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**CHANGING SCHOOL PRACTICES: THE IMPACT OF
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT ON PRIMARY AND AREA
SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND LEARNING
MANAGEMENT**

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education
at Massey University

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ABSTRACT

The thesis is an investigation of how principals construct meaning from experiences as they work through a School Development initiative. The study is not a formal evaluation of a particular strategy nor a comparison between different strategies. Its purpose is to understand more clearly the interface between principal thinking and action, and the development of coherent practices that lead to more effective teaching and learning in a school.

Three case studies provide the data for the dissertation which focuses on the workings of schools following the major administrative changes in New Zealand education of 1989 in the establishment of self-managing schools. This context is further elaborated to consider the crucial role of the principal, how a School Development approach operates, and the conflicting positions of educational and reflective thinking, and managerial action.

Throughout the case studies five propositions developed from personal experience and research findings are used to gain understanding and as indicators of principal thinking and action. The case studies occurred sequentially beginning with a residential design (Case Study A), having both residential and networked modes (Case Study B), and progressing to the inclusion of an audio-graphic component where there were large geographical separations between the groups of schools (Case Study C).

Data gathering, use of teacher narrative within professional discussion, and a critical reflective stance were recognised as essential elements of the School Development approach. A commitment, by schools, to the ensuing hermeneutic practice tended to spread into other more casual staff interactions further supporting the concept of school as community.

It is proposed that there are three critical periods for schools engaging in this kind of School Development activity. The first involves the link between personal and institutional development. A second involves networking and the third is when individuals and the school as a whole combine to celebrate successes. A visual metaphor constructed around sigmoid curves is presented for mapping and planning.

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This research draws on and extends the knowledge developed from an eighteen year teaching partnership with Tom Prebble. The project schools drew heavily from our 1993 publication *The Reflective Principal: School Development within a Learning Community*. This book is the source for some discussion in Chapter 1 and in the definition of terms used within the School Development process.

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PREFACE

Involvement in Principal Development

As a practising principal I became committed to applying a reflective model of school development to my own work. From time to time academics from Massey and Auckland Universities would adopt a consultancy role and provide both insight and feedback into the developing strategies. As some of this work resulted in video tapes being available to other schools, I became involved in the national scene of developing educational administration.

Whenever other academics were involved with me in the process at school level, I began to discover a much greater degree of critical analysis occurring across all the leadership areas. This intuitive beginning of a critical reflective approach rapidly translated into the early 'Reflective Principal' courses which still continue at the time of writing. Here a residential course was structured to provide experiences in critical reflection outside of the busy school day. It was fashioned around the belief that principals, once inducted into such a process in sympathetic surroundings, might continue to apply some of the elements on their return to their schools. There was also an opportunity to induct large numbers of principals into the concepts of school development. Groups from courses sustained a measure of dialogue once back in their districts and many returned a number of times to courses designed to refresh and extend the process.

For a number of years beginning in 1990 I facilitated principal development contracts for the Ministry of Education and principals who had attended these reflective courses became local facilitators and mentors within these programmes. Others who wished to take a local leadership role in these contracts attended Reflective Principal courses in order to refine their knowledge and skills.

As the press for accountability grew, the courses were supplemented by a computer network used to encourage more frequent reporting and discussion amongst the participants and back to the facilitator. Growth of the technology and the possibility of involving remote schools, not previously included led to the audio-graphic approach which is at the core of Case Study C.

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Changing school practices has often involved outside agents first deciding what teachers ought to do and then interacting directly with them in order to encourage the shift. Until 1989 New Zealand had persisted with an inspectorial system which, in the primary sector, still retained the responsibility for teacher grading and appointment, and a triennial system of reporting generally about individual school effectiveness. As a consequence this arm of the Department of Education was able to act in concert with the school curriculum advisors, employed by regional education boards, to impact directly on teachers' work.

This dissertation examines and evaluates data from three case studies in order to understand the impact of school based development on school organisation and learning management following the demise of the inspectorate, and their replacement by self-managing schools, after the major administrative changes of 1989. This study focuses, in the main, on the actions and beliefs of principals.

Purpose of the Study

The present study is an investigation into how principals construct meaning from experiences in order to develop a conceptual framework, usually called *School Development*, through which to work and respond to outside influences. It is not a formal evaluation of a particular strategy, nor a comparison between different strategies. The purpose is to understand more clearly the interface between principal thinking and action, and the development of coherent practices that lead to more effective teaching and learning in a school. An understanding of this dynamic has become more important since the advent of *Tomorrow's Schools* in 1989 when individual schools became essentially independent and much of the money for School Development was advanced through their block grants. School boards in conjunction with principal and staff became

responsible for purchasing the kind of development activities which they believed were in the best interests of their schools.

Context of the Study¹

a. *The crucial role of the principal*

With the implementation of the changes in 1989, primary principals who had always played a significant role in the management of teaching, became the lynch pin connecting the school to the community through the newly established boards of trustees. Each school was responsible directly to the reformed Ministry of Education. For many newly elected boards, principals became their training agents and advisors. It is not surprising that roles and tasks of boards and principals became confused and overlapping as individual schools worked to define their own character and purpose. For example there was not always a clear distinction between managerial and professional issues. Busy principals, intent on ensuring the best for their schools experienced a sudden jump in work load. The managerial responsibilities were often conducted at the expense of professional leadership (Mitchell *et al.*, 1993). This in turn led to additional tensions between some elected boards of trustees and school staff. Similar changes in other systems have seen an exodus of principals from the job (Bryk *et al.*, 1994).

It is the principal who binds together the various threads of “values, leadership, vision and culture” (Campbell-Evans, 1993:110). For most school communities there are competing goals, a wide spectrum of expectations, and a range of values that register almost all the possible points of view. The principal in an effective school, acts as a filter and conduit for establishing the “core” values that the school will honour. Leithwood and Steinbach (1993) argue that we are yet to identify the variables that will allow us to

¹

The context is set by three features:

- a. The crucial role of the principal;
- b. The nature of the School Development approach applied in each instance; and
- c. The relationship of School Development and School Competition.

identify which principals made a difference to student learning, and why this might be so. They state that, “some do [make a difference] but most do not”(ibid:41).

These discussions reinforce the idea that the contradictions in public expectations are a key challenge for principals. Those who successfully deal with this uncertainty are those who are able to manage the culture (Campbell-Evans, 1993). Greenfield (1986) supported this reasoning when he described school administrators as “value carriers”. Whether or not principals can be directly connected to student learning may be still unproven but there is a strong association between effective principalship and a school culture which supports learning. Fullan (1991:169) argues that “Serious reform...is changing the culture and structure of the school” and that this will not get done without the active involvement of the principal. By reform he is implying an improvement in teaching and learning. This view is supported by Sebring *et al.* (1995:68) who describe the principal as “the single most important actor in promoting reform at the building level.”

It was for these kind of reasons that the decision was made to focus this study on principal and leadership behaviour.

b. *A School Development approach*

The School Development approach which is referred to throughout this study had its origins in the organisation development literature. Most of the reported studies of organisational development began either with the total staff of the organisation involved in extensive training simulations, or wide ranging data gathering exercises were initiated before any problems were addressed. Either way involved both staff and consultants in large amounts of time and energy devoted to discussion and analysis. Much dependence was also placed on questionnaire surveys seeking to measure the difference between the actual and desired state of the organisation.

The approach, adapted from this material and entitled “School Development” aims to begin with a focus on principal development and the acquisition, by the principal, of the ability to be critically reflective. A move focussed on a greater understanding of the school culture is facilitated by the adoption of a preference for systematic data gathering and critique. Increasingly staff are also encouraged to analyse the key processes within the school and make overt the prevailing values, and norms of its population. As a consequence change and school renewal is likely to be constant and steady and incorporate existing effective practice. The culture of learning is widened to include all members of the school who increasingly perceive themselves as members of a community.

Implicit within this definition is the belief that such an effort must be collaborative and must deal with both real and perceived problems. Schools are viewed as unique cultural systems capable of self improvement through applying behavioural science techniques in reflective self-analytic ways. As such School Development has to do with growth and effectiveness between and amongst the people in the school community.

The structures and processes of collaborative management do not concern us at this point, except to say that the School Development advanced in the case studies in this thesis, is a process intended to assist schools to become more genuinely collaborative.

c. *School Development and School Competition*

With the change to self managing schools, where each school became an independent institution, there was a strong push by the central Ministry of Education for schools to adopt a “business model” approach to their operation. This was conveyed to schools in papers defining the governance and management notion of how schools should operate (Ballard and Duncan, 1989), and in the language generally where the principal was referred to as the “chief executive”, or the “manager”. Although it was clear that principals would need to take a lead in these new developments, it was my view that thinking of their job as a “business” would divert many from the main task of the school -

to promote learning. Instead they could become separated from classrooms and preoccupied with budgets, forecasts, preparation of reports, image promotion, and attempting to devise simple assessment measures for complex situations.

The Reflective Principal courses were progressively developed to incorporate the developing literature in this context. A view of schools as learning communities was presented with the rationale that such schools could still be “efficient” in a resource management sense, while at the same time, presenting teachers with the support to be creative, divergent, and learning focused (Brookfield, 1995; Dimmock, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1992, 1996). This alternative perspective, emphasising professional dialogue (Smyth, 1991), and a professional community of teachers (Sebring *et al.*, 1995) was presented as enabling principals to emphasise instructional leadership, while at the same time conform to the various expectations that the educational authorities had established.

A series of publications written in collaboration with Tom Prebble, had supported this work. A further book, incorporating ideas developed for these courses was published in 1993 with the writer as the senior author. The popularity of this book, its availability in many schools, and the fact that it is a text for many leadership development courses, has ensured wide understanding of many of the ideas and procedures.

Increasingly change at the school level has developed professional conversations and staff critique which relates to establishing the meanings for what teachers do. How principals and teachers construct this meaning within their work relates to some of the issues in epistemology.

The tension is between the dominant epistemology of technical rationality where theory is separate from practice, and the emergent paradigm of reflection-in-action which emphasises forms of knowing that disavows the separation of theory from practice, one in which theory emerges out

of practice and practice influences theory; in a word “praxis”... (Smyth, 1991:26).

Not only do principals and teachers construct meaning for themselves but they pass on this idiosyncratic thinking to students and colleagues as their interpretation of the world (Hargreaves, 1988:216). Such pursuit of meaning and sense, coupled with the ability to think critically and creatively has been labelled “an empowering agenda” (Green, 1986:72, cited in Smyth, 1991:74). As the work of teachers and school leaders has *intensified* (Apple, 1988), it has become impossible for them to cope with all the demands that arise. The exercising of choice becomes imperative, both for survival and for consistency. Some have chosen to follow Fullan’s (1991:351) suggestion that “acting on change is an experience in pursuing meaning,” and as a consequence invariably look first at their current practices before considering any possible alteration to their work. Contained within these choices, however, is both a “struggle for meaning” and “a struggle for power relations” (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985:36). The range of choices open for any individual may be contingent upon position and relationship within the school leadership group.

Principal development and School Development are linked through a set of complex relationships. Commitment to a programme provides a link between facilitator and principal, and some work, for example, has been done with regard to problem solving behaviours (Leithwood and Steinbach, 1993). Using a literature and research base as a means for influencing action is generally only effective when selected topics are congruent with an individual principal’s focus on a current school issue. There seems to need to be a feedback from practice components in order for the principals to pursue the meaning (Fullan, 1991:351). In the same way that teachers are influenced by professional dialogue, what other principals do and say influences perception and emphasis in individuals. There is a need to meet specific legal requirements on which the Education Review Office regularly publishes material, and most practitioners adapt their behaviour in order to avoid controversial criticism. The relationships between how

principals think about their own development and that of their schools are multi-faceted and multi-layered.

Brief Overview of the Theoretical Position

Reflection upon the above personal experiences and research findings has suggested several propositions about how understanding may be gained.

- It is possible to gain insights into principal behaviour by examining their use and adoption of certain key concepts which facilitate a critical reflective stance within the school (e.g. the four phase development sequence, conceptual job descriptions, quality learning circles, and the concept of school culture (Stewart and Prebble, 1993)).
- Although it is not possible to predict specific outcomes from development activities, use of a specific range of processes could signal allegiance to a particular mindscape (Sergiovanni, 1991).
- Critical reflection is of central importance both for principals and staff (Brookfield, 1995; Canning, 1991; Elliott, 1996; Griffiths and Tann, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1991; Smyth, 1991). Reflection is deemed to become *critical* when it contains two purposes:

The first is to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame and distort educational processes and interactions. The second is to question assumptions and practices that seem to make our teaching lives easier but actually work against our own best long term interests (Brookfield, 1995:18).
- Principal development and School Development activities cannot always be separated (Campbell-Evans, 1993; Dimmock, 1993; Sparkes and Bloomer, 1993).

- Successful School Development is an educational rather than a managerial process.

Educational and reflective thinking reflect a view of education as a set of complex personal transactions between teachers and students (Elliott, 1996:211). Such transactions require teachers to be autonomous and to be able to make ethical, content and process decisions in response to student progress. “Classroom teachers rather than the system [are perceived as] the source of quality in education” (ibid). Managerial processes focus alternatively, on the structure and system of the school and seek to make these technically efficient in a somewhat mechanistic manner. Elliott (1996:208) draws on Hamilton (1994) in suggesting that this view is analogous to perceiving that the world “operates like clockwork”. When applied to a School Development initiative, a managerial approach focuses primarily on prescription and outcome and orderly process. In examining what principals do, the following will be used as indicators of educational and reflective thinking rather than managerial action where managerial processes are defined as conforming to a simple systems approach and ignoring context and “texture”(Elliott, 1996).

- Principals will perceive themselves and their teaching staff as learners (Brookfield, 1995; Cortazzi, 1993; Smyth, 1991).
- There will be a general adoption of concepts of community, when describing school processes, as opposed to concepts of hierarchical management (Brookfield, 1995; Bryk *et al.*, 1994; Elliott, 1996; Grace, 1995).
- There will be a general recognition that education is a complex activity unlikely to be changed by purely managerial methods (Elliott, 1996).
- There will be specific resources allocated to the cultivation of a culture of critical reflection as “awareness of our own thinking usually grows out of the process of articulating it to others...” (Smyth, 1991:28; Brookfield, 1995; Cortazzi, 1993; Grace, 1995).

- There will be a recognition that teaching is, in the main, a set of complex personal relationships and there is a need to establish a forum, within the school, for professional discussion and exchange (Elliott, 1996).
- In the same way that learning cannot be precisely defined for students, neither can precise outcomes for School Development be defined in advance. Principals, therefore, need the ability to recognise and live with a large measure of uncertainty (Campbell-Evans, 1993; Elliott, 1996; Sergiovanni, 1996).
- Professional school leaders need to be future oriented while displaying knowledge about current practices and processes. Such future orientation will also include an interest in development of individual staff members, and improving their own knowledge and skills (Brookfield, 1995; Cortazzi, 1993; Handy, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1988; West-Burnham, 1992).

Most, if not all principals think about cycles of development which may mean that their focus, in a particular instance, is on the sequencing of teaching and learning activities where they are reworking or introducing changed curriculum initiatives. At other times the plan may be to resolve school specific problems such as, behaviour management, or remedial or accelerated programmes. Periodically, schools may also need to revisit accountability issues such as, teacher appraisal, student records, and reporting to parents.

Development activities such as these are, in the main, thought of as being controlled by the individual school, whereas *educational change* is seen as being mandated from the centre, when a set of required responses is prescribed as in new curriculum statements or performance management processes. It is the development activities, their selection and treatment, which form the context of this project. Across the three case studies in this project each school chose the specific activity which they wished to pursue and looked to the project for fashioning mechanisms both to think about what was and what might be, and to work through the chosen development over one calendar year.

Central to the project was the concept of reflection. It was assumed that the principals would need to understand the notion of critical reflection and then both use it themselves and encourage reflective practices amongst their staff. To accomplish this, an emphasis, within the training, was placed on systematic data gathering and subsequent critical dialogue. Steady, cumulative progress was counselled as opposed to searching for simple dramatic solutions. As competence grew, schools were encouraged to develop group structures that represented a form of mutual accountability. Within this work the role of the principal was seen as critical both in understanding process and context, and as a practitioner dedicated to building an appropriate core culture within the school community. A measure of success would be when all members of the school community, pupils, teachers and parents viewed themselves as learners.

Brief Overview of the Methodology

The three case studies, from which the data are derived, form a “data source triangulation” (Stake, 1995:112). In discussion they are treated in the sequence that they occurred, with the Reflective Principal courses, a residential face-to-face experience, being addressed first, followed by the Mentor_94 case where all mentors had attended a previous Reflective Principal course and were responsible for a group of participating schools. In the third case, the Area School study, face to face contact was largely replaced with an audio-graphic technique. Each case can be conceived as a separate instance of the School Development phenomenon. The different circumstances allow for interpretations of meaning to be made more consistently, in that factors that arise in all three cases can be more reliably seen as central to the development process.

The examination of the theoretical propositions within each of the case studies has been undertaken in the light of the following aims and considerations:

Proposition 1.

It is possible to gain insights into principal behaviour by examining their use and adoption of certain key concepts (e.g. the four phase development sequence, conceptual job descriptions, quality learning circles, and the concept of school culture (Stewart and Prebble, 1993)).

Case Study A. The questions in the survey were designed to encourage respondents to think about the courses in relation to their own practices. A number of the specific techniques and processes which had been taught at the courses emphasised educational and reflective thought. The extent to which these techniques were established, or planned to be established in schools would give an indication of commitment to this kind of thinking (see Q4).

Case Study B. Searches for the same techniques and processes will be made through the interviews in this case. The research did not ask directly about particular procedures but invited respondents to talk more generally about School Development as it occurred in their schools, how it worked, how they thought about it, and what actually happened. References, that referred to specific concepts can then be logged and interpreted.

Case Study C. Material gathered from the schools in this project will be organised in a bi-polar manner. Statements relating to critical reflective thought being separated from those referring to tasks or completed processes. By this means it will be possible to gain some understanding about the thinking and action conducted in the various schools.

Proposition 2.

Although it is not possible to predict specific outcomes from development activities, use of a specific range of processes could signal allegiance to a particular mindscape (Sergiovanni, 1991).

Case Study A. By asking principals to rank various categories of stimuli for teacher development that they used in their schools it is proposed that inferences from the results can be made about commitment to a particular view of School Development. Similarly open ended questions seeking views on leadership support and change and development initiatives will provide understandings about the way School Development was conceptualised.

Case Study B. The interviews in this case study will be analysed seeking references to cultural change and mutual responsibility, reflection, the four phase model, and personal professional development, in order to further understand the manner in which principals were thinking about their role and their work.

Case Study C. The analysis technique used with this study will be applied to three major divisions; School Development, professional development, and the audio-graphic project itself. Although the case study was relatively short (one calendar year), both the use of particular devices such as Quality Learning Circles for example, and discussion about School Development and professional development will enable inferences to be formed regarding the local theories that principals were forming to guide their practice.

Proposition 3.

Critical reflection is of central importance both for principals and staff (Brookfield, 1995; Canning, 1991; Elliott, 1996; Griffiths and Tann, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1991; Smyth, 1991).

Case Study A. The concept of reflection was targeted at two different levels in the questionnaire. Question 4 sought to discover if “reflective writing” was present or planned for in the school and Question 10 sought a ranking for “reflection” as a stimulus for teacher development. In addition the text of the open ended questions enabled principals to make reference to critical reflective activities. From these two kinds of responses it will be possible to make some assumptions about how “reflection” was perceived and to what degree it was “critical”.

Case Study B. In the interview analysis the concept of reflection will be defined as a subset of school culture. An indication of the importance of this concept may be derived from both its frequency of use and from the context within which it was used. Another indicator of the relative importance of the notion will be the degree of understanding that the respondents bring to their use of the term. For example the illustration of reflection as “reflection on practice”, “about” practice and “in” practice (Schön, 1983, 1987).

Case Study C. The particular structure of the analysis for this case will permit study of the statements containing a reflective element in relation to School Development, personal professional development, and the actual task which the school undertook during the project. It will be possible, using this material, to make some judgments relating to the perceived importance of reflection to this group of schools.

Proposition 4.

Principal development and School Development activities cannot always be separated (Campbell-Evans, 1993; Dimmock, 1993; Sparkes and Bloomer, 1993).

Case Study A. Three open ended questions (Q5-7) will provide opportunities for principals to state the kinds of experiences that had supported their own development, the development of their schools, and that they would seek in the future. The nature of the inter-relationship between personal development and School Development will then be able to be discerned from the replies. It is likely that for some, specific events within the school will have triggered an enrolment in a principal development initiative and for others the professional development work has led to new options in the School Development arsenal.

Case Study B. All those taking part in this project had contracted to follow a four phase School Development model for a minimum of one year, using a theme of their own choice. Separate questions in the interviews were targeted to responses about the source of their own development and how School Development processes were conceived and performed. Statements within these interviews will be grouped by their relationship to either School Development or professional development in order to facilitate meaning.

Case Study C. Contact with this group was much more school based. The interviews took place in the schools and the audio-graphic sessions were, of course, located at the schools. There were fewer opportunities to focus primarily on principal development. During the tutorial sessions some direct teaching was done and readings were supplied to all groups. Nevertheless, the statements from the survey instruments will be

organised in order to probe for connections and differences in professional and School Development.

Proposition 5.

Successful School Development is an educational rather than a managerial process.

Case Study A. A number of questions in the survey instrument (5-7, 10-13) are potential sources of data for this proposition. It is likely, however, that the sections on concept development and future development will contain the richest data. How school leaders interpret the concept of school culture, for example, may give an indication of how they think about successful School Development. References to structural implications and change generally are also likely to provide insights into how principals go about their School Development programmes.

Case Study B. Some of the interview questions were deliberately phrased in order to elicit data for this proposition. By asking the principals to speculate about how teachers view School Development the opportunity was presented to discuss coercive power versus educational diversity. Specific questions about school culture concepts and their usefulness in this regards were also asked. Sections of data containing examples of the use of teacher narrative will be particularly useful in this section.

Case Study C. Although answers across the whole instrument may have implications for this section, the School Development node will be the prime source of data. A key element of the programme was to encourage challenge and critique at the level of classroom practice. For many this may have meant a link to the notion of Quality Learning Circles as a practical means of establishing these kinds of processes. Important also to this proposition

will be the description of how policy is formulated and written in the school, and how personal theory is formulated.

Results

It is proposed that there are three critical periods in the kinds of School Development activities undertaken by schools in this study. The first occurs when a school leader undertakes a personal professional educational initiative linked with a planned School Development activity. A second sequence begins with the formation of a network of schools pursuing similar ends and the third involves institutional and individual celebration of success. Such celebration provides the energy for a further round of School Development activities. A visual metaphor constructed around sigmoid curves is presented for mapping and planning.

This dissertation now continues in the following pattern of presentation. Next is a review of the related literature with each of the six sections leading to a general assumption which together, were the basis of the development and training experiences for the various participants. Chapter 2, *Project Design and Key Concepts*, is followed by the three case studies in separate chapters. A general analysis entitled *Perspectives on School Development* draws these cases together and the dissertation is completed with Chapter 7, *Conclusion*.

Chapter 1

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Prior to October 1989, the process of School Development was usually initiated by a provincial or regional authority. From time to time, some individuals and groups of interested schools conducted site specific programmes but the responsibility and control of most resources lay beyond their control. These middle level educational authorities were dispensed with in 1 October 1989 and each school has become legally responsible for its own affairs. In the main, resources were also devolved from the centre to support this move.

The thesis involves the description and analysis of three substantive case studies as a means of investigating and understanding the impact of School Development programmes since *Tomorrow's Schools* legislation made each individual school responsible for its own development.

The review is divided into six major sections which each address an element of the School Development process as defined on page 4. Each section leads to a general assumption or theme which together have formed the basis of the training and development, provided in different forms, within all three case studies. These sections are overlapping and intertwined rather than discrete, and the subsections are used to explore some closer analysis.

School Development focuses firstly on the learning of individual principals, their ability to construct new meaning based on their past experience and their developing reflective capacity. These factors are addressed in Section 1.1. A recognition that the principal must work with and through others leads to a consideration of the conceptual issues such as organisational change, the concept of school as community and teachers as researchers addressed in Section 1.2.

As School Development activities extend and develop as group activities the values that underpin individual actions become important to share. These notions, including the concept of quality, the nature of professionalism, the use of teacher narrative and the general understanding of change are the topics explored in Section 1.3. Effective School Development initiatives are planned, focussed and follow particular patterns. These methodological issues, including action research, the four phase process, collaboration, concept mapping and establishing a learning community are addressed in Section 1.4.

The cultural aspects of School Development are central to an understanding of the process. These elements, school culture, core culture and the role of the principal in developing and maintaining the culture of the school are surveyed in Section 1.5. The final section dealing with school effectiveness, what teaching is, and the principal's responsibilities is entitled effective learning communities and constitutes Section 1.6.

The six sections lead to the assumptions (foreshadowed in the Introduction) which informed the core work of the development activities. School Development provided a strategy for dealing with change by first focussing on the individual development, then moving towards collective action and making beliefs and values overt, acknowledging the individual idiosyncratic nature of each school culture and the need to foster concepts of community and continuous learning for all members of the school.

1.1 The Process of Change, Learning and the Individual

1.1.a. Learning and the participation of the individual

Learning is not a passive experience. Block (1987:191) suggests that, "Almost every important learning experience we have ever had has been stressful..."

To learn requires the engagement of the mind. Individual learning can be stimulated and enhanced when others help to develop a specific skill or understanding (Bradley, 1991:1). Where ever possible, within the following case studies, groups of teachers and school leaders were encouraged to explain, debate and reflect upon their current experience as they considered alternative ideas from facilitators and the available literature.

This dissertation takes the view that “learning must permeate everything” in a school (Barth, 1991; Rosenholtz, 1989) and importantly teachers must be perceived by all to be learners (Fullan, 1991:326). An alternative view that students learn and teachers teach will likely lead to restrictive practices and lower levels of participation (Nolan and Francis, 1992 :47-48). By being encouraged to engage in learning themselves, it was intended that participants in these studies would move from simply seeking solutions to classroom problems, to generating and seeking confirmation of *local theories* which they had developed to explain their own practice (Smyth, 1991). These theories would then be tested and refined against their existing knowledge and against future episodes. Such local or “short ranged” theory development (Scheerens, 1992; Smyth, 1991; Sparks-Langer and Colton, 1991; Tripp, 1987) takes into account what Giroux (1983:21) defines as “sedimented histories”.

...in order to decide what to do next, we have to ascertain why things are currently the way they are, how they got that way, and what conditions sustain and support them (ibid).

As explanations of idiosyncratic practice these *local theories* are not necessarily generalisable to other situations or for other practitioners. Provided, however, that they are shared and explained they can help others build their *local theory*. This is theory construction by analogy rather than by inference or hypothetico-deduction. This kind of participatory thinking and learning is further developed in the *Reflection* section below.

1.1.b. *Constructing meaning*

The active individual, engaged in learning, seeks meaning. It is the construction of meaning that enables the cycle of learning to continue.

It is my belief that theory and practice develop in interaction, i.e. that theory becomes imbedded in practice and that practice provides the illumination, challenge, tentative justification and possible transformation of theory (Ball, 1992:63).

Participating in their own learning involves individuals in an active search for meaning. As was argued above, such searching generally requires a process of construction and testing. Smyth (1991:28), believes that the very “awareness of our own thinking usually grows out of the process of articulating it to others.” This talking and sharing of ideas and thoughts with others seems necessary for attaching meaning. Constructing meaning in teaching is no longer just a matter of solving emergent problems, rather it necessitates problem posing and a shift from a position “where scientific derived knowledge is deemed superior to a circumstance in which artistic and interactive knowledge may be equally appropriate”(Smyth, 1991:24). A transformation of this nature builds a school culture where discussion is centred around the meaning of practice.

The philosophical position here draws on the hermeneutic tradition where education is perceived as “a complex personal transaction between teachers and their pupils” and “the quality of education depends on the quality of teachers’ deliberation and judgement in classrooms” (Elliott, 1996). The meanings of practice are expressed in stories and narrative that teachers exchange with each other. As Polkinghorne (1988:7) explains, “Hermeneutic understanding uses processes such as analogy and pattern recognition to draw conclusions about the meaning context of linguistic messages.” School Development activities were, as a consequence, designed to ensure both individual participation and a simulation of future classroom practices.

1.1.c. *Past experience and developed abilities*

The kind of choices that people make, the information and ideas that they are attracted to, and the sense that they make of their work are all based, to a large degree, in the experiences that they have accumulated in their lives to date (Nolan and Francis, 1992). Leithwood and Steinbach (1993:42), argues that “what principals do depends on what they think.” What they think has a strong element of past experience. Included in this accumulated experience are the abilities which have been developed in response to a wide variety of tasks. Clearly, strategies which are perceived to be successful, are likely to be applied to future problems and unsuccessful approaches discarded. One of the outcomes of the political environment in which education currently operates is that some school leaders have tended to “resurrect the old cultural certainties” (Hargreaves, 1994), which include an overdependence on “strong”, “outstanding”, “visionary” leadership (Grace, 1995). This is, in a sense, a reliance on a form of collective past experience.

Grace (1995:144) highlights the problems that have occurred for school leaders in their recent past where the dilemma of “professional community versus autonomous advantage” has arisen as a result of market forces. Even when the school is largely united around goals and values of “autonomous advantage” Grace (1995:212) questions whether these are values of a democratic culture. A total reliance on an individual’s or small group’s past experience and the consequential developed abilities is plainly insufficient. There is need for reflection and analysis which includes the literature and research which can inform future decisions even when “intensification of work may limit [the time for] possible critical reflection” (Grace, 1995:54). There is a real danger that over reliance on personal experience will result in a focus of “better ways of doing more of the same” and as a consequence, ignore the essential moral, ethical, political and philosophical questions that lead to effective and meaningful education (Smyth, 1991:24). School leaders, therefore, need to be creative in their search for mechanisms which will build on the past experience and developed abilities of the teachers in their

schools, but at the same time increase the range of activities which learners use to construct meaning.

There is evidence that teachers do not learn, by and large, from scholarly journals (Little, 1982), research reports (Stenhouse, 1978), or even pre-service courses (Hogben, 1980). Rather they are influenced most by precept and example, especially role models held of their own teachers (Smyth, 1991:85).

A case can be argued for heterogeneous groups which encourage teachers to study and discuss their professional practice with a group of colleagues in a supportive and non-threatening environment. These groups could be simply a structured opportunity for teachers to reflect regularly, on their own and their colleagues' professional practice. Across the school then, teachers' thinking becomes driven by "experience, beliefs, sociopolitical values and goals" (Sparks-Langer and Colton, 1991). "Craft knowledge" (Leinhardt, 1990) becomes shared and opportunities widen to learn about successful practice and others' local theory (Scheerens, 1992; Smyth, 1991; Sparks-Langer and Colton, 1991; Tripp, 1987).

1.1.d. *Reflection*

Currently there would seem to be an impatience by many commentators with the unpredictability and imprecision of the schooling process and a desire to make what happens in schools more productive and accountable to public expectations. Additionally, there is a burgeoning literature and understanding that schools will be more effective if they fashion a "best fit" between what teachers do and the prior experiences and learning styles of students. This literature suggests that schools where reflective action predominates will generate more effective learning.

School leaders driven by a strong sense of accountability are unlikely to promote a reflective culture in their schools unless they are convinced of the value. Donald Schön

(1983) has defined this reflective process and the theory of knowledge on which it is based. He makes a crucial distinction between “objective knowledge” and “knowledge in action”. Objective knowledge includes scientifically verifiable principles of learning and teaching that a teacher or school leader should be able to rely on to hold good in any given set of circumstances. Schön claims on the other hand, that such knowledge is seldom available in the teaching learning situation. Instead, teachers engage in a constant process of reflecting on what is happening, and how their actions are affecting the learning situation. He calls this process “knowing in action” (Smyth, 1968:167). Dewey (1933) explored very similar ideas in a process which he described as beginning with doubt and concern and leading through focused inquiry to a rational response.

The function of reflective thought is, therefore, to transform a situation in which there is experienced obscurity, doubt, conflict, disturbance of some sort, into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled, harmonious (Dewey, 1933:100-101).

Effectiveness in this context is idiosyncratic to each teacher. Broadening the range of techniques where teachers match students’ prior knowledge with current presentations is defined as more effective as opposed to a view of effectiveness where it is necessary that all teachers use a set of recommended practices. It is not so much what teachers do in direct interaction with students which becomes worthwhile and the test of effectiveness, but rather the total learning environment which is created.

...judging teacher effectiveness shifts from that of delivering good lessons to that of being able to build or create a classroom “learning community” (Prawat, 1992:12).

To engage in reflection is to combine both action and thinking together. This is what Grimmitt and Erikson (1988:6) suggest is “the paradox that one cannot know without acting and one cannot act without knowing.” To be reflective in a teaching context is

to consider a range of possible actions prior to moving to the next stage of the lesson, or prior to responding to class initiatives. This will often occur within a very short time frame and to be successful requires teachers to be able to hold in their mind a suitable range of possible alternatives. In many situations teachers will need to explore some of these with the students, withholding judgement until it becomes clearer which direction would be most profitable.

In this sense reflection is a kind of interactive reasoning. This reasoning will be heavily dependent on the inputs and prior learning of students but will always contain a predictive element. This emphasis on reflection is consistent with a 'professional' view of supervision (Prawat, 1993; Sebring *et al.*, 1995), and at odds with the 'bureaucratic' view. That is, a reflective view of teaching would maintain that growth in teacher effectiveness would more likely occur when small groups of teachers were provided with opportunities to reflect with each other, on a regular basis, rather than being pressed to incorporate a set range of so called 'competencies' into their practice (see further discussion of effectiveness in Section 6). Through regular interaction with each other teachers will widen their range of alternative actions; they will gain insights into situations deemed dilemmas by their peers; and they will have an opportunity to reflect on their own work by discussing their practice and their beliefs about that practice with their colleagues. Scientific understandings of teaching are important but not more important than knowledge derived from the artistic and intuitive endeavours of teachers (Schein, 1985).

Reflection is normally a fairly unstructured, intuitive process. If it is to become the focus for school-based teacher development - which was the focus of the case studies - it will need to become more explicit, structured and shared. Smyth (1989) suggests that one step in this process is for teachers to structure their reflection by asking the following questions:

- What do I do? (Describe)
- What does this mean? (Inform)
- How did I come to be like this? (Confront)
- How might I do things differently? (Reconstruct)

Griffiths and Tann (1992) suggest there are at least five levels of reflection for both teachers and school leaders. Level one is *Rapid Reactive Behaviour* where teacher reaction is immediate and intuitive. At the next level *Repair* there is a pause for thinking on the spot and as a result some teacher adjustment. *Review* is a level three action, and reflection takes place after the event. The experiences are commonly converted into narrative as they are shared with others. The fourth level marks a progression involving systematic observation and data collect and is called *Research*. Finally the reflection can become more abstract and precise as the “local” theories undergo reconstruction and public theories are challenged. They call this stage *Retheorising and Reformulating*.

Griffith and Tann (1992:71) assert that “all practice is an expression of personal theory” and that this notion underpins the concept of the “reflective teacher” or “reflective practitioner” (Zeichner *et al.*, 1987:22; McCutcheon and Jung, 1990:144). Teachers engage in reflection by talking to other professionals about their practice. This organisation of thoughts, actions and beliefs into a form of narrative helps make explicit their own underlying personal theories. In addition the group ask questions which further explore the interpretation given and promote critical analysis. Participants find that working in this way within a group both allows multiple interpretation of classroom events and provides a clarification that they are unlikely to find alone. “It is difficult to notice one’s imagery at all; then to label and find words for it; and finally to grasp its significance” (Griffiths and Tann, 1992:76). This understanding and awareness “of our own thinking usually grows out of the process of articulating it to others...” (Smyth, 1991:28). When teachers meet in groups to engage in reflection, the composition of the group is important.

These settings are groups that are relatively small, relatively egalitarian (in the sense that no member has command over another without others' approval), relatively free of recrimination between members, relatively committed to rationally discussing its members' situations and experiences and relatively insistent that its members take responsibility for whatever claims, decisions, or actions they undertake to make. Only within session like these can "consciousness raising" based on rational reflection apparently take place (Smyth, 1991:108, quoting Fay, 1977:230).

This is called the "educative mode of reflection".

The development of a "mindscape" (Sergiovanni, 1991) by each individual teacher, by framing and reframing through discussion and analysis is at the heart of reflective practice. By working within supportive groups who both ask reflective questions of each other and expect to answer such questions all the elements of reflection, "cognition", "critical thinking" and "narrative enquiry" are exercised (Sparks-Langer and Colton, 1991:37).

Thus there is considerable support for the view that learning takes place when individuals are able to build on existing knowledge to make sense of new experience. It is not simply a matter of transferring existing knowledge from one person to another. Moreover, all learners bring their own experience and abilities to the new experience, and this will influence the way that learning takes place. Given such a view of learning it will not be possible to arrive at a universal formula for effective teaching or indeed, for effective training. Each learning context and each group of learners will require its own unique teaching response. Teachers themselves learn and develop in their craft by reflecting on what they are doing, why they are doing it, and the effect it is having. The above discussion draws together a body of literature which supports the following assumption.

Assumption 1.

Learning requires the individual to actively construct meaning and knowledge on the basis of reflecting upon experience.

1.2 Conceptual Issues*1.2.a. Organisational change*

Regardless of the pace and the power of change, schools which wish to be effective must create and maintain a stable environment (Bell, 1991:138). Organisational change, which is generally perceived by teachers as structural change, has a direct impact on teachers' work. Biott and Nias (1992) suggest that "one of the main sources of fear for [most] teachers is that of losing control." As a consequence they need the continuing security of a "core culture". This central web of beliefs, values, shared practices, and unstated understandings (Sergiovanni, 1991), is the touchstone for successful organisational change. There is a view that organisational change is simply a consequence arising from quality strategic planning, which in turn is best completed by the organisational leader. This view must be rejected if teaching is defined as a creative rather than a routine activity (Bradley, 1991:5). For creative activities to flourish it is necessary to have a culture which values participation and variety, encourages risk taking and supports innovation and discussion. Planning and forward thinking must reflect this diversity.

Organisational change which impacts positively on learning and teaching, results from spreading existing successful practices more widely across the school. Activities recommended by various writers to address this challenge include "an educators' forum" (Evans, 1991), "practical reflection" (Elliott, 1976b, cited in Smyth, 1991), "consciousness raising" (Smyth, 1991) and using "Quality Learning Circles" (Stewart and Prebble, 1993). For many school leaders the concept of staff development is the

preferred way of thinking about organisational change. Fullan expresses the point succinctly thus:

Staff development then, is both a strategy for specific instructional change, and a strategy for basic organisational change in the way teachers work and learn together (Fullan, 1990:21).

It is this notion of concentrating on the people in the institution, what they know and believe, how they think about what they do, and how they might extend the ways in which they work together, that makes sense of the concept of organisational change. Huberman (1992) refers to his work in Switzerland and how the most dissatisfied teachers he found had invested heavily in “structural reforms” and to a large extent ignored school cultural aspects. As their careers continued they became increasingly disillusioned with their work.

He suggests that “the metaphor [of organisational change] is not the orchestra with its methodological rehearsals, but rather the jazz group, improvising continuously within the bounds of implicit understandings, even rituals, amongst its members about melodic progression” (Huberman, 1992:9).

Reinforcing this idea Fullan (1991) states, “reform is not putting into place the latest policy. It means changing the cultures of the classrooms, the schools, the districts, the universities and so on.” He argues further that the poor rate of success of most organisational changes of this nature is a direct result of those responsible neglecting the “phenomenology of change” - the actual experience as opposed to what was intended. “Educational change depends on what teachers do and think - it’s as simple and as complex as that” (ibid: 117), and “acting on change is an exercise in pursuing meaning” (ibid:351).

1.2.b. *Concept of school as community*

We change what teachers do by changing the way they think about what they do. This section will focus on how the way that we think about a school (for example as a special kind of organisation or as a learning community), influences both what we do and the emphasis that is given to chosen activities.

The way that we think about what we do has a major effect on what we actually do. If we think about schools as organisations, for example, we tend to consider those aspects of organisations which can be controlled. Clearly, we would wish to exercise some *control* over what students may do in order to encourage active learning and this would seem to reflect what schools are about, but *controlling* what teachers do raises a number of ethical issues. Teachers need to be accountable but the means by which accountability is achieved is important, both to the individual and to the overarching culture of the school.

If schools are perceived as communities, albeit special kinds of communities which are established for the prime purpose of inculcating learning we tend to think of the values that tie the community together, rather than how it may be controlled, and it becomes important to understand the beliefs that various members hold and to what extent there are shared understandings, and shared practices. Communities are driven from the centre, from this common core culture, whereas organisations can be treated as if their rules are inviolate. Sergiovanni (1991) uses these ideas in his discussion of transactional and transformational leadership. The school as an organisation would emphasise transactional modes of interaction where services are performed and rewards and remuneration received, and the school as a community would value transformational associations where the group as a whole was committed to an ideal.

Sergiovanni (1992:41-45) succinctly draws the distinction between the two: in a transactional culture “what gets rewarded gets done” while in a transformational culture

“what is rewarding gets done”. As the name suggests, a transactional culture is based around expectations of exchange and reward. Members belong to an organisation because the rewards they receive equal or exceed the investment of time and effort they are called upon to make. In such organisations managers obtain compliance from members by offering an appropriate mix of economic, political or psychological incentives. This style of leadership works best when both leaders and followers understand and agree on the key tasks to be performed. The leader’s task is to keep members working on task by rewarding high performance and sanctioning poor performance.

In a transformational culture, on the other hand, members are committed to the mission of the organisation and work to achieve those objectives. What we believe in, think to be good, and feel obligated to do gets done. Transformational leadership arises when leaders are more concerned about gaining general commitment and participation from institutional members than they are about getting particular tasks done. Sergiovanni (1996:14) associates transformational leadership with “compacts and commitment” and transactional leadership with “treaties and contracts”.

The concept of transformational leadership has evolved from a particular eclectic blend of ideas illustrated by Mary Poplin (1992:11):

Deci and Ryan (1985) tell us we are motivated through a sense of competence, control, and connection. Learning theory tells us that we grow as we extend knowledge by experimenting and creating new meanings. Critical theory suggests we can advance community growth by promoting critical dialogue. Feminine [sic] theory suggests that growth happens in conjunction with others to whom we feel connected and for whom we care.

The common theme in all these theoretical positions is the belief that success in leadership and in promoting dynamic schools is a consequence of a particular form of school culture. That school culture is characterised by perceptions of community as opposed to ideas of organisation (Mitchell and Tucker, 1992:32). In formal organisations where people are confirmed in roles through policy and rules, job function tends to follow these divisions. It is what Sergiovanni (1996:10-12) calls “separation of function by role.” It has always been difficult to think about teaching in this way as the teaching act embodies elements of both deciding what to do and how to do it.

The thing about teaching is that the specificity of the context is always central. We can't get away with invoking rules and procedures that cut across contexts (Giroux, 1992:17).

When the concept of critical reflection and the importance of an “emotionally sustaining” peer group is added, Brookfield (1995:244) argues that the term “learning community” more accurately expresses the reality than other possible terms such as “network”. The use of the concept “organisation” suffers also from similar inappropriate perceived meanings. Prawat (1993:16) goes on to say in further differentiating communities from organisations, “The goal of learning communities is to build social and intellectual connections among people and control interferes with this process.”

1.2.c. *Teacher as researcher*

There is a wide literature dealing with the concept of the teacher as researcher and the successes and difficulties that various methodologies have encountered. This thesis is concerned with a comparatively narrow focus where teachers gather data to support their stories as they talk and reflect in regular small group meetings. This is not a rigorous scientific process but one where teachers test their own hypothesis stimulated “by the perception of something troubling or promising”, and conclude when they change their practice in a manner that makes sense to them or “by the discovery of new features

which give the situation new meaning and change the nature of the questions to be explored” (Schön, 1983:151). This is the concept of “knowledge in action” (Schön, 1983). Stenhouse (1981) describes a similar process when explaining how “action research, evaluation and naturalistic research all shade into each other”, when, as with this thesis, a case study approach is used in educational research.

An individual is able to make sense of the world through processes of introspection and personal reflection, and may be incapable of explaining how opinions are arrived at and decisions reached. Organisational policy, on the other hand must be far more systematic and explicit as it details the processes of collective decision making. If the leadership of an organization is to demonstrate that they have developed procedures for their members to reflect collectively upon past experience then they must chronicle the genesis of these procedures. This involves at least two stages. First is the discovery, and the sharing of individual and group experiences, through a process of guided data gathering and research. And second, members must have the opportunity to reflect on the data they have collected, its significance, and its implications. These stages of praxis are encapsulated in the following assumption.

Assumption 2.

At an organizational level, learning to construct new meaning requires members of the school community to gather data systematically on the key processes they are endeavouring to develop, and to reflect collectively on the significance of those data.

1.3 Values

1.3.a. *Concept of quality*

The concept of “quality”, when used in an educative sense implies commitment by the teaching professionals. Commitment is a value which cannot be mandated but which is essential for effective change (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1991:26). This is quite different from some commercial definitions of quality where the desire is to continuously replicate a fault free product (Deming, cited in Walton, 1991). It is also clear that revisions of school administrative structures and teacher supervision do not necessarily result in an improvement in quality of student academic performance. In Chicago schools, after three years of change very similar to that experienced in New Zealand, “only a third of the teachers see improvements in the quality of academic performance” in that system (Sebring *et al.*, 1995).

