Relationship between teacher learning and school culture

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER LEARNING AND SCHOOL CULTURE

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CERTIFICATION

I, Wendy M. Bean, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Masters of Education (Hons), in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Wendy M. Bean

October 2, 2003

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Particular thanks must go to the teachers and principals from the research schools who cannot be named because of their request to remain anonymous However, I wish to acknowledge their generosity in inviting me into their schools and classrooms, their trust and most importantly their input.

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Finally thanks to all my family who have always supported me in everything that I have done in many different ways. In particular I would like to thank my mother and father for their belief in me throughout the entire project. Thank you for all your encouragement and support.

ABSTRACT

On school culture and teacher learning…

> It is a culture with very high expectations from both parents and staff. Where everyone has the belief everyone will achieve … with this principal the expectations on us are higher now. The accountability is more succinct. It has always been a culture where the staff agrees on the same sort of philosophy. When we talk about how children learn to read etc there is never much disagreement. When there is some disagreement it leads to discussion. I have worked harder here than anywhere but it is all for good. Everything is improving, my teaching and the students' learning.
>
> Teacher School A

Professional development and teacher learning have been areas of great interest for many years. Similarly, school culture has been the subject of many studies.

This research aimed to bring together the information available on school culture and teacher learning and to examine the relationships between these two areas. Specifically it aimed to develop a grounded theory which explained the role that school culture plays in teacher learning.

The study was set within the qualitative research paradigm and involved focused observation, recording, analysis and checking for reliability through the use of credible measures. The research revealed the complex relationships between professional development, teacher learning and school culture.

The findings of this study indicated that the choice of professional development activity, the actual processes and structures within that chosen activity, teacher attributes, that is, attitudes to learning, and the school culture all have a significant impact on the teacher learning that takes place. Further, the grounded theory showed how the school culture could be observed through the lenses of the school community, values and beliefs, processes in place and conditions.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore the relationship between teacher learning and school culture. In particular it aims to highlight the factors operating in a school culture that enable teachers to turn their professional learning into successful classroom practices.

Specifically the study seeks to investigate the professional knowledge and skills a group of teachers acquired from the specific professional development experiences in the area of literacy teaching, and how that learning was translated to classroom practice at the school level. Further the study seeks to identify and explain those factors within the school culture that support and/or hinder how teachers implement their new understandings.

The broad question that guided this study was:

What do the teachers perceive to be the contributions of 'persons,' 'events' and 'processes' in promoting a school culture, which supports the implementation of their professional learning?

This question was further guided by these specific questions:

- What 'events' and 'processes' within the school setting do the teachers specifically identify as factors that affect the implementation of their learning from professional development?
- What is the role of the principal and other staff members in the role of professional development of teachers in the school setting?
- What is the relationship between school culture and teacher learning?

Background to the Study

This research was conducted during 2001 in three primary schools in the Broken Bay Diocese. It was a time when the provision of professional development in the area of literacy was being reconsidered by the Catholic Schools Office leadership team.

The research builds on previous research conducted in the Diocese by Cambourne and Turbill from 1997-1999 (Cambourne, Turbill: 1999). The focus of this joint venture between the Diocese of Broken Bay and the University of Wollongong was the relationship between staff development and teacher learning. The following figure describes the theory framing this joint venture**.**

