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PROBLEMS IN PROMOTING THE
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF
IN NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY SCHOOLS
(A PRIMA FACIE STUDY)

THESIS

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CAROL E M CARDNO

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the problems which exist in promoting the professional development of staff in New Zealand secondary schools. It has been approached as a first phase study to establish an initial knowledge base in a field which has not hitherto been the subject of wide research in New Zealand.

The introduction clarifies the use of the term 'professional development' in the context of this study and a review of overseas literature draws attention to themes and developments common to this field.

An overview of the structures and the systems used to provide and promote professional development and the listing of current provisioning for professional development opportunity lead to a multi-disciplinary analysis of data as a comment on the state of the art in New Zealand.

A study fellowship to Australia in 1986 enabled comparative research to be conducted and alerted the author to some of the problem areas in this field in New Zealand.

The study concludes with the suggestion of tentative solutions to resolve problems identified in this phase of the research. It recommends that further research at a later stage be undertaken to eliminate error from conjectures made in the concluding chapter of this study.

INTRODUCTION: TERMINOLOGY

The term professional development is used throughout this dissertation to denote the growth process, personal and professional, of the practicing teacher or administrator in the secondary school system.

A number of terms are currently employed to describe the phenomenon of continuing in-service professional development. Continuing education is the generic term which most comprehensively covers the whole range of educational activities which aim to bring about growth in the professional (Bolam, 1986). This term has the widest application in relation to all phases of the development of the professional.

Continuing Education refers to any systematic course of study or set of experiences intended to achieve increased awareness of and improve skill in the use of, or a deepened appreciation for those aspects of culture (including technical culture) and environment (including work environment) about which a participant is interested or concerned.

(Schlechty and Whitford, 1983, page 63)

In this definition, Schlechty and Whitford have drawn attention to the scope of continuing education in that it spans both education related to the individual and education related to the specific nature of the work of the individual. This dual role of continuing education is clearly illustrated by Bolam (1986) who ascribes two purposes to continuing education. One purpose ascribed to continuing education is the enhancement of the personal, general education of the individual. The other purpose of

continuing education is the provision of on-going professional and vocational training in relation to individual career, professional needs and also school and system development needs.

This dual purpose of continuing education is extended to the term 'Professional Development' by many writers in the field when they refer to personal professional development and in-service professional development as two sides of the same coin.

The concept of the continuing education of the teacher in-service gives rise to use of the terms in-service education and in-service training as aspects of professional development of staff in secondary schools. Both Morant (1981) and Bolam (1986) go to some length to explain their use of the term 'In-Service Education' as opposed to 'In-Service Training' by defining it as a concept similar to that of professional development.

The broader concept of in-service education is bound up with the notion of bringing about teachers' professional academic and personal development through the provision of a whole series of study experiences and activities of which training should be rated as but one aspect. Hence in-service training should not be considered as an alternative to in-service education but as part of the total framework of in-service education.

(Morant, 1981, page 3)

One of the most prolific writers in the field of professional development is Bolam (1982, 1986) who in a recent international survey defined 'In-Service Education of Teachers' (INSET) as:

Those education and training activities engaged in by primary and secondary school teachers and principals, following their initial professional certification, and intended primarily or exclusively to improve their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes in order that they can educate children more effectively.

(Bolam, 1986, page 18)

The term teacher education is used by the Education Department in Britain, Australia and New Zealand to identify a key function of these departments and in all cases encompasses the three teacher education phases of pre-service, induction and in-service professional development which according to Bolam (1986) and Fielding (1983) should be viewed as a continuum.

The James Report (1972) U K defines teacher education as:

The whole range of activities by which teachers can extend their personal education, develop their professional competence and improve their understanding of professional principles and techniques .

The Report of the Joint Review of Teacher Education (1986) Australia, deals with aspects of pre-service, in-service and post-experience training as complementary aspects of teacher education. It recognizes personal professional development and in-service professional development as parts of the total framework of teacher and administrator professional development for which the Commonwealth Government accepts responsibility.

The Hill Report (1979) N Z states in Chapter 11, paragraph 11:2:

A wide range of activities is currently provided under continuing teacher education, including:

full time study leave for the acquisition of specialist training or the completion of degrees,

attendance at teachers centres,

local and national in-service short courses,

annual review days and 'teacher-only' days,

technical refresher leave for technical institute tutors,

correspondence courses organized by the Advanced Studies for Teachers Unit,

University study - part-time or extra-mural.

The term staff development is one generally applied to the professional development of teachers. It is interesting to note a growing trend to include all members of the school community in the developmental activities related to organizational growth and renewal. Griffin (1983) states that:

The term staff development means any systematic attempt to alter the professional practices, beliefs and understandings of school persons towards an articulated end.

(Griffin, 1983, page 4)

He emphasises the fact that staff development involves all of those persons who make up the organizational entity called the school and this includes administrators, support personnel and others who work towards accomplishing the mission of the school. The inclusion of Parent-Bodies, Community members and Department officers in the professional development activities of the school is documented by

Bolam (1982, 1986) and by inquiries into teacher education in Australia (1980, 1986).

The term teacher development is often used interchangeably with that of staff development but is much narrower in its scope as it does not generally extend to include all those who contribute to the educational enterprise of the school. Teacher development is described as

a process of personal development through professional and practitioner experience.

(Fielding, 1983, page 1)

There is agreement about the difficulty of comprehensively defining such a complex concept as professional development. Both Rubin (1971) and Bolam (1982) refer to the complexity of the phenomenon of professional growth. Even the commonly used abbreviation INSET (in-service education of teachers) is frequently used to mean different things although this is the term generally employed by CERI/OECD reports into the continuing education of teachers and is used by Education Departments in Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

For the purposes of this inquiry the term 'professional development' is used as it has a wide application to all aspects of teacher and administrator in-service education and encompasses the meaning and intent of all terms used in relation to the professional growth and education of secondary school staff.