There is a strong connection between engaging in collaborative reflective dialogue which deals with teaching and learning issues, and “quality” teaching in classrooms (Sebring *et al.*, 1995; Bryk *et al.*, 1994). Such an emphasis on the interactions amongst teachers and the way these associations impact on what happens to students, point up the different effects of thinking about schools either as formal organisations or as small communities. Some would argue that school leaders should attempt to take the best from both (Sebring *et al.*, 1995:66). Where the thinking and action is focused on teaching and learning it is important that it is perceived to be internally consistent. Showers and Joyce (1996), for example, have shown that evaluative feedback about teaching practices impacts negatively on future collaboration. Their on-going study has focused firmly on the improvement of quality in teaching and learning. Whereas the community aspects of shared planning, joint problem solving, and reflective analysis quite clearly show a contribution to improved learning, the more formal organisational protocols of line/staff supervision and coaching, resulted in reduced collaboration and restrictive teaching practice (ibid:13).

Sergiovanni (1996:12) believes that thinking about schools as formal organisations leads to a “separation of function by roles.” As a result, the planning is separated from the doing. In this environment treaties and contracts can be seen to be applicable. Thinking about schools as small communities leads alternatively to a belief that compacts and commitments will foster quality teaching and learning. Thinking in this community mode leads to the assumption that “not only principals and teachers but parents and students too must accept their share of responsibility for assuring quality” (ibid:17).

1.3.b. *Professionalism*

If the concept of “quality” is linked with that of “community” as is argued above, then the kind of “professional” activities that teachers will engage in will have a social and intellectual bias rather than a “performance” bias (Prawat, 1993). Sebring *et al.* (1995:sec iv), in coordinating the work of the Chicago Consortium, state that professional orientation should have five features:

- regular opportunities for reflective dialogue;
- “deprivatisation” of teaching practice;
- collaboration and shared work;
- shared beliefs and values rather than rules and regulations; and
- a firm focus on student learning.

Furthermore, the same study provided some evidence that these factors needed external help to establish (ibid:8) and that individual schools were unlikely to realise benefits unless the practices became normative, “i.e. most of the teachers engage in them most of the time” (ibid:5).

1.3.c. *Teacher narrative*

An effective methodology for becoming conversant with the evaluations and judgement that teachers constantly make of their own work is to listen to the narratives that they share with their colleagues. Lomax (1989:108) and Kemmis (1986:118) have used the concept of a “validation” meeting to encourage teachers to share their information and arguments about specific programmes. It is in this sense that “teacher narrative” is used throughout this study. Teachers’ stories, when prepared and then told in structured settings, where a pre-agreed focus of pedagogy or curriculum applies, provide the entrée point into reflective process. Elliott (1976b) is described in Smyth (1991:9) presenting “as *practical reflection* the process of engaging teachers in an analysis of their own practice so that emerging problems can be resolved through the generation and testing of hypotheses in teachers’ own classrooms.” Teacher narrative is seen as the initial step in enabling teachers to develop their own theory about their work (Smyth, 1991).

It is the very process of articulating what teachers believe and understand is happening in their classes, through sharing narrative, that raises their awareness of their own thinking (Smyth, 1991:28). Such story telling is not, however, received passively by colleagues. A narrative session is usually characterised by critical questions following the short presentation. Teachers, like all active learners, are constantly constructing new meaning and it is often the reconstructed meaning that will drive any change in existing practice rather than a newly introduced skill (Hargreaves, 1988; Smyth, 1991). Furthermore, all participants in a “teacher narrative” session are all likely to actively reflect about their own practice as a consequence of the examples presented and the understandings expressed by others in the group (Smyth, 1991).

These narrative sessions need to be conducted in a environment of trust and mutual respect. It is not a new phenomenon.

These settings are groups that are relatively small, relatively egalitarian (in the sense that no member has command over another without another's approval), relatively free of recrimination between members, relatively committed to rationally discussing its members situations and experiences, and relatively insistent that its members take responsibility for whatever claims, decisions or actions, they undertake to make... (Fay, 1977:230, cited in Smyth 1991:108).

Smyth (1991:135) calls this "teachers working with other teachers to create a critical pedagogy of classroom practice." Sparks-Langer and Colton (1991) suggest that Leinhardt's (1990) concept of "craft knowledge" and the interpretation of context are critical elements in teacher narrative.

Polkinghorne (1988:11) believes that "...narrative is a scheme by means of which human beings give meaning to their experiences of temporality and personal actions...It provides a framework for understanding the past events of one's life and for planning future actions." He further suggests that "story" is the equivalent to "narrative". When teachers engage in a process of examining each others' narrative they are jointly seeking further understanding about the values and the implicit theories that underlie the actions and reactions being described. As Polkinghorne reasons this is because explanations are contained within the narrative but not necessarily openly demonstrated by it (ibid:21).

1.3.d. *Understanding and managing change in schools*

One of the shortcomings of the early research on "effective schools" was that it tended to hold up models of such institutions as objects for emulation. If we could simply assume some of the properties of these schools our institutions would be equally successful. What this early research did not show was how these schools got to be effective.

The model for School Development which is under discussion, is not a one shot recipe for organizational success. It is a steady, gradual process by which a school community takes stock of itself and, step by step, seeks to improve the quality of its work.

Assumption 3.

Change and development, for both the school community and its members, will be a steady, constant process rather than a dramatic, revolutionary reorientation.

1.4 Methodological Issues

1.4.a. Action research

Although this study is based on the examination and understanding of three case-studies there is an element of action-research in the process. This particular element is illustrated in the concept of “teachers’ voice” (Canning, 1991:20), where practitioners are encouraged to share in sessions where reflection is promoted. It is the reflection-in-practice (Schön, 1983, 1987) aspect which draws on the action research tradition.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1982), in discussing the key features of action research, define a self-reflective spiral, “a spiral of cycles of planning, acting (implementing plans), observing and reflecting.” The work undertaken by the teachers and principals in the three case studies in this thesis could not be defined as being fully developed “action research”. Rather the teacher and principal were seen as being responsible for the collection of suitable and appropriate data to support and illustrate their descriptions for each other. In most cases they were describing their practice rather than implementing new practice.

Most of what teachers and principals do “is largely guided by tacit knowing, by naturalistic generalisation, formed from experiencing, often implicit (Stake, 1986:100).” It was the stated purpose of all the development work illustrated by these case studies to make many of these processes explicit through narrative, discussion and analysis. At a time when there is pressure, in many countries around the world, to break down the teaching and learning process into discrete and somewhat unconnected skills (Smyth, 1991), an alternative open to principals is to examine the cultural aspects of school life and the meanings that staff and pupils construct for themselves (Sergiovanni, 1996). Sparks-Langer and Colton (1991) argue “that experienced teachers have elaborate schemata” which will have an internal consistency through their interconnectedness to each teacher’s beliefs and values. For groups of teachers to be able to work with each other, there needed to be a sharing and consequential understanding of these schemata. By providing a theme within which to work, and the time to talk and question, principals in many of the schools contributing to these studies, structured an action-research environment for their staff. In working in this way schools were acknowledging that “...the bulk of their [teachers’] learning comes through continuous action and reflection on everyday problems” (Schön, 1983). Clearly, this is an appropriate form of action-research.

McKernan (1991) develops a three model typology, namely scientific, practical-deliberative and critical-emancipatory. The scientific model suggests a progression from planning, acting, and observing to reflection (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982:3). Each of these stages can be perceived as a “moment” of action research. Schools are fortunate if their work falls neatly into this sequence. The practical-deliberate model, attempts to solve immediate problems by focusing on current practices. There is an underlying assumption here that work on the immediate problem may unearth the “real” issue (Elliott, 1981). As with the previous model stages move through description, analysis, hypothesis forming and testing, developing a plan, and then taking action. The third model, critical-emancipatory educational research, suggests that planning, acting, observing and reflecting are dynamic and interactive. Provided the goal is illumination

and greater understanding, this allows for the process to lead in unplanned directions and to unexpected outcomes.

The School Development process described in the next section provides a basis for beginning and sustaining a development initiative within a school.

1.4.b. *Working together - the School Development process*

Throughout all of the case studies the four phase School Development sequence was promoted as an organising taxonomy. The phases were:

1. understanding the organisational culture;
2. collaborative problem solving;
3. structural change; and
4. curriculum and programme change (Stewart and Prebble, 1993:59-60).

Phase 1 is intended to promote data gathering and data analysis. In discussing how teachers learn from each other by talking about their work in “forums”, Evans (1991:11) found that the act of “data collection itself is [was] an intervention that can produce positive results.” Talking together around information, collected by teachers themselves or their peers, in order to further understand how the school functions is a concept strongly supported in the literature (Joyce, 1991; Rosenholtz, 1989; Scheerens, 1992; Smyth, 1986).

Once a group of teachers has begun to collect the agreed data it becomes important to ensure that all concerned are able to work together collaboratively. This is Phase 2 of the sequence. It is not possible to take for granted that groups of teachers have the appropriate skills to work together in this way. Bryk *et al.* (1994), in studying the Chicago school system, also found quite low percentages of schools (23-32%) that they called “strong democracy” schools where staff already had the capacity for sustained

debate and collaborative effort. It was at this stage that the concept of community was developed.

Communities are organised around relationships and ideas. They create social structures that bind people together in a oneness, and that bind them to a set of shared values and ideas. Communities are defined by their centres of value, sentiments and beliefs that provide the needed conditions for creating a sense of “we” from the “I” of each individual (Sergiovanni, 1996:47).

At Phase 3 the organisation commits to structural change. Any consideration of structural change is necessarily delayed until these two initial stages are well accepted as externally imposed structures may work to prevent rather than to promote change (Prawat, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1996). Changes that are then envisaged will generally arise out of the consideration of practice that teachers desire to retain as well as suggestions for improvement. Such considerations are internal to each school. Change managed in this fashion returns the accountability for the change to the teachers themselves. Such consideration is congruent with Sergiovanni (1996:14) when he argues that “instead of treaties and contracts, schools need compacts and commitment.” This is another illustration of transformational thinking where quality becomes everyone’s responsibility (Sergiovanni, 1996:17). If connectiveness is important, then these community values become paramount. Prawat (1993, cited in Sergiovanni, 1996:16) believes that “the goal of learning communities is to build social and intellectual connections amongst people.”

Phase 4 occurs when the changes are applied to learning and teaching. These changes, in turn, become the new focus of data gathering and discussion. Garman (1982) and Sparkes and Bloomer (1993) counsel against “contrived collegiality” and the acceptance of “ritualistic encounters between would be collaborators” as meaningful alliances and advocates a “culture-like approach” to ensure that true professional collaboration really does occur. The “habits of mind” that occur when teachers regularly collaborate with

each other lead to a position where “artistic and interactive knowledge” may share equal value with scientific derived knowledge (Sergiovanni, 1996; Smyth, 1991). Such thinking gives credence to teachers’ “informed intuition” (Sergiovanni, 1991).

1.4.c. *Collaboration for reflection*

Reflection is a possible and at times, an appropriate individual activity, but for greater understanding of their own work teachers, like other professionals can benefit from collaborating for reflective activities. Griffiths and Tann (1992:77) suggest that “the practice of any teacher is a result of some theory or other, whether acknowledged or not” and as a consequence the clarification and communication of this theory amongst peers is most likely to lead to improved practice. Special structures need to be designed within schools in order for this kind of collaborative reflection to occur. Some would argue that any form of hierarchy is incompatible with collaboration (Kraus, 1980:19).

Of interest at this point are the values and assumptions that underlie this major commitment to collaboration. In a rather fuller treatment of this topic, William Kraus (1980:130), identifies nineteen sub-values of collaboration and this study subscribes to five of them (pluralism; power, control or influence; problem solving and problem finding; participation; and interdependence.)

- “Pluralism” is the recognition that members of an organisation are likely to adhere to differing values from one another, and that the wellbeing of the organisation owes as much to the differences between these values as it does to the similarities. The Consortium on Chicago School Research (1991) acknowledge the role of the individual in the negotiation of direction by the use of the term “strong democracy” when discussing the patterns of school governance in the Chicago schools. Strong democracy is marked by sustained debate, a collective sense and a collaborative effort (ibid:4).

Sergiovanni (1996) addresses the notion of pluralism by advocating the concept of community as a way of thinking about School Development, “communities rely more on norms, purposes, values, professional socialization, collegiality and natural interdependence”(ibid:48). The reflective dimension is linked with pluralism by Canning (1991:21) as she argues that individuals need to be included within a project and actively engaged in the action research activity if the school is serious about promoting reflection.

- “Power”, “control” or “influence” - whichever word we choose to use - are ingredients which are present in all schools. Theorist, such as Aronowitz and Giroux (1985), have argued that “schooling represents both a struggle for meaning and a struggle for power relations.” The Consortium on Chicago School Research suggests that power can be consolidated by the principal, can be effectively blocked through adversarial politics, or can be shared through sustained debate and collaborative effort (Bryk *et al.*, 1994).

The acceptance of the idea of collective responsibility implies an acceptance of the obligation to negotiate the ends, as well as the means, of collective action within a school (Sergiovanni, 1996). Teachers must be prepared not only to influence their colleagues in the values they hold and the ways in which those values are worked out in action, but also be prepared to accept their colleagues’ attempts to influence them (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1991).

- Kraus (1980) believes that “problem solving and problem finding” are key components of collaborative work. Cortazzi (1993) would add that teachers deal in specifics as opposed to general problem solving and as a consequence it is difficult to generate generic competencies. The question of how individuals engage in problem solving activities has spawned a literature of its own (Dimmock, 1993; Leithwood and Steinbach, 1993; Sebring *et al.*, 1995). Sergiovanni (1996:139) sees schools as centres for enquiry which in turn leads

to a sense of community. These “centres for enquiry” engage in problem solving and problem finding. Smyth (1991:24), using the term “problem posing”, argues that there is a need to move from a position where “scientific derived knowledge is deemed superior to a circumstance in which artistic and interactive knowledge may be equally appropriate.” He is suggesting that, for teachers, their “informed intuition” needs to be backed up with regular problem finding of its source. This viewpoint is the antithesis of Saul’s (1995:15) description of a managerial driven education system, where “we are actually teaching most people to manage not to think.”

This assertion does not seem very remarkable until we remind ourselves that, in most organisations, problem solving is not a highly valued or frequent activity. The political and bureaucratic forces influencing many organisations frequently inhibit members from attempting to push for organisational solutions. There is a defensiveness, an inertia, and sometimes even a positive antagonism to the idea of collective problem solving. There may be an impatience with the deliberate, step-by-step process that is required in collective problem solving, as influential members of the organisation push for their own favourite solutions. Similarly, teachers may be actively discouraged from seeking problems, particularly in areas where policy formation has been recently completed. Problem solving and problem finding become higher order activities in “professional communities” and where analysis is valued by all (Sergiovanni, 1996; Smyth, 1991).

- The value of encouraging “participation” in organisational decision making can be argued for its own sake. In a democratic society, there would seem to be as strong a case for involving people in the important decisions affecting their work life as there is for allowing them a say in the direction of public affairs. But as well as this basic argument, participation does result in what Brookfield (1995) calls “informed commitment” and identification with the enterprise in which the individual is engaged (Sparks-Langer and Colton, 1991). In a people-centred

activity such as teaching it would seem particularly important that teachers should not become alienated from the task which society asks them to perform. As Sergiovanni (1996:14) suggests, “Instead of treaties and contracts schools need compacts and commitments.” Schools become “professional communities” where “members of the community are critically dependant on each other” (Brown, 1994, cited in Sergiovanni, 1996:140).

- The value of interdependence would seem to be of paramount importance to a successful School Development programme. Most importantly, the values themselves are interdependent: collective problem solving will only work if the value of pluralism is respected; power generation will only be tolerated if the values of participation and consensus are pursued equally vigorously; and collective ends are only achievable if the leadership understands and respects the commitment and motivation of individual members of the organisation. Brookfield (1995) links a “critically reflective process” with the teacher’s ability to view their work and their assumptions about their work, through the “lens” of their own analysis, their students’ eyes, their colleagues perceptions and experiences, and through the literature they read. He is emphasising the concept of community and learning from all its members. It is as if a culture of community enables the mapping of individual positions in relation to each other.

1.4.d. *Concept mapping*

The notion of a map or a diagram for aiding understanding or organising thinking has been used widely by teachers for many years. Called concept mapping, it has been used for research (Novak, 1990) in the science field and across age groups and contexts. Kirkwood (1995:5) documents its use with primary, secondary, tertiary students and with adults in contexts including “counselling (Daughtry and Kunkel, 1993), text analysis (Paulston, 1993), and teacher education (Dana, 1993).”

Concept maps have often been used within the teaching profession when preparing work or planning integrated units. They have also been widely used, more formally, to gather information about particular understandings that people hold over a range of situations (Kirkwood, 1995). Inside the classroom concept maps can be used to focus learning activity, distinguish key concepts and promote discussion and analysis (White and Gunstone, 1992).

Gathering or displaying the information is quite straightforward, and has been demonstrated over a wide age group, but there is little agreement about the most effective way to understand and analyse the data. Scoring systems have been used (Novak and Gowin, 1984; Stuart, 1985; Austin, 1993), while others in the field have deliberately eschewed this methodology (White and Gunstone, 1992).

In this present study concept mapping was used in the case studies as a means of analysing the qualitative data. The purpose was to devise a framework for further understanding the discussions and written answers gathered through the duration of this project. By using a bi-polar division of each major concept it was possible to distinguish between critical strategic statements, and statements which related more directly to solving a particular problem or completing a task. The concept map enabled the data to be displayed and analysed in this format and as a consequence particular key concepts could be highlighted across a range of questions and interviews. No attempt was made to score the responses. Instead, statements were displayed in concept groups as a mechanism for informing the researcher of the kinds of development that took place during the life of the project. Similar concept groups were used across the case studies and a bi-polar set of subdivisions discriminating between reflective thought and task completing were employed.

Concept mapping facilitates both the grouping of responses and the connection of statements across categories. The indicators of educational and reflective thinking as detailed in the introduction and overview section were used as organisers to construct

the maps in these studies. The display of the data in a concept map format then facilitates an analysis of how principals developed a conceptual framework for guiding their School Development initiatives. In a real sense concept mapping for the purposes of this study is just another form of matrix building with the rules decided by the constructor.

While in theory it may be possible for teachers to improve their practice through private introspection, wide experience would suggest that this is not an especially effective method of staff development. Teaching tends to be a solitary act, where patterns of practice are reinforced rather than challenged by frequent and unchallenged repetition. Experience from many educational and management perspectives suggests that teachers learn most effectively from each other in a culture of collaboration and mutual accountability. Reflecting on one's professional practice tends to be more profitable when a colleague is able to help us reflect on that practice and suggest alternatives.

1.4.e. *Establishment of a learning community*

When discussing change and restructuring in the Chicago school system, Bryk *et al.* (1994) considered that schools could be ordered into four groups. The "environmental order schools" focused on safety, security, discipline and attendance issues. A second group were engaged in "peripheral academic change" but had no overall plan or sense of direction, and a third group were called "Christmas tree schools", as they selected initiatives which "looked good" but which were not necessarily connected to student learning. Only the fourth group, "emergent restructuring schools", seemed to have a major chance of completing successful change. They were characterised by a "professional community" and "a sense of purpose" (ibid:76). It is this concept of community which brings together a number of threads in this work.

In defining their concept of school community, Sebring *et al.* (1995:5) listed five features which created a professional community for teachers:

- regular opportunities for reflective dialogue;
- opportunities to visit colleagues, discuss their teaching and jointly solve problems;
- collaborate in teaching activities;
- work in a culture of shared values and beliefs rather than one based on rules and requirements; and
- focus main energy on student learning.

Furthermore, these researchers wrote that, “the positive effects of a professional community are unlikely to be realised in an individual school unless practices are normative, i.e., most of the teachers engage in them most of the time”(ibid:5). To get to this point it was likely that the schools would need some outside assistance (ibid p 8). This study provides some understanding of the kind and range of the outside assistance that can be applied to schools within New Zealand.

Charles Payne in a commentary to Sebring *et al.* (1995:70) argued that a commitment to peer collaboration in many schools was likely to generate conflict which may be beyond the capacity of that school to handle. He argues, “the professional community model may require a thresh-hold level of professional skill which may not exist in all schools.” The Reflective Principal Course case study can be seen to be addressing this thresh-hold level of skill. Many of the ideas, crucial to the concept of “community” were introduced to participants during these block courses. For many it was an entirely new experience. As time has passed many schools have taken the opportunity to send other senior staff to these courses as a means of increasing the knowledge pool, and thereby reaching the desired capacity for change. Fullan (in Sergiovanni, 1996:2) also agrees that the “reculturing” of a school precedes successful restructuring rather than vice versa. In the four phase taxonomy which was used in these case studies (see Stewart and Prebble, 1993:Ch 5), structural change was always preceded by an examination of present practices and a period of time for further developing collaborative interactions.

“High Performance Theory” (Sergiovanni, 1996:11), which can be seen to be operating in many of the New Zealand changes, as data collection to substantiate continuous improvement becomes the norm, can be seen as a move away from the concept of a learning community. Planning is separated from the doing in what Sergiovanni (1996:12) calls a “separation of function by roles” and, as a consequence, teachers lose the ability to respond reflectively. Sergiovanni (1996:40) suggests surfing can be seen as a metaphor for teaching as the students participate in the teaching and learning process where advice and instruction come from the beach but the activity is in the waves. Planning and doing are inextricably intertwined. He quotes Prawat (1993) “the goal of learning communities is to build social and intellectual connections among people and control interferes with this process” (ibid:16). The contention is that quality is the responsibility of all in the community. This is an argument for teacher commitment rather than teacher contracts. Schools become “professional communities” when “members of the community are critically dependant on each other” (Brown, 1994).

Whereas organisations have purposes which are interpreted and enacted by their leaders, “communities are defined by their centres...Centres govern the school values and provide norms that guide behaviours and give meaning to school community life” (Sergiovanni, 1996:2:41).

Assumption 4.

Staff, students and parents in schools where learning is a priority for all participants, demonstrate a sense of community through building a culture of collaboration and mutual accountability.

1.5 Cultural Aspects

1.5.a. *School culture*

McGregor (1960) found the machine to be a powerful conceptual model for his analysis of work. The idea of carefully designed individual components brought together for a particular task was a useful way to think about organisations if supervision and efficiency were the prime factors under consideration. As the attention of theorists shifted to the people in the organisation, rather than the structures under which they were expected to work we were presented with the human relations and human resources management theories of the 1940s and 50s, which continue to inform some management thinking to this day.

In the 60s systems theory seemed to provide another powerful perspective on organisations and the way they operate. Systems theory encouraged attention to the relationships among the elements of an organisation, and to the way an organisation survives within its larger environment. Another influential perspective, and one with close links to systems theory, has been the political view of organisations. Here the emphasis is on policy development and the interplay of different interests in arriving at organisational policy. Conflict, bargaining, and goal-setting become subjects of interest to management theorists.

Each successive theoretical perspective has served to focus attention on a fresh aspect of organisational life. Existing perspectives have not been replaced, but they have become less dominant. Since the 1980s the cultural view of organisations has offered a refreshingly different view of the way organisations operate. According to this perspective, organisations are artificial entities - complex expressions of the intentions and beliefs of their members. We also need to understand their intentions as well as observing their behaviour. According to this perspective, it has not been possible to

arrive at universal laws of organisational behaviour. Behaviour can only be understood within its context of cultural significance and individual and group intention.

All organisations have some sort of culture - 'The way we do things around here' - which shows in the values and beliefs to which members generally subscribe. Most organisations will have more than one identifiable culture, and these will tend to correspond to the social or work groupings to be found within the organisation. Members of the organisation will interpret their experience in terms of the cultural values they hold most strongly, and they will be most committed to activities which are consistent with those values.

This view of organisations has considerable implications for leadership and School Development. It will not be enough to design a perfect system and then require members to comply with it as the efficiency model would suggest. It will also not be sufficient to seek the compliance of members by meeting their individual needs for security, self-actualisation and the like as the human relations/resources theorists might suggest. In addition, an understanding of the complex interplay of elements within and without the organisation as the systems/political theorists would suggest is unlikely to indicate any practical course of action to the leader. The cultural perspective, on the other hand, proposes a vital role for leadership in defining, shaping and promoting the core culture of the organisation.

This relatively new management stance is reminiscent of the work of Philip Selznick who, forty years ago, proposed that the core tasks of leadership were to define the mission of the institution, and then to infuse the institution with that mission and purpose (Selznick, 1957). This very simple but powerful formula has become almost an obsession in corporate management over the past decade. Managers of state-owned enterprises speak of the major shifts of culture they needed to undertake to allow their organisations to reorient themselves to a new operating environment. And many companies attribute their commercial success in large part to their ability to redefine the

cultures of their organisations and to win strong support for those cultures from their employees.

The cultural perspective has proved particularly powerful when applied to educational organisations. It has provided analysts such as Sergiovanni, Greenfield, March and Bates with a whole new focus on the school and schooling (see Sergiovanni and Corbally, 1984). But it has also suggested a fresh approach and focus for school leadership. In the past, most attempts to alter classroom practice have focused on the individual teacher, attempting to change practice through training and classroom intervention and supervision methods. However, an understanding of the culture of the typical school suggests that many of these efforts run counter to core cultural values. Schools are characterised by norms of professional autonomy and isolation (Lortie, 1975). Or, as Sparkes puts it more caustically, “the ambiguous celebration of isolation masquerading as autonomy” (1991:9). These norms are sacred in most schools and not easily altered by management intervention (Corbett *et al.*, 1987). At the same time, there is some evidence that efforts to alter classroom practice and develop staff skills are most successful when there is a norm of collegiality and experimentation within the school (Little, 1982).

The challenge then is to shift the culture of the school from a traditional one where most norms of professional autonomy and isolation are sacred and paramount, to one where teachers are prepared to collaborate at the level of classroom practice. There is a growing body of research and practice which has this objective as its central purpose (see Joyce, 1990). Though, as Bruce Joyce (1990:34) concedes, “the culture of the school has proved to be a very tough customer indeed”.

This study sought evidence that school leaders perceived their own ability to change the school culture (Block, 1987) to best support learning and reflection (Brookfield, 1995). Furthermore, questions were posed to ascertain whether school leaders actively pursued

the notion of community by encouraging dialogue that included “values, leadership vision and culture” (Campbell-Evans, 1993).

1.5.b. *Core culture*

This cultural view of schools would suggest that in order to change the way that principals and other school professionals act, it is first necessary to change the way that they think (Leithwood and Steinbach, 1993). As a consequence a whole new field of investigation has opened up in this area. These authors shed light on thinking through a study of problem solving.

The culture is the manifestation of publicly stated personal values which have come to be shared and endorsed by others within the organisation (Campbell-Evans, 1993:95).

Some writers have characterised this kind of development as focusing on means before ends (Sergiovanni, 1996). Teachers commonly talk of how pleasantly surprised they were at some of the lesson outcomes. Their expectations had been wildly exceeded. Some talk of how the planned lesson changed quite dramatically as students interacted with the available material and with the ideas of each other. During effective teaching sessions, it is common for the *ends* to change as the *means* develop. The goal is reached and surpassed, or more meaningful goals are substituted, or a successful experience leads to totally unexpected outcomes. Many of the approaches mentioned above, are based around the idea that *ends* must be defined as a first step and teachers then simply need to uncover the *means* for achieving these goals. This is portrayed as a straight line process of filling the gap. There is no recognition that “the act of playing the game has a way of changing the rules” (Sergiovanni, 1996:35).

The School Development approach used in this thesis emphasises *means* as always the first step as those cluster of aspects that we call culture, values, beliefs, shared

understandings, and taken for granted procedures, are likely to ensure that the *ends* or what each student learns will be idiosyncratically different. Even when engaged on developing a school vision, it is probably more important to have in place an effective process for discussing a possible vision than it is to reach an acceptable vision statement. The “final” statement may have a short currency. Alongside this emphasis on means first, is a consideration of individual beliefs. What teachers believe will have a profound influence on what they teach.

It is the writer’s view that effective schools are not necessarily correlated positively with completed strategic plans but rather associated with the number and variety of opportunities that teachers have for sharing critical narrative about teaching and learning. The leadership which allows this to happen is often called *transformational*. Policy becomes the statement of meaningful practice rather than a prescription for practice. In a sense the policy becomes the “high ground” where “values are expressed through actions and through one’s judgement of the actions of others” (Campbell-Evans, 1993:96). This “high ground” to be successful will have needed to have been developed collaboratively.

As Karl Weick noted in 1976, schools are loosely coupled organisations in which actions and developments in one section of the school may have little or no impact in another, and in which leaders and managers have only indirect influence over what happens in classrooms (Weick, 1976). Ten years later he refined this analysis by conceding that administrators in loosely coupled systems achieve influence by shaping the culture in which teachers work, and the perceptions and values they share (Weick, 1986).

In short, the principal cannot hope to control the direction of the school by directing the daily operations of classroom teachers as if they were process workers performing interlinked and easily monitored tasks. The best way to influence that direction is to identify, clarify, and modify the core culture of the school, perhaps in the form of a

mission statement, and then to take any and every opportunity to articulate and model those beliefs and values and shared understandings to enhance learning.

1.5.c. *The role of the principal*

The school principalship has always been a demanding, stressful position. There has seldom been much unanimity over the goals and objectives of schooling, either in the community or within the teaching profession, and yet the principal has been expected to coordinate and lead the efforts of a group of colleagues in pursuit of a set of coherent and acceptable goals. The process of teaching has proved difficult to define and measure, and harder still to modify and improve, and yet the principal has always been held responsible to a greater or lesser degree for what goes on inside classrooms.

Because of the nature of schools with their ambiguities and uncertainties, it is often within the areas of values, of vision, and of culture that effective principals work (Campbell-Evans, 1993). Successful work with teachers often involves working with concepts and ideas rather than defining and refining tasks and as a consequence needs leadership traits often categorised as *transformational* rather than the more usual *transactional* (Sergiovanni, 1991; Leithwood and Jantzi, 1990; Fullan, 1991). Even so, some would argue that although some principals do indeed make a difference to the ways schools function, many do not (Leithwood and Steinbach, 1993:41).

The differences between these two groups can often be explained by examining the way that they think but even then “quite effective forms of principal practice are reported to have largely indirect effects on students” (Bossert *et al.*, 1982; Heck, 1990; Leithwood and Montgomery, 1986; Pitner, 1988, as cited in Leithwood and Steinbach, 1993:42). The major difficulty is that we just do not know what the intervening variables are but there is much evidence to support the concept of school culture in both its content and its application as being a most important factor (Little, 1982; Mortimore *et al.*, 1988). Those principals who are perceived to be effective may be those who by their actions

shape and transform the culture to best encourage teaching and learning (Deal and Peterson, 1991; Firestone and Wilson, 1985; Hargreaves, 1990; Leithwood and Jantzi, 1990).

Nevertheless, “leadership remains as Burns (1978) suggested, one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (Campbell-Evans, 1993:99).

What seems to be emerging for the principal is more of a “mediation” role in place of a “controlling” function (Sparkes and Bloomer, 1993), although recent legislative initiatives in the area of performance appraisal, would suggest that this is not an official view. Principals face multiple competing demands for their time and their attention. For many there is the dilemma of administrative work versus visits to classroom and involvement in the teaching programme. Some writers suggest that principals should recognise that there is a finite limit to the amount of time that they can spend within classrooms. Their major focus should be instead “in transforming the culture of the school” (Fullan, 1991:161). The assumption here is that such a focus will in turn influence teachers to transform the culture of their classrooms. Here the mediation role of the principal would enable best and most effective practice to be spread amongst the faculty. Teachers would influence each other in a positive direction, with the understanding and consent of the principal rather than the principal being responsible for influencing each teacher directly, even if this was possible.

Within the context of the School Development taught in the case studies that follow, the principal’s role was describe in the following five areas. It was argued that the principal should:

- lead, coordinate and facilitate the learning community;
- manage and develop the school culture;
- take responsibility for school communication networks;
- play a figurehead role in representing the school; and

- maintain a programme of personal professional development (Stewart and Prebble, 1993:187).

In this way, the directions outlined above, would be operationalised.

Assumption 5.

The principal has a critical role in developing a core culture for the school, dedicated to learning, and ensuring that the establishment of the learning community becomes the major preoccupation for all members of the school community.

1.6 Effective Learning Communities

1.6.a School effectiveness

There is no universally accepted definition of the term *effectiveness* and Chapman (1993:201) believes that it is a “highly value laden notion”. It is an essentially contested concept. Chapman (1993:201) quotes from Gallie (1964) in suggesting that the “term is best understood as contested moves in a set of language games”. Wittgenstein (1958, cited in Chapman, 1993:202) suggests a metaphor of a rope with “one visible whole... - myriad of separate fibres that crisscross and overlap.” Considering the nature of schools with their overlapping and often opposing goals, it is not surprising that there would also be a variety, and even conflicting view of *effectiveness*. Chapman (1993:216) suggests that effectiveness might be thought about as a metaphor of the theoretical vessel on which work is done which changes it quite significantly, from its design at launching. Some of the change may be as a result of new ideas and other work simply repair or refurbishment.

Glenda Campbell-Evans (1993) gives a definition: "...high expectations, a focus on learning, effectiveness over time, professional development for staff, safe and orderly environment, use of consistent discipline, regular monitoring of achievement, rewards for performance, involvement of the community and strong leadership." Even an attempt at an all inclusive definition such as this is full of values which could be interpreted in a variety of ways. To understand how any particular school defines its *effectiveness* it is necessary to understand and examine its culture. Campbell-Evans (1993:95) defines school culture as "the manifestation of publicly stated personal values which have come to be shared and endorsed by others within the organisation." She believes that, "core values are [also] the touchstone of effective schools" (ibid:110).

There is also the thought that schools could be conceived as essentially "non-rational" organisation (Paterson *et al.*, 1986). The non-rationality stems from the reality that many of the goals pursued by schools, and much of the power is located externally from the school. In addition teaching can be an activity largely hidden from any control.

Another view defines effectiveness as "efficiency, productivity or the survival power of an organisation" (Scheerens, 1992:3). This meaning would change depending on the perspective from which effectiveness was being viewed. Productivity would be different, perhaps, when measured as money for value by governmental officers, or as employment opportunities as measured by students and parents for example. The whole notion of effectiveness depends both on the activities used to gather the data and on the standards by which the judgements are made. Schools can be perceived as "a set of nested layers: pupils within classrooms, teachers within schools, school managers acting in the larger context of local and national authorities and other relevant external parties, such as the consumers of education, teachers' unions etc" (Scheerens, 1992:39). Within each of these layers the observations and judgements can be different. What leads to "effectiveness" in one layer may be irrelevant or at worse, even lead to ineffectiveness in another. Forms of decision making would be an example of this dynamic. Without

doubt, effectiveness is also site specific and comments above made about the “layers” would also apply across schools.

Elliott (1996:199) argues “that the issues at stake between school effectiveness research and their critics are best understood as disagreements about the nature and purpose of school rather than disagreement about facts.” He questions the whole status of the school effectiveness research movement and suggests that this methodology is best viewed as “ideological legitimisation of a socially coercive view of schooling” (ibid:200). Furthermore, the “findings [of school effectiveness research] rule out an alternative view of schooling as an educational process.”

The reader might understandably wonder whether at the end of all this costly research and debate anything interesting or original has been discovered, for surely the so called “enduring truths” that remain are nothing but a set of platitudes (ibid:204).

Elliott (1996) argues that values “that appear to be constitutive of a social control ideology” underpin the published findings. This “structure of ‘coercive control’ both underpins the findings and shapes the research methodology. Rather than search for an ‘efficient cause’ schools should work to establish conditions where there is a ‘concern to respect pupils’ capacities for constructing personal meanings, for critical and imaginative thinking and for self-directing and self-evaluating their learning” (ibid:210). Building on the work of Perrone (1989), Elliott (1996), advances an alternative view of education from that portrayed by the list of factors presented within many of the effectiveness studies. He redefines education as “a highly personal transaction between teacher and pupil in collaboration with parents” (ibid:211) The implication here is that “education” will be different for each student. This introduces a complexity absent from most of the school effectiveness studies, and places an emphasis on “classroom teachers, rather than ‘the system’, as the source of quality in education” (ibid:212).

The emphasis on the teacher includes the notion of autonomous action in the sense that the very act of teaching means engaging in “prudent choice”.

Prudent choice, therefore, implies a process of deliberation about what constitutes the right course of action in a morally complex and dilemma-ridden situation; a process in which reflection about right action (about means) is inseparable from reflection about its moral ends (Elliott, 1996:218).

It is apparent, therefore, that “from this perspective the quality of education depends on the quality of teachers’ deliberations and judgements in classrooms” (ibid:218). The route to improving this classroom practice lies, then, in teachers’ ability to reflect on what happens in their classrooms and to construct and reconstruct new meanings for possible future action. Such activity, suggests Elliott (1996), can be construed as a form of “action research”.

When engaged in a school improvement initiative, Elliott (1996) distinguishes between an *educative* viewpoint and an *effective* or production system one. Such an educative view implies that “learning is a dynamic and unpredictable process whose outcomes are not something the teacher can confidently predict or control. His or her responsibility is to establish the curriculum and pedagogical conditions which enable pupils generate significant and meaningful learning outcomes for themselves” (ibid:221).

1.6.b. *Definition of teaching (exchanging concepts)*

The teacher’s task is to create a classroom culture which supports, encourages and facilitates active learning, one where students build on their prior understandings, work with others and construct new views of the world for themselves. Creating environments which stimulate and challenge young people will also call for routines and shared understandings about how decisions should be made, conflict resolved and achievement

recognised. These micro-cultures are dynamic but fragile and need to be planned and monitored carefully. If we hope to change or influence what teachers are doing we must first encourage them to reflect on what they are doing.

Throughout the case studies in this project a definition of a teacher's job included the introduction of *The Conceptual Job Description*, an idea first published in collaboration with Tom Prebble in 1993. This definition of teaching has five major characteristics:

- classroom teaching;
- classroom culture;
- personal professional development;
- school culture; and
- specific responsibilities.

The primary concern for any teacher must be the *teaching* act - in helping students to acquire new knowledge and skills. The job description must draw their attention to the need to assess prior learning, design appropriate learning programmes, set realistic goals, evaluate learning experiences and outcomes, and reteach where necessary.

Such activity could be said to be exchanging concepts. Students generate their own meaning as they take part in the classroom learning experiences and the communication between teacher and student, and amongst students, is unique to that classroom and that situation. Teachers react and respond through their *reflection-in-action* (Schön, 1987). Classrooms are small communities and their culture is as important to learning as any other factor. Classrooms are part of a wider school which has itself an identifiable culture. Teachers need to be learners themselves in order to facilitate their pupils' development. This kind of nested set to describe what a teacher does, has now wide acceptance in New Zealand schools. Aspects are supported in parallel work which is proceeding in other countries.

We must be able to catch the ball that the children throw at us, and toss it back to them in a way that makes the children want to continue the game [of learning] with us: developing perhaps: other games as we go along (Fillipinni, 1990, cited in Edwards, 1993:153)... (Sergiovanni, 1996:134).

Teaching, in this context is viewed as a “form of intellectual labour” (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985:30) rather than a collection of tasks which can be pre-planned by others outside the classroom, or even as a form of activity which can be directed by someone else. It is the unique thinking-reaction aspect of teaching which separates it from other endeavours and forms of information dissemination or problem solving. The culture of classrooms is defined by Campbell-Evans (1993:106) as the “conception of the desirable in practice.”

Hargreaves (1988:216, cited in Smyth, 1991:73) states that “teachers are not just bundles of skill, competence, and technique: they are creators of meaning, interpreters of the world and all it asks of them.”

The discussion of the *Conceptual Job Description* in the studies that follow, was one of the means used to surface thoughts about the nature of work that teachers engage in, and how this might affect the way leaders in the school thought about School Development processes. This activity often initiated discussion regarding the inherent locus of power and control in schools, the relationship of policy and practice, and how supervision could be exercised. These questions are addressed again in the case studies which follow.

1.6.c. *Principals' responsibilities*

There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that the principal's job has intensified along with that of teachers (Apple, 1988; Apple and Jungck, 1991; Bryk *et al.*, 1994). Some would argue that there has been a greater intensification of work in these positions, to

the extent that turn over of principals and the consequential short tenure of individuals may endanger the whole change strategy (Bryk *et al.*, 1994:78). In the change to a more inclusive form of learning it is the principal who plays the key role in interpreting the values, the way common understanding will be applied and how the culture will be extended (Campbell-Evans, 1993). The major responsibility, to make learning the dominant characteristic of the institution, rests firmly on principals' shoulders. Although most school work takes place in classrooms and principals can be held responsible for these interactions, Fullan (1991:161) argues that "there is a limit to how much time principals can spend in individual classrooms. The larger goal is in transforming the culture of the school."

Principals have a responsibility to ensure that learning and teaching functions effectively and that members of the school community gain satisfaction from these activities. How they do this may have more to do with developing a commitment to a range of agreed core culture elements, than developing managerial and supervisory systems which mimic the commercial world (Sergiovanni, 1996).

Serious reform...is changing the culture and structure of the school...if the principal does not lead changes to the culture of the school, or if he or she leaves it to others, it normally will not get done. That is the improvement will not happen (Fullan, 1991:169).

If we seriously believe that learning is the active construction of knowledge by individuals, then we will not be satisfied with any school goal which emphasises mere knowledge acquisition. We will want to establish conditions which encourage pupils and teachers to challenge old conceptions and learn from new experiences. It is the process of reflection and learning that we will be focusing on, rather than merely the outcome in terms of knowledge acquired. The principal's main objective should be to foster that climate of active reflection and learning throughout the whole school community. This objective certainly extends beyond the student body. Teachers too need to be reflecting

on what they are doing and the effects of their actions. Parents and board members need to be brought into this net of learning and reflection too. They cannot rely on outside solutions and yesterday's solutions any more than students or teachers can.

It is the interaction of all the individuals, sharing their perceptions and "interests" and "narratives" that enables the construction of a school community. Such a concept is, or can be dynamic and constantly changing.

Assumption 6.

The primary objective for the principal is to establish a learning community.

In summary, the six assumptions which formed the core elements of the development work within the case studies were:

1. Learning requires the individual to actively construct meaning and knowledge on the basis of reflecting upon experience.
2. At an organizational level, this view of learning requires members of the school community to gather data systematically on the key processes they are endeavouring to develop, and to reflect collectively on the significance of that data.
3. Change and development, for both the school community and its members, will be a steady, constant process rather than a dramatic, revolutionary reorientation.
4. Staff, students and parents in schools where learning is a priority for all participants, demonstrate a sense of community through building a culture of collaboration and mutual accountability.
5. The principal has a critical role in developing a core culture for the school, dedicated to learning, and ensuring that the establishment of the learning community becomes the major preoccupation for all members of the school community.
6. The primary objective for the principal is to establish a learning community.

Chapter 2

PROJECT DESIGN AND KEY CONCEPTS

How do principals construct and operationalise the framework for their work? This study examines three instances of the phenomenon called School Development as a means of interpreting how principal thinking and action connects to teaching and learning in a school. Each instance or case study demonstrates a different condition for the development of the School Development process. Case Study A is an example of face-to-face activity; Case Study B builds on this design and introduces the notion of mentor principals; and Case Study C is an example of the use of audio-graphic techniques as a means of interaction when schools are remote from each other and from the researcher.

All the cases focused on leadership or principal development as the means for first stimulating and then supporting the School Development initiative. Case A, that of the Reflective Principal was a series of residential courses offered in a number of locations in New Zealand, while the other two cases, B and C, were year long programmes where there was continuing interaction between the researcher and the schools throughout that period.

Case studies are used in the sense that Stake (1988) defines. "A case study that portrays an educational problem in all its personal and social complexity is a precious discovery" (ibid:254) and "case studies work on the conceptual structure"(ibid:255). We can regard them as a form of "bounded system" and as such they have a "kind of unity" (ibid:255). For the purposes of this discussion the shared concepts, public and personal theories, and common understandings, within each of the three groups, are deemed to be part of the "conceptual structure".

Each of the three case studies is explored for its innate idiosyncrasy and complexity, seeking to generate greater understanding and meaning as opposed to seeking

generalisability. It is the “patterns of meaning” which are investigated in order to delineate the kind of School Development and principal training that works (Stake, 1988:259). As a consequence validity is not dependant on the case study methodology per se but on “the use to which the findings are put” (Stake, 1988:263). Within case studies of this nature there is a real sense of “progressive focusing” (Parlett and Hamilton, 1976, cited in Stake, 1995), where the issues and underlying values which may have been essentially abstract at the commencement of the project become more accessible and open to debate. Stake seeks to differentiate case study research of this nature from the more general qualitative research and states that, “our primary task is to come to understand the case. “It will help us to tease out relationships, to probe issues, and to aggregate categorical data, but those ends are subordinate to understanding the case” (Stake, 1995:77). Through an understanding of the case it will be possible to build some propositions for the future. Choosing three instances provides, in a sense, “data source triangulation”, or as Stake (1995:112) goes on to describe, “an effort to see if what we are observing and reporting carries the same meaning when found under different circumstances.”

2.1 The Case Studies

Case Study A, the Reflective Principal courses, represents the residential block format which has been the traditional form of principal training in this country. It provides a means of grouping participants from wide geographic locations and, being separated from individual schools, provides the conditions for focussed study and discussion.

Case Study B, represents the large group of development initiatives which are now run under contract to the Ministry of Education. This study, Mentor_94, was funded with Ministry contract funds and used a mentor-participant model to involve a relatively large group of schools in a sequence of activities that ranged over a calendar year. Each of the principals who took a mentor role, had previously attended a Reflective Principal course.

During the time that the contract was active most of the participating principals also attended some form of residential block course. There was a contractual expectation that all the schools in the project would persist with a School Development project over the term of the year.

Case Study C, which was also supported with Ministry of Education contract funds, represents a serious attempt to conduct School Development projects using the emerging multi media distance technologies. The predominant media for interaction was audio-graphic technology. Once again a number of the participating teams were represented at Reflective Principal courses during this time.

2.1.a. *Data gathering and analysis*

Questionnaires were mailed to the addresses shown at time of attendance to all who attended Reflective Principal courses between 1990 and 1995. The replies constituted the data for Case A. Information sought (see Appendix A) covered training completed, processes and concepts presently operating in their schools, views about training and development generally, and thoughts about the impact of this form of activity on their work. As the major unit for development in Case B had been the mentor participant group, the data gathering here was by group interviews. A cross section of groups met with the researcher and shared experiences and opinions about the School Development process used in this instance. The interviews were recorded, and subsequently analysed. Case Study C was a much smaller group and all completed a questionnaire at the conclusion of the project (see Appendix B). Three schools were visited and interviews conducted with the School Development team. The data from these sources were integrated with the log kept during the project and the discussion which was held during a day long meeting after the conclusion of the contract.

Figure 2.1 Across Case Comparisons

	Case Study A Reflective Principal Courses	Case Study B Mentor Participant Organisation	Case Study C Audio-graphic study
Nature of Case	A series of 3½ days face-to-face residential courses.	Small groups of schools each consisting of a mentor principal and 3/4 participating principals. (All mentor principals had previously attended a Reflective Principal course.)	Ten Area Schools spread across the country connected to the researcher by an audio-graphic link.
Data Gathering	Questionnaire survey	Group interviews	Questionnaire survey, interviews at 3 schools, day long seminar, audio-graphic log.
Analysis	Response frequency and concept search of open ended responses.	Concept search of discussion.	Concept search of open ended answers and discussion. Bi-polar analysis of reflection and task completion.

In all cases the content of the course material was based around the six assumptions in the Introduction and Overview and again in Chapter 1, and the print material in the texts that I have published up to 1993. Five propositions are advanced (see pages 7-8 Introduction and Overview) regarding how understanding may be gained and seven indicators of educational and reflective thinking rather than managerial action are delineated (see pages 8-9). These elements formed the common thread through the case studies. The assumptions and indicators and their relationship to the case studies are represented diagrammatically below.

2.2 Propositions and Indicators

Figure 2.2 Relationship of Case Studies to Propositions and Indicators

<p><i>Proposition 1:</i> <i>It is possible to gain insights into principal behaviour by examining their use and adoption of certain key concepts (e.g. the four phase development sequence, conceptual job descriptions, quality learning circles, and the concept of school culture (Stewart and Prebble, 1993)).</i></p>			
Case Study A	Case Study B	Case Study C	Indicators
<p>The questions in the survey were designed to encourage respondents to think about the courses in relation to their own practices. A number of the specific techniques and processes which had been taught at the courses emphasised educational and reflective thought. The extent to which these techniques were established, or planned to be established in schools would give an indication of commitment to this kind of thinking.</p>	<p>Searches for the same techniques and processes will be made through the interviews in this case. The research did not ask directly about particular procedures but invited respondents to talk more generally about School Development as it occurred in their schools, how it worked, how they thought about it, and what actually happened. References, that referred to specific concepts could then be logged and interpreted.</p>	<p>Material gathered from the schools in this project would be organised in a bi-polar manner. Statements relating to critical reflective thought being separated from those referring to tasks or completed processes. By this means it would be possible to gain some understanding about the thinking and action conducted in the various schools.</p>	<p>Principals would perceive themselves and their teaching staff as learners (Brookfield, 1995; Cortazzi, 1993; Smyth, 1991).</p>

<p><i>Proposition 2:</i> <i>Although it is not possible to predict specific outcomes from development activities, use of a specific range of processes could signal allegiance to a particular mindscape (Sergiovanni, 1991).</i></p>			
Case Study A	Case Study B	Case Study C	Indicators
<p>By asking principals to rank various categories of stimuli for teacher development that they used in their schools it is proposed that inferences from the results can be made about commitment to a particular view of School Development. Similarly open ended questions seeking views on leadership support and change and development initiatives would provide understandings about the way School Development was conceptualised.</p>	<p>The interviews in this case study would be analysed seeking references to cultural change and mutual responsibility, reflection, the four phase model, and personal professional development, in order to further understand the manner in which principals were thinking about their role and their work.</p>	<p>The analysis technique used with this study would be applied to three major divisions; School Development, professional development, and the audio-graphic project itself. Although the case study was relatively short (one calendar year), both the use of particular devices such as Quality Learning Circles for example, and discussion about School Development and professional development would enable inferences to be formed regarding the local theories that principals were forming to guide their practice.</p>	<p>There would be a general adoption of concepts of community, when describing school processes, as opposed to concepts of hierarchical management (Brookfield, 1995; Bryk <i>et al.</i>, 1994; Elliott, 1996; Grace, 1995).</p> <p>There would be a general recognition that education is a complex activity unlikely to be changed by purely managerial methods (Elliott, 1996).</p>

Proposition 3:

Critical reflection is of central importance both for principals and staff (Brookfield, 1995; Canning, 1991; Elliott, 1996; Griffiths and Tann, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1991; Smyth, 1991). Reflection is deemed to become critical when it contains two purposes: The first is to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame and distort educational processes and interactions. The second is to question assumptions and practices that seem to make our teaching lives easier but actually work against our own best long term interests (Brookfield, 1995:18).

Case Study A	Case Study B	Case Study C	Indicators
<p>The concept of reflection was targeted at two different levels in the questionnaire. Question 4 sought to discover if “reflective writing” was present or planned for in the school and question 10 sought a ranking for “reflection” as a stimulus for teacher development. In addition the text of the open ended questions enabled principals to make reference to critical reflective activities. From these two kinds of responses it would be possible to make some assumptions about how “reflection” was perceived and to what degree it was “critical”.</p>	<p>In the interview analysis the concept of reflection would be defined as a subset of school culture. An indication of the importance of this concept may be derived from both its frequency of use and from the context within which it was used. Another indicator of the relative importance of the notion would be the degree of understanding that the respondents bring to their use of the term. For example the illustration of reflection as “reflection on practice”, “about” practice and “in” practice (Schön, 1983, 1987).</p>	<p>The particular structure of the analysis for this case would permit study of the statements containing a reflective element in relation to School Development, personal professional development, and the actual task which the school undertook during the project. It would be possible, using this material, to make some judgments relating to the perceived importance of reflection to this group of schools.</p>	<p>There would be specific resources allocated to the cultivation of a culture of critical reflection as “awareness of our own thinking usually grows out of the process of articulating it to others...” (Smyth, 1991:28; Brookfield, 1995; Cortazzi, 1993; Grace, 1995).</p>

<i>Proposition 4: Principal development and School Development activities cannot always be separated (Campbell-Evans, 1993; Dimmock, 1993; Sparkes and Bloomer, 1993).</i>			
Case Study A	Case Study B	Case Study C	Indicators
<p>Three open ended questions (Q5-7) would provide opportunities for principals to state the kinds of experiences that had supported their own development, the development of their schools, and what they would seek in the future. The nature of the inter-relationship between personal development and School Development would then be able to be discerned from the replies. It is likely that for some, specific events within the school would have triggered an enrolment in a principal development initiative and for others the professional development work has lead to new options in the school development arsenal.</p>	<p>All those taking part in this project had contracted to follow a four phase School Development model for a minimum of one year, using a theme of their own choice. Separate questions in the interviews were targeted to responses about the source of their own development and how School Development processes were conceived and performed. Statements within these interviews would be grouped by their relationship to either School Development or professional development in order to facilitate meaning.</p>	<p>Contact with this group was much more school based. The interviews took place in the schools and the audio-graphic sessions were, of course, located at the schools. There were fewer opportunities to focus primarily on principal development. During the tutorial sessions some direct teaching was done and readings were supplied to all groups. Nevertheless, the statements from the survey instruments would be organised in order to probe for connections and differences in professional and school development.</p>	<p>There would be a recognition that teaching is, in the main, a set of complex personal relationships and there is a need to establish a forum, within the school, for professional discussion and exchange (Elliott, 1996).</p> <p>Professional school leaders need to be future oriented while displaying knowledge about current practices and processes. Such future orientation would also include an interest in development of individual staff members, and improving their own knowledge and skills (Brookfield, 1995; Cortazzi, 1993; Handy, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1988; West-Burnham, 1992).</p>

<i>Proposition 5: Successful School Development is an educational rather than a managerial process.</i>			
Case Study A	Case Study B	Case Study C	Indicators
<p>A number of questions in the survey instrument (5-7, 10-13) were potential sources of data for this proposition. It was likely, however, that the sections on concept development and future development would contain the richest data. How school leaders interpret the concept of school culture, for example, may give an indication of how they thought about successful School Development. References to structural implications and change generally were also likely to provide insights into how principals went about their school development programmes.</p>	<p>Some of the interview questions were deliberately phased in order to elicit data for this proposition. By asking the principals to speculate about how teachers view School Development the opportunity was presented to discuss coercive power versus educational diversity. Specific questions about school culture concepts and their usefulness in this regards were also asked. Sections of data containing examples of the use of teacher narrative will be particularly useful in this section.</p>	<p>Although answers across the whole instrument may have implications for this section, the School Development node would be the prime source of data. A key element of the programme was to encourage challenge and critique at the level of classroom practice. For many this may have meant a link to the notion of Quality Learning Circles as a practical means of establishing these kinds of processes. Important also to this proposition would be the description of how policy was formulated and written in the school, and how personal theory was formulated.</p>	<p>In the same way that learning cannot be precisely defined for students, neither can precise outcomes for School Development be defined in advance. Principals, therefore, need the ability to recognise and live with a large measure of uncertainty (Campbell-Evans, 1993; Elliott, 1996; Sergiovanni, 1996).</p>

2.2.a. *The connections between propositions and indicators: a computer software solution*

For the qualitative data analysis in this project software from Q.S.R called NUD•IST was selected. This software permits multi-level sorting of responses and enables a reference system for indexing text to be established. The diagrams (Appendix C-E) that show the arrangement of the qualitative data for each of the case studies were generated in this way and provide a guide to the index references of the quoted material. By its presentation, this form of analysis provides a kind of concept mapping (Kirkwood, 1995) which illuminates the connections between the propositions and the indicators. Within the case study, these concepts can be shown to be tied to reflection and action and can be expanded to include material not predicted within the questionnaire design or interview outline.

Central to these notions were the concepts of *Quality Learning Circles*, *Professional Development Consultation (PDC)*, and *Conceptual Job Descriptions*. These original ideas were developed in publications specifically for principal training. A brief overview of each of these processes follows.

2.3 **Quality Learning Circles and Thematic Supervision**

The most difficult but probably the most important challenge facing school leaders is to improve the quality of classroom teaching. There are all sorts of indirect ways of achieving such an improvement. Improvements in teacher training, reforms in hiring, promotion and retention policies, new curricula, the use of alternative teaching media are just a few of the methods that are commonly used. It is very easy, however, to invest a great deal of energy and resources into such interventions without seeing any measurable improvement in classroom teaching. The only obvious alternative to such indirect measures is direct supervision - where a senior colleague observes a teacher in action,

provides feedback on the latter's performance, and discusses ways in which the teacher might improve.

The principal approach to supervision over the past decade or more has been a procedure variously called 'in-class supervision', 'clinical supervision', and 'in-class support'. This is a system by which teachers spend short periods of time observing the teaching of a colleague, collect data on predetermined aspects of classroom behaviour, and then report those data back to the teacher, helping their colleague to analyse what has taken place and to come to some conclusions about the behaviour in question. This approach developed from the early work of people such as Cogan (1973) and Goldhammer *et al.* (1980).

In-class supervision is based on the assumption that change in teacher behaviour will come about as teachers are confronted with data about what is really going on in their classrooms. Teaching is a self-reinforcing activity, and in the normal course of events teachers seldom get an opportunity to gain an objective view of their performance. In-class supervision provides that opportunity. More specifically, there are a number of operational assumptions which underlie in-class supervision.

- Teachers can be assisted to identify weaknesses in their own techniques.
- Teachers will then be able and willing to demonstrate these problems to the observer.
- Supervisors will suppress any of their own biases and preferences about teaching style.
- The observer has the ability to accurately record what is happening, and is also able to communicate this accurately to the teacher at some later time.
- Teachers will not deliberately alter their behaviour while the observers are in the classroom.
- These observations will lead to teacher improvement.

It is clear that those schools which manage to persist with this approach do indeed increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning. It is also apparent, however, that many teachers engaged in the process of in-class supervision find the whole experience essentially negative and threatening. They particularly resist the constant focus on weaknesses and shortcomings in their teaching. Throughout the year teachers are continually expected to identify weaknesses in their teaching technique. The assumption is that there is always room for improvement and that through this interactive process their teaching practice will steadily improve. While most teachers would concede that there are aspects of their teaching which could be improved, the process of supervision seems to commit them to a never-ending round of observation lessons which invariably focus on their weaknesses. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that many teachers become disenchanted with the whole procedure and eventually halt the process by declaring that they have no further problems.

In-class supervision is also a technique which places great demands on the supervisor to remain objective and non-intrusive. The approach obliges the supervisor to accept the problem areas identified by the teacher under supervision even when there may be more pressing and obvious shortcomings in the latter's classroom behaviour. It also requires the supervisor to ignore any behaviour which lies outside the negotiated focus of concern, and to allow the teachers under observation to arrive at their own analysis of what is taking place. These expectations are important elements of the contract which the two parties enter into, and when these expectations are not met the whole process quickly becomes discredited.

In-class supervision has been given a fair trial in a large number of schools, and it must now be conceded that it is not an adequate vehicle for long term staff or School Development. But that period of trial has revealed aspects of in-class supervision which are valuable and which should be retained, as well as aspects which are ultimately unworkable. The elements of value are the opportunity for teachers to observe each other's practice on a regular basis, the deliberate focus on a narrow range of classroom behaviour, and the challenge to discuss that practice and those observations with one's

colleagues in a supportive way. The unacceptable and unworkable aspects of in-class supervision are the problem-centred nature of the process, and the requirement for teachers to identify a never ending stream of difficulties in their classroom practice.

In an attempt to retain the useful features of in-class supervision while abandoning the less helpful aspects I have developed two concepts or techniques. These are firstly Quality Learning Circles, and secondly Thematic Supervision.

2.3.a. *Quality Learning Circles*

The concept of *Quality Learning Circles* combines both the developments in this field pioneered by supporters of the development of critical theory (Carr and Kemmis, 1983; Kemmis and McTaggart, 1982; McTaggart, 1991), and by those who wished to promote the teacher as an action researcher (Elliott, 1991; Adelman, 1993; Elliott, 1985; Somekh, 1988).

Quality A goal of most schools will be to improve the quality of teaching and learning that they offer.

Learning Schools should be learning communities where all members - teachers, parents and pupils - wish to participate in the learning process as part of their own development.

Circles Schools should be collaborative enterprises where knowledge and expertise are shared and problems are solved cooperatively.

Quality Learning Circles (QLCs) brings these three objectives together in a process that unites and invigorates the life of the school. The notion of QLCs, as a staff process, is consistent with, transformational leadership, where “the leader works with others to obtain transformations of undesirable features of schooling, culture and practice” (Grace, 1995:54); ideas of schools as learning communities (Sergiovanni, 1996); and

management roles using collaborative and cooperative methodologies (Brookfield, 1995). “If you want to change people’s ideas you shouldn’t try to convince them intellectually. What you need to do is get them into a situation where they act out ideas not argue about them” (Horton, 1990:16, cited in Brookfield, 1995).

Quality Learning Circles are small groups of teachers brought together to develop their professional practice. Quality Learning Circles are formed by selecting staff who are comfortable working with each other, but who also represent a heterogeneous cross section of teachers within the school. It will be useful if such groups comprise teachers at different stages in their career who are selected across age and subject boundaries. The size of QLC groups should not exceed five or six teachers and they should remain intact for at least the duration of the school year.

The Quality Learning Circles become the basic units for individual professional development within the school. They should meet regularly, preferably once a week, for at least half an hour. Their purpose will be to allow teachers to study and discuss their professional practice with a group of colleagues in a supportive and non-threatening environment. Quality Learning Circles are simply a structured opportunity for teachers to reflect on their professional practice and that of their colleagues.

Principals should join QLCs for a time as participating members. The size of the school will determine the length of time that the principal will remain with any particular group. During this time it would be expected that group members would have the opportunity of hearing the principal’s philosophy and methods of teaching described, as well as visiting a class while the principal is teaching.

Quality Learning Circles could operate in a variety of ways, but typically they will follow a three phase sequence of steps: firstly, the members of the group will discuss a selected theme, and talk about their own interpretation of that theme in their classroom teaching; secondly, they will get an opportunity to observe other members of the group demonstrating their interpretation of that theme in their teaching; and finally, the group

will discuss and reflect on what they have seen and discovered in their own as well as their colleagues' teaching. Through this process teachers will be able to construct new meaning and understanding to apply to their own classroom practice.

The first phase involves discussion of a selected theme. In-class supervision focused on problems which individual teachers had identified in their teaching practice. These problems then provided a theme for discussion and observation between the teacher and supervisor. With a larger group such as a Quality Learning Circle it becomes necessary to select a theme that will be meaningful to the whole group.

The complexity and the subtlety of the teaching-learning process means that teachers often find it difficult to be analytic about what is going on. Sometimes they will present textbook explanations which may bear little resemblance to what is really going on; or else they may simply describe their classroom practice as if this were some sort of statement of purpose. The challenge may be to get behind these taken-for-granted statements of theory or practice, and encourage teachers to reflect with fresh eyes on what they are really doing and trying to do. Any attempt to provide a simple cause-effect analysis of what is going on will almost certainly fail to tell the whole story. In fact, story telling is often a good place to begin as a group of teachers starts to talk about their classroom work with each other. Encouraging teachers to summarise their interpretation of the theme with a story or a metaphor can be a simple but powerful way to get a new perspective on what is going on.

Teaching is about exchanging ideas and concepts, and facilitating the construction of new and different meaning by the learner. Teaching is not an activity which can be readily measured or quantified. While it may be possible to record and analyse the teacher's behaviour, it is not so easy to determine the effect that the session is having on each member of the class. The affective dimension of teaching is important, but not one that is easily assessed. Sometimes a raised eyebrow, or an encouraging smile, can be more significant in determining the success or failure of a teaching session than the quality or form of the information being presented, or the carefully followed lesson plan. Quality

Learning Circles begin as groups of teachers tell stories to each other about how they teach, about classroom culture, and about the successes and worries of their current class.

The second phase involves teachers visiting each other's classrooms at predetermined times to observe a colleague putting into practice something they have discussed during the first phase. The visitor has an altogether different status and purpose to the supervisor in the in-class supervision situation. Here the observer is a learner who has come to observe something the teacher wants to share, rather than an observer coming to gather data on an area of professional weakness. The visitor will gather data if this is appropriate.

The third phase will involve conversations between the visiting teacher-learner and the demonstrating teacher. The visitor will provide feedback to the demonstrating teacher on the basis of the data that has been collected, and the interpretations the visitor has made of the sessions she has observed. The demonstrating teacher may be asked to clarify aspects of the lesson or of the underlying objectives. Following these private conversations the larger QLC group will reconvene to share what they have learned during their study of that particular theme. It may be that certain examples of good practice come in for particular mention, and are then shared with the wider community through a whole-of-staff meeting. Following this the group would commence discussions on the next theme for the year.

2.3.b. *Thematic Supervision*

In-class supervision has been criticized for its emphasis on teachers' professional shortcomings, and for the way it isolates teachers from the support and example of colleagues. Quality Learning Circles are a departure from the problem- and individual-centred approach to in-class supervision. They make the assumption that teaching can and should be a collaborative rather than a solitary activity, and that there is more to be gained by considering a common theme within a group of colleagues than

by focusing exclusively on one's individual professional shortcomings with a single supervisor.

There are a number of advantages for adopting a thematic approach to supervision rather than persevering with the problem-centred clinical supervision approach.

- Teacher anxiety will be reduced. Thematic Supervision places the focus on a series of developmental tasks in the annual cycle of the classroom, and not on the problems or difficulties teachers may be having.
- The process is a school-wide one encouraging collaboration across the whole school. The progress made by individual teachers will vary, but at any point in the year all the staff will be working on the same basic theme.
- The process will emphasise attainable, short term goals rather than presenting teachers with impossibly ambitious targets for self-improvement. Teachers only have so much energy available for staff development activities, and they are likely to become more committed to a programme that can deliver on realistic but limited goals, than one that promises much, but delivers little.
- The visiting teacher will be the learner rather than the supervisor. Each theme should provide teachers with the opportunity to share some aspect of their classroom practice with their colleagues. The visitor is there to observe and learn from the work of a colleague, not to criticise and propose alternative practices.
- Teachers will get frequent positive and supportive feedback. In general, they will be displaying aspects of their teaching practice in which they

feel they have achieved something worthwhile, and not constantly exposing their shortcomings.

- The focus of discussion and observation will increase in complexity as the year progresses. As teachers become more familiar with each other's practice, and as their powers of reflection and group sharing become more practised, they are likely to become more ambitious in the issues they research and develop.
- A thematic approach will force teachers to use a variety of data-gathering instruments, and they will be less likely to become stuck in a limited and habitual response to classroom challenges.
- Each year will follow a similar sequence. This should provide some assurance in that teachers will come to recognise that progress made in one year can be picked up and pursued in subsequent years. An annual, cyclical process will also mean that new staff can enter the process at any point, and they need not feel they have missed out irrevocably on some earlier stage in the process.
- While the annual cycle may be the same each year, there should also be scope for emphases to change as staff become more confident in the process. It may be that as a staff resolves many of the issues associated with getting classroom routines established and developing a supportive learning culture, they can spend more time in later years on learning outcomes and developing individualised learning programmes.

To summarise, Thematic Supervision within a Quality Learning Circle process can replace the practice of in-class supervision. It retains many of the essential features of in-class supervision. That is, it is cyclical; it focuses on patterns of teaching behaviour; and it is subject to professional ethical controls.

On the other hand, it avoids many of the drawbacks of in-class supervision. The process no longer focuses on the problems which teachers are assumed to be having. Classroom observation follows a cycle of themes which match the development of classroom life through the school year. Teachers share their observations and experiences with a group of colleagues who can afford to operate in a supportive and non-critical way together. They visit each others' classrooms as learners rather than supervisors (Showers and Joyce, 1996), identifying and reinforcing good practice where they find it. And through the discussions and reflections of the Quality Learning Circle they get an opportunity to clarify and add meaning to what they have observed.

Sergiovanni (1996) argues that the hierarchical supervision practised in many approaches in the past exerted positional power and assumed that hierarchical status equalled expertise. He concludes that "instead of treaties and contracts, schools need compacts and commitments" (ibid:14). A commitment to quality learning circles and the consequential critical reflection about their own work would bode well for school improvement.

2.4 Professional Development Consultation Cycle (PDC)

When the concept of the PDC was developed in an earlier collaborative project (Prebble and Stewart, 1981), the procedure was offered as one solution to some of the problems of middle management supervision. At that time many principals, particularly in primary schools, were experiencing difficulty in making the best use of senior staff. Schools were divided in a variety of ways - departments, year groups, houses, syndicates, junior/middle/senior schools being some of the more common arrangements - and senior staff were being used to exercise leadership over these units. The principals' dilemma was how to exercise influence over the work of the whole school through such a devolved structure, and how to make sure that their senior staff were making a good job of their delegations.

At about that time principals were facing another challenge in terms of classroom supervision. During the late 1970s and early 1980s great attention was being paid in the literature on educational management to the instructional leadership role of the principal. Clinical supervision, or in-class supervision, was being promoted as an effective tool of instructional leadership. This posed a serious logistic problem for many principals. In smaller primary schools it may have been possible for the principal to carry out most of the in-class supervision of teaching staff, but in larger primary and secondary schools this was clearly out of the question. An obvious alternative in such cases was to delegate most of the responsibility for direct classroom supervision of teachers to senior staff.

The solution we proposed for this joint challenge was the professional development consultation cycle. The PDC cycle was, quite simply, a series of meetings between the principal and each of the staff over the course of a year. These meetings were called 'professional development consultations' because this term seemed to preserve the positive, collegial, and non-threatening elements of supervision that should be stressed.

The purposes of the meetings were:

- to provide the formal opportunity for each member of senior staff to discuss and evaluate their goals and performance on a regular basis;
- to allow the principal to monitor and facilitate the goal setting and job performance of the senior staff;
- to uncover problems and contingencies in the patterns of work relationships operating among the senior staff; and
- to provide a formalised and legitimate opportunity for senior staff to evaluate the working relationship they had with the principal.

The PDC cycle filled the vacuum so neatly that now, more than fifteen years on, probably the majority of principals hold regular progress meetings with each of their senior staff whether they label these sessions professional development consultations or something else. What we did not anticipate in 1981 was that many principals would want to use

these one-on-one consultations as their primary means of supervising classroom teachers as well. With the loss of support for clinical and in-class supervision in recent years and the new requirement for regular performance appraisal of all staff, many principals are using the PDC cycle as a means of goal setting and job clarification between principals and all their staff.

This is a positive and functional evolution for the PDC cycle to take, and it is one which should be endorsed. There will be limitations in how much direct supervision an individual principal can undertake personally, but in larger schools some of this responsibility can be shared amongst the senior leadership team. The PDC cycle could be used as the primary means of appraising all teaching staff within a school.

2.4.a. *Operation of a PDC cycle*

The *first PDC* of the year would take place early in the first term. The teachers would be expected to prepare a report on their progress in setting objectives under each major heading of the job description. Discussion would probably follow the order of the major headings as set out in the job description, for example:

- classroom teaching;
- classroom culture;
- personal professional development;
- school culture;
- specific responsibilities; and
- objective setting, goals for the year.

Particular attention would be paid to the major objectives the teacher had listed under each heading.

There should be opportunities to discuss key concepts, the results expected, and any possible difficulties arising out of that year's particular class composition or other unique

features. At the conclusion of each topic the teacher would propose new goals for herself in that section and there would be opportunity for the principal to engage in some elaboration or examination of the areas selected. Time lines would be discussed with the teacher indicating when the stated goals were likely to be realised.

When discussing 'classroom culture', for example, the teacher may have selected the area of 'recognising disputes/misunderstandings, and providing a procedure for resolution' as an area of focus. A teacher's goal in this section might be *to work from the social skills material to develop specific skills in resolving classroom and playground disputes.*

Together the teacher and the principal would talk about how this would happen and the specific kinds of disputes that the teacher was concerned about. Some time lines and targets would be agreed to and the teacher might add to the goal *...and have the first of these procedures in place by the beginning of March.*

It would be at this time that the teacher would share with the principal the goals chosen for professional development during the year including enrolment in professional education courses and any projected involvement with other schools.

Debate and negotiation could occur as the principal aired any thoughts about specific and whole-of-school duties and responsibilities. Negotiation of the details of these concerns would occur at this meeting. This first PDC would conclude with the signing of the agreed revised document.

The *second PDC* of the year would be held at about mid-year, again focused on the job description and in particular the objective setting page. The staff member would report on and analyse the reasons for successful or unsuccessful goal attainment. The principal would have an opportunity to react to this report offering personal interpretation of the work of the staff member.

The staff member would also get the opportunity to comment on the support and restraints applied by the school systems in general and the principal in particular. This is an important part of PDC - the analysis and comment should not be all one-way. These comments might be in answer to the following sorts of questions from the principal:

- what aspects of school organisation and policy make your job more difficult?
- what do I do that makes your job more difficult?
- what might I do to help you in your job?

It could be appropriate at this time to spend some time discussing the professional development of the staff member, plans for further professional study, aspirations for promotion, and desired changes in duties and responsibilities.

At the conclusion of this discussion the staff member might wish to reset the stated goals for the remainder of the year in the light of progress over the previous six months, new insights and developments, and the principal's comments.

The *third and final PDC* of the year would be held towards the end of the school year. It would have many of the elements of the second PDC. Once again the staff member would have the opportunity to analyse and interpret progress towards the stated goals and the principal would have an opportunity to respond. This conversation could be an opportunity for a full discussion on the performance of the staff member.

Rather than a resetting of objectives or a discussion of working relationships, it would be more profitable at this stage of the year for the staff member to state some personal preferences which might influence upcoming decisions concerning staffing, organisation, policy formation, and the allocation of duties and responsibilities for the following year. The principal could react to these suggestions if it were appropriate, but more likely they

would be regarded as data input for an organisation meeting called near the end of the year to establish planning priorities.

2.4.b. *Discussion*

What is being suggested here is quite simply a guaranteed pipeline between principal and staff where communication about goals, professional needs, objectives and concerns can flow in both directions. In larger schools the principal will need to share this role with other members of the senior management team but through this process principals will be able to get a clear appreciation of the priorities of staff and have a direct influence in the coordination of these various goals and activities. Professional accountability will be taking place on a regular basis.

A growing number of schools are using the PDC cycle as the basis for their development and supervision. For the most part, all parties are finding it a worthwhile development. Principals are finding that they are able, perhaps for the first time, to keep in regular contact with the work of all major areas in the school, and are also getting the opportunity to offer guidance in a professionally acceptable manner to their colleagues. Teachers are deriving considerable benefit from keeping the principal fully informed about their own activities and those of their team. They are finding that these regular meetings give them the opportunity to negotiate programmes of work which meet the overall goals of the school but which suit the interests and talents of their particular area of the school and group of teachers. Furthermore they are finding that they are able to negotiate the criteria on which their performance will be assessed, and will no longer be overlooked or misjudged by a principal who does not fully understand or appreciate what they are doing.

Some principals have introduced the PDC system without a great deal of prior discussion with the staff. In such cases the scope for misunderstanding and failure is considerable. If the staff are unconvinced of the benefits they are likely to gain from the PDC cycle, or if they fear that the principal may use it as an instrument of unalloyed managerial control,

they are likely to be negatively disposed towards it and guarded in their own interaction with the principal. Similarly, if principals don't fully appreciate the reciprocal nature of the negotiations that are intended by the PDC meetings, they may be tempted to regard the innovation as a device to increase uniformity among departments. This points to the interrelatedness of the elements being discussed in this book. It is only after a school has gone through an exercise of self-reflection and discussion such as is implied by Phase 1 and 2 of the School Development sequence that it is likely to derive the full potential from a structural innovation such as the PDC cycle.

In working with the schools in the case studies, PDC was advocated as an adjunct to Quality Learning Circles as a means of both meeting the legal supervision requirements and for having an input into the goal setting and evaluation process of all teachers.

2.5 Cycles of Accountability: Levels of Appraisal

Over the past decade appraisal and accountability have become dominant themes of our organisational rhetoric if not always of our organisational behaviour. One of the central tenets of *Tomorrow's Schools* was that schools should be accountable to local communities, and that those communities should have the power to determine the kind of education they want for their children. This is a new form of accountability for most New Zealand schools, and many of them are still coming to grips with all of its implications.

There are several levels of accountability in even the smallest school. The first level of accountability is that between a board of trustees and its constituency, the parents of the children attending the school. The board works within the terms of the school charter, and, as a public body, is required to carry out most of its business in public. The board is required to report on progress to its constituency, and is subject to triennial re-election. The board is also accountable to the Government and to several ministries and government agencies. The nature of these obligations are generally specified by law.

Performance against these requirements is assessed through inspection of reports and returns, and in some cases by direct inspection. Non-compliance can lead to the public listing of such behaviour, by suspension of funding, and ultimately by the suspension of the board itself. The accountability of boards to their constituencies and to the Government is extremely important, but will not be the subject of special attention in this section.

The second level of accountability within a school is that between a principal and the employer, the board of trustees. In general terms the principal is required to operate within the school charter. But more specifically the board is required to appraise the principal's performance on at least an annual basis. This is a very new accountability relationship for New Zealand schools, and one that offers plenty of scope for interpretation. The foundation of this relationship must be the principal's job description which will be negotiated and agreed upon between the principal and the board. As is common throughout commercial organisations, the principal's job description can be a detailed listing of roles, tasks and responsibilities. This sort of document traps both principal and board into a fairly sterile annual reporting round in which the principal assures the board of what it probably knows already. This kind of reporting framework can be useful when a principal is clearly failing to achieve in the job, as this kind of itemised reporting allows the board to assemble documentary evidence of these failings. But it offers a static and limited view of the principal's role, and makes it difficult for either party to explore the developmental possibilities of this accountability relationship. The *conceptual job description* is an alternative approach which incorporates the assumptions in Chapter 1. This alternative then allows a different form of principal's appraisal to occur, which should allow the board to be more closely involved in the development of the school as a learning community.

The third level is that between a teacher and the principal. The principal is obliged to appraise the performance of each teacher in the school on a regular basis. As with any other job this appraisal must be carried out against a formal written job description. If summative judgements are to be reached about the competence of professional people

in discharging their duties, it makes sense that the nature of these duties and obligations are stated quite clearly in writing.

The teacher's job description must form the basis for any such appraisal, though many such documents provide little useful guidance to either party. All too often teachers' job descriptions are simply lists of duties and responsibilities. This approach gives far too much emphasis to the out-of-classroom duties such as supervising the traffic patrols, understudying the librarian and being responsible for all textbook purchasing, and too little emphasis to what the teacher is paid to do for the other ninety percent of the time. The teacher's job description proposed here is both more standardised and more open; one that recognises that all teachers share the same basic responsibilities and challenges within their classrooms, and that the job description should encourage them to develop their performance in each of these areas.

A job description is not sufficient to ensure effective performance of course. The principal must have systems in place for ensuring that teachers are performing up to expectation. The principal will have many sources of information to draw on in reaching a determination of how effectively a teacher is performing, but proposed here is a regular appraisal meeting for each member of the staff to allow the latter to negotiate their objectives and to report on progress towards achieving those objectives. The Professional Development Consultation Cycle described earlier is the process suggested.

In the case studies it was suggested that these appraisal processes should run alongside and complement the kind of staff development activities discussed in the previous section. For instance, a Quality Learning Circle group may be encouraged to study various aspects of the teachers' conceptual job description, and individual teachers may provide assistance and advice to each other in improving their professional performance. These activities will take place within a formative, developmental framework. But two or three times each year each teacher will have a Professional Development Consultation with the principal or some other member of the management team, and on these

occasions there will be a clear expectation that the two of them will focus on objectives and performance.

2.6 Appraising the Teachers: Developing a Conceptual Job Description

The teacher's task is to create a classroom culture which supports, encourages and facilitates active learning, one where students build on their prior understandings, work with others and construct new views of the world for themselves. Creating environments which stimulate and challenge young people will also call for routines and shared understandings about how decisions should be made, conflict resolved and achievement recognised. These micro-cultures are dynamic but fragile and need to be planned and monitored carefully.

If we hope to change or influence what teachers are doing we must first encourage them to reflect on what they are doing. A teacher's job description is an important starting point in this process. Generally, a job description is a statement listing a series of tasks and responsibilities. This kind of document may be useful in an organisation made up of interlocking specialised roles, where the formal job descriptions make it very clear what each person does, and how their work relates with that of their colleagues. But, in the case of a complex and multi-faceted job like teaching, a formal job description is seldom very helpful - either to the teacher in guiding behaviour, or to the principal in holding the teacher accountable for that behaviour. Too often written job descriptions give unwarranted emphasis to all the non-classroom responsibilities which teachers carry, like supervising the library, or organising field trips, while saying little that is helpful about classroom teaching itself.

An alternative approach is to start with the ideas, the concepts and the intentions which teachers bring to their work, and to develop a Conceptual Job Description which will broadly define the work of all the staff of a school. This form of statement should

concentrate on what teachers are trying to achieve in their classrooms and within the wider school community rather than simply identifying the discrete tasks they engage in. A school we worked with very closely identified five concepts which served as a useful framework for the job description they developed:

- classroom teaching;
- classroom culture;
- personal professional development;
- school culture; and
- specific responsibilities.

Each school is free to arrive at its own set of concepts, but this list does seem to follow a natural developmental sequence, and to give appropriate emphasis to the various activities and concerns of the classroom teacher.

The primary concern for any teacher must be the *teaching* act - in helping students to acquire new knowledge and skills. The job description must draw their attention to the need to assess prior learning, design appropriate learning programmes, set realistic goals, evaluate learning experiences and outcomes, and reteach where necessary.

It is suggested that the statement in the conceptual job description relating to classroom teaching be no more detailed except to indicate very briefly the kind of results that should be expected against each objective. So, if a key objective is 'to establish entry level for individuals', it is expected that this will be achieved through an appropriate assessment of skills and knowledge at the beginning of the year. There should also be an opportunity for teachers and the principal to record any difficulties or contingencies that may prevent a teacher meeting this objective.

The teaching takes place within a social context - in a classroom with a unique *culture* which will either support or detract from the teacher's efforts to encourage individual

learning. It is possible for a school community to identify the kind of classroom cultures it wishes to foster, and the results that can be expected from such a culture. Studying and upgrading professional skills is vital to all members of the learning community, and it should be possible to indicate some of the objectives for *personal professional development* towards which teachers should be striving.

Classrooms have a contribution to make to the greater *school culture*, and they are certainly deeply influenced by the prevailing values and customs of the wider school. Teachers need to acknowledge their responsibility in building up an appropriate school culture, and then communicating the central messages of that culture to the wider school community.

Finally, most teachers will have *specific responsibilities* which must be listed in their job descriptions, and which will generate their own objectives and statements of anticipated results. No matter how clear and succinct a job description may be, it will only be useful if it is seen to influence what teachers are actually doing in their classrooms. One way of ensuring that this happens is for the job description to become a central document in both the *development* and the *appraisal* activities of the school.

For instance, considering the concept of 'classroom culture' from the teacher's job description, the key objectives contributing to this concept could keep a QLC busy for many months. Quality Learning Circles could spend time studying how teachers ensure that all students are experiencing success in spite of the varying ability levels in most classes; how teachers develop and maintain a supportive classroom climate; the variety of modes and approaches that teachers are able to bring to bear; and the ways in which teachers resolve disputes and maintain a harmonious working atmosphere in their rooms.

Development should be one of the functions of the job description; appraisal must remain the other. The job description should remain a central feature of any system of formal performance appraisal within the school (see Appendix G).

The case studies which follow, can be conceived as three instances of the School Development phenomenon which was based around the key concepts described above. The discussion of each case is organised around the propositions and indicators enabling a cumulative view of the impact of this process on school organisation and learning management for the participating groups. Case study order follows the chronological order of the three projects.

Chapter 3: Case Study A

THE REFLECTIVE PRINCIPAL COURSES

3.1 Introduction

Prior to 1 October 1989, School Inspectors had the responsibility for much of the professional development activities that were offered to schools. It was clear that there would be a continuing need for principal courses following the major structural changes to the school sector occurring on 1 October 1989, when *Tomorrow's Schools* were introduced. Colleges of Education were taking a lead in this work but there was now the requirement that the courses be self funding.

Working in collaboration with the Wellington College of Education the first Reflective Principal Courses were conducted incorporating some of the recent literature relating to reflective practice and addressing the problems of site based School Development. Although these courses were relatively expensive at the time, and school personnel were not used to paying for them, it was apparent that a process had begun which seemed to have a continuing and expanding appeal. Not only was it possible to conduct three or four of these courses each year in Wellington but provincial principal groups, from Kaitaia to Invercargill also organised participants and venues for these seminars.

The courses continue to the present time, are now conducted in Palmerston North and have recently become the block course of one of the papers for the Diploma in Educational Administration. Occasional courses are run periodically in other centres.

3.2 Rationale

From the earliest courses the intention was to devise a residential seminar, lasting several days, which used reflective action techniques to address many of the practical problems

that school leaders were experiencing in their own institutions. As I was also a school principal during this early period, much of the input drew on my own experience informed and extended by the current literature. We provided books and magazines from a wide variety of sources and scheduled time each day for personal study and writing.

Activities each day began with an input session addressing a problem that many principals were experiencing, included group discussions where current thinking and practice were debated and exchanged, and timetabled individual reading, and writing. All participants were encouraged to live-in during the course and evening sessions were structured to give experience of a variety of group techniques and to further challenge personal thinking. All participants were expected to depart from the course with a substantial amount of personal writing completed. This usually took the form of a systematic exploration of possible actions addressing a problem that the school was currently experiencing. Where follow up courses occurred, they began with a discussion of these plans and diaries and the responses made by the school community.

3.2.a. *Sequence of development*

Although the actual topics which were addressed in these courses changed as principals adapted to the new “self-governing” environment, the underlying process has remained relatively constant. For example, in many of the early seminars school leaders were concerned about how best to specify teachers’ jobs. The traditional job descriptions which had been in use for many years in the commercial environment adapted poorly to education as they seemed to focus on the tasks which teachers saw as peripheral to their main responsibilities. Consequently, adaptations of the “conceptual job description” (see discussion Chapter 2 and Appendix G) which I wrote in 1990 have been used widely by course members and other readers of our publications as this document is perceived by principals and teachers as describing more accurately the intellectual and social nature of their work.

The base assumptions that most influenced the course processes were:

- that to change what teachers do you need to first influence their thinking;
- that school culture and classroom culture have a powerful influence on the teaching and learning process; and
- that a four phase School Development process would provide an effective vehicle for change.

This four phase School Development process (see Section 1.4.b.) had been the subject of my masterate and subsequent publications had further extended its use. The latest development of this concept was published in a further book in 1993. Fundamental to this four phase process is an understanding of the nature of the concept of school culture. Thus, these processes of reflective thought and action, a consideration of the concept of school culture, and the use of my model of the four phase School Development approach to solve problems and initiate change, have been common to all the courses. Within the courses, I have tried both to model the processes that are being taught, and to ensure that participants gain some opportunities to experience the processes in action.

3.2.b. *Key concepts*

The Reflective Principal courses were fashioned around six key concepts.

1. *Reflection*

Donald Schön (1983) makes a crucial distinction between “objective knowledge” and “knowledge in action”. Objective knowledge, or those principles of learning and teaching which can be relied upon to hold good in any set of circumstances are seldom available in the teaching-learning situation, or indeed in the hurly burly of principal-staff-parent relationships. Teachers and principals depend on the process of “knowing in action” to adjust both content and process as the interaction continues. This can also be

called reflection-in-action and may result in a change of belief as a result of a particular set of interactions. We often think about reflection as a kind of interactive reasoning.

It is this form of reflective action that has been applied to many of the particular problems and themes which followed the very rapid changes that were occurring in the school sector during the time of these courses. The issue of “governance and management”, for example, which encapsulated the debate about control in schools was an early topic. It tends to reappear in cycles congruent with board of trustee elections and provides a continuing study of how some concepts are transferred inappropriately from one domain to another. The school sector in New Zealand has suffered, sometimes dramatically, as commercial notions have been forcibly grafted onto their fabric.

After the initial structural changes had taken effect, principals began to revisit the more traditional leadership dilemmas of improving teacher quality and effectiveness, of supervision and of school community relationships. These were also dealt with through the same kind of reflective processes and resulted in many schools adopting a number of original ideas, first proposed at these courses such as the “Quality Learning Circle” concept discussed in Chapter 2, which extended the concept of critical reflective action to professional staff development activities.

2. *The four phase School Development process*

This taxonomy, with its four stages of understanding the organisational culture and data gathering, collaborative problem solving, structural change and curriculum and programme change (see Section 1.4.b.), was presented as a fundamental methodology for conceptualising a change-action sequence. Throughout all the courses many examples were presented to illustrate how the stages could assist thinking and action at a variety of levels. In addition, participants were encouraged to use this notion as a basic organiser for the thinking and problem solving in which they engaged during the week. The final session, at each course, where presentations were shared was often structured into these four phases.

3. *Collaboration and transformational leadership*

A view of leadership as *transformational* where “the leader works with others to obtain transformation of undesirable features of schooling, culture and practice” (Grace, 1995:54), is a dominant position taken in the presentation of the course. This view is contrasted with leadership seeking “autonomous advantage” (Grace, 1995:144) where the school is considered to be competing with others according to a “market forces” ideology. This is consistent with the view that sharing both power and responsibility with others will lead to more successful schools (Leithwood and Jantzi, 1990). This form of leadership which incorporated collaboration is an integral element of a view of schooling as an educational process where the personal transactions between teacher and pupil are critically examined through a process of personal and group reflection leading to improvement in teaching and learning (Elliott, 1996:200, 211).

4. *The concept of culture*

The cultural perspective has proved to be particularly powerful when applied to educational institutions. It is in contrast with a view of school improvement that attempts to improve classroom practice by a narrow focus on training, classroom intervention and close supervision. Through presentations, discussion, reading and reflection, participants are encouraged to understand how the concept of culture could apply to the work they do in the school, and how they might work with staff to develop a core culture where an agreed set of values, beliefs and shared understandings underpinned all actions within the institution. It is projected that “informed commitment” of staff, students and parents would flow from such an undertaking (Brookfield, 1995:23). The “taken for granted” attitudes and beliefs will, as a consequence be available for examination and debate (ibid:141). Course participants are encouraged to develop a facility for recognising, detailing and representing back to staff the cultural “artifacts” that illustrate beliefs and values of the school in practice (Sergiovanni, 1991).

5. *Consideration of schools as learning communities*

This concept is developed in conjunction with the idea that “underneath every school culture is a theory...” (Sergiovanni, 1996:3). That is to say that the way school leaders think, believe and behave will be influenced by the “mindscape” or the theoretical construct that is used to “frame” the concept of school (Sergiovanni, 1991, 1996). Thinking of schools as communities, as learning communities, allows and encourages the values to be defined by the centre rather than to be imposed from without (ibid:1991). Most formal organisations separate planning what to do from the execution of the plan. As teachers acting as reflective practitioners need to incorporate planning and thinking-in-action, this kind of separation cannot occur. The more traditional top down “coat hanger” way of thinking about how schools work is contrasted with a circular community focus with the core culture at its hub. Prawat (1993, cited in Sergiovanni, 1996) argues that “the goal of learning communities is to build social and intellectual connections among people...” It is this concept which is advanced as a major purpose of schooling during the course.

6. *Incorporation of reading and educational research into professional conversations*

A wide selection of books and articles are made available at the course. In addition a photocopier is supported for students to copy articles which they have not sufficient time to read. Each student also receives a folder of supplied readings which follow the four themes of the course outline. Each day presentations are made to the whole group from some of this material and the connections to current problems are debated. The readings in the folders are selected with a view that not only would they be of interest to the participants but also of interest if distributed to staff in the school. The position is taken that school leaders are responsible for making current research in education available and understandable to classroom teachers. As a consequence their own reading has to be consistently maintained.

3.2.c. *Themes*

The Reflective Principal courses have been used by a number of groups of principals as their main professional development activity each year (see Section 3.5) and, as a consequence, we have designed a number of these seminars to address issues of particular note. Recently, for example, a course was entitled *Evaluation and Assessment* as this concern was being heightened through legislation and through the reports of the Education Review Office. The process that the course followed was as previously developed but the literature and problem solving activities were biased towards evaluation and assessment issues.

Similarly, a course was planned for August 1996 with the title *Creating a Meaningful School* with the intention to focus on matters of effectiveness, learning management, constructivist programmes and the unique fit of particular schools with their communities. This application of reflective thought and action within a particular School Development framework has wide appeal and numbers attending have had to be limited to the earlier enrolments.

3.2.d. *Recent course format*

In the courses presented since February 1995 the format of applying one theme to each day has been followed. *Reflection* is presented, or for some revised, on the first day and then operationalised throughout the remainder of the course. Day two has an emphasis on school culture and the nature of the four phase School Development theory. Day three presents the course theme from the perspective of thinking about how schools work through an organisational framework, or via a mindscape of school as community (Sergiovanni, 1991, 1996), and day four is devoted to a consideration of problem solving within a School Development design.

To add further consistency and predictability to the process, each day follows the sequence displayed below.

Figure 3.1 Daily Timetable

8.30-9.30	Each day will begin with a lecture/discussion outlining the theme, and providing some overview of the readings and resources available.
9.30-10.15	The main input session will be followed by group discussion where participants will be encouraged to share their own ideas and practices which are pertinent to the theme of the day.
10.15-10.30	Morning tea.
10.30-11.40	Personal reflective study time. Each participant will be expected to follow a particular interest throughout the week. Time will also be scheduled within this block for interviews and conferences with the facilitator.
11.40-12.00	Report back session. All course members will be asked to report briefly in the following areas: reading begun and completed; analysis; current questions; and plans for further study.
12.00-2.00	Lunch and walk the talk. Weather permitting the group will walk each day after lunch.
2.00-3.00	A practical application of the theme.
3.00-3.15	Afternoon tea.
3.15-4.00	Personal reflective study.
4.00-5.00	Group discussion relating to the practical application and individual alternatives.
5.00-6.00	Evening meal.
7.00-9.00	Evening session. Use will be made of a range of group interactive practices to further extend concepts within the day's theme. Day 3 session will be in the nature of a <i>understanding performance</i> (see notes in activities section).

Throughout the course it is emphasised that there are no imperatives being promoted and that there is no one *best way* to run a school. The initiative of what to do is very much with individual leaders and the course is attempting to promote some options for analysis and process.

This course is not a collection of inputs which have been designed to impact on members current actions but rather a cohesive series of processes which will assist individuals design their own School Development initiative. It is recognised that these plans will each be unique, but will incorporate ideas that have been shared and developed throughout the week (from course notes, August 1996).

3.3 An Overview of the Case Study

This case study is built from the questionnaire replies of 187 school leaders who attended Reflective Principal courses between 1990 and 1995. The questionnaire was designed to provide information which would contribute to the “patterns of meaning” (Stake, 1988:259) necessary to address the research question of, *How do principals and school leaders construct and operationalise the framework for their work?* The framework in this case being the kind of School Development processes used.

Although some of the content changed from course to course the process and the central concepts remained consistent. As a consequence no differentiation is made between courses in the discussion. The examination of the case begins with an explanation of the survey instrument and a summary of the results. The five propositions and their indicators from Chapter 2 are then used as organisers for a closer study of the responses, with particular attention given to the open ended question contributions. This is followed with a concluding section which draws together the implication for principal and leadership development arising from this case study.

3.4 The Questionnaire Survey

From the cumulative course records it was possible to identify 370 participants who had attended Reflective Principal courses conducted between 1990 and first half year 1995.

In September 1995 a letter of explanation and a short questionnaire was posted to each of these people at the address recorded at the time of their attendance at the course. Many had, of course, moved on to other schools and, as a consequence, a large number of letters did not reach the addressee. There would appear to be a comparatively low level of commitment by schools to forward mail of this type or staff turnover may result in the addressee not being recognised as a previous staff member. Even when mail was returned to us our ability to find an up to date address was frustrated by the lack of any central data bank of teacher and principal addresses. Where questionnaires were simply not returned this was followed up with an additional letter and/or telephone call.

By December 1995, 187 (50.5%) completed questionnaires had been returned. When the 66 which were not delivered (insufficient address 37, retired 3, left teaching 5, returned to sender 17) or not completed as the recipients were not currently in school leadership positions (4) are subtracted from the total, the return rate rises to 61.5%.

Table 3.1 Questionnaire Returns

Participants attending RP courses 1990 - 1995		370
Q. Returned	187	
Q. Returned insufficient address	37	
Q. Returned Participant retired	3	
Q. Returned Participant left teaching	5	
Q. Returned to sender	17	
Q. Not applicable	4	
Percentage returned		50.5%
Corrected percentage		61.6%

3.4.a. *Purpose of survey*

The questionnaire was divided into three main sections (see Appendix A for an example of the questionnaire form). One section was designed to elicit information about the participant and included questions about position in school, number of courses attended and other training and development activities that had been undertaken that had been based wholly or in part on Stewart and Prebble published materials. A second section asked about particular concepts which had been presented and discussed at the Reflective Principal courses, and queried their current use. The third section encouraged open ended responses to more general questions about training and development opportunities, and the Reflective Principal courses in particular.

The survey was designed to encourage respondents to think about the courses in relation to their own current practices and to comment or respond about the linkages. It was not intended to be used as a formal evaluation instrument, as there was no standard curriculum to assess, but rather to discover the degree to which concepts and styles of thinking, that had been introduced through the Reflective Principal seminars, had been integrated into their leadership and administrative practice.

It is also acknowledged that although many of these concepts may have been introduced to school leaders at the Reflective Principal courses, they are by no means restricted to this form of dissemination. Specifically, all the major concepts, outlined in Chapter 2 and sought by the questionnaire, address concerns shared with many writers in this area. Unique names, however, have been given to many of the notions and processes and the questionnaire sought information focused on these terms.

In summary:

Quality Learning Circles(QLC) is the term used to describe a process of heterogeneous group discussion where the focus is on teaching practice, classroom visits, and reflective analysis. *Conceptual Job Descriptions (CJD)* is

a term invented to describe a method of writing a statement of work that is specifically designed for educators, and acknowledging the essentially intellectual nature of their work, rather than being based on the more traditional commercial/industrial job description which emphasises tasks. *Professional Development Consultation (PDC)* describes a series of structured interviews between teachers and the school leadership which centres on goals and goal attainment and compliments the Quality Learning Circle functions. PDC and QLC together have been presented as a mechanism for both teacher improvement and performance appraisal. *Four Phase School Development* relates to the specific School Development sequence that is used as the basis of all the courses. *Teacher Narrative* is the descriptive term used to define that particular form of story telling and method for relating classroom vignettes that is encouraged as an integral part of the Quality Learning Circle dynamic.

3.5 Results Overview²

Questions 1-4, 8-10, 12 and 14 used a likert format, are analysed quantitatively and are presented first.

Questions 5-7, 11, and 13 sought open ended answers and are summarised in the subsequent section.

²

See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire.

3.5.a. *The quantitative data*

Table 3.2 Question 1. n=187

Position in school at time of course attendance

Principal	135	72.2%
Deputy Principal	33	17.60%
Assistant Principal	12	6.4%
Senior Teacher	1	0.5%
Teacher	1	0.5%
Other	2	1.1%
No Response	3	1.6%
Total	187	100%

All the courses have been directed towards principals and that is reflected in the returns. Increasingly principals are encouraging their deputies and other senior staff to attend. On a few occasions groups of staff have attended together and used the seminar as the stimulus for team development. From time to time advisors, overseas visitors and specialists from other branches of the educational sector have attended as a means of broadening their own delivery systems.

Table 3.3 Question 2. n=187

Number of courses attended

One course	103	55.1%
Two courses	51	27.3%
Three courses	24	12.8%
Four courses	7	3.7%
More than four courses	2	1.00%
Total	187	100%

A group of principals have used these courses as their annual professional development activity. For three consecutive years the writer planned particularly for this group and designed courses which built directly on previous material. Over the last three years courses after the introductory course have been distinguished by a theme. The School Development process and a critical reflective method are still employed but applied to a theme. Most attending a “theme” course have already previously attended this basic course.

Table 3.4 Question 3. n=187

Other training/development with Stewart and Prebble material

Type of training/development	Frequency one	Frequency two	Frequency > two
Ministry Contract	26	12	11
Massey University Papers	11	8	8
College Diploma Courses	5	6	5
Other short courses	7	5	6
Other non-specified	39		
Totals	88	31	30
Total positive response	118	63.00%	

The fact that 118 or 63% of the group replying to the questionnaire had at the same time, or subsequently, studied the material and concepts in another forum is of interest.

Table 3.5 Question 4. n=187

Concepts operating in respondents' schools

Concept	Operating	Plan to Operate	Col 1&2 % n	Not Operating	Not answered
Quality Learning Circles	76	40	62.0%	34	37
Conceptual Job Descriptions	101	28	69.0%	33	25
Professional Development Consultation	128	8	72.7%	20	31
Four Phase School Development	86	17	55.1%	38	46
Analysis of Teacher Narrative	10	16	13.9%	89	72
Reflective Writing	54	20	39.5%	62	51

When the responses of those who have some of these major concepts in practice are combined with those who “intend to” (see column 3 above), the resulting percentages range from 40 - 73 for five of the six concepts, and 14% for “Analysis of teacher narrative”. The much lower score for this concept could be a result of its comparatively recent introduction into the course work and that many who replied to the survey had not been exposed to the idea.

Table 3.6 Question 8. n=187

To what extent is the concept of culture important in your school?

Value	frequency	percent
Very important	133	71.1%
Important	41	21.9%
Undecided/not answered	13	6.9%
Totals	187	100%

That 93% replied that the concept of culture was important or very important in their school indicates extremely high acceptance of the notion as a useful idea and has important ramifications for future work in these schools and others like them. It also provides a link to the assumptions which lay behind the training e.g.:

- the need to reflect on experience (Assumption 1);
- the focus on data gathering, and identifying artifacts (Sergiovanni, 1991) (Assumption 2); and that it is possible to make statements of shared understandings and beliefs (Assumption 5).

Table 3.7 Question 9. n=187

The management of School Development and Personal Professional Development

	Very important/ important		Undecided		Not important		Not answered	
One budget for both	104	55.6%	10	5.3%	20	10.7%	53	28.3%
SD school resp/PPD teacher resp	36	19.3%	15	8.0%	41	21.9%	95	50.8%
School supports some PPD	87	46.5%	7	3.7%	16	8.5%	77	41.2%
Each request treated as arises	41	21.9%	15	8.0%	28	15.0%	103	55.1%

This question was an attempt to understand if resources were skewed to whole of School Development rather than personal professional development. Discussion at recent courses had led the writer to believe that principals were dissatisfied with the effect that personal professional development, often paid for by the school, had on any specific School Development initiative. Teachers seemed to benefit personally but the contribution of their development to the school was obscure.

For those who replied to this question there seemed to be an acknowledgement that both School Development and personal professional development should be supported by the

school. The 19.3% who answered that personal professional development should be a teacher responsibility were probably indicating that teachers should continue their professional development as an integral part of their job.

Table 3.8 Question 10. n=187

Stimuli for teacher

	Very Important/ important		Undecided		Not important		Not answered	
Courses	117	62.2%	26	13.9%	24	12.8%	20	10.7%
Personal Study	100	53.5%	32	17.1%	27	14.4%	28	15.0%
Reflection	85	45.5%	35	18.7%	26	13.9%	41	21.9%
Group discussion/sharing activities	113	60.4%	19	10.2%	28	15.0%	27	14.4%
Staff meetings	104	55.6%	17	9.1%	41	21.9%	25	13.4%
ERO reports	41	21.9%	32	17.1%	64	34.2%	50	26.7%
MOE curriculum developments	108	57.8%	29	15.5%	24	12.9%	26	13.9%
Input from parents	69	36.9%	41	21.9%	32	17.1%	45	24.1%
Research articles and presentations	69	36.9%	38	20.3%	28	15.0%	52	27.8%

In analysing what principals thought stimulated teachers' thinking and development, there is still a narrow lead in their preference for traditional courses. This is closely followed by group discussion and sharing, MOE developments, and staff meetings. Reflection is seen as less important as are research activities and inputs from parents. ERO reports fall to the bottom of the preferences.

Table 3.9 Question 12. n=187

Recommend Reflective Principal Course to a colleague

	Yes		No		Not completed	
Would recommend RP to a colleague	182	97.3%	1	0.5%	4	2.1%

This very strong support is mirrored by the enrolments each year encouraged by principals who have attended in the past.

3.5.b. *Open ended questions overview*

The open ended section posed the following questions:

Q5 *What kind of training and development has best supported your development as a leader?*

This question was framed with the intention to elicit replies that would permit an analysis of personal development into categories such as reflective thinking versus task management and the possibility of participants acknowledging themselves and their staff as learners in a complex educational activity as opposed to a view of their staff in a more technical and managerial dimension (Brookfield, 1995; Cortazzi, 1993; Elliott, 1996; Smyth, 1991).

Q6 *What kind of training and development has best supported your change and development work in your school?*

It was proposed that this question would give participants the opportunity to discuss the elements of School Development that they were employing in their own schools and how particular forms of training impacted. It would also contribute to the data about how staff were perceived. Answers might also provide insights into leaders' thinking and "mindscape" (Sergiovanni, 1991) about their school in the dimension of school as

community versus school as an organisation to be managed hierarchically (Brookfield, 1995; Bryk *et al.*, 1994; Elliott, 1996; Grace, 1995). From answers to this question some indication might also be available as to the level of complexity principals saw in their work (Elliott, 1996).

Q7 *What kind of training and development experiences will you seek in the future?*

This question was phrased with the thought that it could give opportunities to talk about critical reflection and develop the concept of variety pool, where narrative and professional group discussion leads to increased understanding and improved performance. It was in response to this question that answers may be given that would clarify the articulation that leaders had made between practice, value and belief (Brookfield, 1995; Cortazzi, 1993; Grace, 1995; Smyth, 1991).

Q11 *When thinking about change and School Development and reviews, which concepts come to mind?*

From answers to this question some judgements would be able to be made regarding the use of specific concepts taught on the course (see Section 3.4.a.). Some indication may be apparent as to the extent, if any, that these notions had become integrated in the leaders' thinking. In addition it was expected that answers may demonstrate how leaders conceptualised what teachers do, and some of the factors that they use to define School Development and school improvement. For example, indications may be present demonstrating the view that teaching is a set of complex personal relationships (Elliott, 1996) and that there is a need for leaders to have a strong future orientation (Handy, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1988; West-Burnham, 1992).

Q13 *What if anything, stimulated at a Reflective Principal course, has stayed with you?*

This section was proposed with the view that it would encourage participants to further discuss the inputs that they would consider useful for their personal and professional study and the degree to which they would wish to collaborate with others. Here also was expected any references to the unpredictability and uncertainty associated with working within the educational sector. It was considered possible that some comments could contrast this uncertainty with the more predictable commercial model from which prescribed processes, such as job descriptions for example, had been derived (Campbell-Evans, 1993; Elliott, 1996; Sergiovanni, 1996).

3.5.c. *A summary of Questions 5, 6, and 7*

When discussing training and development that developed their thinking, impacted on their work and the kind that they would seek more of (Questions 5, 6 and 7), respondents' answers can be grouped into the following six categories:

- Reflective Principal courses;
- tertiary courses;
- informal groups;
- ministry of education contracts;
- informal study; and
- miscellaneous.

This section summarises answers to Questions 5, 6 and 7 under those headings. Within each of these categories responses were grouped under Personal Development, School Development and Future Development³.

³

See Appendix C.

Figure 3.2 Question 5, 6 and 7 Summary

Categories	Personal Development	School Development	Future Development
Reflective Principal Courses	learned to think analytically; consider the ideas of others; take part in discussion without constraint.	changed focus about my role; re-emphasised the place of theory in reaching practical outcomes.	Implementation of specific change strategies, e.g. <i>conceptual job description or Quality Learning Circles.</i>
Tertiary Courses	courses which stimulated new thinking and brought groups of like-minded people together.	looked for specific ideas and processes that could be shared with other staff.	no clear general focus; tendency to hope further opportunities will arise in response to emergent problems.
Informal Groups	just talking with others to share experiences; sometimes more structured with a mentor or facilitator.	many of these same groups were more focused on school related issues.	most answers focused "on the moment" rather than future orientated.
Ministry of Education Contracts	involvement in contract work as a learner and as a facilitator; working with a senior principal.	seen by some to be the major mechanism for School Development activities.	belief that new contracts would be available when needed; appearance of a new contract can divert school from previous planned development.
Informal Study	Reflective Principal courses occasionally sparked new interest in professional reading.	strategies for capitalising on informal interactions; formal time planned for teacher discussions.	desire to choose experiences which had a mix of theory and practice; preference for action research.
Miscellaneous	one respondent was looking for MBA type training.		two respondents signalled possible career changes.

3.5.d. *Summary of responses to Reflective Principal courses*

The actual words *Reflective Principal course* were used 50 times (27% of respondents) in answer to Question 5 *What kind of change and development has best supported your development as a leader?* In addition, it was clear from the context that a further 32 references were made to these specific courses in this question. In total, therefore, 44% of those replying thought these kind of courses best supported their own leadership development. Some typical comments are included below.

At the heart of the School Development approach that was the basis of the course structure was the concept of reflective thinking. Presentations and readings were an integral part of the course work and participants were encouraged to spend some time each day developing their own reflective process. In addition reflective action procedures were modelled by the presenters whenever possible and where appropriate. Not surprisingly, therefore, there were a number of responses emphasising this notion such as, “Training [that has supported my development as a leader is] where I have been required to think about what I do and why, mixed with input of new ideas” (Text units 26-27: Node, 11) and, “Initial Reflective Principals course changed my whole thinking about my role and the introduction to reflective practise was invaluable”(Text units 431-433: Node, 11).

It was intended that these courses should provide opportunities for practitioners to share their successful practice, and significant amounts of time have been devoted to group discussions from the inceptions of the programmes. School leaders are invited to bring with them to the course, examples of their thinking and practice that illustrate how they have solved particular problems. During these sessions a variety of group processes have also been introduced, and the course members have had opportunities to practice particular techniques of analysis. While the focus of such discussions has been appreciated, so also has the now much less frequent opportunity within schools and within local groups, to hold extensive discussions without interruption as is illustrated with the following comment “Reflective Principal course enabled me to meet other ‘like

minded' people to discuss common problems away from the work place" (Text units 29-31: Node, 11).

To aid connectiveness, all course members have been expected to focus their learning towards some on-going problem or challenge that they currently experience in their school. An underlying assumption here was that many principals needed unpressured time both to consider the effectiveness of their present procedures, and to evaluate the manner in which colleagues in similar situations reacted differently. This was picked up by a number of comments such as, "sessions where there has been 3-4 days concentrated focus, development and reflection" were my best support (Text units 74-75: Node, 11), and training and development that suits me includes "theory and research linked to practical outcomes for the school and time for discussion and planning. Participation such as this whereby theory and research is related to implementation including an analysis of the practical possibilities" is ideal (Text units 479-483: Node, 11).

These courses have been seen by some to be an alternative to the more specific subject or curriculum orientated courses that have been promoted by the Ministry of Education since 1989. From their inception the courses have taken the perspective that schools must develop and sustain a particular learning culture that supports the form of teaching and learning most appropriate to the student group who attend the school. This is consistent with Block (1987), Campbell-Evans (1993) and Fullan (1991). It is the school culture that supports the introduction of new curriculum initiatives not vice versa. Comments such as, "I prefer a 'global' approach rather than a narrow such as a curriculum area. I found the Reflective course helpful in the way of a general stimulation and challenging. If thoughtful in approach I feel we see things in a different light as a result" (Text units 375-378: Node, 11), supported this view. Both the continuing enrolments in this course and statements like, "the Reflective Principal courses have helped me more than any other form of training and development" (Text units 204-205: Node, 11) suggest strong support for this form of development activity. In answer to Question 12, which asked if respondents would recommend a Reflective Principal course to a colleague, 182 (97.3%) replied in the affirmative.

Whereas much of the seminar procedure was aimed at personal leadership development the questionnaire probed for comment about whether any of the learning influenced or supported School Development initiatives after returning to the school. Did the Reflective Principal course encourage a process of thinking and action which persisted into the routine operations of the school? In answer to Question 6 which sought comment as to the kind of training and development that best supported change and development work in their schools, participants made 47 (25%) direct references to the Reflective Principal courses and an additional 30 indirect references to the course experience. In total 77 (41%) of those who replied viewed these courses as the best support. No other single activity was mentioned by more than 10% of the respondents.

Table 3.10 Preferred Training and Development Activities

Kind of Training and Development	Frequency	
	Reflective Principal Courses	77
Sundry Courses/Contracts	19	10%
School Based Activities	16	9%
Tertiary Study	16	9%
Specific Task Focus	14	7%
Informal Groups	11	6%
Individual Reading	11	6%
Advisor/External Change Agent	3	2%
Curriculum	2	1%
No Answer	18	9%
Totals	187	100%

It has been noticeable over the last few years that some principals are choosing to send their senior management personnel to these courses. In a number of instances they have chosen to come together as a group. This trend is reflected in the following extract that

“Reflective Principal is a must for anyone wanting a senior management position” (Text units 4-5: Node, 12).

Although the question asked for comment about support for school change, there were statements which demonstrated the impact of the courses on the way principals thought about their work and the emphasis that had been placed on continued reading. For many principals attendance at a course of this nature represented the first sustained opportunity to think about the way they worked and to use a literature base to explore possible future alternatives. Many, perhaps most, had received no formal training upon becoming a principal. For example, “the initial Reflective Principals course changed my whole thinking about my role and the introduction to reflective practise was invaluable” (Text units 417-422: Node, 12) and, “David’s emphasis on the need to read and do more reading [has affected how I work] - I’m a reading junkie” (Text units 291-292: Node, 12). Other comments linked ideas presented at the course to practical outcomes with the notion that “theory, and research linked to practical outcomes for school [was useful, as was] training to ensure time for discussion and planning” in a busy school schedule (Text units 459-460: Node, 12). It was clear, that for some there was a connection between the work that was completed during the Reflective Principal week and their on going School Development. It is impossible, however, to attribute any causal link here.

The answers in these two sections were very positive but formed less than half of the total responses. The remaining comments relating to the things that supported their development as leaders and the change strategies that they were endeavouring to implement in their schools are spread across the other five broad categories: tertiary courses; informal groups; Ministry of Education contracts; informal study; and the catch all, miscellaneous. No other single category of training and development initiative was selected by more than 10% of those answering.

Q11 *When thinking about change and School Development and reviews, which concepts come to mind?*

Answers were analysed under the following headings:

- reflection;
- collaboration;
- structure;
- culture; and
- general analysis.

These concepts were chosen because they best represented ideas which formed the basis for the sessions at the Reflective Principal courses. All courses made use of these concepts to organise the content and background reading. Participants were also encouraged to select procedures from their own schools to illustrate and illuminate these notions (see also Appendix C).

Figure 3.3 Question 11 Summary

Concepts	Frequency		Node	Focus
reflection	21	11%	141	Thinking and analysis linked to working with others.
collaboration	14	7%	142	Working together as a team.
structure	34	18%	143	Structure follows data gathering and collaboration.
culture	26	14%	144	Shared beliefs and values.
general analysis	53	28%	145	From panic through new curricula to respect for people.

The final open ended question (Q13) asked *What if anything, stimulated at a Reflective Principal course, has stayed with you?* In this section the following concepts were the focus of the analysis:

- references to reflection;
- references to collaboration;
- references to consideration of structural change; and
- references to culture.

Figure 3.4 Question 12 Summary

References	Frequency		Node	Focus
reflection	56	30%	1411	Improving personal job satisfaction and school effectiveness
collaboration	14	7%	1421	Collaborating with other school leaders.
structure	101	54%	1431	Implications for leadership role and specific processes.
culture	35	19%	1441	Understanding present conditions and the centrality of the concept of culture in a successful change strategy.
reading	25	13%	146	Reading for professional development and to inform reflective writing.

3.6 The Propositions as Indicators

The propositions (see Section 2.2) developed from personal experience and research findings are used in this section to provide an organising framework. They are a means of grouping the data in the search for understandings about how principals and school leaders construct their mind sets and School Development plans through which to work and respond to outside influences.

3.6.a. Proposition 1.

It is possible to gain insights into principal behaviour by examining their use and adoption of certain key concepts (e.g. the four phase development sequence,

conceptual job descriptions, quality learning circles, and the concept of school culture (Stewart and Prebble, 1993)).

Here the search was for reference to structural concepts which had been introduced during the courses. Although most of these strategies are in the public domain through various publications, they do form, as previously discussed, some of the central strategies taught in the Reflective Principal courses. As a consequence of this emphasis and the manner in which they were presented, their adoption may indicate a commitment to a particular pattern of behaviour. The following summary results were obtained:

- four phase development 36 instances;
- quality learning circles 42 instances;
- PDC 8 instances;
- conceptual job description 17 instances;
- sigmoid curve 2 instances;
- narrative 5 instances; and
- school culture 73 instances.

In one case the school had adopted *conceptual job descriptions* and wished to expand the notion further into the area of staff appraisal. The respondent specified that the focus would be on “linking staff appraisal with conceptual job descriptions and developing the processes” (Text units 34-35: Node, 143).

Another wished to explore the Quality Learning Circles concept in a more deliberate way and declared that they intended to concentrate on “collegial reading, discussion and practical experiences e.g. 1996 Quality Learning Circles” (Text units 432-433: Node, 143). In addition some answers contained multiple concepts where two or more ideas were grouped together and the example below demonstrates a combination of the importance of research to “chart your way through the swamp” and the need for a collaborative approach to the four phase School Development process.

[When I think about School Development I remember] the “swamp” metaphor, using SD model, and the importance of going through the stages of this, involving staff and community in process. The importance of data gathering and sharing results to assess where at and to set new directions, and writing down the plan [either in diagram or mind map or essay form] (Text units 581-585: Node, 143).

The acknowledgement that having sound theory gave a good base from which to start was also expressed by participants. The next example also confirms a commitment to a notion of core values with the use of the word *embedded*. This reply stated that with School Development there is a “need to have a theoretical base. The model of change needs to be embedded in the school” (Text units 603-604: Node, 143).

An emphasis on data gathering as a prerequisite to the consideration of a structural change has been a central thread of this programme and others. Acknowledgement of this concept was evident in twenty responses, one of which is illustrated below.

[With School Development we use the questions] What is the problem, who is involved, what do we want to see happen, what data needs to be gathered, who will gather it, what happens to the data, who uses it, will it solve the problem (Text units 371-373: Node, 143)?

The questionnaire gave participants the opportunity to signal their intention to implement some of the key concepts from the course or to note that their development was still in the introductory phase and a representative reply stated that, “I am working to a plan to move to Quality Learning Circles and P.D.C.’s. We have identified our school’s culture and values and examined current group processes and conceptual job descriptions” (Text units 118-120: Node, 1431).

Occasionally, educational leaders who are working as itinerant advisors have attended the course and as they have the opportunity to visit many schools the following comment

is useful. Clearly there is considerable agreement between this process and the work of the advisor who wrote, "I see the QLC's in action in a number of schools and they work effectively and our input as advisors fits in well" (Text units 494-495: Node, 1431).

Most school leaders, who have attended these courses have found the concept of culture as a particularly powerful tool for both understanding why things are as they are, and for planning future School Development activities. The next group of responses mirror that centrality.

[What has stayed with me is] the importance of school climate/culture - morale etc. - the "global issues" which precede the effectiveness of all else (Text units 23-24: Node, 1441)...Positive collegial environment where school culture is understood and valued by all needs to be in place before effective change occurs (Text units 131-133: Node, 1441)...[Useful for me has been] the definition of a core culture, the concept of culture, reflection as a leadership skill and practise, the holistic view of development and change, the importance of research, the importance of starting with current strengths, and human dignity (Text units 283-288: Node, 1441).

For one, a leader but not yet a principal, the course raised anxiety rather than leading to reliable solutions.

[I still have] a general feeling of inadequacy in the level of deep thought about what and why I do things. 90% of my thoughts about teaching are intuitive leaps. I never really got into standing back and looking at the "big picture". Maybe I'm scared that if I did I wouldn't like what I saw, but personally do not want to commit more time to it to fix it! Maybe I'm just too shallow. I feel a bit intimidated by the Massey/University thing! And my principal has attended (Text units 372-379: Node, 1441).

3.6.b. *Proposition 2.*

Although it is not possible to predict specific outcomes from development activities, use of a specific range of processes could signal allegiance to a particular mindscape (Sergiovanni, 1991).

From across the questions responses were stated from which can be inferred a strong preference for a collaborative School Development style. Grouped under this rubric are a variety of expressions. Weak forms of collaborative work which may be expressed as “consultation” would form one polar extreme while expressions such as “transformational practice” would form another. In between were such terms as:

- consensus approach;
- collegiality;
- cooperation;
- team approach;
- shared decision making;
- working collectively;
- community;
- shared ownership;
- shared vision;
- synergy; and
- brainstorming in groups.

With the emphasis that there has been over the last several years regarding the importance of collaboration in schools, it is unlikely that any link back could be made from these answers to the Reflective Principal course work. All that can be said with certainty, is that notions of collaboration are strong within this group. It is viewed as much as a survival strategy as it is a valued belief as is illustrated by the following extract.

[The constant change causes us first to think] more work - but we are trying to reduce change to its essence so as to have maximum change for minimum work, while working collectively to try and reduce suspicion and increase understanding... (Text units 203-206: Node, 142).

Coming through some of the answers is the concept of the school as a learning community and as a consequence a place where collaboration is a necessary condition of professional practice. One leader wrote that School Development means, “developing a staff as a team of professional [people]- able and willing to take the initiative and enrich the school” (Text units 538-539: Node, 142). Other references were made to “bottom-up” development, signalling an understanding of the notion of collaboration and sharing of roles within the school.

When asked (Q13) to state those things that had stayed in their minds since the course, there were 14 references to collaboration. As the concept of collaborative leadership in education institutions is widely accepted, however, this level of response could be expected. Most school leaders would accept the notion that collaborative leadership is desirable even if some still exercise some measure of autocratic behaviour. One of the intentions of the course work had been to inculcate a desire by participants to adopt a more collaborative style within their institutions. What emerged in some of these answers was the desire to interact and collaborate more with other leaders. The sense of isolation which has intensified since 1989 was echoed in the following summarised extracts.

What has stayed with me is:

- the knowledge that one is not “alone”(Text units 99-99: Node, 1421);
- time to “share” with others - problems, successes (Text units 263-263: Node, 1421);
- the worth of meeting with other principals to discuss, challenge, question, re-examine with enough time to do so (Text units 418-419: Node, 1421).

Others used this section to confirm their adherence to the twin notions of reflection and collaboration with one participant emphasising, “the importance of time to reflect and the opportunity for teachers to share, discuss, self evaluate, ideologies, etc” (Text units 351-352: Node, 1421) and another putting the group of concepts together in stressing the “importance of leadership/team work/commitment/sharing and reflecting” (Text units 381-382: Node, 1421).

Although answers which addressed the concept of collaboration form a rather small group, it is of interest to this analysis that the connection between reflection, critique, and working with others was positively associated with this model of professional development. Being a school leader was clearly demanding and time consuming but there was no evidence that participants in this survey saw education as a particularly complex activity needing unique educational styles of control, supervision or development.

3.6.c. *Proposition 3.*

Critical reflection is of central importance both for principals and staff (Brookfield, 1995; Canning, 1991; Elliott, 1996; Griffiths and Tann, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1991; Smyth, 1991). Reflection is deemed to become critical when it contains two purposes:

The first is to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame and distort educational processes and interactions. The second is to question assumptions and practices that seem to make our teaching lives easier but actually work against our own best long term interests (Brookfield, 1995:18).

The concept of reflection was used or referred to 21 times by those who answered Question 11, and 56 times in answer to Question 13. Many of the responses were single words assuming common understanding and common meaning. For others, the concept

of reflection was grouped with other strategies which gave some indication as to the relative importance placed on this concept. For example, concepts associated with School Development are, “consultation and plenty of reflection and discussion, shared vision - having everyone on board” (Text units 85-86: Node, 141)... “reflecting on where we are/what is happening now? What do we want to happen? How will this be achieved? Review. The concept of a ‘moving school’ is important” (Text units 225-227: Node, 141).

Other answers gave some indication about the nature of reflective practice that they had engaged in and their commitment to the kind of structured questions suggested by Smyth (1989). They asked, “Where are we at? Where do we want to be? What do we do? Why do we do things like that? How can we improve learning and teaching” (Text units 250-251: Node, 141)? The collegial aspect and setting for reflection within a supportive group was perceived as important and is contained in this excerpt where the writer stated the “need to reflect and share discussion in a peer non-threatening situation” (Text units 383-384: Node, 141). For many of these school leaders the concept of reflection has become a necessary part of their School Development strategy and a means for expanding discussion and analysis of teaching and learning in their schools.

Four made reference to a “swamp” analogy which had been used to illustrate the kind of work that teachers engage in. For them it had become representative of a different way of thinking and what had stayed with them was “the need for reflection - the image of teachers as swamp dwellers leaping about from dry patch to dry patch - the need to get up on a hill and see the whole picture” (Text units 213-215: Node, 1411).

As well as this acknowledgement that “critical reflection” required analytical thinking, one answer linked the importance of theory to this concept. It was expressed as “theory supporting practice” and consequently raised the question of whether in this school theory was used to “inform practice”. A number of references (8) were made to the link between writing and reflection. Some of the specific aspects of the course, such as making time to encourage teachers to think and analyse their own practice were

expressed as, “Think/reflect - Can’t change the way staff act until you change the way they think” (Text units 485-487: Node, 1411). For some, it would seem that the course legitimised “thinking” as a worthwhile activity to engage in and they expressed this as now perceiving “the notion of reflection as a valid process” (Text units 544-544: Node, 1411). Whereas teachers talking with each other about their practice may have been understood as a characteristic of school staff rooms, the concept of critical reflection gave this process a more central part in the staff development scheme leading one respondent to observed that a dominant memory of the course was, “the concept of reflection and the importance of teachers talking both individually and collectively” (Text units 267-268: Node, 1411).

From the answers, also, it can be surmised that the actual experience of reflection, critical analysis with colleagues, and time to write was a significant influence on their own personal development. One even illustrated how thinking reflectively had led to a career change!

I found the Reflective Principal course very valuable - during my “reflection” I came to the decision that it was time for me to move on and not because I was unhappy, but for a number of reasons it was time to try something else. I am presently leading a team from all over the country which is developing a new Religious Education curriculum for Catholic primary schools in A/NZ (Text units 91-97: Node, 1411).

3.6.d. *Proposition 4.*

Principal development and School Development activities cannot always be separated (Campbell-Evans, 1993; Dimmock, 1993; Sparkes and Bloomer, 1993).

A search through the answers was conducted in an attempt to understand where the motivation for particular personal study was contained and the connections that it might

have with School Development. This proved somewhat elusive but for some the Reflective Principal courses provided initial motivation to be better informed themselves and offered a range of possible content to consider for the on-going work in their schools. Once started on professional reading in this way, personal interests seemed to sustain the practice. In discussing personal development one principal stated that “the Reflective Principal course was very good for this as it gave me a good overview of a number of areas and time to read and think, but much of where I’m at comes from my own reading and thinking rather than from any formal training programme” (Text units 510-513: Node, 51).

In addition, contact with other principals, matters raised at principal meetings and the need to support some of the changes that were occurring in their work, stimulated further informal study and professional reading. For one at least, who wrote that s/he used, “background readings/ knowledge to support changes in [my] leadership style” (Text units 420-421: Node, 51), it seemed the study was in the nature of a post hoc justification.

Answers grouped under the heading of *informal study for School Development* were somewhat more expressive and added weight to the assumption, that school leaders generally, apply more attention to School Development than to personal professional development. By the very nature of the way that schools work, much of the day to day interaction amongst the staff is informal. Some schools are able to capitalise on this dynamic and programme some more regular meetings as well. The implicit, unstated assumption is that School Development will help “get the work done” firstly and if there is time left over some analysis and critique can be employed.

For others, an on-going attendance at Reflective Principal courses provided the incentive to follow a particular model of change and to keep up with some personal professional work. One expresses this as School Development and personal development being maintained through, “ongoing study via Reflective Principal courses. The change model

has proved very effective. The examination of school culture was paramount” (Text units 76-78: Node, 52).

Contained within a number of the responses were statements reflecting the intensification of teachers’ and principals’ work since the 1989 changes. The competing demands of personal returns of one kind or another, seemed to regularly squeeze the amount of time that would previously have been spent in professional dialogue. Time was officially designated for routine matters but informal discussion of professional practice was left entirely to individuals. To a degree this has probably always been so, but in these times of rapid and turbulent change it may be necessary to provide appropriate occasions where teachers can share insights from their work with each other.

In a survey of these comments with a view to discover preferred methods of professional development the residential format that has become standard and well know for the Reflective Principal course was dominant. Representative of the answers was the statement that this participant would look for, “a mixture of theory and practice and courses which involve academic reading. [There should be] time for personal thinking as well as group interaction/discussion/ brainstorming” (Text units 183-185: Node, 53); and another would seek, “refresher courses that run for a short period followed by a longer intensive study period [providing] a balance of theory and action research” (Text units 313-314: Node, 53).

An unexpected category which emerged from the answers was that of reading and reflective writing. Time is allowed at the courses for both these activities and discussions are enlivened with the expectation that participants will substantiate their contributions with reference to the available literature. Time is also taken to present and discuss in some depth, a variety of recent research papers. It is interesting to observe that this has been a stimulus for some leaders to re-evaluate the time they give to this activity. Some express it as, “the need to read and write” (Text units 35-35: Node, 146), “making time for reflection, especially written reflection. The importance of professional reading” (Text units 258-259: Node, 146), and “the need to read and do more reading - I now

have an allowance for books in my prof development budget” (Text units 339-340: Node, 146).

Others combined this aspect of their professional life with reflection and made statements expressing “the importance of THINKING, writing ideas, reading” (Text units 393-393: Node, 146) [emphasis contributor].

Answers such as these to a question asking for comment on aspects of the course that have remained important for them would tend to suggest that an emphasis on thinking, reading and writing had not been important considerations for themselves until this time. It is paradoxical that people leading institutions where the main purpose is to inculcate these particular behaviours have themselves ignored the imperative to demonstrate their own commitment to learning.

While informal study is an integral part in the life of a professional, responses analysed in this section would suggest that it is becoming a much smaller part in the life of an educational leader. They would seem to prefer some more systematic and formal mechanism into which time for personal and School Development can be scheduled. Where informal study does exist and persist, it is often a consequence of previous events, such as the attendance at a course or participation in a Ministry of Education contract.

3.6.e. *Proposition 5.*

Successful School Development is an educational rather than a managerial process.

Data from previous proposition sections overlap with Proposition 5. This is particularly true in regard to the material on development processes. As a consequence this discussion will focus more carefully on comments which used the notion of school culture as a mechanism for guiding the School Development initiatives.

There were twenty six references to culture in the answers to Question 11, and thirty five in answer to Question 13. Statements ranged from the single word “culture”, to a variety of interpretations of the notion. Some illustrated their thinking being influenced by writers such as Hopkins *et al.* (1994) when they suggested that, “you must change the thinking before you can change the structure or practices i.e. culture first - processes second” (Text units 398-399: Node, 144) or Sergiovanni (1991) when they defined School Development as, “assisting staff to become secure and confident in their professionalism through them increasing their personal professional knowledge and the school developing a ‘team’ culture” (Text units 440-442: Node, 144).

These kind of answers demonstrate the way that the concept of culture has become an integral part of how many school leaders think about their school’s development and change with one respondent stating that the courses had inculcated in his/her mind that “culture allowed the addressing of global issues which precede the effectiveness of all else” (Text unit 23-24: Node, 1441). Knowing how teachers think about what they do is now, for many, fundamental to fully understanding what teachers do. The concept of culture has become a powerful tool for professional and School Development.

A survey of the reasons for selecting tertiary courses for personal and professional development indicated that respondents seemed to be seeking experiences that both stimulated their thinking about their work, and that brought them into contact with like mannered colleagues expressing their preference as “personal study centred around courses such as ASTU and Reflective Principal [where there is] time to share experiences and discuss issues with other leaders” (Text units 43-45: Node, 21). It is interesting that the Reflective Principal courses were viewed as similar to the Advanced Study for Teachers units which were conducted from the Colleges of Education and M.Ed Admin vacation courses conducted by Massey University. Some sought training and development opportunities which were relatively long term and stated that “the ASTU was valuable and working with colleagues over a year was useful”(Text units 60-61: Node, 21). Although there has been a strong push by central authorities to make much of the in-service work with schools site based, others wished to attend courses where

they were able to spend time away from their schools at “live in” or university vacation courses.

Not all the respondents had a clear plan for how they might use offerings from tertiary institutions for their future professional development, but those who did mentioned courses at Massey University, the Christchurch College of Education Diploma in Educational Management, ASTU papers and the possibility of some unspecified business courses. A marked degree of uncertainty was apparent in this section. Individual principals seemed to find it difficult to decide what might be best for them and this is confirmed by the following response, “I have looked into the various educational administration programmes on offer, but haven’t committed myself to any as yet -the Dip Ed Admin from Massey looks most promising” (Text units 451-453: Node, 23).

Answers were scanned to retrieve references to the effects that informal groups had on development activities. A rather small group of replies were isolated. As would be expected, informal groups of principals met from time to time to discuss emergent issues. In some cases the organisation provided the incentive to read a range of relevant articles. Occasionally a senior principal acted as the mentor and facilitator for the group. It was clear from associated comments that some of these informal groups had grown out of Ministry contracts and other more formal associations between the schools. Some of these groups visited each other’s schools and stated their appreciation of these “prolonged visits to other schools” (Text units 519-520: Node, 31). My interpretation would be that these *prolonged* visits would have a strong educational content. Some made mention of work which is addressed in Case Study B.

I like the opportunity to share ideas with colleagues - and as such the Mentor approach is great. It keeps you “on track” knowing that follow-up is immanent - and the informal sounding-board. The collegiality is very useful. Your courses facilitate the establishment of these colleague networks (Text units 150-153: Node, 32).

Although it would be dangerous to make any wide ranging decisions as a result of the material gathered in these sections, there is a distinct possibility that large numbers of school leaders spend little time or energy contemplating the possible benefits of further study, either for themselves or for their schools. There would appear to be a tendency to rely on avenues of assistance being readily available when a specific problem appears in the school. This was often the case prior to 1989 but specific support is now becoming scarce and increasingly a charge against school budgets. It is difficult to surmise how leaders operating in this mode, in regard to their own futures, would act in facilitating and planning further formal educational opportunities for their staff. There is little evidence to suggest long term School Development planning in an educational or managerial sense. All that can be said with confidence is that those references that do occur relate to experiences offered for further education.

3.7 Implications for Principal and Leadership Development: Insights from the Case Study

Since 1989 and the administrative changes in New Zealand schools, there has been a concerned drive to locate a significant amount of the professional development initiatives at the local school level. Although a number of these development and training proposals have been focused at principals and boards of trustee participants, the objectives have, in the main, been to effect immediate change in classroom procedures. Alternatively, the Reflective Principal courses described in this case study, have as their major objective, challenging and widening the way school leaders think about what they do. A number of specific processes, designed to operationalise particular theoretical positions, have been presented to demonstrate how aspects of this kind of thinking would work in schools. Each of the Reflective Principal courses has been deliberately scheduled in a venue quite removed from the school situation. It is clear from the responses that participants have appreciated this separation. It is also clear that a number have considered the separation to be sufficiently important for them to offer similar opportunities to other middle level leaders on their staff. Two kinds of changed principal

behaviour would appear to have resulted from the course experience. For some, the course stimulated them intellectually and inspired them to think differently about their own role in the school. For others, a particular process gained their attention and on their return they set about implementing a particular change strategy. Some, of course combined both these approaches.

3.7.a. *Developing a theory of change*

There is some evidence that the courses assist principals to develop a theory of change that enables them to manage more effectively. For many this begins with them making sense of how a school works. One example is how the Schön (1983) division of *objective knowledge* and *knowledge in action* has proved a useful way for principals to give value to the knowledge that their teachers already have in their heads (Section 1.1.a.). This, in turn, has enabled the particular change strategy with which the school is presently concerned to be informed by the current practice valued by the staff.

Critical to the development of a functioning change strategy would appear to be the adoption of a transformational leadership style. Here the concepts of school culture and school as community would appear to be important. Contained in many of the answers was the thought that the course raised the importance of reading and being able to incorporate a wide range of contemporary research when devising the framework for a school change strategy.

3.7.b. *Implementing a School Development process*

The market model of change, currently in ascendance in almost all areas of New Zealand life, forces managers to look for relatively short term outcomes. The same reasoning applied to teaching can result in important and well developed teaching and learning strategies being abandoned as their effect and influence is long term. In addressing these and similar issues, school leaders are forced to confront teacher quality issues. It is significant that processes like Quality Learning Circles, now widely published but first

taught through these courses, allow debate about these issues and at the same time, provide the outline for an alternative way of working through the teacher quality issues.

These courses enabled school leaders to take part in a range of critical reflective activities in relatively safe and relaxed surroundings. Along with the readings and presented material it is clear that these experiences actively influence the kind of School Development process that these people then realised in their schools. For many it seems to be the only opportunity that they have received to date where they are able to marshal and gather support for educational arguments that enable them to pursue a course distinct from the “commercial advantage” viewpoint and a course which emphasises learning, thinking, and making meaning for all who attend the school. It is this renewed emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning which many have taken as the central aspect of their School Development initiatives.

3.7.c. The need for “follow-on” support

Spin off from these courses has also been significant. Ministry of Education contracts have linked directly into the cohort who have been to the courses by requiring, in one instance, that all the *mentors* working in the project had previously attended a Reflective Principal course. In a subsequent contract, many of the mentors had in addition been participating principals in the previous year. It is not surprising, therefore, that many principal net-works have grown directly from this work. Individuals, and some groups, have also been stimulated, through such a beginning, to revisit tertiary study.

With the paucity of principal support and development agencies, since 1989, there has developed a significant role for university programmes and centres. There is, for example the relativity between a model for leadership and a model for learning that a university centre could develop in a working partnership with groups of existing or aspiring school leaders. It concerns the kind of behaviours that principals might model that could influence teacher and student learning in the school.

Clearly, Reflective Principal courses cannot stand alone. They do offer experiences that would be difficult to replicate in other situations, but participants need support once they return to their schools. Such support can be provided by net-worked groups, by engaging in some cooperative participant research, or by enrolling in some appropriate post graduate education. Difficulties arise because of the competition between contiguous schools and, as a consequence, the groups that evolve are often separate from local principal clusters. Another role, usefully exercised by a university is the provision of group formation through bringing together leaders who have shared similar development exercises such as Reflective Principal courses.

3.7.d. How do principals and school leaders construct and operationalise the framework for their work?

In the present climate of site-based management but centrally located curriculum and centrally mandated accountability, school leaders are often driven by the pragmatic demands of which return is next due, or which report needs to be completed today. The framework for their work is in this way constructed for them by external events. Attendance at courses like the Reflective Principal at the very least, alert them to the possibility that there are other possible ways of working. Furthermore, a move within the school to greater collaboration and professional responsibility may reduce, rather than increase, the demands on them for decisions.

If it is important to ensure that school leaders have a consistent educational focus in their work then it is clear that courses such as these have a significant impact in that direction. Courses are required that combine both a critical reflective approach and particular processes, true to that notion, that solve issues of the day. It is through this combination of discussion, reading and implementing specific strategies that principals and school leaders construct their framework.

The thinking and doing are combined and overlapping. The Quality Learning Circle process has been important here as it has enabled a critical reflective process to permeate

teachers' conversations and reinforce this behaviour from leaders. Reflective Principal courses may be a necessary first step in ensuring that principals and school leaders integrate critical reflective thought and action into their School Development programmes.

Chapter 4: Case Study B

THE MENTOR_94 PROGRAMME

4.1 Introduction

During the final sessions of Reflective Principal courses, participants often spoke about their need to be members of supportive principal groups. Due to the new competition for students and resources that was apparent in many areas, many of the local groups of contiguous schools no longer shared a forum where professional matters could be discussed. As a consequence of their work together during the Reflective Principal course some new groups were forming where travel to a central location for meetings was possible. In discussion with Ministry of Education officials it was suggested that it may be possible to capitalise on both the experience that many principals had received through the Reflective Principal courses and at the same time build a number of professionally focussed principal groups.

It was proposed that a principal who had attended a Reflective Principal course would act as mentor and facilitator and gather another three or four principals into a group which would work and meet together regularly over a school year. All the principals in the group, including the mentor would follow a systematic School Development sequence over this period and report on their progress to the researcher. In addition, the researcher would provide appropriate readings to support each individual initiative, and from time to time convene additional training for the mentor principals and whole of group meetings for the participants.

A computer bulletin board service was put in place for the mentor principals and any of the participant schools who also wished to join. All the accounting, reporting and sharing of information was done via this medium entitled *Schools Sharing Information Network* (SSINet). Regular updates of the projects and other school related materials were shared across the whole group through this network.

The project became a Ministry of Education funded programme under the title of “Principal Development: Curriculum Leadership”. Its stated purpose was to assist principals develop the notion of collaborative and purposeful teacher development in their own schools.

4.2 Rationale

For many principals, courses such as *The Reflective Principal* inducted them into a way of exercising leadership in their schools that had support from the contemporary educational literature. Furthermore, courses such as these proposed a number of specific processes which demonstrated how some of these principles could be put into practice. In order for individuals to persist with these concepts some form of follow-on support was thought to be necessary. If the first call for support was from a local group committed to sharing School Development experiences, it was hypothesised that individual development initiatives would be more persistent and more effective.

Support for this view comes from the early work of Parker (1977, cited in Lieberman and Grolnick, 1997:193), where loosely formed groups or networks that were found to be successful shared a common purpose, had a sense of commitment both for the support of each other and to share information, were led by a facilitator and met voluntarily as equals. More recent work in this area confirms these parameters and emphasises the commitment to the group that is engendered when members feel in control of the agenda and undertake work which is “responsive to their questions, their learning, and their need for support...” (ibid:199).

In order to create a sense of unity and common understandings, all groups agreed to pursue an individual School Development initiative loosely based around the four phase development sequence (see Section 1.4.b.) and emphasising a reflective element (see Section 1.1.d.). Individual schools were free to choose themes that were appropriate to them but all were encouraged to engage in critical reflective practice, particularly during

their meeting time together. This generally meant that one principal would lead off with a narrative description illustrating the stage of that school's development and the others in the group would subsequently explore for further meaning with such questions as, "What does this mean?", "How did you get to be this way?", "What alternatives do you have?", "How might you do things differently now?" (Smyth, 1989).

As all the mentors had attended one or more Reflective Principal course they were conversant with a range of appropriate theoretical constructs and had a folder of readings to support their thinking and advice. The mentor principals were also expected to be engaged in a School Development initiative and to take their turn as narrator at the regular meetings. In this way it was reasoned that the conditions for effective groups would be established and that considerable momentum for development of the chosen theme would occur. From time to time, input sessions would be held, managed by the researcher and targeted variously at the group of mentors, at individual mentor-participant groups, or involving the total cohort of schools broken into two groups. Consequently information from across the groups could be disseminated, problems resolved and new input delivered to maintain unique and unexpected occurrences. At all times equal weight was placed on participant knowledge and the research literature, a position confirmed by Lieberman and Grolnick (1997:205), in their conclusion that "what sets networks apart from conventional professional development activities is that the content knowledge of school-based educators *and* outside knowledge are both recognised as important sources for agenda building".

4.2.a. *Key concepts and activities*

1. *Reflection*

For most participants at Reflective Principal courses, the idea of stimulating reflective practice amongst teachers at their schools was an attractive one. For themselves, however, the concept of critical reflective practice was seldom an integral part of their work. For many the reflective stance that they were required to take during the course

was both novel and somewhat difficult. The groups in this case study were designed to provide opportunities where critical reflective concepts could be discussed and practised. Many of the principal groups in the project used their meeting time to practice their own interactive reasoning as it was a skill that they wished to establish more firmly for themselves and within their schools. These sessions provided a form of rehearsal for processes that were then introduced with staff groups.

2. *Use of narrative*

Although “telling stories”, in the context of illustrating professional practice, is a common occurrence amongst many occupational groups, there is often resistance to using narrative in a more formal sense because of the possibility that a professional judgement may be challenged. A development of narrative through incorporating the use of metaphor was used with good effect by a number of groups and the recasting of real events into different images provided the appropriate distancing safeguards. On a number of occasions, some particularly strong messages were exchanged, to good effect, using this device. For many groups, the use of reflective questions when applied to each others’ narrative became a regular part of the group meetings. An example of this process was published in *The New Zealand Principal* (Stewart, 1994:26-7) and is attached as Appendix H.

3. *Readings*

A folder of selected readings which had been started at the Reflective Principal course by the mentors was progressively built up by all the participants over the project period. Many of the readings were presented at Mentor seminars as lecture discussions. Such discussions were often later emulated at the group meetings. In this way ideas and research findings from other studies were interpreted into the local themes.

4. *Understanding of schools as learning communities*

Since the advent of *Tomorrow's Schools* there has been something of a tension between the organisational and learning requirements of schools. Much of this tension is still present in the confusion between “governance” and “management” which first appeared in the *Lough Report* (1990). This review of the education reform implementation process used these terms in distinguishing between the responsibilities of the new boards of trustees and school principals.

This course took the view that thinking of schools as communities, albeit somewhat special kinds of communities, could put this tension to constructive use. As a consequence schools were encouraged to think of themselves as “learning communities” rather than as organisations and to accept that in communities, roles were allocated and performed differently from organisations. Communities were driven from the centre whereas organisations emphasised mandated roles. In communities it was the values that held it together as distinct from the control of an organisation (see Section 1.2.b.). Combining this concept with the ideas of school culture was found to be a useful activity.

5. *Commitment to a sequential development process*

All schools agreed to follow the four phase School Development model (Stewart and Prebble, 1993:Ch 5) and to report on their progress through these phases twice a month. This was a vital element of each school's growth as not only was there a requirement to begin, for example, with data gathering, but it was necessary to state and support why that particular data set had been gathered in preference to some other. In addition much fruitful time was spent in group meetings exploring the efficiency of a variety of forms of data gathering instruments.

6. *Taking part in some structured, shared activity*

Themes chosen by the school had to follow the four phases of School Development. This cycle begins with an understanding of the school culture and encourages the collection and analysis of data. The second phase shifts the focus back to the people in the organisation and encourages increased cooperation and collaboration. Potential change to the structure of the school is considered during Phase 3 and Phase 4 shifts attention back to learning and teaching. As noted earlier this *School Development cycle* has long been a central part of the writer's development activity (Prebble and Stewart, 1981; Stewart and Prebble, 1985, 1993) and has been widely applied within New Zealand. It has many similarities with the action-research cycle of Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) and was developed specifically for schools where there was a desire to engage in "whole of staff" development activities.

To gain further experience themselves each small principal group at their regular meetings, practised cooperative and shared activities which they might later use with their staff. This was followed with a monthly report to the programme director. Such activity built on notions of transformational leadership (Stewart and Prebble, 1993:Ch 13) where groups focus on a common goal in contrast to following a person. It was recognised that structured, shared activity was more likely to give rise to wide consensus and commitment. Many of the activities shared at these meetings were taken back to individual schools, reshaped and used with staff.

7. *The challenge to construct new meaning within a chosen theme*

The nature of the activities worked against the simple replication of ideas from one setting to another and promoted genuine reflection in searching for the most appropriate meaning in the particular school setting. We were all keen to avoid these sessions becoming simply an exchange of good ideas for adoption. Participants were encouraged to critique the ideas rather than simply collect them.

Throughout the project a number of groups visited other schools (some within the project and some not). This method of alerting themselves to other possibilities was often closely focused on the themes that group members were following in their own schools, and timed to allow feedback to occur before decisions relating to structural change were taken. In addition, every effort was made to find and read appropriate journal articles at this time. As a consequence there were many, very creative ideas promoted across the whole group. These ideas were shared at seminars and on occasion written as papers on the computer bulletin board, Schools Sharing Information Network (SSINet), for others to read.

8. *Time away from school to do some thinking*

Most groups met regularly away from their school. Many included lunch and some initiated an “unburdening” time where worries and frustrations were shared prior to engaging in the project work. In addition a number of course members, both mentors and participants, attended a Reflective Principal course during the course of the project. This enabled those who attended to have further time for reflection. As the group of schools meeting together tended to be at about the same stage in their theme (e.g. data gathering, increasing participation, structural change) most of these meetings were tightly focused on process questions and options. Consequently, principals returned to their schools somewhat refreshed and revitalised from the focused thinking and talking.

9. *Links to a tertiary institution that encourages development of personal as well as institutional goals*

Many principals who are keen to join School Development projects would be delighted if, at the same time, their personal study and input could be credited to an academic qualification. Some of the programmes offered from Colleges of Education already attain these goals. It is the thinking activity that is at the heart of School Development initiatives, and tertiary institutions are well placed to cater for these dual goals of School Development and personal accreditation.

4.3 An Overview of the Case Study

Sixty schools took part and the key element was the group of 18 mentors who convened small clusters of 3 or 4 participating schools. All the mentors had previously attended one or more Reflective Principal courses (see Chapter 3) and were, as a consequence, thoroughly conversant with the main theoretical constructs. School Sharing Information Network (SSINet), a computer based bulletin board and E-Mail facility was used by the groups to both report progress at fortnightly intervals and to share ideas across the whole project. Regular readings, around the topics being addressed by the schools were supplied to all.

This small group structure, of mentor and three or four participating principals was supplemented from time to time with meetings of the mentors and the researcher and occasional “whole of course seminars”. It provided a framework for principals to develop their own capacity for professional narrative and reflective critique. As a stimulus for this development all groups were encouraged and facilitated to do some practical work in the area of school culture; in change theory; and in an individually defined School Development process. Vital to the success of these groups was the ability of the mentor principals to illustrate reflection in their own practice. Many of these groups continued, at their own expense, in 1995. A number expanded to include other senior members of their staff.

This case study examines the implications of this form of networking where the mentors or facilitating principals shared the progress and problems of their own School Development initiative with a small group of colleagues who had agreed to follow a similar four phase sequence, albeit with a different theme, and join in presenting evidence of their efforts for the group to examine. Central to the operation of the project was the link back to the researcher for comment and literature dissemination.

4.4 Interviews with Twenty Principals

A stratified random sample of mentor groups was selected for interviews, ensuring that both size and type of school, and urban-rural settings were represented. Interviews were conducted with all members of each mentor-participant group present and care taken, by means of a checklist, to ensure each principal had opportunities to contribute to each area of discussion.

Groups were selected for interview by randomly selecting mentors from the following four groups of participants:

- urban mentor working with small urban schools - 5 groups of which 2 were selected;
- urban mentor working with large urban schools - 5 groups of which 2 were selected;
- urban mentor working with rural schools - 4 groups of which 1 was selected; and
- rural mentor working with rural schools - 3 groups of which 1 was selected.

Interviews, each of one hours' length were conducted with 20 principals in the six groups that were selected or 33% of the total group taking part in the programme. The interviews were conducted in the last month of the programme (December 1994).

4.4.a. *The interviews*

Prior to the interviews the following list of questions was sent to each group. They were subsequently asked directly and the use of a check sheet ensured that all participants had an opportunity to contribute to the discussion on each question. As each speaker began to speak the interviewer acknowledged with their name so as to identify the various responses on tape.

Figure 4.1 Checklist for Questions

1.	What is School Development?		Speaker
2.	How does it work in your school?		
3.	Tell me how you think about SD?		
4.	How do you order SD activities? What sequence do they follow? Do some things happen before others?		
5.	How do you find out what teachers do and what they think about what they do?		
6.	How do you get your own professional development?		
7.	When you think about SD what do you think about doing?		
8.	When teachers think about SD what do you think that they contemplate?		
9.	How are Senior Teachers trained in this school?		
10.	Talk to me about school culture and its usefulness in working through ideas about SD.		
11.	Think of a recent problem that you dealt with related to SD. Would you describe the process you followed? What works and what doesn't work? Why is this so?		
12.	Does SD work as you hoped it would?		
13.	Is SD worth the effort? Are there other alternatives that you could use?		
14.	If I was to come back and look at some of the things that happen in this school, what would be the best thing I could see? What would you like me to see that you are proudest of?		
15.	Do you want to tell me anything else about this Mentor_94 project?		

Through these questions it was hoped to gain further understandings in the way in which the principals conceptualised a School Development initiative. The extent to which they considered their own professional development and the professional development of their staff contributed to that School Development process, and the patterns of meanings that they had developed to understand and process the context of the change.

In formulating the questions, the form and context of principals' thinking as well as their actions was sought, incorporating Leithwood and Steinbach's (1993:42) notion that "what principals do depends on what they think." Opportunities were given for those interviewed to incorporate some of the precepts of School Development expressed in the literature into their discussion. Indications of thinking in a reflective way, for example, might be deduced if they spoke about quality learning circles, thematic supervision, professional development consultation cycle and conceptual job descriptions. These amongst other theoretical constructs, had been used as illustrations of a critical reflective approach in the readings and in interaction with the researcher during the project.

Another strong thread during the Reflective Principal courses that the mentors had attended and in the readings supplied during this project was the idea that school was an educative rather than a managerial process (Elliott, 1996), and that, as a consequence, thinking about schools as communities as opposed to organisations was more likely to support collaborative School Development (Sergiovanni, 1991, 1996; Section 1.2.b.). The questions were designed to allow these kinds of ideas to be expressed without asking directly. Similarly, whereas some School Development initiatives would be concerned with specific curriculum and instructional change, the interviews sought expressions of ideas related to the way principals envisaged staff might work together to construct a particular learning environment (Fullan, 1990).

There was also a concern to discover the principals' perceptions about how teachers thought about their work and about the school wide strategies for development (Fullan, 1991), and on what evidence principals based these beliefs. It was assumed that discussion of these kinds of concerns would lead to some understanding of the use of the

concept of school culture and the importance of establishing the meaning of the School Development initiative for all staff (Fullan, 1991; Leithwood, 1990; Sergiovanni 1991, 1996).

It was thought important to gain some indication as to the normative nature of the movement towards a professional school community. Such a position relates to that expressed by Sebring *et al.* (1995:5) in their view that “the positive effects of a professional community are unlikely to be realised in an individual school unless practices are normative, i.e. most of the teachers engage in them most of the time.” To get to this point may require additional training as Sebring *et al.* (1995:70) argue that “the professional community model may require a threshold level of professional skill which may not exist in all schools.” A number of processes addressing this idea had been available throughout the project. They were designed to draw attention to the “cultural habitus” or the beliefs, traditions, myths, language and implicit conventions that existed amongst the staff and students of the school (Smyth, 1991:11), before embarking on a School Development project.

Finally the questions invited open ended comment on the project itself and its relationship to both the School Development theme selected and the principals’ own professional growth.

4.5 Results Overview

The interview material was analysed and appropriate references located at four main nodes labelled school culture, School Development, professional development and narrative (see Appendix D for figure). As the data was processed further divisions were created with school culture having sub sections of mutual responsibility and reflection; School Development having sub sections of data gathering and creating new meaning; professional development having sub sections of quality learning circles, thematic supervision, conceptual job descriptions, and learning community; and, narrative

remaining as a global descriptor. Material from these nodes was further analysed under the five propositions in Section 4.6.

Principals interviewed demonstrated an understanding and a commitment to *reflective* practices, both for themselves and for their staff. There were many illustrations (70% of respondents) of how this process often began with a data gathering sequence. Importantly, the reading and discussion of articles supplied throughout the training was also seen as a stimulus for reflection. Working first with how staff thought about issues now, tended to be the accepted introduction to the change strategy and during this time much use was made of a variety of change models. For many it was important to have a means of visual representation of a change and development process and be able to chart their progress on such a model.

The School Development four phase model (Stewart and Prebble, 1993:73) was identified as a unifying and coordinating reference although individuals felt confident enough with the guidelines to reloop back to data gathering or to the collaborative stages prior to effecting a structural change. Not only did the process act as a compass for principal direction but increasingly, staff began to place a great deal of reliance on this sequence of activities.

It was evident from the transcripts that individuals had integrated many of the concepts used in the original training into their descriptive language of how their schools worked. Ways of thinking about the work that they and their teachers undertook were heavily influenced by their understanding and application of the concept of *school culture*. Many of them depended on these concepts to mark their School Development or change process. In addition, many of these principals provided illustrations of how they listened carefully to informal discussion and narrative, seeking here insights into relationships, beliefs and values, amongst the staff.

Many of the principals represented in these data appear to have become more clearly focused on *learning* as their prime objective for their students, their staff and for

themselves. This is characterised by a shift from thinking of themselves as organisational leaders to contemplating the way that they work together with other professionals in a form of community. Within this learning or professional community it then becomes important to understand other individual's beliefs, values, and understandings. Taking this changed view of themselves and others is often a function of the way they think about their jobs. As a consequence the adoption of the idea of a *Conceptual Job Description* is one indication of movement in this direction. It is clear that many principals in this group also linked the concepts of *transformational leadership* to this kind of development.

Across all of these dimensions, principals signalled that they were paying increased attention to what teachers said, the kind of stories that they told, and the type of narrative generally that was commonplace in the staff room. Such a focus on the *type* of narrative being both told and accepted generally, as well as paying attention to the *content* of the story supports the development of a reflective stance as the listener asks questions like, "What does this mean in the context of school culture?"

4.6 The Propositions as Indicators

The propositions (see Section 2.2) are used again as an organising framework to sift and examine the data. This organisation across the three Case Studies promotes a form of "data triangulation" (Stake, 1995).

4.6.a. Proposition 1.

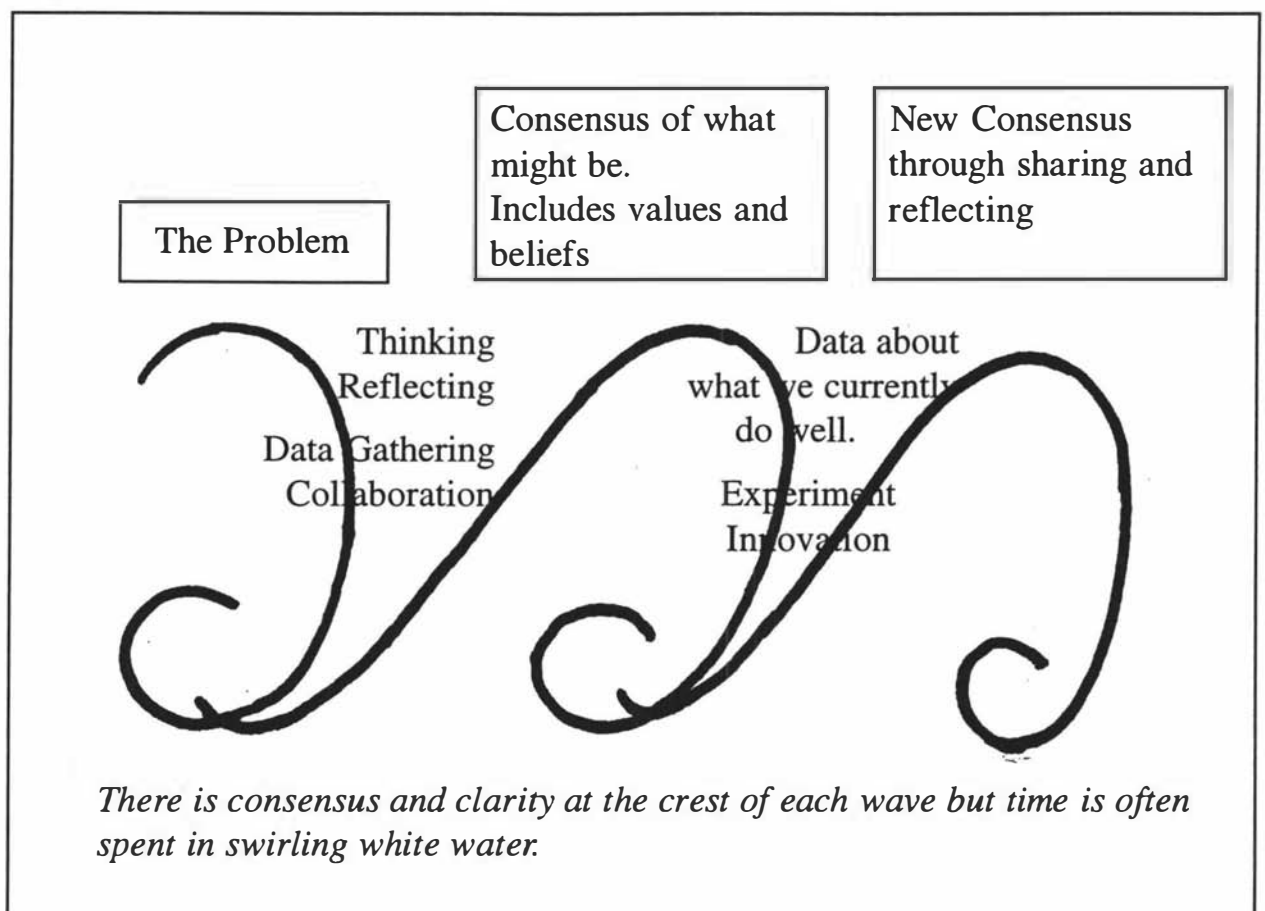
It is possible to gain insights into principal behaviour by examining their use and adoption of certain key concepts (e.g. the four phase development sequence, conceptual job descriptions, quality learning circles, and the concept of school culture (Stewart and Prebble, 1993)).

Each of the schools in the project had chosen a theme suitable to their own development and then agreed to work through the stages of the four stage development model discussed earlier. The interviews revealed the level of commitment to this way of

working and indicated the emphasis that was being placed on data gathering processes and group understanding. It was expressed as, “It is very important that you follow those steps [of the four phase model], but I don’t think you have to go 1,2,3,4. You could go 1,2 and then 1,2 or 1,2,3. But I think you do need the four steps to get there in the end” (Text units 68-71: Node, 2). This speaker was emphasising that the staff may wish to return to another cycle of data gathering and discussion before going on to Phase 3 which was the consideration of structural change. Confirmation that others followed a similar track is contained in the comment, “But what we did was gather data to identify a problem and then went back and gathered further information to find out more about the problem” (Text units 107-117: Node, 2).

These examples demonstrate how participants were conceptualising the process of data gathering as a means of refining the definition of the problems. Once a data set had been gathered and staff began to talk about it, the possibility of rethinking and resetting the targets arose. Principals viewed this refocus activity positively and as an integral part of the School Development activity. It was represented by the white water at the base of the first wave in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 A view of the Four Phase Process as a change wave



As one participant suggested, “The data that you have gathered has shown you something different in that perhaps the problem that you thought it might have been really wasn’t the problem” (Text units 82-85: Node, 2). Redefining the problem, and as a consequence constructing new meaning about what is really important and worth spending more time on, became an accepted part of working through a School Development sequence.

Some groups found that beginning in this way enabled the questioning of unspoken assumptions, and to a large degree uncovering some of the “essence” of the school culture (Schein, 1985:6, cited in Hopkins *et al.*, 1994:88). By combining together to work on an agreed project some school staff discovered, through the talk, that colleagues applied quite different beliefs and values. Before they could make any further progress on the project they had to address those cultural “artifacts” which allowed a variety of interpretations of the same data (Sergiovanni, 1991). Working together in this manner also alerted principals to assumptions which they had made about the level of interpersonal and collaborative skill members of staff were likely to display.

We went backwards to go forwards, which was a bit of a worry. But what we found was that we had made certain assumptions about skills that the teachers had and that everybody would have assured you they had, prior to going into this project...so in terms of what the teachers thought they were doing and what we thought the teachers were doing. It wasn’t happening at all. They had all developed their own ways of going about it (Text units 151-161: Node, 2).

These “own ways of going about it” were idiosyncratic and, for this staff group, antithetical to the main thrust of the programme. The base assumptions about what resources were necessary, about responsibilities to build on previous programmes, and how each teacher was part of the wider school group with accompanying rights and responsibilities, needed to be clarified first. As well as the actual data gathering, it was important to involve those who were going to discuss the problem or would be involved

in the application of any problem solution in the actual data gathering exercise. Occasionally, this kind of process resulted in a solution by new consensus as is evident in the next example where many staff were convinced that there was a major problem with bullying and other inappropriate behaviours in the playground.

I'll use an example: the assertive discipline programme. You often hear about how children behave in the play ground from the parents. You know, that you've got so many naughty children and the bullies. And when you investigate it, it's not true...We listed the things that people had found in the duty book that children were doing wrong. Like it may have been simply playing knuckle bones...or being inside when they should have been outside and that also alleviated the problem. And we had a house point book that teachers walked around with and children that were playing well, supporting one another were rewarded for good behaviour (Text units 737-758: Node, 2).

Challenging underlying assumptions, or personal beliefs by a data gathering process could lead to different perceptions and as a consequence, different actions such as focusing on positive rather than negative aspects of behaviour. In this example it was the teachers who were gathering the data to confirm or deny others' perceptions, but this school did go on to consider encouraging parents to gather data when they had a real stake in the outcomes such as the example above. As the commitment to data gathering grew, principals looked for affective evidence as well as observable information.

The emphasis in the group sessions on "narrative" and the variety of interpretations resulted in one principal suggesting, "...it's also the way that people talk about the children. I guess it's the words they use and the interest in their voice...And you get sort of feelings of whether they are frustrated or whether this was just a one off or they're coping or they're not coping. I worry too about the ones who don't talk" (Text units 406-412: Node, 2).

As schools moved into a change strategy, some experienced initial resentment, from staff, that more data needed to be collected when *everyone knew* what the problems were. As one put it, “There’s always that notion that we know what the problem is and what are we carrying out this exercise for? We all know the kids are misbehaving and there’s fighting. We all know that. And that’s the problem” (Text units 790-794: Node, 2). Nevertheless there was strong evidence throughout the groups that data gathering as an activity, was a powerful mechanism for change. Questions such as: Where is the data?; Who should gather it?; Will we believe what is collected?; and How long will we need to spend on this activity?, became common.

As confidence grew with the development of the school’s selected theme, some principals began to experiment with more complex processes such as *Quality Learning Circles*. As one reported, “This year I started Quality Learning Circles in its very basic form and I think that’s been the most informative thing for me. Being involved in the circles and listening to what they have been saying...teachers going and spending time with each other and feeding back. We have incorporated these ideas into the PDCs as well” (Text units 301-307: Node, 31).

The linking of PDC (Professional Development Consultation) with *Quality Learning Circles* demonstrated a mechanism for appraisal and school review which was congruent with a reflective practice and transformational leadership perspective. The PDC process simply uses a series of scheduled meetings between individual teachers and the leadership team to both set goals and monitor progress towards agreed objectives. That these principals had incorporated these concepts into their schools is confirmed by the principal who stated “I guess it’s a lot of sharing what we are doing now...looking at what perceived needs are. I guess that’s the data collecting. We are really finding out what people want and what they think then actually working on those areas...Things like PDCs, reflective writing and the sharing is happening. Quality Learning Circles have been set up. It’s sharing those experiences in the school and focusing on teaching and learning that is important” (Text units 41-55: Node, 31).

School Development within a school is affected by the way that teachers think about the work that they do. With the advent of school based management in New Zealand there has been a requirement to specify teachers' jobs in more detail. Early efforts to encourage schools to adopt job descriptions suggested an industrial model which emphasised routine tasks at the expense of encouraging learning, and as a consequence the researcher introduced and published the idea of a *Conceptual Job Description* (see Sections 1.6.b. and 2.6), for use by both principals and teachers.

These ways of describing jobs within schools have been widely adopted with local modifications throughout New Zealand and recently in Massachusetts USA (Stewart *et al.*, 1997). The documents focus on the core activities of teaching and learning rather than being a list of diverse tasks and responsibilities and are designed to assist reflection and act as a starting point for professionals to engage in reflective action.

When they have been introduced at the commencement of a School Development initiative, they have encouraged teachers to think through their work in the context of classroom and school culture. This, in turn, has often led to more emphasis on the collegial nature of work in the school. The *conceptual job description* was designed to be a central document in appraisal and developmental activities. There was some evidence from the interviews that this was occurring as indicated with the following excerpt.

...we wanted to address teacher appraisal. I was concerned about the whole notion of the inspectoral view of that. I had been to a course last year and previously done quite a bit of reading and thinking about...the process I was following here, collecting information, thinking about it, talking about it. I talked about it in this group. Looked at your material...used your book about job descriptions. We talked it through and found that people were happy with it and we went through the process of putting that job description in place, and it worked (Text units 713-727: Node, 32).

4.6.b. *Proposition 2.*

Although it is not possible to predict specific outcomes from development activities, use of a specific range of processes could signal allegiance to a particular mindscape (Sergiovanni, 1991).

Throughout the project participants were encouraged to explore the implications of thinking about the school as a “community of learners”, “...critical teachers must be seen to be critical learners too” (Brookfield, 1995:206), as opposed to thinking of the school as a special kind of organisation. Many of the readings which were distributed during the training and development echoed this theme. No specific interview questions contained these words and a search of the transcripts was made to elicit whether this concept was used by the principals as an integral part of the explanation of what they do.

Whereas the term “community” was regularly used it was not used in the sense defined above at all regularly. Only two instances could be defined with any confidence. On the other hand there were no instances where principals referred to their schools as “organisations”. Much of the material from the interviews that addressed collaboration, sharing, and being influenced by colleagues was subsumed under the category of “school culture”. There was a recognition that school culture was all pervasive and that a clear understanding of the concept could lead to more successful School Development efforts. This is indicated in the following quote.

But I think really overall the thing for me that I am proudest of and, it's come through all sorts of ways and writing and doing the school culture thing, is the oneness of the school...the togetherness of the staff and the supporting of each other. You know, it's a school that's literally free of conflict most of the time. And this is something that parents comment on a lot. It's just the kind of togetherness of us as a school and the identifying of the school culture and the identifying of what we believe about achievement, they are the things this year... that I am proudest of

- and that have really pulled us together. We always were [collaborative] but it has just kind of given us more a focus I guess. And it must feed back into the teaching and learning programmes (Text Units 635-650: Node, 1).

Collaboration was often seen as a relationship feature, “the idea that they understand where one another are at. They are prepared to share. They are prepared to show a caring and so on” (Text units 507-513: Node, 1). One novel introduction to this discussion was introduced by the principal who said, “The more I understand about culture the more...I talk about culture as energy” (Text units 792-793: Node, 1). This thinking about culture as *energy* suggests that some of these principals may be constantly aware that teachers in the current environment are close to their physical limits. School Development initiatives, therefore, need to be carefully planned to reallocate and reorganise resources rather than increase demands. Metaphors which expressed similar ideas were expressed by others with statements like, “...it’s like my heart in my body and the culture is the heart...That’s the pump that keeps it going” (Text units 812-816: Node, 1).

4.6.c. *Proposition 3.*

Critical reflection is of central importance both for principals and staff (Brookfield, 1995; Canning, 1991; Elliott, 1996; Griffiths and Tann, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1991; Smyth, 1991).

All groups used the concept of reflection to illustrate how particular things happened in their schools. In all 14 illustrations were developed. Most of the examples presented began from a *reflection on practice* viewpoint but then developed into *reflection about practice* and in a few cases *reflection in practice* (Schön, 1983, 1987). Much of the reflection was stimulated by the data gathering activities. As principals applied the four phase School Development model they provided the conditions for reflective questioning and thinking amongst the staff. One example given in the interviews, related to

perceived problems with the manner in which the school managed reporting to parents. The principal reported that:

This was sort of thrown in at a staff meeting suddenly about the middle of the year when people were going to be writing reports...There was talk about all the problems associated with [writing reports] and why couldn't we change...So then we set in place the [four phase] model. They had to gather the data first. Two members of staff had to talk with other members of staff, people in their syndicate and actually gather the data and then come back...The interesting thing was that when they had gathered the data and everybody had a chance to discuss it and air their views...they decided there wasn't actually a problem (Text units 510-521: Node, 12).

Reflective action was also stimulated after reading some of the articles that had been presented as part of the course work. In commenting on why the material was useful a principal offered, "You read it and think and you make a paradigm shift. You have a different idea about your work...which is partially dissonance but also partly shifts in thinking, which in turn brings about shifts in action..." (Text units 210-218: Node, 12). It was an accepted maxim that "you best change what teachers do by changing the way that they think about what they do" and this was illustrated in the interviews when talking generally about reflection. For example one participant gave a particular view of how this might be done with the suggestion that, "There is quite a lot of difference between what people do and what they think and so we really have to nail what they think...." (Text units 315-319: Node, 12).

There is also a link to the kind of School Development theoretical constructs which principals use when engaging in reflective thinking. A series of tutorials and discussions which linked the four phase School Development model with a notion of a wave of change had a significant impact on one group. They planned much of their year's

development activities using this idea. From time to time throughout the project they shared this diagrammatic thinking (see Figure 4.2). One reference began:

...after you did the work on the change model that was the focus. It's having had the confidence to say this is what we believe in and I'm the instructional leader and I will facilitate your beliefs and we will take the beliefs first and then we will data gather and then we will meet the requirements. We will own the change. We will collaborate. We will review and once I got to that stage I started to understand what reflection meant (Text units 81-91: Node, 12).

This group faxed to the researcher throughout the project, many diagrams of their progress based on the wave change model. It illustrated the need to visually represent both progress and position that many of them demonstrated. Leading a group of teachers is a complex activity and to keep a particular change strategy on track requires energy and clarity. Clarity requires that the principal can demonstrate progress and "track to run" for the staff while all are engaged in a multi-tasking environment. The element that caught the attention of this group was that the wave model demonstrated that the four phase development sequence would at times seem confused as they wallowed in the white water, while at other time, as they crested on top of the wave, goals and progress would be clearly in focus.

4.6.d. *Proposition 4.*

Principal development and School Development activities cannot always be separated (Campbell-Evans, 1993; Dimmock, 1993; Sparkes and Bloomer, 1993).

Programmes such as this Mentor_94 project which offer theoretical understandings of practical problems, encourage individual and group reflection and do so within an overall change strategy, also provide the basis for significant personal professional development.

Principals, when interviewed mentioned a number of means of furthering their own education, such as the Advanced Studies for Teachers Unit and professional conferences but significantly, the Mentor_94 programme was given prominence through comments such as, “this Mentor_94 project...I got a lot out of that, especially working with other teachers. That was a major contribution to my professional development...” (Text units 177-191: Node, 3).

The small group meetings where there was a focused agenda and agreed tasks but also time for networking and mutual sharing of emergent issues was mentioned particularly. A recurring comment demonstrating the overlapping nature of school and professional development is illustrated with one principal’s view that, “I find a lot of value in the small group discussions. Whether it’s focusing on the project we are actually doing or whether it’s just discussing generally with a trusted few what is happening for you and going on for you” (Text Units 276-287: Node, 3). These discussions promoted an increased range of possible options for individuals and for many, stimulated more focused and intense thinking about the particular theme under action. An oft repeated comment was that, “this group would be one of the main sources of my professional development” (Text units 429-433: Node, 3).

The cross over from the discussion and analysis of the principals’ narratives at the group sessions and increased understanding that this brought to the participants is amplified by this extract about how one principal widened her understanding of teacher values and beliefs.

The stories they tell about the place and about their teaching are probably even more meaningful than structured interviews. Because when you get structured interview you’ll get the answer you want - to some extent. If you listen to what they say especially when they talk about children I think you’ll get a pretty good idea of what they think about what they do (Text units 369-375: Node, 3).

As a closing exercise, many individual principals from this Mentor_94 group contributed a narrative to the Schools Sharing Information Network (SSINet) which illustrated both their own personal development and the manner in which their school had progressed during the time that this project was in operation. These accounts highlighted the critical role of the mentor or facilitating principal with comments like, "...the key thing for me has been working with L as well. Because it's just been so invaluable working with somebody who shares some of the fundamental things that you believe are special to you...our schools are very different but we still are managing to implement things and be able to work with someone who is further on but a really supportive person. It is really invaluable" (Text units 553-561: Node, 3).

4.6.e. *Proposition 5.*

Successful School Development is an educational rather than a managerial process.

When talking about their schools the term "school culture" was used as a coordinating concept by five of the six groups. It was used in this context on 23 occasions. For these principals the concept of school culture was strongly linked to the notion of School Development that they had developed. It was, as one suggested, "very much based on shared responsibility and ... that fits in well with School Development because it relies on the fact that we are going to gather data" (Text units 321-328: Node, 1). By implication, decision making would be based on logical educative reasons where there was a shared responsibility for the consequences. Working in this way was acknowledged to be both complex and a continuous learning experience for all members of the school community. As one principal expressed it, "Having been at the school for a number of years now and done quite a lot this year, there is still...an awful lot to learn about your own school culture" (Text units 321-369: Node, 1). What had been "taken for granted" was now explored for meaning (Schein, 1985, cited in Hopkins *et al.*, 1994).

Getting the work done, in a managerial sense, was still an important part of the leader's task but the interviews elicited a number of instances where an understanding of the beliefs and values of the staff were considered to be of prime importance. For example:

...after the meeting was closed people just sort of sat round and then they started to talk and what they talked about was what they actually thought schools ought to be about. And I knew when I heard that discussion I could actually work with these people. We could make music and that we were on the same wave length... (Text Units 635-642: Node, 1).

The metaphor of "making music" also suggests a process of collaboration and cooperation in developing the school which is different from a managerial or competitive advantage approach.

4.7 Implications for Principal and Leadership Development: Insights from the Case Study

With this kind of training there appears to be a strong link between School Development and personal professional development. Learning which enabled leaders to reconceptualise real school problems in a variety of ways provided a sense of personal satisfaction for the principals in addition to the feelings of competence associated with positive School Development activities. The regular group meetings facilitated individual growth in critical reflective thought, which in turn lead to increased confidence and clarity of intention.

4.7.a. Developing a theory of change

The strong commitment to the concept of school culture evident within the interview responses suggests that the change theory being developed by this group was one where inclusion and prior understandings were seen as important priorities. This is supported

by the often enthusiastic adoption of the Quality Learning Circle process. But as with most innovations, some experienced difficulties and failure. It would seem that where QLCs arise out of a desire to share teaching ideas and strategies they tend to become institutionalised quite quickly but where they are introduced as another form of top down delegation in addition to existing relationships they tend to be resisted by staff. Teachers visiting each other and focusing on specific themes throughout the school for a time also seem to be essential requirements for successful implementation of QLCs. This particular process gave principals the opportunity to develop conditions within the school where all staff could feel comfortable talking about their teaching and engaging with their colleagues in a successful application of critical reflective practice.

There was a general rejection of the idea of “gap” analysis, common in the commercial and business literature where the gap between goal setting and goal attainment are seen as relatively straightforward ideas. Progressing goals into outcomes was perceived as a complex, non-linear and largely interactive process with much of the work going on inside peoples’ heads. Where professional conversations enabled the sharing of this thinking, initial goals might be redefined and possible outcomes re-examined. One group illustrated how a “wave of change” image reflecting the complexity and at times, confused world of the school, better fitted their experience and provided a “conceptual map” (Deshler, 1990, cited in Brookfield, 1995:33) of progress and future direction. It would appear that this form of visual representation has an important role to play in engendering refocusing and “reframing” for professionals engaged in long term School Development initiatives (Sergiovanni, 1991).

4.7.b. *The need for support*

At the time of writing, two years after the formal completion of the Mentor_94 project, some of the groups formed for this development are still meeting regularly. Individuals from others have reformed as job changes have necessitated individual movement away from an area. In addition, groups continue to visit the university, from time to time, to catch up with current work. The element which ceased at the projects conclusion was

the regular link to a university researcher. Supply of appropriate readings, coordination and dissemination of ideas across groups, and the occasional large seminar for people with a high degree of shared understandings were all aspects of this project which stimulated and maintained leadership momentum. There would appear to be a real need to have a means of continuing these kinds of support outside the confines of fixed term contracts.

4.7.c. *How do principals and school leaders construct and operationalise the framework for their work?*

This case study illustrates that regular small group meetings, with planned agenda which reflect some of the initiatives with which individuals are currently engaged, are effective means for stimulating critical reflective thinking, generating a range of alternative action, and providing psychological support for principals. If these groups can be an integral part of a wider network which links to a researcher in a tertiary institution, then the positive effects are increased.

These group meetings provided a form of legitimating for the tentative “local” theories that principals were forming about processes and procedures in their own schools. The support and critique of individual change strategies and rationale widened and often confirmed as appropriate, the thinking that principals were engaged in. Fullan (1992:8) argues that “significant changes have virtually no reality outside what local actors think they are.” While this interpretation is clearly applicable to work within a school, the groups in this case study, allowed the perceived local reality to be exposed to a professional critique by informed supportive peers. Each of the participants was made aware of the “patterns of meaning” (Stake, 1988:259) that others in the group had constructed about the events being presented and the milieu of the forum allowed and encouraged reshaping and reconfirmation of the direction to be followed.

It is not enough to present just the opportunity for critique. As vital to the coherence of the on going discussion is a commitment to a form of School Development that is

understood and part of the repertoire of all members of the forum. Important also is the opportunity to “try out” some actual processes which embody the accepted theoretical position. As the Reflective Principal courses may be the accepted first step, these kinds of groups operating over time, may be a necessary next step.

Chapter 5: Case Study C

THE AREA SCHOOL AUDIO-GRAPHIC PROJECT

5.1 Introduction

There are many schools in New Zealand which are remote from main centres and as a consequence are often thrown back on their own resources for school and staff development. Area Schools represent a unique group in this regard as they are usually quite remote both from other centres and from each other, but also incorporate students from new entrants to Year 13 students. This isolation coupled with a strong desire to offer the widest range of educational opportunities possible has led groups of these schools to begin to experiment with a range of innovative teaching mechanisms. Chief amongst these has been audio-graphic technology where sound and graphics can be shared across telephone and computer links at widely dispersed locations. Schools have experimented with the idea of sharing specialist staff across groups using this kind of technology for the teaching.

During an address to the Area Schools' Annual Conference in 1994 the writer expressed the view that the audio-graphic facilities that these schools were developing for shared teaching could also be utilised for systematic School Development initiatives. A new link to the researcher at Massey University could be created using existing software and hardware. Staff could select a staff development team who would then link with the researcher on a regular basis over a calendar year to interact within a "whole school" development theme. While the prime purpose would be to facilitate the individual School Development project it would also be useful to evaluate this method of networking as a cost effective means of study and development for staff.

There was considerable interest in the idea at the conference and the Ministry of Education subsequently agreed to support a small scale development exercise with 10 Area Schools for 1995.

5.2 Rationale

School Development at Area Schools may be affected by the school's geographic isolation. Schools which are isolated, whether geographically or culturally, often find it difficult to carry on interactive and reflective School Development. Development in isolation can become either top down autocratic and/or unfocussed and "helter skelter". To relieve isolation, staff from the school can attend school conferences or bring in a facilitator on a staff development day to add to their expertise. Development, however, implies an evolving process which cannot be concentrated into one visit. By its very nature, School Development spans a period of time, should be supported frequently, is reflective in focus, and is interactive. Although this process can occur among and within the staff of schools without outside intervention or interaction, frequently staff appreciate outside focus, feedback, input, and opportunity for reflection.

Input from outside the school staff can occur through frequent visits by a chosen facilitator and the advantages of this method are frequent feedback, and interaction and reflection with a person of some expertise. The disadvantages are: firstly the expense and inconvenience of travelling frequently to isolated areas; and secondly the potential of diminished interaction of staff in the presence of an outside expert who may not appreciate their particular concerns.

Interaction can occur through telephone, either individually or through a conference/speaker telephone. The advantages of telephone interaction are that it can occur with a group of persons, takes very little equipment, virtually everyone knows how to use a telephone, and it can occur frequently. The disadvantages include the problems of talking to a box with very little focus, identifying speakers, and managing the process of the session to include all the participants as well as completing the business of the session.

Another method of interaction which is located between simple telephone contact and face-to-face meeting is the audio-graphic conference. Using this methodology the school

links with a tutor, on a monthly basis, through both computer and telephone. In the audio-graphic conference, persons at either end talk by conference telephone and share visual information through an interactive computer screen. Persons on either end can send slides, pictures or tasks to be completed, through the system to be displayed on each group's computer screen. The displays are interactive and can be highlighted, underlined or amended and such changes will appear immediately on all screens. All participants can identify the source of the changes that are being made. Questions, answers, and comments are entered through the keyboard, pen or tablet directly onto the shared screen link-up.

The audio-graphic conference offers not only verbal interaction but an interactive focus which allows immediate feedback and reflection. The graphics provide an advanced organiser function as well as providing the stimulus for discussion. Conferences, as a result are interactive and focus upon the needs and interests of the persons involved in the School Development team.

Further advantages of an audio-graphic conference are: that the conferences can occur frequently, and at times that support the staff in the School Development sequence as it evolves; that the computer link provides a focus and a vehicle for interactive discussion; and that it is possible to link more than one school together with the facilitator to exchange ideas in a multi-site interaction. The disadvantages are that the conference cannot occur successfully with the entire staff at one time, limited by the number who can see the screen (generally about six persons unless the school is equipped with some means of computer projection). There is also the possibility of technical difficulties interfering with the planned programme.

It was proposed that audio-graphic conferences with each School Development team in this project, would occur monthly throughout the year. Meeting times would be scheduled after school and would begin with point to point sessions linking the researcher and each individual school. Schools would be free to select their preferred

School Development theme, would work in this project for the whole of the year and commit some of their own resources to the initiative.

5.2.a. *Key concepts and activities*

1. *Reflection*

The audio-graphic sessions were intended to replace the small group meetings in Case Study B as the forums for experiencing and practising interactive reasoning and reflection. It was hypothesised that regular sessions with the School Development team and the researcher working in this way would spill across to the manner in which the team then worked with other staff in the school. One principal in the group had previously attended a Reflective Principal course and three others attended Reflective Principal courses which took place during the time that the project was in operation.

2. *Use of narrative*

It was intended to have a strong emphasis on *School Culture* throughout this project. Consequently, participating groups were encouraged to prepare material which illustrated the effects that their chosen theme was having on the larger culture of the school. By focusing on a particular narrative, supported by slides prepared by the school group, the researcher was able to encourage the further use of reflective questions and help generate a range of alternative actions.

3. *Readings*

Selected readings around the theme chosen by the school, were mailed at intervals to all the schools. From time to time, particular readings were mailed to the whole group. In order to integrate the readings with the School Development project the researcher drew from this material in the graphic material prepared for the interactive sessions.

4. *Commitment to a sequential development process*

As with Case Study B, participants in this project agreed to follow generally the four phase development cycle of data gathering, increasing collaboration, consideration of structural change, and a focus on teaching and learning. Whereas the first two phases of data gathering and increasing collaboration gave coherence and form to the school's project, phase three and four development was more difficult to document. As with Case Study B, the gathering of information and the discussion that followed often led to further rounds of data gathering. A number of schools then wished to change their focus and change their theme. The year long project then concluded before a further full round of development could be effected by all the schools.

5. *The challenge to construct new meaning within a chosen theme*

Regardless of the theme selected it was intended that by the end of the programme teachers in all the schools would have a better understanding of the core culture of their school and its effect on teaching and learning, and employ data gathering and reflective practice as a basis for School Development. Such learning would be applied to their classrooms and as a consequence the teachers would be more aware of how students learn, more aware of teaching strategies which promote effective learning, and be confident to use such strategies in their classrooms. It was hoped that the School Development team would meet together both before and after the audio-graphic sessions to extend their own learning.

6. *The involvement of all staff in learning*

The particular nature of Area Schools with their wide age range of students, has often resulted in a separation of staff along primary and secondary divisions. This project aimed at increasing the access to the whole pool of educational expertise that existed in all the schools. A particular feature, therefore, became the discussion, application, and viewing of teaching concepts across this primary/secondary divide. The ability of staff

from both divisions to learn from each other and visit each other's classrooms was an important part of the project.

5.3 An Overview of the Case Study

Ten Area Schools, spread across the length of New Zealand from Hokianga in the north to The Catlins in the south, agreed to take part in a year long School Development exercise conducted mainly via an audio-graphic link. Each school chose a theme which they wished to develop and nominated a School Development group to link up with the researcher for 30 minutes each month. As an induction for the project and an opportunity for key people to meet, the researcher met the school principals and usually one other member of the proposed team at a series of one day regional seminars before getting under way. Here it was possible to discuss some of the key concepts and processes and detail how the various pieces of technology would function. Two further one day seminars were held with key people from the schools, by scheduling time immediately prior to the annual Area Schools conference which they all attended in Wellington. Some Board of Trustee members sat in for these seminars to experience directly the kinds of opportunities that this form of development offered.

Near the conclusion of the project the researcher visited three of the schools and interviewed the School Development teams that had been responsible for the project. In all of these cases it was also possible to share time briefly with the whole of the staff. A detailed log of all the sessions was kept along with a file of the screens used. During the final session opportunity was taken to conduct a simple evaluation of the interactions. All schools completed a more formal written evaluation after the completion of the year, and these data sources have been combined in the results section.

Working with these remote schools exposed the project to some of the oldest telephone exchanges in the country and as a consequence we learned to cope with a wide variety of technical "glitches". By the end of the year smooth error free links had been achieved

with nine of the schools and continuing assistance was being provided to one school which had experienced an unfortunate sequence of problems with the computer that they had purchased for the data transfer. Their service agreement necessitated sending the computer to a centre some considerable distance away to correct a range of errors which had been created by the supplier. The down time did create a problem for the project and detracted considerably from that school's development process.

Each of the participating schools signed a formal undertaking to select a School Development theme which had implications for classroom teaching, to interact with the researcher on an audio-graphic link each month, and to commit some of their own resources of time and training to the project. The School Development team was generally composed of the school's principal, deputy principal, assistant principal and instructional technology person although this varied somewhat from school to school. The project was financed by contract with the Ministry of Education.

5.3.a. *Range of themes*

The schools were given open choice in that they were not limited to a list of possible topics. Nevertheless it was suggested that the focus chosen should involve multiple staff, should impact on teaching practice in the school and be relevant to current expressed concerns or needs within the school.

The topics actually chosen by the schools often reflected areas of interest currently being emphasised by the Education Review Office and/or the Ministry of Education. It was not surprising, therefore, given the plethora of material descending on schools from the Ministry of Education, the Education Review Office and sundry contract providers at this time, under the heading of *Assessment and Evaluation* that this was a topic chosen by four schools in the first instance and by the end of the project seven of the ten were working in this area. Figure 5.1 indicates the initial and final themes chosen by the ten schools. Changes occurred because the schools either altered their focus as a result of the data gathering exercise, or wanted to cover more than one topic. For some the

second theme grew from the earlier work but for others the link is more difficult to ascertain.

Figure 5.1 Chosen Themes

School	Initial Focus	Final Focus
1	Developing achievement statements	Narratives for assessment
2	Assessment and record keeping	Culture and student based learning
3	Assessment and teacher appraisal	Assessment and teacher appraisal
4	Discipline without confrontation	Teacher narrative
5	Assessment and evaluation through Quality Learning Circles	Communicating qualitative assessments to community
6	Culture definition	Assessment and evaluation through Quality Learning Circles
7	Assessment and reporting	Total Quality Management
8	Four phase School Development	Quality Learning Circles
9	School culture and action plans	Job descriptions
10	Learning Styles	Assessment and evaluation

Of the initial ten themes chosen, four examined an aspect of assessment. Other themes included achievement, discipline, culture, effective teaching, and the four phases of School Development. In the final themes three more schools were looking at assessment while three of the schools initially looking at assessment had moved on to another topic. Other discussion topics included student based learning, teacher narrative, working with the community, quality management and staff interaction.

5.3.b. *The technology*

For these seminars to take place the schools needed:

- an IBM or IBM clone 386 or better with windows 3.1 installed;
- a copy of the computer program *vis-avis* installed on the computer;

- the computer connected via a 14.4 bt modem to an outside line;
- a second phone line available for contiguous voice contact; and
- some means of sharing the voice connection via a speaker and microphone, multi point phone or similar.

Ordinarily these sessions were *point-to-point* connections, where an individual school was connected to the researcher's office at Massey University. There was the capacity for all schools to be connected with Massey via a *bridge* connection. In the Massey office there was a similar computer setup to that described above plus the addition of a full duplex speaker/microphone connected to the telephone.

This is relatively low level technology, which is potentially available in most schools. An Area School group was chosen for this project as many of these schools were already trialing audio-graphics for their own teaching linkages. Competence with this technology had not spread to the groups of staff who became partners in this project. Most had little experience with the equipment or methodology which may be why many chose to include their IT teacher as part of the School Development group.

This form of interaction could be seen as preceding or replacing full video conferencing. It is interesting to read that industry groups are saying the same thing.

In many cases companies find they don't need the video dimension even when it's available. "While it's nice to be able to see somebody's expression, especially in a customer situation," say Intel's Mr Lee, "visual contact is not vital to sending and receiving bit mapped slides or documents..."

In fact, the visual contact can be not only unnecessary, but also downright embarrassing. "I call it the 'nose picking, lips-moving syndrome'" says Doug Davis, a senior engineer at TASC... (Mehling, 1995:13).

When planning the project it was anticipated that a number of group or “bridge sessions” would be held throughout the year involving schools which were following similar themes. Each time that this was suggested schools replied that they preferred to maintain the focus on their own work in association with the researcher. In a number of cases the imminent arrival of the Education Review Office team may have contributed to this perspective but schools everywhere seemed pushed into this position through the intensification of teachers’ work (Apple, 1988).

5.3.c. *A typical audio-graphic session*

The sessions were links between one school’s School Development group and the researcher. Times were agreed in advance, usually between 3.30 and 5.30 pm, and the researcher would ring the group by telephone at the agreed time. All groups and the researcher used full duplex speaker telephones for this audio link. After confirming that all were present and the computer program was running on a machine attached to a separate phone line, the researcher would activate the data link.

Most meetings would begin with the researcher introducing a group of slides which would be used to focus the initial discussion. These would be based around the theme that the school had chosen and linked with readings which had already been posted to the school. An example of this process is shown below.

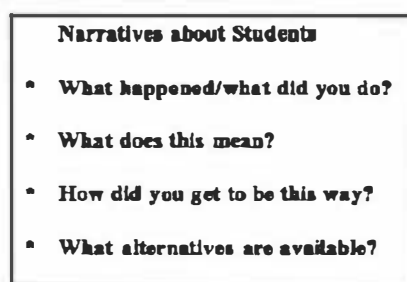
Figure 5.2 Examples of Data Screens used in Early Sessions

<p>What data is vital for <i>learning</i>?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who decides? 2. How should it be kept? 3. How should policy be made? 	<p>What is expected from Teachers?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual progress 2. School records 3. Shared data
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These screens would be transmitted from Massey and arrive, almost instantaneously on the computer at the school. Both groups could then work directly on the screen by highlighting portions or adding further text. This kind of activity, particularly that of adding additional text became a very important part of each session. It served to focus the discussion and to form the basis of a running record of past sessions. The screens were retained as files able to be printed and re-accessed in the future, at both locations. Increasingly, as the year progressed, schools initiated their own screens and were also able to supply the researcher, via fax, SSINet, E-mail, and regular mail, examples of what they were doing in classrooms.

One aspect of discussion, for example, had been the use of narrative in an assessment and evaluation situation. One school supplied a number of stories they had collected and they became the basis of discussion for the next audio-graphic session. Both parties had the narratives on their desk in hard copy, and the discussion was structured with the following slide. The session structure using these reflective questions was subsequently used again by the members of the School Development team with other teachers with whom they were working.

Figure 5.3 Data Screen used to Examine Narrative



Each session lasted approximately 30 minutes but on occasions would last as long as one hour. Plans for the next link were always completed prior to disengaging and some notes were made as to the probable focus for the next session. Communication was continued in the intervals between session by phone calls, E-mail and fax. On occasions where technical problems had intervened, additional sessions were held to recheck the stability of the link.

5.4 Evaluation Methodology

All schools completed an evaluation questionnaire at the end of the project. In some cases this was submitted as a joint response from the School Development team and in other cases a separate paper was completed by each member of the team. Visits were made to three of the schools and interviews conducted with those staff members who had taken part in the audio-graphic sessions. Further short sessions were held with all the staff in each of these schools. The final audio-graphic session was conducted as a form of evaluative feedback where discussion was focussed on content, process, and the notion of audio-graphic development. Data from these three sources is combined in the subsequent sections.

5.4.a. *The questionnaire (see Appendix B for form)*

At the end of the project all schools were posted a written document on which to record their thoughts about the experience. Sufficient copies were sent to each school in order that all who had regularly taken part in the sessions could respond. Principals were asked to gather the responses of these teachers and the replies could be collated on one form or each participant could submit an individual response. All schools returned the form in the numbers shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Forms Returned

School	Number of forms returned
1	1
2	1
3	3
4	1 (composite from 4 respondents)
5	2
6	1
7	4
8	1
9	1
10	1 (composite from 3 respondents)
Total	16

All the questions invited open ended answers. Each School Development group was asked to comment on what actually happened, in their school, within the project and how this related to their early expectations. In addition they were invited to suggest the criteria that they would apply to any future School Development offerings. The first four questions sought statements regarding the participants' definition of the concept of School Development and how the project related to that definition. An indication of their overall change strategy was requested and respondents were invited to state the expectation that they held for the impact of this programme on classroom practice.

1. Please state your definition of School Development.
2. As concisely as you can, relate your expectation of the project.
3. Please state how you expected to promote change in your school.
4. What impact did you expect the programme to have on classroom practice?

In addition to gaining some insights into their thinking from the written answers, these questions were designed to stimulate reflection by the participants and to provide a link between their intentions and the action that occurred in the school. The next group of questions (5-8) were designed to provide insights into the participants' current espoused theory. Answers to this group of questions would be searched for examples of key concepts and processes and for indications of the way that key concepts had been incorporated into their language when talking with other professionals and with the lay members of their school communities.

5. You are introducing a number of newly appointed staff to the school. Please state how you would like them to think of School Development at _____ School.
6. You are talking with your senior staff and defining for them the criteria that you now believe should be applied in evaluating potential School Development training programmes. Please write down your ideas.
7. At an early BoT meeting you take the opportunity to explain how change is managed at _____ School. Summarise the main points that you would make.
8. At a whole of staff meeting you wish to explain how the School Development programme planned for 1996 will impact on classroom practice. Summarise the main points that you would make.

The final group of questions related to the content and process of the 1995 project. This kind of School Development was different from any previously tried and it was considered important to gain some general understandings about content, form and general presentation of the sessions.

9. What, if anything from the project will influence what you do in 1996?
10. What aspects of the project did you enjoy?
11. What aspects of the project would you suggest that I change before offering the programme to any other group of schools?

12. Who regularly attended the sessions at your end?
13. Would you join a similar programme again?
14. Would you recommend this programme to other schools?
15. Any other comment?

5.4.b. *The interviews*

The researcher visited three of the schools that had taken part in the year long project. Initial interviews which were recorded and subsequently combined with the other data, were held with the School Development team and somewhat shorter sessions were held with all the staff. These sessions also included an informal tour around the schools and provided the opportunity to talk briefly with many of the staff. The formal interviews began with the School Development team being encouraged to discuss the links that they saw between the project and classroom behaviours.

These discussions included examples of actual practice and surveyed the methods used by the school to persist with the selected theme, and to spread the growing expertise of the staff across all sections of the school. The usefulness of the *Quality Learning Circle* concept was a strong discussion topic. Here also were references to the overlap between what can be defined as school or individual professional development. As an early intention within the project had been to combine the experiences of schools across the group in “bridge” sessions but there had been no commitment from any of the participants to engage in this form of interaction, opportunity was taken to discuss reasons. The interviews concluded with an exchange of views about the audio-graphic delivery mechanism and the particular way in which this project had operated.

5.4.c. *The final group day*

This final seminar was split into four sessions. The questions set as the agenda for the first session were:

- How do you ensure that all professional staff in the school continue to grow and improve their practice? and
- What were some of the results of the 1995 School Development initiative? To what extent was the four phase model put into practice?

The second session focussed on the audio-graphic methodology and participants were asked to be prepared to describe both the physical arrangements made for the conferences and how their particular School Development group operated. In addition it was expected that they would explain how they came to choose their particular theme and what actually happened within the theme during the year.

A third session shifted attention to current practices and sought to explore the manner in which current (1996) themes for School Development had been chosen. Here it was intended to clarify any links with the audio-graphic project. Time was also allocated to discuss some of the emerging legislation and to address some input from the researcher that had been specifically requested but was not directly part of the evaluation. Finally, in a fourth session, time was taken to address the issue of future contact between these schools and the university and to explore how the emerging Internet technology could be integrated into a School Development delivery mechanism. The day finished with time made available for recommendations and suggestions for further work of this nature.

5.5 Results Overview

At the final audio-graphic conference all groups completed an informal summary under the headings of “content”, “process” and “time intervals”. Three of the schools were visited and the School Development teams interviewed. All participating schools provided a written evaluation, and a final face to face session was held with those members of the School Development teams who attended the 1996 Area Schools

conference. Material from all these sources, along with data from the ongoing log, are integrated into the analysis section (5.6).

The final slide ensured that each group discussed the content of the course, the timing of the sessions, their frequency and the general process. Each group summarised their thoughts and added statements to the screen during the session. The process used in the project was seen to be attractive, cost effective and novel. Most (8) would like to take part in another similar programme. Of the two dissenting, one would like to take part in the programme if he/she was in another school and the other had just lost the key member of the 1995 School Development team and was uncertain how this would affect on-going development in the school. Comments included “lack of travel was a delight” and “readings were linked to the process and provided focus”.

Other comments indicated the kind of support that these schools gained from this process and that the content broadened the thinking that they were able to apply to the chosen theme. A number suggested that some of the early sessions caused them to redefine precisely what they wished to achieve. An interesting contribution suggested that the programme presented in this way provided time for reflection and preparation and provided “intellectual respectability” for the work they were conducting. They stated that much of the content became the starter for staff discussion. Time between sessions was “about right” for most as they had other competing tasks to complete but needed regular contact to keep progressing the theme. They appreciated the flexibility of individual school schedules.

In general, comments reflected the view that the slides focus attention and thought; that interaction, through typing, highlighting and other screen activity was essential; preparation of slides, by the school group acts as an advance organiser and as a discussion stimulus; and that an open white board during the session kept the talk on track. There was an interesting mix of responses to questions which sought responses from schools regarding their own procedures which suggest that while some schools actively seek rapid action responses to resolve problems, others tend to prefer a more

reflective approach. The former, for example, tend to describe School Development initiatives as processes, or a series of actions that produce change, while the latter seek more collaborative strategies which involve a large measure of thinking and planning prior to taking any specific action.

One response that illustrates the view that School Development is action to produce specific change states, School Development is “a programme which takes the school from where they are now to a position where they can implement the focus area - i.e. assessment” (questionnaire text). An illustration of the view of School Development as collaboration, reflective thinking and planning was expressed as, “arriving at ways we can successfully implement the necessary changes in policy and organisation to meet new directives” (questionnaire text).

In seeking to give focus to their School Development endeavour, some sought *expert* outside knowledge, others looked to a specific curriculum focus, and some sought to deepen staff knowledge of the school culture. The difference between a task and a strategic focus was also evident in these responses. One school defined what they were doing as, “an ongoing educational programme which actively encourages teachers to use their level of understanding as a foundation upon which to advance their personal educational philosophy, their skills, and common school beliefs.” A similar thought was contained in the response that School Development is, “helping teachers do it better by providing the plan/framework to achieve this.”

Throughout the evaluation, opportunities were provided for stating the concepts that this lead group held in relation to promoting change. Although there was a strong inclination evident towards collaborative change strategies, answers and contributions suggested that few of the School Development teams had developed a systematic notion of how change might be managed in their school. There was little emphasis on the successful things that the school was already doing, and little reference to any change literature. Many statements showed a strong reliance on surveys, brainstorming and generally spreading existing ideas. There was little evidence that staff or school leadership had a

comprehensive change focus view for the school. A search was made for any evidence of links between planned change and the impact on classroom activity. As a majority of these schools chose assessment and evaluation as their theme many statements reflected that focus. Much of this was quite specific and seeking specified outcomes. There was little reference to, or acknowledgement of, possible growth in teacher learning and understanding as a result of any School Development processes. Anticipated statements in this section about professional development and teacher growth were also missing.

In looking for examples of what actually happened during the year that the programme was in operation, the intention was to discover whether any of the major concepts developed throughout the course had been incorporated into the respondents' vocabulary. Unmistakable positive confirmation is provided in the following two examples from the interviews.

School Development is about improving teaching and learning. I would ask them about their experience in areas such as "whole brain learning" and would introduce them to the concept of QLCs - the forum we currently use to share best practice, discuss achievements, promote effective teaching and learning.

[School Development is] an on-going process of change in which you will be involved, mainly through small groups composed of people from different levels of the school. People will talk about their experiences, will learn from thinking about them and will arrive at a consensus about what should happen.

There was also reference to *knowledge in use*, or as Doyle (1990:355-6, cited in Cortazzi, 1993:9) explains, teachers' "knowledge" can be thought of as "high context" or personal practical knowledge [and may be] "event structured e.g...particularistic and situational...case knowledge." The concept of *School Development*, for some, also carried an element of professional development. There were many examples of a focus

on teaching and learning, on the use of reflective practice, and on large group involvement in planning and evaluation. This is not to argue that these notions were stimulated *only* by the project but it is quite possible that the work carried out on this occasion by this group did contribute to these positions.

Respondents found it difficult to detail any differences that students might see as a result of the School Development work and there was ambivalence towards how change was managed in the school. Some suggested that it was not managed at all with the statement that, “by and large it is not managed in any tight centralised sense. The institution is too diverse and its key players too autonomous for any sort of enlightened, hegemonic or other (tightly) centralised system to work.” In contrast, other answers focussed on the form of change, with a search for collaboration and consensus, and recognition of the centrality of the existing school culture. For one there was a belief in reflection and discussion, to understand other points of view. This was tempered with overtones of direction and compliance! “Continuous discourse (even entailing vigorous debate) enables those who have a responsibility to influence to give sectional and departmental developments a nudge here or perhaps a knee to the groin there. The quality of the rational and emotive debate is the critical generator” (Interview data).

A final section of the questionnaire and questions in the interviews and at the review day looked for comment on the potential influence of the project for future School Development work, and the nature of the audio-graphic procedure in other similar projects. Some mentioned quite specific concepts, from the project, such as teacher narrative and Quality Learning Circles, which they intended to retain as in the comment, “I have taken a more cautious (perhaps less-certain-of-my-premises) approach to professional development/School Development. The place of the teacher’s story in my professional analysis checklist-come-taxonomy has risen.” Another stated that, “we will keep QLC, heterogeneous groups, and mixing primary and secondary as a forum for improving teaching and learning and as a forum for prioritising staff development” (Interview data).

Others signalled that reflective thought had become a much more important part of their professional life with comments like, “I am sure my thinking about School Development has changed (developed from zero) so I guess everything I do will have been influenced by the project and the Reflective Principals course” (Interview data).

Apart from the expected positive elements of a project run in this way, such as a saving in travel and accommodation, the convenience of meeting on the school site, and the consequential savings in cost, there were some comments that suggest that this particular form of interaction increases participation generally in the school. To remain in control of the process was also important but as one respondent said, “thrashing things out with my closest colleagues that without the ‘sponsorship’ of a project/contract commitment might have struggled to get time” has been important for me. A similar thought included the researcher in this collaborative loop by valuing, “the opportunity to consult/discuss with an outside expert, while still retaining control of the process.”

Another strength of this method of working was clearly the spaced frequency of the sessions while the responsibility and control of “what happened in the school” remained the responsibility of the school. This was compared with people visiting the school as one participant suggested, “I think the good thing about the audio-graphics link is it’s a continuous process isn’t it, whereas people arriving and you know they just arrive, do their bit, and then it’s too easy to let it go” (Text Units 186-189: Node, 3). Furthermore, “the conferences gave us great feedback and deadlines” and we were “forced to clarify where we were going on a regular basis” (Interview data). There was some evidence that the process used did cause groups to become more reflective as is evidenced by the comment, “so I guess the fact that it was a long term thing and it was a known long term thing made us much more willing to be reflective and both our small group sessions and our large group sessions tried to have some aspect of reflection in them” (Text units 129-133: Node, 3).

From the 16 questionnaire forms received 14 (88%) said that they would join a similar programme again and 13 (81%) said that they would recommend this particular

methodology and content to colleagues. This particular programme was funded as a Ministry of Education contract. Whereas the telephone costs are relatively modest, and most schools wishing to take part have the appropriate hardware and software, the facilitator cost could be a disincentive. There is little doubt that schools *would* take part again if the total cost was manageable.

5.6 The Propositions as Indicators

In the same way that the propositions (see Section 2.2) developed from personal experience and research findings, were used in the previous case studies to gain insights into the impact of the School Development on organisation and learning development so also are they used in Case Study C. The use of the propositions enables the data from the case study to be systematically sifted and examined in searching for understandings about how principals construct their conceptual framework and respond to outside influences.

5.6.a. *Proposition 1.*

It is possible to gain insights into principal behaviour by examining their use and adoption of certain key concepts (e.g. the four phase development sequence, conceptual job descriptions, quality learning circles, and the concept of school culture (Stewart and Prebble, 1993)).

Questions at the interviews and in the final questionnaire probed for insights into the way these groups thought about School Development. In particular, interest was concentrated on the inclusion of any of the concepts that had been introduced during the project sessions. For many, *School Development* was a generalised notion addressing the field of change management expressed in phrases like “the cycle by which change is managed” and “where the whole school is involved in change management”. Answers

such as these gave little indication of locus of power or of the over-arching strategy that the school preferred.

In contrast, a few schools showed that they had internalised a number of the key ideas introduced during the project and had applied them to their own development. In addressing how the selected theme was developed in their school one respondent stated, “they have somebody who convenes and says...right, today our theme is learning to learn and can you offer any stories?” Significant here is the reference to stories or narrative as this was a central concept in the development of *Quality Learning Circles*. This interview also illustrated that some reflective questions were used by groups during the sessions with the comment, “in fact the question...what does this mean...was asked...”

There was a general level of intention to affect the work of teachers across all the groups and this was represented by statements that schools need “to be given the strategies and approaches to challenge teachers to look at their teaching practice” (Text units 22-23: Node, 11). The schools that introduced some form of Quality Learning Circles as the forum for discussion generally had a higher level of satisfaction with the discussions that ensued. In this Area School group there had traditionally been a split between primary and secondary teaching staff. As a consequence critical discussion about teaching practice and its effects on learning had often been limited. It would appear that heterogeneous groups may be necessary to stimulate effective discussion even if the school does not adopt the total Quality Learning Circle concept as is illustrated by the excerpt that follows.

They were certainly heterogeneous groups, is that the word, so it's drawn from all levels of the school so it wasn't just secondary or primary, so I tried to make sure I had someone from J1 to J3, someone from Standard one to four, someone from Form one and two, someone from Form three to seven. And then in groups of about five, I tried to get different experience, different ages, different sexes, so it was designed to be reasonably near quality learning circles (Text units 58-69: Node, 11).

These groups would then discuss the theme that the school had chosen and as well as discussing what they did in their own classrooms, they were able to debate why they had chosen that particular course.

5.6.b. *Proposition 2.*

Although it is not possible to predict specific outcomes from development activities, use of a specific range of processes could signal allegiance to a particular mindscape (Sergiovanni, 1991).

Across the whole sample of schools in this case study, the idea of professional development was applied quite narrowly to individual development specifically related to the current position the person was holding and the current issues the school was addressing. There were no references made in the material gathered in this section to personal professional development for the future. This preoccupation with an intensified work schedule and problem solving is consistent with Apple's (1988) view that getting a task completed will take precedence over any other action. In many schools in this study the particular task that they wished to complete was to write a policy page.

Where references were made to professional development activities, these were usually based around the idea of staff educating other staff. If staff groups could get together and identify effective practices then the "first change will be in teachers themselves - what am I doing well now..."(Text units 70-71: Node, 2), and these changes may spread to other teachers. Clearly this is both a desirable and a positive feature to encourage amongst a staff group. It supports a School Development effort but is not sufficient as the only means of professional development. What is also required is the further development of each individual teacher's personal theory in the sense that Griffiths and Tann (1992:71) use when they state: "The view that all practice is an expression of personal theory underpins the approach often referred to as 'the reflective teacher' or the 'reflective practitioner'..."

A major problem that school leaders face in regard to promoting the development of individual theory of teaching and learning is that such activity may promote argument and debate at the very time when the school management is seeking consensus and cohesion. As a consequence some schools tend to present a range of “good ideas” for staff to select from rather than encouraging critical reflection and literature based study. There was some evidence that this also happened in this case study as can be observed from the comment that “I think most of them thought, oh that’s a good idea, yeh, I might try that, and looked upon it as a source of ideas rather than reflecting, why did you do it that way” (Text units 94-97: Node, 21).

Throughout these schools there was the pressure to get this task completed as there were so many other tasks still to address. “Well you know what the staff gets like, that a whole load of different things one tries to do and I didn’t have that much time to introduce the problem” (Text units 97-99: Node, 21). Not only are there always more tasks to complete than time to complete them, but many of the jobs competed for priority. Time to think and reflect was an early casualty. Outside the school’s area of influence, a number of professional development opportunities still exist. Courses are offered by a variety of providers ranging from contracting individuals to tertiary institutions. In addition teacher support services operate regionally. These opportunities are advertised at various times through the year and schools generally view them as one-off opportunities. Much of the money for this activity is made available on an annual basis and there is no guarantee that any course will be repeated in the following year. A common comment was that “there’s a lot of people go on professional development courses and there’s no follow-up” (Text unit 193-194: Node, 21).

The very nature of these courses makes it difficult for schools to have any integrated scheme within which they might be placed. In one case the school leader attempted to provide some cohesion. “I pick up some stuff when advisors come, and when people come back from courses and I store it here, but it doesn’t mean a hell of a lot to me” (Text unit 198-200: Node, 21).

These examples show the difficulties that schools face in this area. Some have embraced the Quality Learning Circle concept as one way of coordinating and disseminating this kind of knowledge. It doesn't address the issue that such activity may widen the range of views amongst staff and encourage a variety of classroom approaches. It is only when principals and other school leaders see that increased variety is a strength that time and energy will be given to such activities. Perhaps this is what was meant by the following extract. We aim to develop the school "by empowering teachers - to have a forum that recognised and celebrated their expertise. To give real decision making opportunities to teachers" (Text units 8-10: Node, 21).

5.6.c. *Proposition 3.*

Critical reflection is of central importance both for principals and staff (Brookfield, 1995; Canning, 1991; Elliott, 1996; Griffiths and Tann, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1991; Smyth, 1991).

Most of the School Development teams in the schools in this sample believed that primary trained teachers worked differently from secondary trained teachers in their schools. There was a strong desire to break down this barrier and have the two groups learn from each other and reflect on the reasons for the different approaches. Quality Learning Circles was seen to be a useful procedure to aid this exchange. The statements collected with these data covered a very large range. One school reported a major shift in culture. Prior to taking part in the project one particular forum for the secondary area of the school spent a good deal of time focusing on student deviant behaviour. "Often it used to be a forum where at risk students or students who were misbehaving were identified and talked about" (Text unit 317-319: Node, 111).

After the QLCs had been in existence for a time the behaviour of this group of teachers changed. Rather than focus on what the student needed to do to change, staff began to investigate what they themselves could do to positively alter the learning of this group of students. "I think in parts the philosophy behind them [QLCs] has helped to shift that

constant sort of negativity. Though heh, well look let's not just go on...about this child...let's look at what we are doing that might be contributing to this problem and what can we do to change things" (Text units 335-338: Node, 111).

As these inter-school and inter-class discussions continued, the knowledge about what other teachers on the staff did, expanded exponentially. The way teachers were regarded by their colleagues also changed. The example below relates to a teacher who had superb skills but did not talk much at whole of staff meetings. She did not consider her teaching technique would be of any particular interest to others. The QLC meetings were more intimate and focused and resulted in others visiting her room. As a consequence, "She found it really empowering, she gained master teacher status through QLC because people saw the work she was doing and I don't think it's an exaggeration that she was talked about and celebrated as a master teacher in the staffroom quite openly" (Text units 261-265: Node, 111).

Here was an example of a teacher's *knowledge in use* (Schön, 1983) being of immense use to her colleagues. Unfortunately for this school, this teacher subsequently sought and achieved a position in teacher education, teaching these skills. Teacher forums, structured in this way allowed both a spread of knowledge and the incentive for all to think critically about the consequences of their own teaching practices. For many it was the first time that they had thought about the nature of teaching divorced from their own subject areas. This was not a time where they were seeking to come to some kind of consensus, but rather a time of analysis, exploration and celebration of expertise.

Regardless of what happens elsewhere in the school, it is essentially the individual teacher who does the teaching, often unobserved by any other professional. This isolation can work against critical reflection as there is little incentive to discuss their teaching practice. On the other hand, working together need not mean that they do the same things. "It's just creating an environment in which they can work. So there's that willingness to look at people as individuals rather than just as large groups" (Text Units 54-56: Node, 1111).

One school wished to develop a more effective way of dealing with discipline situations and chose that as their early theme. Much of the talk that they engaged in at this level was about expectation, values, and a belief that teachers and students should feel secure in the classroom. One statement abstracted from their record summarised this concept. They wished to build “a more supportive classroom environment where staff could defuse explosive situations - where students could be challenged to raise their expectations and effort and achievement and could experience success in a secure classroom” (Text Unit 4-7: Node, 1111). Once acceptable practices were defined and illustrated across the group there was often a move to confirm a concept by defining it within a classroom policy.

In this project it was occasionally the readings that pushed the action-response but more often it was the interclass visits. These often began quite simply and, in a number of the schools investigated routine classroom procedures and then moved to a more idiosyncratic and more personal level. There were examples of teacher groups wishing to explore new ideas in these groups because of the all round knowledge of each other that it brought as a consequence. The following section is from a conversation with a principal relating how the staff dealt with the newly emergent issue of appraisal. The principal expected that they would prefer to work in their traditional subject and area groups under the guidance of the senior staff in the school but, “what they chose to do was use the quality learning circle grouping because they found that here we all are doing something, here we are in the best position to find out the skills we actually have access to right amongst our own staff and how we can as a whole school move forward. Well, I just about danced out of there” (Text Units 380-385: Node, 1112).

Other schools dealt with assessment and what should actually happen at any class level and reported, “we actually sat down and we planned that unit together and then we planned the assessment tasks together, and we looked at portfolios and we actually did a sort of grid of what we were assessing, how we were going to assess it, and instead of test test test, we actually looked at a lot of other ways we could possibly do it” (Text units 880-885: Node, 1112). Just as importantly, ideas and methodologies were

discarded when they were no longer serving a useful purpose, “like I think that one change where a whole heap of stuff, that perhaps wasn’t particularly useful, got chucked out” (Text Units 900-902: Node 1112).

5.6.d. *Proposition 4.*

Principal development and School Development activities cannot always be separated (Campbell-Evans, 1993; Dimmock, 1993; Sparkes and Bloomer, 1993).

Articles that widened the debate within each school’s chosen theme, were supplied throughout the project. After allowing some time for individual reading, audio-graphic tutorials stimulated some debate. It was intended that similar debates would be conducted amongst the rest of the staff. One school had selected to work within a theme of discipline and the principal was having great difficulty getting the staff to come to terms with the issue. Some of the early material that was shared during tutorials demonstrated a strong belief in formal rules, a plea for standards and disenchantment with a detention regime. The focus of the project at that time was exploring how the concept of culture could be applied to the various themes that the schools had selected. As the discussion with this group ranged across the various techniques for discovering values, beliefs and shared understandings amongst school groups, time was spent elaborating the place that narrative can take in this regard.

Following the audio-graphic session the School Development team set up a seminar with the whole of staff where all were encouraged to relate a story. They were given the choice of telling a positive story, “one that they felt worked” or a negative one, “one they were unhappy with”. To provide further guidelines all were asked to relate:

- What was the incident?
- What did you do?
- What was the outcome?
- Could you have handled it differently?

A long fax was received by the researcher after this meeting detailing some of the stories, but more importantly, listing the kind of suggestions that staff had made as a summary after the session. The principal was astonished at the vigour of the discussion and whole hearted acceptance of this form of development. His fax concluded; "Do you have any more magic for me for the next session with staff?" This group went on to develop, in more detail, their expectation of each other, of the School Development team, and what they thought student expectation of them might be. Clear guidelines for the development of "teacher as researcher" are contained in this activity. Their expectation, for example, could be matched with observed behaviours as Sergiovanni (1991) suggests in his discussion of artifacts. In this example the principal's understanding of teacher narrative and the practical application of the concept in the School Development project are inextricably combined.

Another school, developing the theme of assessment and evaluation, became interested in a range a readings in this field. Mid-way through the year the log notes summarise a spirited discussion that occurred relating to rubrics and portfolios. These discussions were again later repeated in QLC groups within the school and, as a consequence, influenced the writing of the school's assessment policy in such a way that constant critique could be applied. It was acknowledged that no one methodology would fit every occasion, and a specification for every occasion would be unworkable. This was an example of careful theory development followed by professional trust, arising out of their own research in classrooms.

Some schools followed a quite tortuous route through the project and a one year focus may have been too short for the kind of theoretical development and action sequences anticipated. At one of the final sessions for a school group they were discussing achievement reports from the point of view of purpose, outcomes for teachers, and outcomes for students. The final slide asked for some discussion as to "what does this mean for our evaluation and assessment policy?" Their reply, "It seems as if there are many dimensions to be considered in this sort of achievement statement", was quite different from their earlier statement that the major purpose of achievement reports was

simply “to assess student achievement”. Another School Development group having a similar discussion with the researcher concluded that, “it seems as if we will come up with a shared theory and then be able to plan the detail at departmental level and still have a school wide assessment culture.” These examples of the development and application of local theory illustrate the interconnectiveness of the School Development groups’ own learning with the general School Development project.

Those schools who chose to start using Quality Learning Circles also experimented with story telling. One session with a school concentrated on the relative benefits that students gained from being members of working groups. At the conclusion of the session some materials were sent off to the school for further reading. At an interview later one leader commented, staff “...talked quite a lot amongst their own section as to the composition of student groups and who was being advantaged and who was being disadvantaged, so that group thing you sent as a reading guide grew into quite a heated discussion here” (Text units 253-257: Node, 3111). The interviewee went on to detail how this talk spilled over into breaks and other teacher “free time”. This same kind of discussion and story telling about current practices led another leader to remark, “I have taken a more cautious (perhaps less-certain-of-my-premises) approach to professional development/ School Development. The place of the teacher’s story in my professional analysis checklist-come-taxonomy has risen” (Text units 18-20: Node, 3111). This would seem to suggest that the kind of criteria that this leader would use in future to evaluate teaching was beginning to change.

5.6.e. *Proposition 5.*

Successful School Development is an educational rather than a managerial process.

Most of the audio-graphic tutorials were structured to encourage the School Development team in the school to critique and compare their practice with ideas from the contemporary literature. In a real sense many of these occasions provided the first

critical forum that they had experienced for this practical material. Their replies confirmed that presenting questions in this way did focus their thinking and encourage them to integrate some of the “new” concepts, such as “school culture” into their work with the staff. Others applied the value of the “continuous discourse” that they themselves experienced from the tutorials into their work with others. One felt that, “the quality of the rational and emotive debate is the critical generator” (Text unit 55-56: Node, 31).

During these audio-graphic tutorials, one of the purposes was to demonstrate practically how a reflective discussion session might be conducted. This was picked up by most of the schools and a number made reference to this “modelling” in their final reports. Another major purpose was to establish a particular School Development process as a useful taxonomy for thinking about School Development progress. One comment, “we did not look at just one practical problem, so we have a methodology to use now” (Text unit 28-29: Node, 31), suggests a strategic rather than a simple problem solving approach. This taking a longer term view and incorporating the relevant literature is also echoed in the extract, “one thing we would like to follow up is some aspects of long term school planning in the fuller sense” (Text unit 412-414: Node, 31).

The multiple pressures that schools experience can be further exacerbated by the isolation that the schools in this study shared. Time lines agreed to for the project seemed to assist and comments such as, “I suspect I might have given up, if it hadn’t been for you at the other end of the line” (Text units 418-419: Node, 32), give support to that assumption. They seek out the kind of development activities that increase staff abilities as, “we sort of feel isolated and abandoned, so the people who can give us strength to carry on are each other” (Text units 437-439: Node, 32).

Some of the audio-graphic sessions had particularly strong influence across large groups of staff. In one instance it was a prolonged discussion about assessment and evaluation and the place of portfolios. The concept of interviewing students regarding the meaning and content of their portfolios as a means of understanding their learning was first

presented in a reading and caused a great deal of discussion. During an interview at one of the schools one leader commented, “That’s an idea that you popularised, or spread a bit. A lot of them have been doing a lot more of that. They’ve seen the point of it and tried to use it” (Text unit 507-509: Node, 32). This discussion had begun a new task. Students were self selecting work for their portfolios and then talking to teachers about their choice of material and general understanding. This group of staff had previously restricted their use of portfolios to a collection of “best” work, selected by the teacher, that showed how progress had been made. Discussing student choices opened up a new range of understanding about what had actually been learned, and what the students thought the teachers expected.

The School Development team in other schools described task completion as, “greater awareness of the requirements of successful assessment practice” (Text units 30-32: Node, 32), and “greater use of Quality Learning Circles”(Text units 37: Node, 32). The thinking that was beginning to emerge in some of these sessions was changing from a perception of “problem solving as *closure*” and signalling the end of a sequence to “problem solving as *springboard*” and of building this problem solution into the next round of critical reflective thinking.

For some groups the prime reason for putting energy into a School Development initiative was to make policy at the school level. They needed to complete a particular policy often as a result of a critical Education Review Office report on their school. This is an example of the task orientated approach. Clearly, there was an underlying assumption that the policy, when written, would have an effect on teaching and learning, but the prime focus was on writing and accepting the particular policy. There was a generalised, unstated expectation that written policy would translate into classroom practice because staff had been involved in its formulation.

Some had fashioned their School Development initiative in an effort to comply with the central authority directives that they saw as applying to them. This was another form of task orientation. In a real sense this group perceived that the policy was indeed decreed

by the central authority and the school needed to decide how it would be implemented. Their policy statements used the supplied content and specified implementation procedures as they stated that they were, “arriving at ways we can successfully implement the necessary changes in policy and organisation to meet new directives” (Text units 36-37: Node, 12).

For other groups the intention was to involve teachers in further thinking about their jobs. For them, School Development was a sequence of learning and observational strategies which did not necessarily lead to any formal policy writing. For this group the School Development activities have, “made teachers a lot more conscious of assessment and their assessment practices” (Text units 27-28: Node, 12), and “I think they feel a lot more comfortable about assessment now. So before, a year ago, I think they kind of, everyone recoiled with horror...uughh...assessment. Now I’m not saying they actually jump up and down with glee at the prospect of assessment, but at least they feel a lot more comfortable with it, and about it” (Text units 47-52: Node, 12).

Contained within some of the answers were a small number of statements which alluded to the dilemma of multiple goals, that all school leaders experience. Involvement in discussion and critique may not lead to consensus of action. It is possible that School Development activities may lead to greater disparity. School Development, said one respondent, “is a shared process, there is individual, school and departmental input. There is regular feedback/input and not all of it is consistent” (Text units 41-43: Node, 12). That this seemed to be accepted and acceptable by the leadership of the school could signal a commitment to an educational rather than managerial leadership style.

5.7 Implications for Principal and Leadership Development: Insights from the Case Study

There are significant financial implications in considering School Development support that does not require a frequent travel component. Furthermore, a School Development

initiative which allows individual school teams to both select the tutorial time as part of their school day, and to conduct the session from a room on their own site has an integrating effect. One participant at the final session remarked that “this programme gave us the best marriage between theory and practice” confirming the impression that *real* school events had formed the basis for much of thinking that had occurred in that school’s case. Others, during this final session stated that:

- “this programme was an exercise in practical theory”;
- “the talk flowed into the curriculum”;
- “telling stories is a worthwhile activity”; and
- “we were totally focussed on what we were doing”.

A number of schools considered that they had reached the stage of considering structural change as a result of the work of the project. These changes and their consequences will form the focus for future work in these schools. Overall most schools considered one calendar year much too short a time for programmes of this nature. They would have preferred to double the time at the very least. Referring to the “four phase model” design, many of them considered themselves to be now at Phase 2 - “increasing the level of collaboration”. Nevertheless, eight of the nine schools present at the final seminar stated that the frequent support conferences for professional development throughout the year had a positive effect on learning processes and had stimulated more effective teaching.

5.7.a. *Developing a theory of change*

The nature and number of changes in the requirements for schools since 1989, and the relative isolation of these Area Schools had imposed on many of them a form of reactive responding. It was not so much a matter of developing a cohesive plan for their particular situation but rather a concern to “keep up to date” or to implement the various requirements delineated by the Education Review Office as quickly as possible. Collaboration within this project alerted the teams to the breadth of expertise available

within their staff group, and to the excitement and potential energy able to be released by groups of staff being encouraged to try out ideas in a supportive environment. One school reported, with some delight, that a subsequent report from the Educational Review Office picked up on the success of this purposeful team sharing and practice, and stated that the school was making “real progress in the area of student-based learning through the use of multi-level teaching and multi tasking within subjects”.

Another school, as a focus within their major theme addressed the split between what teachers “said” they did and what they actually did. The specific approach that they used was “teacher narrative”. Teachers in this school had, according to the principal, been resistant to attempts to more widely consider views of how children learn. The story telling sessions exposed groups to a variety of points of view and interpretation and led on to useful discussions of theory and practice, and alternative classroom processes.

A further interesting report was in the area of metacognition. A group in this school set out to define and delineate how the metacognition process functioned across the age range in the school. Not only did this result in a greater analysis of individual practice but also developed a greater understanding of the concept itself and how it could be evaluated. Junior teachers, for example, instituted a practice of finishing each day by ensuring that all the class shared with each other “one thing they had learned today”.

These kinds of experiences provided a level of confidence for the leadership of the school to move beyond the immediate implementation of external requirements to a position where data gathering and increased participation were accepted as the usual methods for addressing emergent problems or dilemmas. Working in this way opened up a range of alternative possibilities which could then be considered against the various mandated obligations. This emerging theoretical perspective on change provided a greater sense of choice and as a consequence a sense of ownership which provided further energy and commitment. Increasingly the School Development teams were focusing on the implications of any change for teaching and learning rather than simple compliance with system wide directives. The theory of change which many of these leaders were

constructing began to include a large measure of “professional talk” and critical reflection to generate increased understanding of existing practice and value, prior to consideration of possible future action.

5.7.b. *The need for support*

The project demonstrated a need for support at the system level and a need for support to demonstrate critical reflective discussion. This was illustrated with the school whose team focussed for a time on “portfolios” within their overall theme of assessment and evaluation. During an audio-graphic session there was a discussion of some of the readings which had been posted out the month previously. They related to “portfolios” and their widest use. A number of teachers in this school already used portfolio ideas with their classes and were relating their practices during the session. In their work there was a strong relationship between set goals and work selected in the practice that one teacher described. It was apparent that the main purpose of portfolios, in one participant’s view, was to illustrate how particular goals had been met by reference to sets of students’ work. During the session the group discussed the possible implications of students choosing the work that would go in the portfolio. Even though there was some opposition to this idea expressed at the time, all the teachers agreed to “try out” the notion.

At the next session discussion focused again on the work that was assembled in the folders. One teacher reported that junior students in her class, when given the opportunity to select the “best” piece of work for inclusion, chose four pages of scribble because it was the “most” work. She was questioned about “what does this mean?”, “how did the child get to be this way?”, “what were the implications for her practice?” The conversation focused around teachers gaining a better understanding of how students thought about the work they had completed in regard to the values and beliefs which they held.

At a third session, related to this topic, the School Development group reported that this notion of pupil choice had stimulated a great deal of discussion across the whole school and had effected much change in how teachers expressed their goals to the students. It was recognised that encouraging students to select work that they themselves thought illustrated the achieved goal would lead to greater teacher understanding of children's thinking. The support and modelling for this development was an integral part of the audio-graphic process.

5.7.c. How do principals and school leaders construct and operationalise the framework for their work?

There is a very strong demand to "get the work done" which is, in part, generated by the sheer volume of work to be done by the principal and the general intensification of all teachers' work over the last few years (Wylie, 1997). This kind of external pressure often pushes school leaders into exerting pressure on teachers in the same form of shortened time lines and concentration on completed tasks that they themselves are faced with. The four phase development process which was introduced to all the schools at the beginning of the project was intended to move the attention of the school leadership from this task orientation to a focus on data gathering and professional discussion.

One school, for example, used the concept of school culture as their theme and unifying concept and began their project with an extensive data gathering exercise based on Charles Handy's (1986) "psychological contracts". This was presented in readings and in early audio-graphic sessions with this school. The basic technique was to have various groups within the school respond to the questions, "What are the three things you expect of the school this year?" and "What three things do you think that the school expects of you?"

Representative student groups were asked the same questions. After discussion and analysis student groups were asked further questions in an endeavour to understand their motivation, beliefs and values. From this material teachers gained considerable insights

into student thinking, the variety of ideas held amongst staff groups and were able to redesign activities and programmes to a better fit. The School Development team discovered that these kinds of activities led to improved teaching and learning and began to seek other opportunities where staff could explore a problem through gathering data and combining in analysis.

In another situation staff wished to use the project to write a school assessment policy. The audio-graphic seminars were used to progressively develop the range of possible alternatives and individuals took time between sessions to explore the purposes of the various alternatives suggested. In order to make sense of much of this material teachers had to “tell stories”, illustrate their methodology, and visit each other’s rooms. They used a *Quality Learning Circle* approach which enabled the sharing. These heterogeneous groups also helped break down the primary-secondary split. For this school this was a new type of school contact which has now become an acceptable, well used, form of staff interaction. In order to understand the assessment procedures, staff needed to understand the teaching and learning sequence. They consider that they have achieved significant structural change. The school leadership has a mind set for policy formation that now begins with data gathering and critical reflective discussion, includes wide visiting amongst classrooms and seeks policy statements which are a reflection of existing best practice.

This case illustrates an early attempt to use emerging technology as a means of assisting site-based School Development. Combined with some of the more traditional strategies such as face-to-face workshops, and guided reading, audio-graphic networks offer a cost effective means of sustained contact between facilitators and schools. The regular contact enables individual schools to develop and complete idiosyncratic School Development initiatives.

Chapter 6

PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

There is an on-going demand for courses for school leaders which have a strong research base and which seek to address current issues. Process taught at these courses, and subsequently available through published material would seem to have a strong carry over to individual schools. Leaders in schools seem to be seeking a process that Hargreaves (1997) defines as *reculturing* as opposed to *restructuring*. Here the emphasis is on the relationships of people working with each other, the clarification of beliefs, values, perspectives and assumptions that make up the theory that informs the actions of all who work in schools (Sergiovanni, 1991; Brookfield, 1995).

This concept of culture acts as a unifying focus for many school leaders, in that it encourages the debate of values and beliefs and integrates many development ideas into a cohesive whole. Applying the cultural perspective to educational organisations is not unique to New Zealand. It has provided analysts such as Sergiovanni (1991, 1996), Greenfield and Ribbins (1993), and Hopkins *et al.* (1994) with a whole new focus on the school and schooling. It has also suggested a fresh approach and focus for school leadership. In the past, most attempts to alter classroom practice have focused on the individual teacher, attempting to change practice through training and classroom intervention and supervision methods. However, an understanding of the culture of the typical school suggests that many of these efforts run counter to core cultural values. Schools are characterised by norms of professional autonomy and isolation (Lortie, 1975). Or, as Sparkes puts it more caustically, “the ambiguous celebration of isolation masquerading as autonomy” (1991:9). These norms are “sacred” in most schools and not easily altered by management intervention (Corbett *et al.*, 1987). At the same time, there is some evidence that efforts to alter classroom practice and develop teachers’ skills are most successful when there is a norm of collegiality and experimentation within the school (Little, 1982).

The challenge, for a school leader then, is to shift the culture of the school from a traditional one where most norms of professional autonomy and isolation are sacred and paramount, to one where teachers are prepared to collaborate at the level of classroom practice; from a school organisation where goals and mission direction are the preserve of the leader to a school community where policy becomes a statement of effective practice. There is a growing body of research and practice which has this objective as its central purpose as evidenced by *The 1990 ASCD Yearbook* (Joyce, 1990) which devoted all the articles to interpretations of community. This is a new focus for School Development but not a guarantee of success as Bruce Joyce (1990:34) concedes with the comment that “the culture of the school has proved to be a very tough customer indeed”.

With the devolution of control to individual schools, each site has a responsibility to fund training and development within the school. It can also be assumed that individual schools have a responsibility to facilitate each teacher’s personal professional development. Whereas this support of professional development is often interpreted as attendance at courses or personal study, there is evidence in this study that time devoted to reflection, to collaboration and sharing activities can also be a strong mechanism for teacher development. Hargreaves (1997:2) advocates the creation of “cultures of educational change” by developing “more collaborative working relationships between principals and teachers, and amongst teachers themselves.” In arguing for more depth in the change process Hargreaves challenges practitioners to develop, “what Goleman (1995) calls the *emotional intelligence* of students and teachers alike” (ibid). Goleman (O’Neil, 1996:6) defines *emotional intelligence* as “being able to manage distressing moods well and control impulses. It’s remaining hopeful when you have setbacks. It’s empathy. And it’s social skills.” Such a position is analogous to the ideas of Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) who wish to view teachers, and by implication principals, as intellectuals and their work as “intellectual labour”. So much of what teachers and principals do happens inside their heads. What is observed is often a result of their reflective thinking and the development and understanding of their own and their students’ emotional intelligence. Professional group reflective activities enable this kind of thinking to be shared.

In each of the Case Studies five propositions, developed from personal experience and research findings, were used to organise the data and search for patterns of meaning. Their use in this chapter permits a form of triangulation through “multiple views” (Stake, 1995:108) as the impact of School Development on organisation and learning development is examined across the three cases.

6.1 The Propositions as Indicators Across the Three Case Studies

6.1.a. Proposition 1.

It is possible to gain insights into principal behaviour by examining their use and adoption of certain key concepts.

Some participants in the case studies defined School Development as actions to produce specific change, while others thought of School Development as a collaborative strategy for reflective thinking and planning. There may be a need to teach specific strategies of School Development, particularly to newly appointed principals. Such strategies could heighten the contradictions between local control and centralised curriculum statements, thereby providing alternative strategies for schools to consider as they planned their own development activities. For a few this may make the job more uncomfortable and trigger a change of occupation. For others it may stimulate further reflective thinking and writing and engender the formulation of a practical theory which brings further coherence to their work. An illustration of this beginning is given in case study one where the swamp metaphor encouraged lateral thinking (see Section 3.6.a.).

Data gathering is seen to be a central activity in promoting and sustaining School Development initiatives. When a new problem is to be addressed, data gathering is used as first step to ensure that current activities are taken into account and valued. This same starting point can act as a mechanism to challenge underlying assumptions, or to challenge ‘taken for granted’ attitudes and beliefs which some members of staff suspect

to be untrue. After a process has got under way, and has perhaps become confused and ill defined, engaging in a further round of data gathering can act to redefine the problem focus. Promoting a “we are all in it together” notion by ensuring that the data gathering begins as a shared activity has also been found to be a useful mechanism for promoting cooperation and collaboration within the staff. Over the three cases there was a growing acceptance by principals that regardless of what leaders do, it is the individual teacher who does the teaching often out of sight of any other professional.

Case Study B (see Section 4.6.a.) presented a number of illustrations of how some groups needed to revisit the data gathering set to redefine the precise nature of the problem that they were addressing. Here was both a commitment to the four phase developmental sequence and an agreed procedure for progressing to a solution based firmly within the culture of those particular schools. Such work and interaction embodies the concept of learning as an active process. Chapter 1 (Section 1.1.a.) surveyed the learning and the participation of the individual. Case Study B, in particular, demonstrated how the theories in use by the various participants, their “sedimented histories” (Giroux, 1983), and unstated assumptions were tested against the available data.

There is substantial support from busy practitioners to be presented with ideas which show how particular values and beliefs can be operationalised in their schools. Examples of these concepts include *Conceptual Job Descriptions* and *Quality Learning Circles*. It seems to be important that these notions be developed in practical terms and readily available through published material as there is a need for clear understanding and justification. Furthermore, the task of putting ideas such as these into operation influence the way school leaders think about their job and increase the likelihood that more time and energy will be focused on teaching and learning.

Where *Quality Learning Circles* (QLC) were established in schools, the discussion in the heterogeneous groups often resulted in teachers closely examining their own practice. This was particularly evident in Case Study C where some staff groups who had

originally attributed to students all responsibility for changing deviant behaviour, became ready to include teacher actions as part of the overall milieu. As a consequence they felt they had a great deal more potential influence in this area as they could readily alter their own behaviour and responses. As QLCs develop and visits to each other's classroom to gain further understandings become more common, the acknowledgement of particular expertise amongst the staff grows. When events such as this occur, the general level of confidence also grows within the school. This was well illustrated in the group work example in Case Study C.

Evidence of combining some key concepts also provides insights into ongoing leadership behaviour. Across the three case studies there are many examples of this activity. Particularly useful are the examples where *Professional Development Consultations* (PDC) are combined with *Quality Learning Circles* (QLC). These concepts demonstrate a commitment to professional conversations and reflective thought at many levels. There is the development of core values and the sense of ownership of the development activities as detailed in Case Study A (Section 3.6.a.), the engagement in these two activities as a means of focusing more tightly on teaching and learning detailed in Case Study B (Section 4.6.a.) and the way these concepts can be used in performance management as detailed in Case Study C (Section 5.6.a.).

The importance of these kinds of combinations is firstly the manner in which they permit the construction of meaning for individuals. As discussed earlier (see Section 1.1.b.), this argument draws upon the hermeneutic tradition expressed by Elliott (1996) where "the quality of education depends on the quality of teachers' deliberation and judgement in classrooms." By developing processes within the PDC and QLC rubric teachers and school leaders develop their ability to deliberate with each other and gain understandings of how their colleagues engage with students within individual classrooms. Secondly, these activities provide a framework for engaging in critical reflective thought and considering a learning environment based on the concept of "learning community" (Prawat, 1992; Section 1.1.d.). Here, within supportive groups, the "cognition", "critical

thinking” and “narrative enquiry” elements of reflection are all present (Sparks-Langer and Colton, 1991).

Principal behaviour is more than the discernable actions of the principal, more than an ability to organise and manage a school, and includes the manner, the demeanor, the thinking and reasoning and meaning making that together impact on how these leaders work. Action, for example, may depend on whether problems are perceived as *opportunities* or a “blur of confusing, uncomfortable demands” (Leithwood and Steinbach, 1993:62). How principals adopt, reject or combine of a range of key concepts as part of their own construction of a theory or mindscape (Sergiovanni, 1996) for their work provides some understandings of how they view their job. It is also clear that another intervening variable for principal behaviour is the culture of the school (Leithwood and Steinbach, 1993). This is an interactive loop as principal behaviour both impacts on, and is influenced by the school culture. Understanding principal behaviour is vital as Sebring *et al.* (1995:68) argues that the principal is “the single most important actor in promoting reform at the building level.”

6.1.b. *Proposition 2.*

Although it is not possible to predict specific outcomes from development activities, use of a specific range of processes could signal allegiance to a particular mindscape (Sergiovanni, 1991).

School Development in this country has a strong “informal” strand. What others are doing has become very important. Some principals have built a “visiting others” component into their schedules and most enjoy viewing samples of the work from other sites. School Development in this context can be viewed quite narrowly. It can become a sequence of problem solving activities, or a means of implementing a particular curriculum as others have done it. The training and development work discussed in this study has taken a critical strategic focus where School Development might be defined as a collaborative narrative. Many schools provide time for routine discussion but have

little allocation for professional dialogue. This is in spite of the connection in the answers to the reflective principal questionnaire which demonstrated a link between collaboration, reflection and critique when leaders were asked to think about the process of School Development.

There was a growing awareness across all the studies of the use of narrative in data gathering. This was illustrated with some reporting that students were encouraged to “tell their stories” and in other cases the principals themselves deliberately used the narrative form to express their meaning. Some reported that a focus on the kinds of stories that teachers told was indicative of the kind of culture evident in the school. Cortazzi (1993:10) argues that narrative gives others access to knowledge of classroom practice that “could not be expressed in any other way.”

Other references to narrative acknowledged its use as:

- a means of sharing values, beliefs and common understandings across a staff;
- a motivator and energiser of staff activity;
- a means of explaining individual teacher, informal, classroom research; and
- a mechanism for providing raw material that begins a process of reflective critique.

These examples are practical representations of the concept that Polkinghorne (1988:7) refers to when he explains that, “Hermeneutic understanding uses processes such as analogy and pattern recognition...” The analogies and the pattern recognition form the content of the teacher narrative and the telling and consequential discussion provide the “validation” (Lomax, 1989; Kemmis, 1986) that is a necessary part of the development process in constructing and modifying an individual theory-in-use. This dynamic interaction is an essential element in “informed commitment” (Brookfield, 1995). Using teacher narrative in this way emphasises the centrality of context and “craft knowledge”

in developing greater understandings of teaching and learning (Smyth, 1991; Sparks-Langer and Colton, 1991; Leinhardt, 1990).

Working together in this way helps promote a sense of community and develops further collaboration and a sense of mutual accountability (see Section 1.4). Across the three case studies there were many references to this kind of development. It was, for example, expressed as *increasing understanding* in Case Study A, as *releasing energy*, in Case Study B, and as *staff educating staff* in Case Study C.

A central aspect of all groups was the application of the four phase School Development process (see Section 1.4.b.) as the superordinate taxonomy. This enabled each school to develop a theme, give prominence to data gathering and collaboration and to assess the likely impact of a range of alternative actions on classroom teaching and learning prior to instigating any structural change. This kind of mindscape (Sergiovanni, 1991), where a leadership priority was placed on a framing and reframing notion to establish progress through the four phase process, was referred to across all the case studies. A respondent in Case Study A talked of the process being *embedded* in the school and others noted how it made sense of a *swampy* process (Section 3.6.a.). In Case Study B there were indications that this sequence with its initial commitment to data gathering helped staff redefine and reassess the problem that they were addressing (Section 4.6.a.). In Case Study C, there were references to the meld of theory and practice that this form of development encouraged (Section 5.7). There were also many references to the first two stages of data gathering and collaboration but as discussed earlier, the time scale did not permit many schools to complete the total cycle. Nevertheless, in this third case, those schools which embraced *Quality Learning Circles* made considerable progress in using teacher forums for critical reflection and were encouraged as to the impact that was having on classroom practice (Section 5.6.b.). Working in this way emphasises the steady considered process of change with purpose as opposed to a sudden revolutionary orientation (Section 1.3).

6.1.c. *Proposition 3.*

Critical reflection is of central importance both for principals and staff (Brookfield, 1995; Canning, 1991; Elliott, 1996; Griffiths and Tann, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1991; Smyth, 1991).

Although many specific readings were supplied to the schools, evidence of it reaching all the staff is patchy although some principals have modified their own behaviour to include more regular reading (Section 3.6.c.). The press to reach a consensus, regarding a particular issue often outweighs the desire to reach a new understanding through developing the widest view possible. The forces operating towards closure are usually stronger than those supporting a discussion of all the alternative viewpoints. Closure can also be more rapid, if evidence can be produced, that other schools are taking a similar course. Seldom is time made available for any philosophical or literature based discussion. Where there was a determination to take a broader view both in scope and in time, staff were surprised and delighted with the outcomes. One example in Case Study C (Section 5.6.c.) dealing with an assessment theme provided a positive alternative to testing and an opportunity to abandon a range of more traditional procedures.

When comparing the Reflective Principal course with other opportunities in Case Study A, no other single training opportunity or form of development was selected by more than 10% of the participants. There would seem to be a dearth of current opportunities designed to support principal and School Development particularly from a critical reflective viewpoint. To some extent this state of affairs is a consequence of the competition that now exists in many local areas. It is difficult to be open and sharing with colleagues who are competing for the same pool of students. Many principals actively seek face-to-face development activities but are not keen to divulge sensitive information within local clusters. This was confirmed with the formulation of across-district groups which persisted after the conclusion of Case Study B.

It is not enough for principals to be aware of, or even knowledgeable about reflection. They need opportunities to develop the skills of critical reflection, with reference to their own work, along with other professionals that they trust and respect. Brookfield (1995) argues that viewing their work and their assumptions about their work through multiple *lens* which include their colleagues' perceptions and experiences, is the essence of critical reflective practice. It is unlikely that school leaders will make time for teachers inside their schools to engage in reflection unless they, themselves have taken time to develop the necessary skills and appreciate the technique. Building a professional community in their own institution where learning is given prominence, may be a consequence of principals' desire to recreate for staff opportunities which they have found valuable as in the networks described by Lieberman and Grolnick (1997). The core culture values and beliefs then continue to be applied if schools were to accept the criteria for judging teacher effectiveness shifting from "that of delivering good lessons to that of being able to build or create a classroom 'learning community'" (Prawat, 1992:12, quoted in Sergiovanni, 1996:39).

Within the four phase development process there was an emphasis on the way that teachers think about what they do. There is some evidence in the case studies that this School Development procedure helped move many teachers from a reliance on simple outcome measures to an acknowledgment on multi-dimensional effects (Section 5.6.c.). When subsequently writing policy statements, for example, groups of teachers endeavoured to choose statements which acknowledged and supported variety in teaching and learning modes (Section 5.6.c.). Beginning the development sequence with discussions and sharing of personal values and beliefs enabled the construction of a 'core culture' for the school. In this case the culture supported a large degree of teacher discretion which was legitimised in the writing of the school policy statements. Leadership which allows this to occur is often termed *transformational* in that undesirable features, such as rigid teaching methods, are transformed (Grace, 1995:54). Burns (1978, in Sergiovanni, 1996:94) states that for leadership to be transformational, "purposes and visions should be socially useful, should serve the common good, should

meet the needs of followers, and should elevate followers to a higher moral level.” What is illustrated here is the very beginning of a transformational approach.

6.1.d. *Proposition 4.*

Principal development and School Development activities cannot always be separated (Campbell-Evans, 1993; Dimmock, 1993; Sparkes and Bloomer, 1993).

The high level of recommendation of reflective principal courses from participants to their colleagues, would suggest that this kind of experience overlapped the School Development and personal development boundaries. Close to half of those who had attended signalled that the Reflective Principal form of training best suited their development needs. In-service courses, or workshops, are often offered to schools in what Goodman (1995) calls the ‘purchase’ model. Providers have been resourced by the central authority to provide a particular focus which schools can opt into using. Alternatively, Reflective Principal courses, provide a context in which school leaders can focus more precisely on the current problems within their own schools. At the same time they can hear from the experience of their colleagues, and take time to be familiar with some of the contemporary literature. There would seem to be strong links from this kind of experience back to individual schools and to personal growth (Section 3.6.d.). It would also appear to be important that the significant ideas and processes are available in published form for further reading and consultation (Sections 3.6.d., 4.6.d., 5.6.d.).

Principals are keen to apply proven processes to the current issues and problems that they are confronted with in their schools. Work in this project suggests that, for many, the “good idea” is insufficient (Sections 3.6.d., 4.6.d.). They wish to understand the theory that supports the practice and to integrate that knowledge with their own thinking and practice. This melding of professional development and School Development seemed to occur when small groups of principals met regularly to share their development and were supported with a wide range of contemporary literature (Section

4.6.d.). There was often significant impact across many groups when a particular article had been used and discussed within a 'mentor' training session and was then subsequently used as a focus at local group meetings.

Many of the principals represented across the three case studies in this project had a strong desire to base the means of considering and implementing change within a cultural context. They wished to make overt the "basic assumptions and beliefs" (Schein, 1985:6, in Hopkins *et al.*, 1994:88) held by members of the school community as they worked through the School Development processes. As a consequence they encountered the well documented problems of teacher isolation and autonomy (Section 1.5.a.) and the more recent phenomenon in New Zealand of the emergence of a *market-liberal* view of education with an emphasis on choice and measurable outcomes (Codd, 1997). To continue to work within a cultural context meant, for many, that they needed to refine and extend their understanding of the concept of school culture and how a core culture could be developed (Sections 1.5.a., 1.5.b., 1.5.c.). Case Study A provided a number of examples of how individuals had used the available literature to accomplish this learning (Section 3.6.e.) with particular reference to Hopkins *et al.* (1994) and Sergiovanni (1991). The courses in this case study were perceived as being similar to university and advanced study for teachers courses rather than short term in-service. Such perception lends weight to the proposition that personal and professional activities cannot always be separated.

The decision of the leadership choosing to emphasise transformational traits is documented across all the case studies. In Case Study A, examples included the recognition of the value of reading and writing (Section 3.6.d.), the examination of previous "taken for granted" elements of teaching and learning were examples in Case Study B (Section 4.6.d.), and the specific use of teacher narrative as a means of examining beliefs and values were further illustrations in Case Study C (Section 5.6.d.).

As school leaders show a commitment to establish some form of learning community there develops an obligation to demonstrate, by their own behaviours, that they are

extending and enhancing their own skills and understandings. To be *effective* and lead *effective* schools they need to model the view that the emphasis in quality education is about “classroom teachers, rather than ‘the system’” (Elliott, 1996:212). Here again the boundaries between individual understanding and School Development are blurred. Case Study A (Section 3.6.d.) provided an example of reading and thinking supplying a rationale to explain and justify an intuitive response and determine its consistency with the existing core culture. Evidence of this kind of overlap was also available in Case Study B (Section 4.6.c.) where examples were given of the value of working with others who “shared the fundamental things that you believe are special to you...” (Text units 553-561: Node, 3). Case Study C (Section 5.6.d.) provided an instance giving an insight into how a principal’s understanding of teachers’ work was changing as a consequence of exploring teacher narrative. This person was now sensitive to the beliefs and values that teachers demonstrated in their story telling as a means of further understanding their classroom practice. The definition of what constituted teaching was undergoing modification in this school (see also Section 1.6.b.).

Narrative, its promotion as an introduction to reflective analysis, and its use as a form of data gathering, may provide a mechanism for school leaders to exercise their responsibility for supervision without an overburdened schedule of class visits. This is not to argue that class visits are unimportant as that is not the case, but rather to accept Fullan’s (1991:161) view that “there is a limit to how much time principals can spend in individual classrooms. The larger goal is in transforming the culture of the school.” Transforming the culture means that thinking, constructing new meaning and establishing a learning community becomes the overriding priority.

6.1.e. *Proposition 5.*

Successful School Development is an educational rather than a managerial process.

Principals seldom plan for their own long term education and development needs and would also appear to neglect this kind of career planning with their staff. The focus is on helping staff solve immediate problems rather than on any form of more generic teacher growth. This is evident throughout the case studies where “developing staff” is often synonymous with simply providing teachers with a range of good ideas from which to choose although there is reference in Case Study A to “increasing personal professional knowledge” (Section 3.6.e.). The problems and issues of the moment often take up all the available energy. In addition, particularly in rural areas (Section 5.6.e.), the main source of professional development is the staff group itself.

There is clearly an opportunity for a tertiary institution to provide the conditions and expertise for these kinds of processes. The implications for the primary and Area School service as a whole would appear serious unless these kinds of development concerns are addressed. Much current development work is predicated on a one year cycle as this fits the funding and contracting cycle. Such a short term focus exacerbates the notion of career planning and militates against a future orientation. Thus, choosing to become a principal may become less attractive to teachers and remaining a principal less attractive to current incumbents. Wylie (1997) reports that 34% of those surveyed in 1996 expected to be out of teaching in five years time and a further 20% were unsure. In the Chicago school reforms Bryk *et al.* (1994:78) report that,

Serious questions have been raised about whether the principalship in Chicago is sustainable over the longer term required to institutionalize change. In fact, many of the initial principal leaders have already moved on to other jobs, typically outside of the system.

Across the three case studies there is a strong desire to understand and explain the process of change that they are all experiencing, with use of simple but meaningful diagrams and metaphor. For a number of clusters in Case Study B, a “change wave” explanation caught their attention and imagination and provided a useful clarifying device for their ongoing planning. Explanations which acknowledge that work in schools can be chaotic, illogical, and subject to a myriad of forces at the same time, capture the non-rational world that teaching sometimes frequents. Consequently, such explanations allow a long term critical strategic view to persist by conceding that a change process is unlikely to be linear. Those using the change wave representation signalled their satisfaction with a visual concept map (Section 1.4.d.) which helped them keep control of the process.

It is by the principals actively taking part in learning themselves that the concept of a *learning community* is more strongly established. By working with a group of like minded colleagues, and sharing sensitive insights into their own belief and practice, the importance of *trust* in the procedure becomes self evident. As a consequence when similar processes are introduced within their schools, it is more likely that appropriate and sympathetic procedures will be designed. The implication of combining development with any form of career evaluation will be obvious.

A focus within the courses and the small group meetings was the concept of school as *community* (Section 1.4.e.). This idea was often contrasted with the view of schools as organisations or as formal systems (Sergiovanni, 1996). There is little evidence that this dichotomy was used by members of the various groups. Although there are many references to the culture of the school and how the culture affects the way staff think about what they do, there are no further instances in this material which give insights into the “picture in their mind” or mindscapes (Sergiovanni, 1991), that principals have of their school. During the visits, organisational charts were often in evidence, suggesting that for some purposes, at least, this was the preferred thinking frame. There is perhaps an absence of available alternative concept maps for assisting thinking about School Development.

The concept of the teacher as researcher was expressed in many statements. The sequence usually begun with the specification of some form of criteria as was evidenced in Case Study C, for example with “assessment for specific learning”. The current situation was then delineated by use of teacher narrative. Where possible these stories were extended and informed with readings from the current literature. Teachers then “tried out” a variety of approaches developed from this material. At subsequent meetings, more narrative followed and was subjected to reflective critique. Finally through the use of “it seems as if...” statements teachers began to build their own “local” theory (Huberman, 1992) to explain their teaching.

Most of the actions that Sebring *et al.* (1995) list as necessary features for professional community were present across the case studies. Such activities as: regular opportunities for reflective dialogue; visits to other classrooms for discussion and problem solving; teacher collaboration; endeavouring to work within a core culture based on beliefs and values; and a focus on student learning. What was missing was clear evidence that these practices, as a group of practices, were normative. There are many references to the difficulty that schools experienced with mutual visits for example. Peer collaboration cannot be imposed by the leadership. To do so may generate conflict beyond the capacity of some schools to handle (Payne, 1995). Such a situation could also be true in this project. Many of the procedures in the case studies, and in particular *Quality Learning Circles*, were designed to help develop the skills and procedures necessary for collaboration, visits and reflective critique to proceed. Mutual accountability and professional community become possible when “members of the community are critically dependant on each other” (Brown, 1994). It is unlikely that such critical dependance can be mandated in any managerial sense. Rather it will arise out of a situation in which School Development is implemented as an educative process.

6.2 School Development through Three Lens

Case Study A represents a traditional approach to School Development and change in schools where groups of practitioners are released from their schools and brought together for a time to consider a range of ideas. In this case it was the process, that of critical reflective practice, that was the major concept under consideration. The courses were designed to enable the participants to experience some aspects of reflective practice during the in-service time by selecting themes or problems relevant to the group as the focus for the work. That 45% of the sample (Table 3.3) returned for further courses suggests that this was a preferred activity for a significant group.

It is clear that many of the participants in this activity applied a range of strategies designed to promote reflective thinking and action on return to their schools. In the main these were strategies designed and published (Stewart and Prebble, 1993) prior to the case studies commencing and included such notions as the *Four Phase School Development Sequence*, *Professional Development Consultation Cycle*, *Conceptual Job Descriptions*, development of a *core culture*, and *Quality Learning Circles*.

Case Study B built on this activity by enabling *mentors* who had previously attended a reflective principal course to facilitate a small group of colleagues who were relatively new to this kind of activity to undertake a year long development programme designed around the same principles. It was a requirement of the project that *mentor* principals also engage in a School Development procedure during this time. Although the period in which this case study was conducted was one of intense national activity and major educational change, the references to energy being created by the reflective and collaborative activities (Section 4.6.b.) give an indication of the potential power of this form of School Development. It was fundamental to this case that all the school leaders in the project were committed to a critical reflective view. The mentor principals were viewed as colleagues somewhat more knowledgeable about possible process but still engaged in learning and development activities themselves, rather than experts and facilitators of particular actions or techniques. This form of networking was enhanced

by the resources made available by the Ministry of Education, particularly in enabling the various groups to meet regularly outside the school and the employment of the necessary relieving teachers.

In discussing the use of audio-graphic technology used to support School Development in Case Study C there are a number of statements that can be made. An assumption made by the researcher at the beginning of this case that the schools would likely be interested in each other's progress was not born out. The planned "bridge" sessions where all contributed did not eventuate. This may have been a consequence of the time limits of the project or it may indicate the level of intensification that has occurred to all professional jobs in schools. There was considerable sharing at the final meeting which occurred some four months after the last audio-graphic link. Perhaps these face-to-face meetings should be built into this kind of project, on a more regular basis.

The audio-graphic process was preferred to that offered by a visiting expert as the audio-graphic link was perceived as being less intrusive and more continuous. There is evidence that the programme did stimulate reflection both for the participating groups and the staffs of the schools. The methodology adopted by the researcher was seen by some to model the kind of reflective approach that school leaders, in turn, could apply to their own situations. This group of remote schools are reliant, to a large degree, on their own resources and knowledge. For such schools, this form of development was particularly appropriate as it linked directly to them. The inputs were often used immediately, at the next available meeting, and some respondents expressed the view that not only did they still feel "in control" but they achieved a level of confidence that was based on the knowledge that the interactions were on-going and if necessary, immediate. A number of schools made additional use of SSINet (see Section 4.1), fax and telephone. On one occasion the researcher conducted an audio-graphic session with the entire staff with additional monitors, phones etc. being arranged by the principal.

Although it was not always the case, this "at a distance" School Development can lead to critical strategic thinking by members of the school community. There is an

immediacy to the focus that the school has chosen and literature resources can be selected and targeted to these themes quite rapidly. For most taking part in this particular project Brophy's definition of a learning community was pertinent. It is the establishment of a "social environment...where dialogue promotes understanding" (Brophy, 1992, cited in Sergiovanni, 1996:132).

6.3 Propositions for the Future

Extrapolating from these three Case Studies into a model for the future, the following sections suggest some ways to think about School Development and how visual metaphor can provide a route map. Examples from Case Studies B and C are used as illustrations of how visual metaphor could be developed.

There is a need to find a way to think about School Development that:

- combines critical strategic thinking with multiple problem solving loops;
- advances school policy processes and learning competence;
- provides coherence for the school while at the same time promoting teacher discretion;
- matches the non-logical and non-linear reality of much of what happens in schools;
- includes professional development for more effective practice, generates "local" theory and provides career planning and support;
- builds a "core culture" for the school by providing opportunities for new statements of consensus;
- incorporates the concept of a learning community; and
- focuses on the main task of the school , i.e. to develop and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Critical strategic thinking combines the notion of “critical” as incorporating all the elements of reflection and critique; “strategic” in the sense of planning over time, incorporating the strengths of the institution and developing a core culture; and “thinking” as acknowledging that most of the work that principals do can be defined as “intellectual labour” (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985:30). Such *intellectual labour* will be applied to the multiple problems and dilemmas that present continuously to educational leaders.

A commitment to this form of thinking and action means that the school develops its policy as a consequence of agreeing about effective teaching and learning. This is contrasted with a situation where policy is imposed on staff as a directive for practice. School policy statements, therefore, become in the main, agreed articulation of successful practice. In this way coherence of an institution and discretion and innovation of individual staff are promoted concurrently. Teaching and learning activities often follow unplanned and unique routes. This is not surprising for behaviours which essentially occur inside people’s heads. A description or narrative of teaching in this context could be called “more poetic than logical” (Polkinghorne, 1988).

Although it would appear rational for central educational authorities to target all their available resources to School Development, Proposition 4 in this dissertation (Sections 3.6.d., 4.6.d., 5.6.d., 6.1.d.) has provided evidence to suggest how very difficult it becomes to separate school and principal development activities. It may prove important to integrate personal and professional development at this level to ensure that the leader’s personal theory has been constructed from the widest possible range of literature and research. It is only from such experiences that an appropriate “core culture” can be established in individual schools.

The notion that “learning must permeate everything” (Barth, 1991) encourages the development of the concept of learning community where excitement and energy are released through shared understanding. While the prime purpose of the institution is to

inculcate further student learning, it is clear that professional development activities focused on adult learning and reflective thinking have a positive influence in this regard.

6.4 Visual Metaphor

Case Study B provided an illustration of a group of schools using visual metaphor in the form of a wave of change, to understand their own progress and to communicate with each other regarding current and future events (Section 4.6.a.; Figure 4.2). These kinds of visual metaphor are both concept maps (Section 1.4.d.) as they provide the connecting links between the various elements of the School Development process, and a means of describing and illustrating complex relationships through illustrated narrative. It is this connection of concept representation with real event narration that makes these figures useful instruments in the School Development process. Individuals are enabled to hold their place and tell their story.

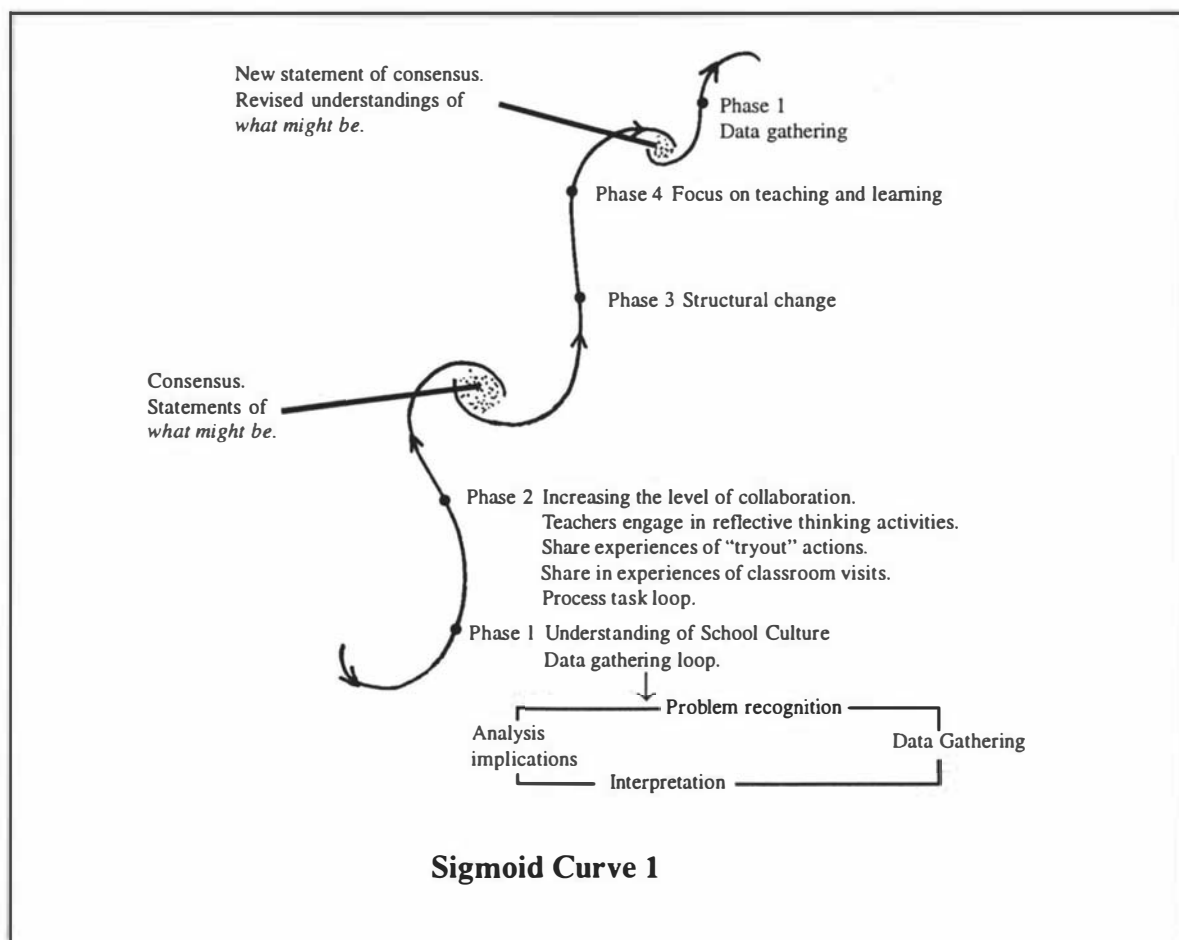
Although the change wave notion was accepted enthusiastically by one group of schools and leaders generally appreciate the metaphor of being immersed for times in swirling white water at the base of a wave, this particular representation is somewhat limited. In searching for a diagrammatic form that could allow wider and more varied connection, that demonstrated a reflective and yet strategic focus, and which portrayed crucial moments dependant on collegiality and consensus for progress, the writer near the conclusion of this project introduced to the various groups, a form of the sigmoid curve. A similar shape form is used by Handy (1994) albeit for a somewhat different purpose.

The basic taxonomy is still the four phase development sequence of:

- understanding the school culture and data gathering;
- increasing the level of collaboration;
- considering the implications of structural change and making the change;
- and
- focusing on teaching and learning within the school.

A fundamental element is the gap which is drawn between one curve and the next which can only be bridged with statements of consensus.

Figure 6.1 Sigmoid Curve 1



Moving up the curve is the critical strategic focus. The energy and movement comes from critical reflection. Processes such as data gathering, problem solving and policy writing are closed loops which feed back to the strategic thinking. These loops of problem recognition, strategic development, intervention, analysis and evaluation and feedback both solve the immediate problem and provide further questions for the developing school.

School Development in this visual metaphor links across personal professional development and institutional change. Here professional dialogue and professional

judgement are the key to success. Looking forward to the next period of collegial focus and clarification could motivate the school to ensure that professional development occurs both to facilitate the next round of consensus statements and to ensure that further leadership opportunities continue to develop in the school. This necessitates well informed and well planned career structures for staff.

Figure 6.1 portrays one sequence of the four phase development process. It begins with the understanding of the culture of the school (Phase 1) which will usually involve a simple data gathering - feedback loop. The analysis and implications of this data gathering lead the staff to Phase 2, a concentration on increasing the level of collaboration within the school. This may involve the group with some additional skill development and will certainly contain elements of “trying out” new ideas. It can be thought of as another process task loop feeding back to the main School Development thrust and involving critical reflective questions and professional dialogue. It is at this point that staff may engage in *Quality Learning Circles* forums with the consequential narrative of their activities, shared classroom visits and reference to the available literature.

The intersection of the two curves represent a gap that can be bridged by a statement of consensus of what might be. This is in a real sense an articulation of some preferred school culture attributes. Without substantial agreement here it is difficult to proceed with confidence to the next phase of structural change (Phase 3). The importance of the Phase 3 discussion is to enable all available energy to be focused on teaching and learning (Phase 4). As the gap between the next curve is reached members of the school community are able to employ the understandings that have been attained in the present sequence of activities to a revised interpretation of how they might continue to work together and the focus that such collaboration will take. The sequence begins again, following a new theme at this point.

Figure 6.2 Sigmoid Curve 2

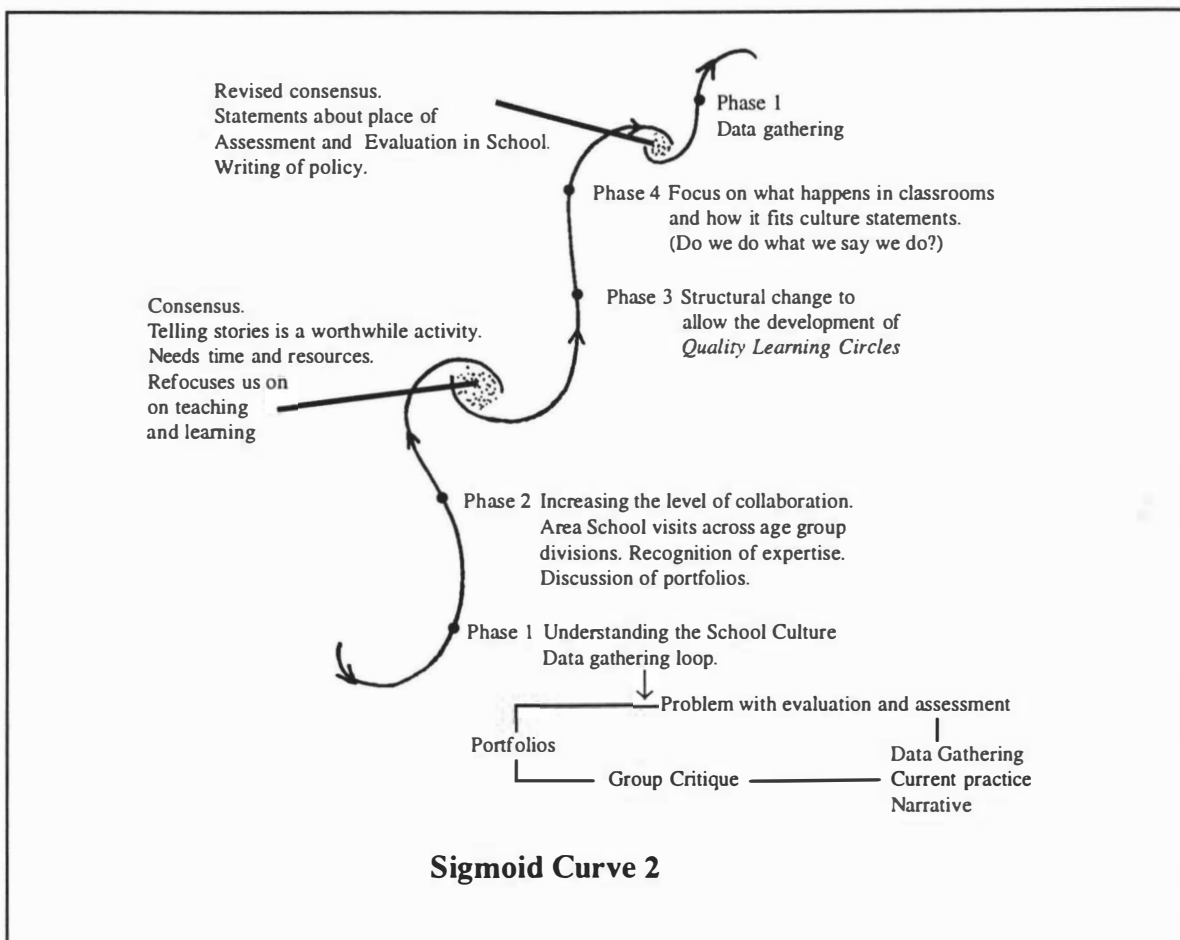


Figure 6.2 demonstrates how some of the material from Case Study C could be arranged for further understanding and discussion. The curve begins with some across school discussion of school culture with particular reference to how assessment and evaluation issues might be clarified in order for a school policy to be written. This involved a simple data gathering, problem solving loop ensuring that all were familiar with the range of existing practices and had an opportunity to critique them where necessary.

Phase 2 focussed on current and possible uses of the concept of portfolios as applied to assessment and evaluation. This involved some reading, supplied in this case by the researcher, and a number of across school discussions. Teachers tried out some different ideas and reported back to the group with their thoughts and suggestions. Arising out

of these discussions a number of reciprocal classroom visits occurred and a substantial discussion was mounted around the concept of teacher narrative as a mechanism for beginning School Development processes. This discussion and the consequential agreement to plan for specific time allowances to meet in heterogeneous groups led to a structural redesign of meeting times within the school.

Quality Learning Circles were established within this structural change (Phase 3) and their early sessions sought to establish the congruence of what happened in the various classrooms with current policy statements of what was thought to be important, particularly in the area of assessment and evaluation. This focus on classrooms could be seen to be Phase 4, focus on teaching and learning and the revised statement of consensus at the intersection of the curves culminated for this group with the writing of the school policy statement for evaluation and assessment in the school.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 Main Findings and Implications

This study investigated the thinking and action of principals and school leaders within a School Development framework. Further understandings were sought relating to how these people arranged and formed the range of practices that constituted their School Development activity and how such processes impacted on classroom teaching and learning management. A number of specific techniques and processes were introduced to all the groups and were also made available for further study through published material. The extent to which these, or similar procedures based around the notion of critical reflective thought were established in schools was used as an indication of commitment to this kind of thinking and action.

Five propositions pertaining to principal and School Development were developed as a means of coordinating the case study material and making across case links. These propositions formed the framework for discussing the case studies and forming conclusions.

- It is possible to gain insights into principal behaviour by examining their use and adoption of certain key concepts.
- Although it is not possible to predict specific outcomes from development activities, use of a specific range of processes could signal allegiance to a particular mindscape.
- Critical reflection is of central importance both for principals and staff.
- Principal development and School Development activities can not always be separated.
- Successful School Development is an educational rather than a managerial process.

An ability to implement successful School Development activities which lead to teachers applying critical reflective analysis to their work develops slowly and is nurtured both by time for principals and school leaders themselves to engage in reflective activities, and by some form of longitudinal networking with others engaged in similar activities. Early attempts to engage school staff in activities of this nature may increase the level of dissonance amongst staff and necessitate some additional skill development work with the professional group.

Data gathering, often centred on ensuring that current practices are illuminated for all and engaging the participants in data collection, is a core activity for School Development. There is some evidence that cycles of data gathering activity interspersed with collaborative discussion may be needed first to define the problem prior to engaging in problem solving activities. School groups that applied a similar data gathering focus to understanding the school culture and “taken for granted” actions showed strong growth towards more collaborative communities.

There was widespread use of many of the tools developed by the researcher to assist School Development processes. In particular the adoption and implementation of *Quality Learning Circles* allowed the practical application of critical reflection but even more importantly, signalled to staff that this form of professional development was worthy of considerable investment of time and resources. That, for most schools, time and resources needed to be reallocated to QLC discussions confirmed the view that professional discussions of this nature were crucial to a School Development process. Here was a vehicle for display, analysis, reflection and reconstruction using theory and practice in a collegial manner. Research and literature influences were seen as integral to this process. Where groups combined *Professional Development Consultations* with *Quality Learning Circles* there was further growth of critical professional conversations and reflective thought. A commitment to this hermeneutic practice tended to spread into other more casual staff interactions further supporting the concept of school as community.

The growing use of teacher narrative as the stimulus for a *Quality Learning Circle* discussion and as an acceptable form of data in defining or addressing a problem illustrated the developing tendency of school leaders to look for patterns of meaning within their School Development initiatives as validation of improvement in teaching and learning. Use of teacher narrative in this manner reinforced the value of teacher knowledge while at the same time engaging the staff in activities which broadened and sharpened the critique that they applied to their own, and colleagues' theories of teaching and learning. Narrative in this sense provided a reality based mechanism for continuing learning and accountability amongst the teaching staff.

School communities seem to need a simple mechanism for charting their progress and describing where they are within a School Development process. The four phase development sequence provided the superordinate model for leaders and school groups in this study and a number of groups sought further clarification through some form of visual metaphor. Successful representations take into account the non-linear, and at times non-rational and confusing nature of development ventures in schools which take as their focus the improvement of teaching and learning. Such illustrations need to acknowledge the importance of understanding and clarifying the various perceptions, values and beliefs that teachers bring to their work if collegiality and transformational leadership are the goals.

There is a press within all schools to get the work done. As a consequence adherence to notions of reflection, surveys of literature, or extensive data gathering can be interpreted as getting in the way of task completion. Where there was a commitment to reflective action through some form of contract with an external agency as in Case A and Case B of this study, there were instances of problem resolution and the subsequent policy writing taking a unique course for that particular staff. It may be that this form of School Development needs to be networked to others with some agreed accountability mechanism, such as exchange of narratives illustrating reflective action, as an integral part.

Successful School Development activities illustrated in this study often began and were supported with the experiences and learning that had occurred on the Reflective Principal courses. Change initiatives, programmed around the concept of site-based projects may need to be additionally supported with withdrawal elements which allow school leaders the opportunities to engage in reflective activities with colleagues from different schools and personal study time to revisit the emerging literature. Tertiary courses which are based around an understanding of School Development, school culture and change process and which demand thinking and assignment work which apply these notions to the participant's emerging school problems are another way of approaching this concept. Such courses would need to include elements of face-to-face interaction but could be supported in the main with audio-graphic technology and could form the essential content of interactive and on-going networks. Continuing education of school leaders would appear to be an essential component of School Development processes.

Current social and economic trends in New Zealand education emphasise a managerial bias. An alternative view of school as a learning community presents, for many professionals, a measure of cognitive dissonance and some unresolved dilemmas in areas of teacher discretion, teacher supervision, teacher accountability and staff development. Current government initiatives in curriculum development tend to follow yearly cycles of contract work with schools and there was little evidence in the case studies in this project that principals were taking a much longer view of professional career development for their own staff. A number of the processes advanced by the researcher in this study enabled school leaders to take an educative stance to School Development and contrast that approach with the more prevalent managerial inclination.

An educative stance included the concept of the teacher as researcher. The model developed utilised teacher narrative and data gathering, teacher innovation and experimentation and culminated in reconstruction and theory building through group sessions where discussion was guided by statements beginning with "it seems as if...", as a means of enunciating current understandings. This activity could be contrasted with a emphasis on mandated actions and required responses.

There is a need for readily available published material for the kind of School Development illustrated by these case studies to be supported and sustained. The growth and availability of the “Internet” provides an immediacy that was maintained by the *Schools Sharing Information Network* (SSINet) bulletin board used over these years. Isolation created by the structure of self managing schools tends to insulate practices and beliefs in individual institutions. The ready availability of information on particular applications of ideas together with their genesis and justification allows wider debate to occur within each school. This is particularly important when schools are geographically isolated from others as in Case Study C.

The intensification of teachers’ work is well documented. A commitment to regular, well planned professional dialogue resulted, for some of these groups, in additional energy and renewed vigour. It would seem that this form of activity, rather than increasing the burden of work, engaged teachers in pleasurable and productive sessions, the consequence of which were often renewed commitment and reinjection of excitement in their work. The belief that time spent in this manner could engender excitement was often a direct result of the principal’s own experience from a course such as *The Reflective Principal*. Working collaboratively with this focus on their pedagogy and “taken for granted” understandings about teaching and learning enabled school staff to consider multi-dimensional effects of particular practices which would incorporate any mandated requirements (e.g. *New Zealand Curriculum Framework*).

7.2 Towards a Theory of School Development

The principal is a pivotal player in any School Development initiative. Sebring *et al.* (1995:68) describes the principal as “the single most important actor in promoting reform at the building level.” There is a strong connection between the principal’s actions and the school culture (Campbell-Evans, 1993; Fullan, 1991). The theory of School Development that is being developed here links learning opportunities of the principal with the whole-of-school activities (Proposition 4).

This dissertation lends weight to the view that successful School Development is a process that begins by the principal making a commitment to engaging in critical reflective thought (Proposition 3). Becoming reflective is then developed through principal development opportunities which have a long term School Development activity as an integral component. Such activity gains momentum and depth when it is connected with a tertiary institution through seminars, graduate programmes, and university led development initiatives. These endeavours may progress and incorporate models such as “principal as researcher” where the leader participates in the data gathering and analysis; “principal as mentor” where a leader facilitates a small group of other principals engaged in similar School Development initiatives; “principal as developer of culture” where consensual core values, beliefs and understandings are achieved; and “principal as community leader” where a learning community is fostered and maintained. They are likely to be associated with certain key processes such as *Quality Learning Circles*, *Conceptual Job Descriptions* and a *Four Phase Development Model* (Propositions 1 and 2).

The common assumption behind all of these processes is that professional autonomy should be nurtured or fostered. *Quality Learning Circles* promote reflectivity and critical analysis in a collaborative environment. *Conceptual Job Descriptions* help build a culture centred in learning and growth and the *Four Phase Development Model* provides a process to bring all these elements together. As well, these key processes, which are transformational rather than transactional, provide labels for members of the school community to think about their work.

Both the induction of the principal into forms of reflective thought and action, and the parallel School Development activity are contingent on an educational rather than managerial stance (Proposition 5). Emerging skill and understanding, for example, are based around an analysis of “craft knowledge” and school culture through narrative and data gathering which emphasises collaboration and professional conversations and celebrates innovation and difference rather than mandating a range of specific, predetermined actions which have been devised removed from the specific school where

the principal works. Sergiovanni (1996), for example, rejects the three kinds of theories designed for the business and managerial world which he classifies as the *Pyramid Theory* which was designed to produce “standardised products in uniform ways”, the *Railroad Theory* for “predictability and determination” and *High Performance Theory* where in schools “ends are considered to be measurable learning outcomes” in favour of a concept of “learning community”. In the “learning community” an educative perspective is adopted as the goal “is to build social and intellectual connections among people and control interferes with this process” (Prawat, 1993, cited in Sergiovanni, 1996:16)

Principal and School Development activities of this nature are sustained over time through professional groups which are committed to critical reflective dialogue based around the School Development activities in which they are presently engaged. Leaders, mentors, facilitators of these groups function more effectively if they are networked to others and include tertiary teaches and researchers in the discussion loop. Alcorn (1993:14) further advocates a politicisation of principals through these kinds of groups in order to “retain a sense of allegiance to education and to the profession.” Networks such as these can function for some of the time via electronic media such as audio-graphic conferencing.

Where School Development activities enable individuals to complete additional qualifications that enhance their personal professional careers, the process is intensified. Success is then defined in both individual and institutional terms. Celebration of this dual success energises a further round of School Development activity and may widen the circle of participants, within the school, who wish to link their individual educational career options with further whole of school activity.

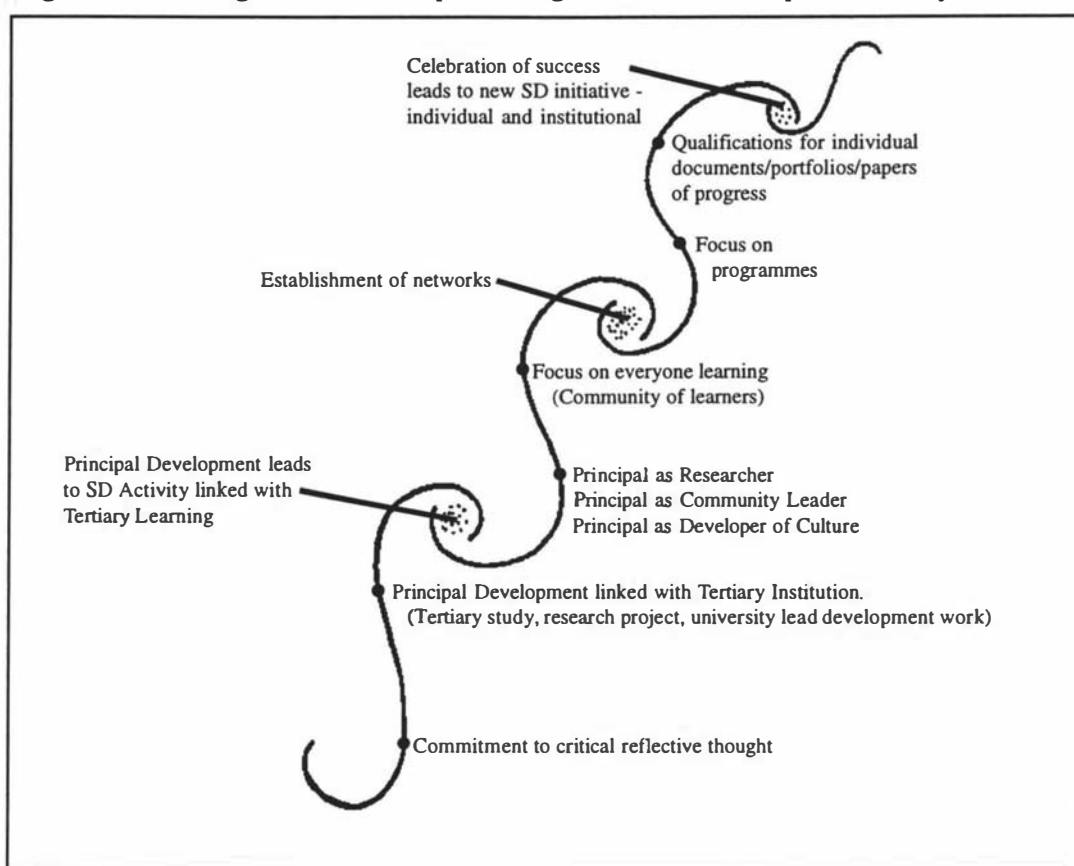
The three critical points in this kind of development are:

- when the personal professional education, probably connected with a tertiary institution, links with a planned School Development activity;

- when networks of schools following similar processes are formed, and the group facilitators are connected to tertiary programme providers; and
- when school-wide celebration occurs incorporating individual and institutional success as a platform for the next School Development activity.

These critical points and the intervening activities are represented diagrammatically in Figure 7.1 below.

Figure 7.1 Sigmoid Curve representing a School Development theory



The School Development theory expressed above does not extend to include every activity that school leaders might be engaged in. Accounting procedures, employment law, fundraising, property management and staff appointments, to name a few are vital knowledge areas which fall outside this schema but are a necessary part of principal education. Traditional, withdrawal seminars, published guide books, and established

support agencies provide the means of acquiring the appropriate information and resolving emerging problems in these transactional or managerial areas. School Development, as defined in this dissertation pertains directly to the learning and teaching culture within the school.

The chain of activity is developed as a sigmoid curve to acknowledge that what happens in schools is non-linear and yet contains a number of critical points, shown at the intersection of the curves, which are fundamental to continued growth. The open-ended notion signifies the need for energy to be created, as in celebration, to sustain and further develop a culture of learning community within the institution. School Development, in this context, is not a contracted commitment to a finite year long programme, although it may begin that way, but rather a mode of constantly thinking, talking and reading about improving the match between teaching and learning. Sustained learning and learning exchange is facilitated through professional dialogue. Career development, tenure, intellectual challenge and job satisfaction are an integral part of the School Development process.

7.3 Limitations of the Study

The three case studies in this project have been presented in chronological order. In a time of rapid change in education the result was that each study group was exposed to somewhat different conditions and different pressures. It was not intended to use the cases to evaluate the effectiveness of any particular version of School Development but rather to use the data to gather insights into patterns of meaning and, in particular, to advance some understandings of principal and leadership behaviour in these schools. It was inevitable that evaluative opinions would be expressed by the participants in the study. Where these have been quoted it is their context that is important rather than their support for any particular viewpoint.

The very large quantity of qualitative data which was produced through the conduct of the three case studies was subjected to progressive sifting and categorisation. Every effort has been made to deal with these data in an unbiased and uniform manner. Nevertheless, the exercising of choice and interpretation of meaning are essentially subjected to individual understanding and the resulting emphasis reflects those understandings. The five propositions provided both the frame and the limits for this interpretation.

Over the three studies the researcher has filled the dual roles of facilitator and recorder. This participatory model permits wider clarification of the reasons behind the actions of the participants as each case evolves, but also varies the intensity and emphases of any particular process as time progresses. For example, the experience of Case Study B informed and changed the facilitation of Case Study C. Additionally, as a consequence of Case Study B, the researcher was sensitised to a range of behaviours in Case Study C. The sequence of the case studies was an important element both in content and in outcome.

Each of these cases is a unique event and is important for the insights that can be obtained from its study. It is not intended to compare one case with another. They are three lens surveying the application of a School Development process with the intention to discover how principals and school leaders think and act as they endeavour to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. The result of the dissertation is some understanding of possible processes and procedures for stimulating growth and development in schools and some indications of possible mechanisms for keeping the development “on track”. These observations are more in the nature of how to think about these kind of approaches rather than any blueprint for action. The limits placed on interpretation across the case studies can also be seen as a strength of the approach in the search for patterns of meaning.

7.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Whereas this study suggests a link between principal and school leader experience of critical reflection and an adoption of some form of reflective action and professional dialogue in the school, there is no account of any hermeneutic influence in the work that teachers do in their classrooms as a result of this form of School Development. Another study could gather data which reached to this level.

As the number of schools adopting some form of *Quality Learning Circles* increases, it is timely to focus more keenly on the content and variety of theme and narrative which make up these sessions. The manner in which colleagues use classroom visits to clarify the meaning of the narrative would also be a useful concept to pursue. Further evidence is needed to demonstrate whether the notion of releasing energy by these procedures is more than just an idiosyncratic experience from one of the case study schools.

There is emerging evidence that the role of the principal is becoming less attractive for teachers (Bryk *et al.*, 1994; Wylie, 1997), and the numbers of aspiring principals is falling. It would be interesting to gauge the perceptions of possible aspiring principals in schools which were endeavouring to take an educative focus for development as contrasted with those who could be typified as taking a managerial stance. Such a study could be conceptualised as contrasting an organisation stance to school procedures and control, with the concept of a school as a learning community as the overriding paradigm.

This study has demonstrated some examples of how visual metaphors aid the perceptual and planning aspects of a School Development process. There is an emerging literature which offers a series of visual tools for thinking and decision making processes (Hyerle, 1996). Inducting staff into some of these techniques and then following their subsequent progress over time would provide useful material relating to this field, particularly if similar approaches were being applied to aspects of classroom activity at the same time.

How schools work is a vital field of inquiry. Studies which illuminate the role of the principal and how learning excitement is generated and maintained, how staff support and encourage each other, and how students get caught up in cycles of knowledge, meaning and growth, are fundamental to this field.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire Case Study A



19 September 1995

Greetings from Massey to all who attended *Reflective Principal* courses.

For some of you this letter may be *a blast from the past* but for others who have taken part in more recent programmes it will not be entirely unexpected.

The **Reflective Principal** course began in 1989-90 as a bridge course to assist principals and school leaders cross over into the realm of self-managing schools. No one would have predicted that it would have persisted so long, and it really comes of age next year when it is translated as a paper in the *Diploma in Educational Management* here at Massey University.

Courses for next year are, as usual, advertised in the 1 October Gazette, and we expect a mix of participants enrolling. Some will attend the traditional Reflective Principal course, and others enrolled for the Massey paper will be involved in further reading and some assignments.

As part of my Ph.D research, I have undertaken to gather some opinion from those who have attended courses in the past. This questionnaire is being sent to all course members whose record of attendance we have. As some of our addresses are now much out of date I would appreciate hearing from you if any of your colleagues attended a course but have not received this letter.

My research is entitled, *Changing School Practices: The Impact of School Development on School Organisation and Learning Management*, and the Reflective Principal courses have been a central element in this regard over the last five or six years.

It would be most helpful if you could spend a few minutes and complete the questions enclosed. Confidentiality will, of course, be observed and the results of the survey will be available, in due course, to any respondent.

Best regards for the remainder of the year.

Thanks for your help

David Stewart



ID _____

From my records you have attended a Reflective Principal course. I am particularly interested in your judgement of these kind of training and development experiences. My research is an attempt to gain further understandings about how best to support schools and teachers in New Zealand. Your time and consideration in completing the attached questionnaire is appreciated. It should not take more than 10 minutes as I would like you to record your initial reaction. If you completed an earlier evaluation circulated by Ruth Mansell would you please indicate here.

An earlier evaluation was completed: Yes No

1. Position at time of course attendance: Principal DP AP ST T

2. Number of courses attended _____

3. Other training/development with Stewart and Prebble material: (Please circle the total attended)

Ministry Contract 1 2 3 4 5

Massey University (Papers) 1 2 3 4 5

College Diploma 1 2 3 4 5 (Institution _____)

Short Course 1 2 3 4 5 (Convenor _____)

Other, Please specify: _____

4. Do you have any of the following concepts currently operating in your school?

Quality Learning Circles Yes No but plan to

Conceptual Job Description Yes No but plan to

PDC Yes No but plan to

4 Phase school development sequence Yes No but plan to

Analysis of teacher narrative Yes No but plan to

Reflective writing Yes No but plan to

5. What kind of training and development has best supported your development as a leader?

6. What kind of training and development has best supported your change and development work in your school?

7. What kind of training and development experiences will you seek in the future?

For the following questions, please circle the response which best indicates your thinking.

8. To what extent is the concept of culture important in your school?

5	4	3	2	1
Of No	Not	I'm	Important	Very
Importance	Important	undecided		Important

9. How do you manage School Development and Personal Professional Development:

one budget for both	5	4	3	2	1
SD is the school's responsibility, PPD is the teachers responsibility	5	4	3	2	1
a policy that supports some PPD	5	4	3	2	1
treat each request as it arises	5	4	3	2	1
other (please specify) _____					

10. What are the main stimuli for teacher development in your school?

courses and training opportunities	5	4	3	2	1
personal study	5	4	3	2	1
reflection	5	4	3	2	1
group, discussion and sharing activities	5	4	3	2	1
staff meetings	5	4	3	2	1
ERO reports	5	4	3	2	1
Ministry of Education curriculum developments	5	4	3	2	1
input from parents	5	4	3	2	1
research articles and presentations	5	4	3	2	1
other (please specify) _____					

11. When thinking about change and school development and reviews what concepts come to mind?

12. Would you recommend a Reflective Principal course to a colleague?

Yes

No

13. What, if anything, stimulated at a Reflective Principal course has stayed with you?

14. Would you be willing to expand some of these answers during a planned phone conversation?

Yes

No

If yes please include your your name and a contact number below.

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.

Please seal in the envelope provided and post it.
NO POSTAGE IS REQUIRED.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire Case Study C

FIELD(first name) FIELD(family name)

FIELD(school)

FIELD(address 1)

FIELD(address 2)

FIELD(address 3)

16 January 1996

Dear FIELD(first name)

It is now time for me to complete the documentation of the 1995 audiographic programme and I would be grateful if you would give me some of your thoughts under the following headings. The technique that I am applying to this stage of the project is broadly labelled *conceptual mapping*. This process begins with a statement by the participants which is then subjected to a conceptual analysis by the researcher. You may remember some of the thoughts that we shared during the year about *narrative* or *story telling* and if you do, you may see the relationship that this procedure has with that idea. Please take time, if you are able, to reflect about your statements. Could you please gather the responses from all who participated. If we can arrange again to meet in Wellington before your annual conference I will share the results with you then. Many thanks for you help.

Think back to the beginning of 1995 and in the light of what you then knew about the programme, comment under the next four headings:

1. Please state your definition of school development.
2. As concisely as you can relate your expectation of the coming project.
3. Please state how you expected to promote change in your school.
4. What impact did you expect the programme to have on classroom practice?

The next group of questions relate to the content and process of the 1995 project.

9. What, if anything from the project will influence what you do in 1996?

10. What aspects of the project did you enjoy?

11. What aspects of the project would you suggest that I change before offering the programme to any other group of schools?

12. Who regularly attended the sessions at your end?
Name *Designation*

13. Would you join a similar programme again?

14. Would you recommend this programme to other schools?

15. Any other comment?

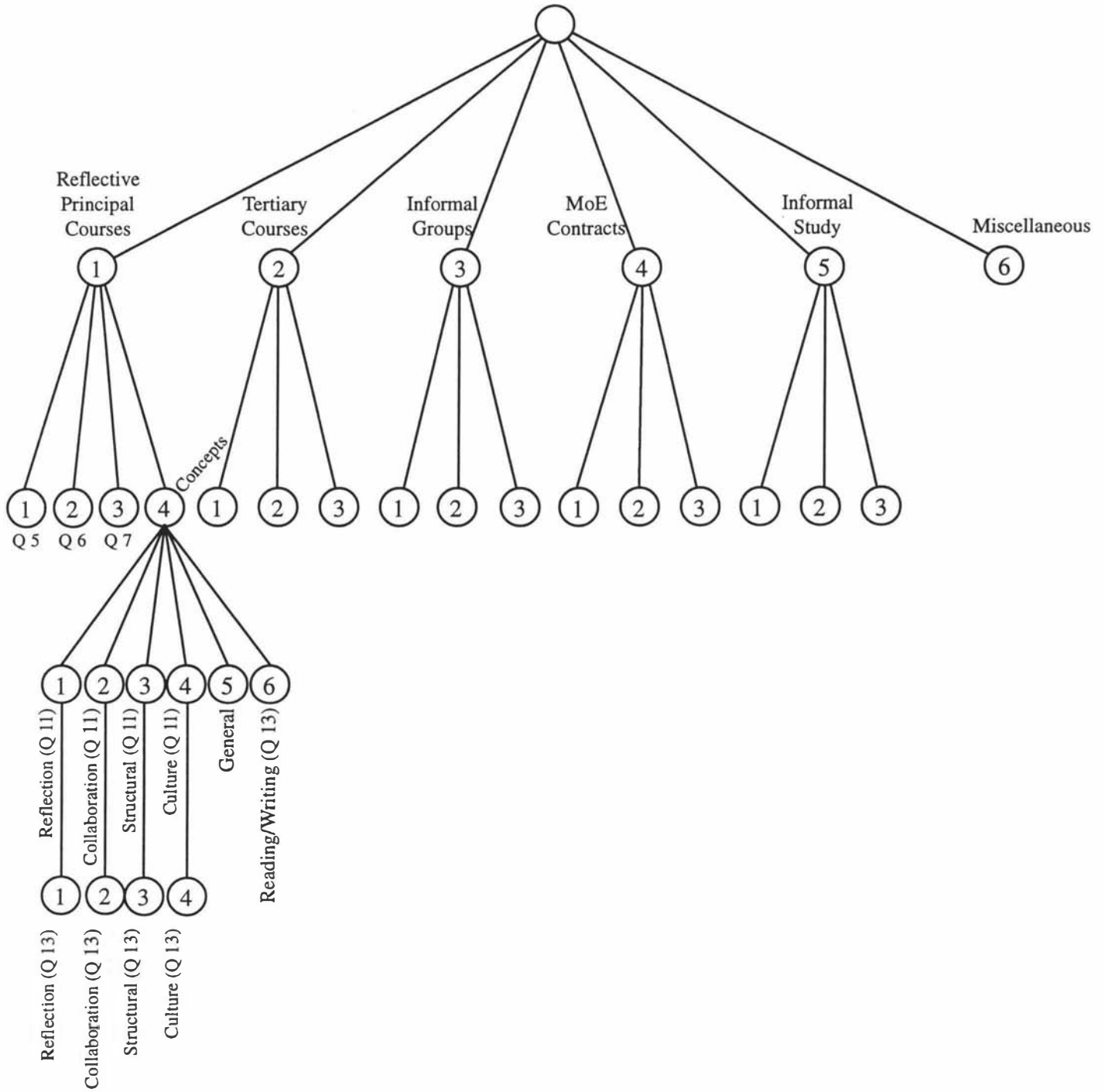
Many thanks for your time and thoughts.
Kind regards

David Stewart.

APPENDIX C

NUD●IST Chart Case Study A

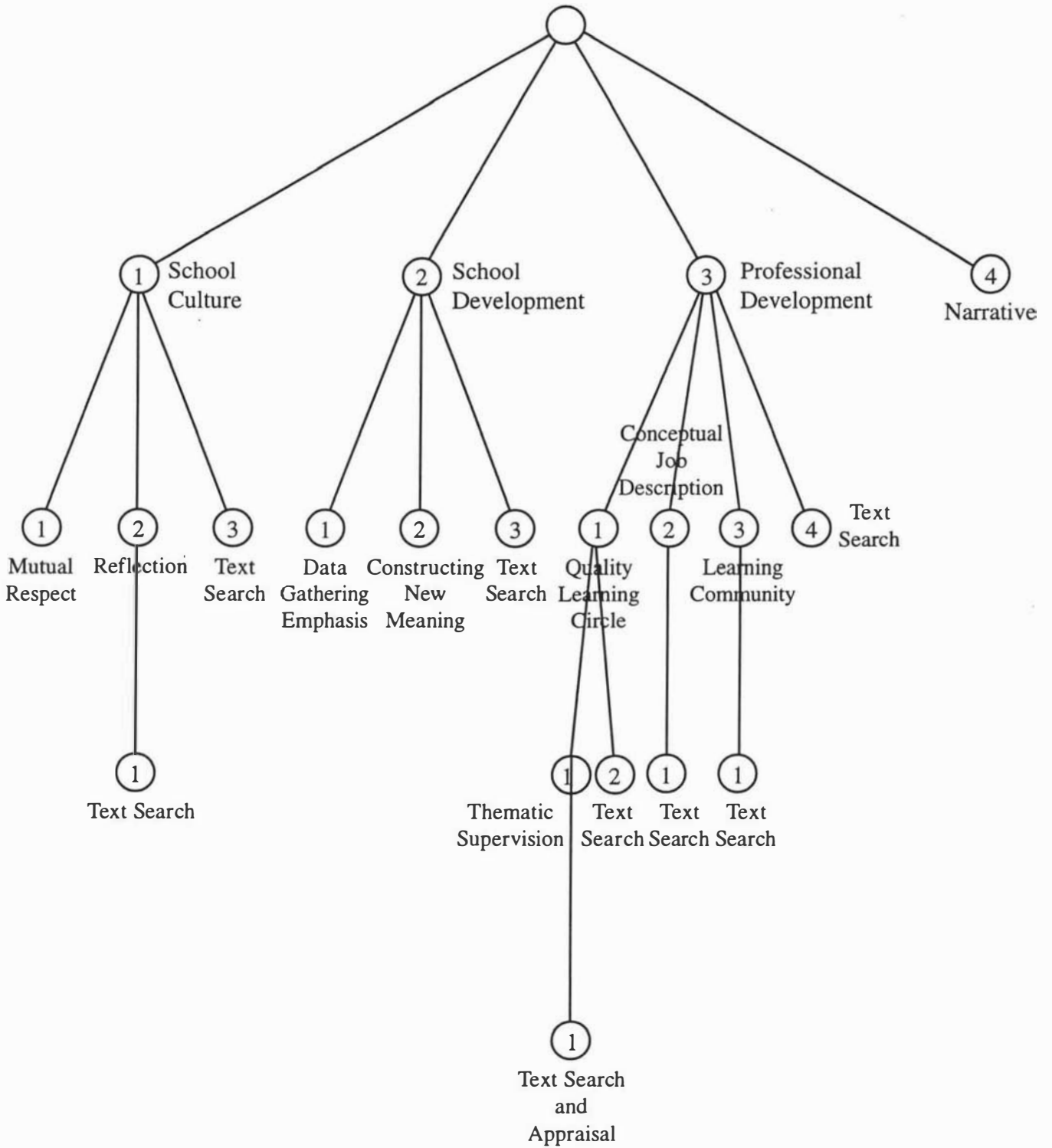
Open Ended Questions (5, 6, 7, 11, 13)



APPENDIX D

NUD●IST Chart Case Study B

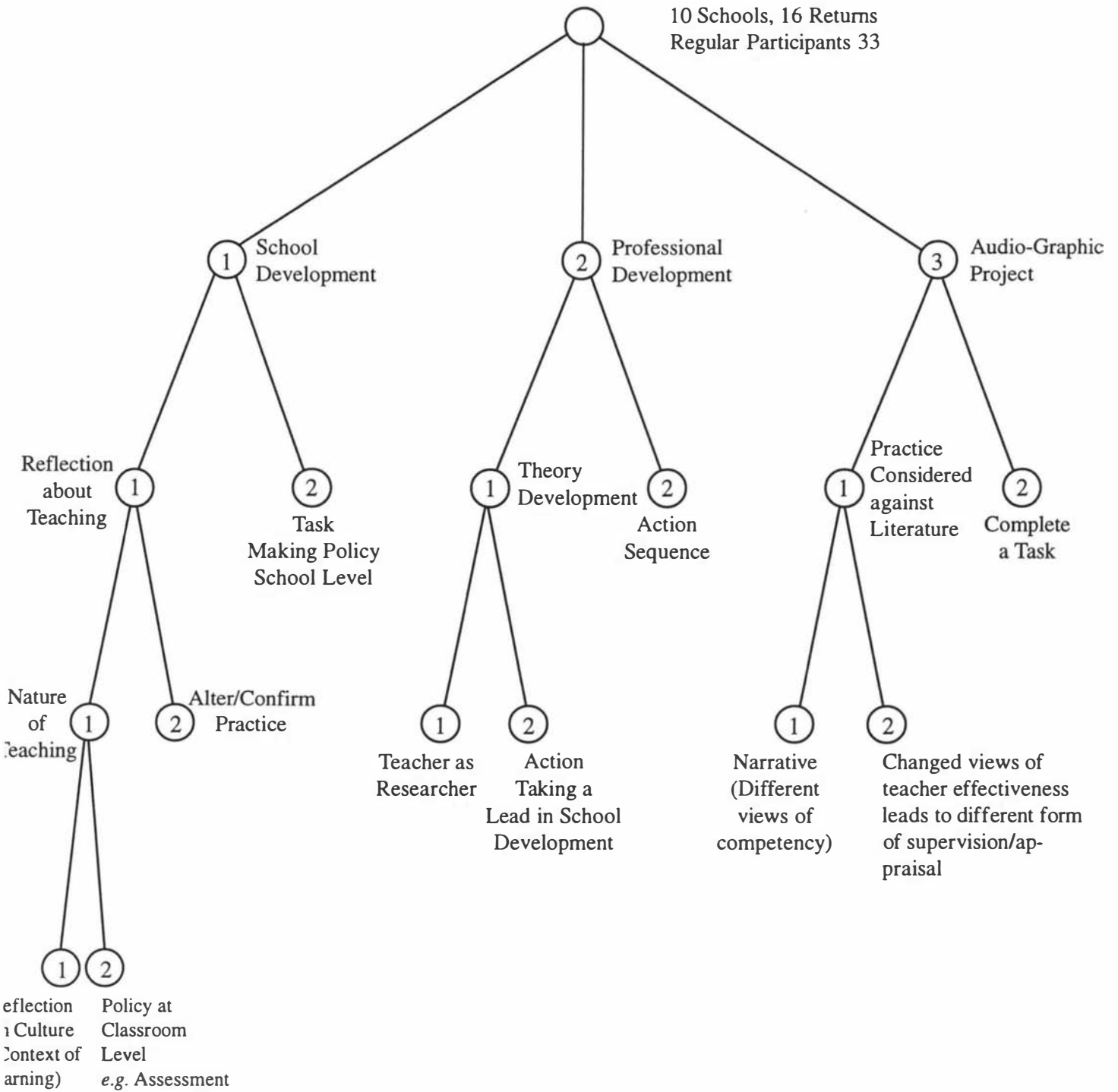
Mentor-94 Interviews



APPENDIX E

NUD●IST Chart Case Study C

Interviews with Cheviot/Oxford/Taurarua and Final Questionnaire



Permission Form

Name of School:

Participant:

I would be willing to take part in a one hour group interview with David Stewart regarding the _____ (Mentor_94/Audio-graphic 95) project.

The material from this interview may be used for publication and for University research provided the identity of all persons and schools remain confidential to the researcher.

It is understood that some follow-up interviews will be held and that a small number of school visits made. Material gathered in this way may also be included in the study.

Communication, and work generally in _____ (Mentor_94/Audio-graphic 95) may also be used as data, subject also to the same confidentiality protocols.

If material which I have contributed appears in the final study record I would like to see a draft prior to publication. Yes / No

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX G

Conceptual Job Description

A Conceptual Job Description - Teachers

Responsibilities

1. Classroom teaching

Concept

Providing quality learning opportunities based on the school's curriculum plan, and targeted to the specific needs of this class group.

KEY OBJECTIVES	RESULTS EXPECTED
Establish entry levels for individuals.	Cumulative pupil progress.
Design and plan learning sequences.	Area, class, group, individual plans and programmes.
Set achievable goals.	Individual pupils know specific goals.
Evaluate learning experience and outcomes.	Cumulative pupil profiles demonstrate growing mastery and available on request.
Re-teach where necessary or appropriate.	Learning episodes relisted to result in mastery.

2. Classroom culture

Concept

Developing a classroom culture where individuals are encouraged, respected, and challenged intellectually, physically, and socially.

KEY OBJECTIVES	RESULTS EXPECTED
Develop classrooms where students feel safe, relaxed and committed.	There is a progression from custodial care to mastery learning throughout the year.
Ensure tasks are within the capabilities of students.	All students will experience success.
Maintain a classroom where praise and positive reinforcement predominate.	Students will reinforce each other.
Ensure that the classroom is an attractive, orderly place where equipment and resources are well managed.	The classroom is a stimulating, constantly changing place with everyone involved in its maintenance.
Recognise individual differences, and provide for a variety of learning modes and groupings.	All students are able to work effectively in a variety of modes.
Provide a procedure for resolving misunderstandings and disputes.	Distractions to learning are kept to a minimum, and disputes are resolved rapidly.

3. *Personal professional development*

Concept

Maintaining an understanding of developing trends in education, keeping up to date in curriculum development and participating fully in teacher development and Teaching and Learning Circles.

KEY OBJECTIVES	RESULTS EXPECTED
Read a variety of educational articles and journals.	Incorporate new ideas into teaching repertoire.
Take part in school-based and district in-service education.	Discuss, examine and modify present teaching practice.
Share ideas and practices with colleagues.	Take an active part in small group and faculty meetings.
Be involved in visiting and being visited by colleagues in the classroom and in subsequent discussions.	Follow a thematic School Development approach through the school year.
Take an active part in QLCs.	Develop an active, reflective-practice mode of improving professional competence.

4. School culture

Concept

Maintaining a professional stance both within the school and within the community in order to foster the highest quality teaching and learning.

KEY OBJECTIVES	RESULTS EXPECTED
Participate in student activities outside the classroom.	Students are fully committed to educational activities outside the classroom and beyond the school.
Communicate with parents or caregivers regarding student progress.	Maintain a six weekly reporting cycle, attend meetings with parents and offer interviews.
Support the school's image in the community.	Respect individual confidentiality; resolve problems within the institution; promote students' positive attributes; welcome visitors, etc.
Participate in whole-of-school events.	Demonstrate a commitment to a collegial relationship.
Promote appropriate and desirable student behaviour.	Listen to a variety of points of view; be available for individual help and advice; model courteous behaviour; act fairly, etc.

5. *Specific responsibilities*

Concept

To demonstrate to others by example, effective and elaborated skills as a classroom teacher and share with the principal the responsibility for promoting and maintaining an optimum learning community.

List here any specific duties/responsibilities that you have, e.g. area leader, sports coordinator, maths resource, music, computer software, maths remedial and extension resources, etc.

(This example is for a deputy principal in a primary school.)

KEY OBJECTIVES	RESULTS EXPECTED
Provide examples of a wide variety of teaching techniques through regular class teaching.	Other teachers will seek advice and support regarding their classroom practice.
Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and support for the school's development objectives.	Be able to communicate with colleagues, students and parents about the essential elements of school life.
Take responsibility for managing and coordinating delegated school activities.	Problem solving strategies are applied and effective outcomes are achieved.
Promote QLCs through active participation and commitment to learning and teaching theory.	All teachers will be enthusiastic about QLCs and look to the deputy principal for further intellectual input.
Deputise for the principal when required.	The school will continue to function effectively and predictably when the principal is absent.

Objective Setting for 199

Please write your major objectives under each of the headings. There will be an opportunity to discuss and revise these, if necessary, at the PDC.

- 1. Classroom teaching**
- 2. Classroom culture**
- 3. Personal professional development**
- 4. School culture**
- 5. Special responsibilities**

Signed Teacher
..... Principal

Date:

APPENDIX H

New Zealand Principal Article