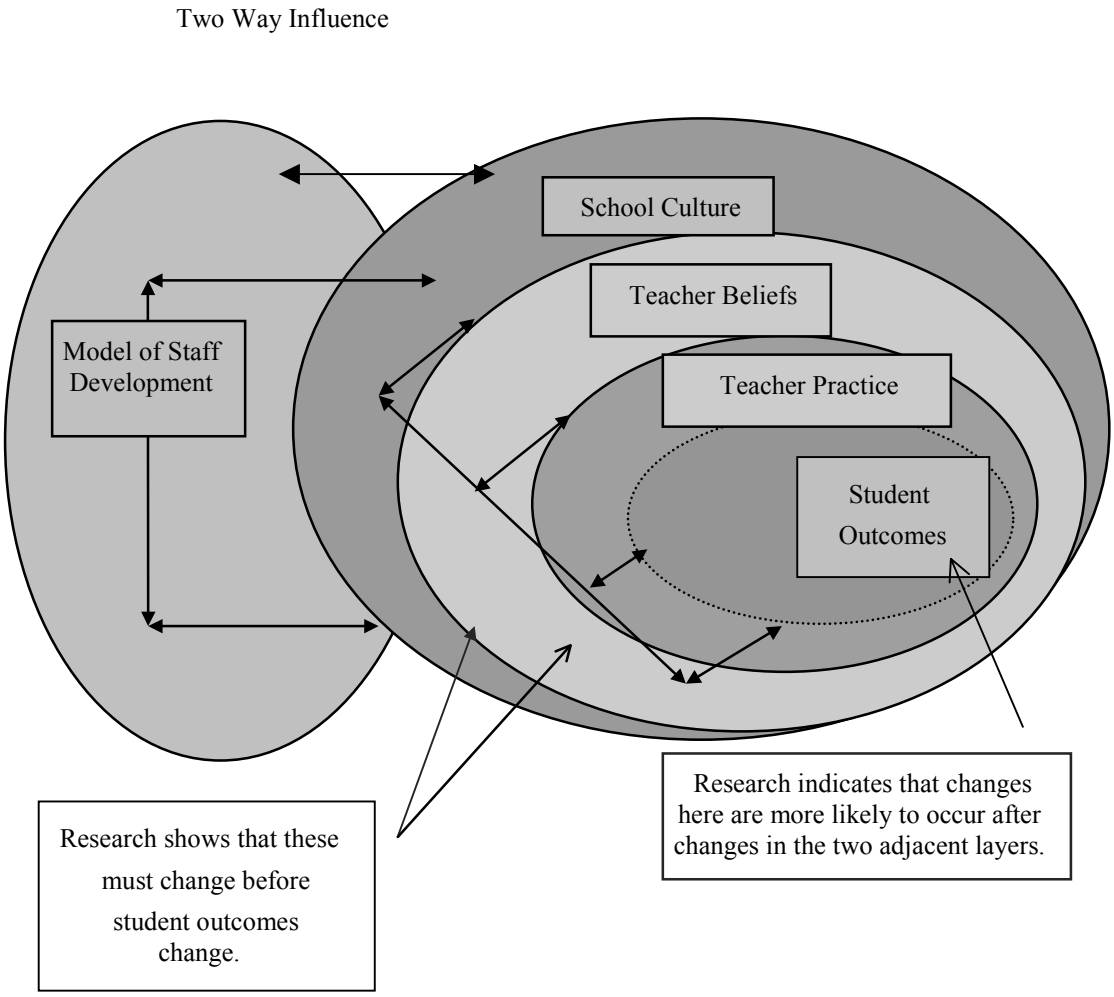

Figure 1 A Schematic Representation of the Theory Framing the 'Teacher Learning' Project

In the report, project co-ordinators Cambourne and Turbill (1999) state that in summary this theory argues that:

(i) if student learning (the inner layer in Figure 1) is to be positively influenced then

(ii) teaching practices (the next layer in Figure 1) are in turn shaped and framed by teachers' beliefs especially their beliefs about learning, teaching, and the

nature and purpose of whatever they are trying to teach (in this case something called 'literacy').

(iii) thus before classroom practices can change, teachers must first be given the opportunity to examine and modify their belief systems (the next layer in Figure 1).

(iv) the outer layer of Figure 1, 'School Culture' spreads its influence in two directions, outwards and inwards. Not only does the school culture subtly determine the nature of the staff development program which a school or school system decides to adopt ('outward influence'), it will also influence and be influenced by the inner layers which are embedded within it ('inward influence').

This study's focus is the outer layer of the model, namely the role of the school culture in teacher learning. As such it builds on previous research undertaken by McKenzie, (2001) and on the findings reported in 'The Teacher Learning Project' (Cambourne and Turbill, 1999). The report for this project stated:

> There was also some support for the notion that the outer layer, 'School Culture' is both affected by, and in turn affects what happens in the other layers. There is evidence that changes in the way these schools 'did business' had subtly changed in ways that were congruent with some of the experiences, process and knowledge that the staff development course provides. Teachers were asking for, and trying to create more opportunities for professional sharing and discussion. Furthermore there was some evidence that these teachers were asking for more follow-up, more resources, and more in-service training based on the same interactive/integrative model as the *Frameworks* program (Cambourne and Turbill, 1999).

Frameworks (1991) is a staff development program that focuses on the teaching of literacy K-6. It was an initiative in the Broken Bay Diocese from 1997-1999. The model of teacher learning which underpins Frameworks is based on research which began more than twenty years ago and culminated in 1994. It has been described by Turbill (1993) as an 'integrative/interactive model of staff development', and as such represented a new paradigm in staff development, a paradigm which viewed school cultures as 'social semiotic systems' (Turbill, 1994; Halliday, 1978). The research related to this model formed the basis of my personal understandings about professional development that I brought to this study.

In her research investigating the teacher learning from *Frameworks* and other professional development programs, McKenzie (2001) describes aspects of the learning and how it takes place. McKenzie's work identifies that, as a result of a professional development experience, teachers are 'challenged, affirmed, informed or reminded' (McKenzie, 2001:7). The teachers in McKenzie's study raised a series of questions that may be pertinent to this study:

- What does this mean for my classroom? Does it make sense in the light of my experience and tacit knowledge?
- What do I do now to continue this growth? Can I innovate on this to improve my teaching?
- Can I improve on what I already provide? Will these practices work in my classroom?
- How can I implement that practice into my current classroom structure? Would those types of organisational structures work in the physical environment of my classroom? (McKenzie (2001:7).

This research further builds on McKenzie's work and focuses specifically on the relationship(s) between school culture, professional development experiences and subsequent changes in teacher learning and teacher practice.

The Broken Bay Diocese

The Broken Bay Diocese is situated between the Diocese of Maitland/Newcastle, the Diocese of Parramatta and the Archdiocese of Sydney. At the time of the research there were 42 systemic schools: 36 primary schools, 6 secondary schools. The schools are structured into three clusters: the North Shore Cluster, the Peninsula and the Central Coast. There are 12 schools in each of the clusters and an Education Consultant supports each of the clusters. The Catholic Schools Office 2001 Annual Report (2002) reported there were 10,425 students enrolled in 2001. This represents a gradual increase in the last four years.

Table 1 Broken Bay Diocesan primary school enrolments

	2001	2000	1999	1998
Enrolments (Primary	10,425	10,176	10,150	10,164

In 2001, Broken Bay Diocese systemic primary schools had a total of 56 indigenous students. Indigenous students are defined in the Annual Report (2001) as:

> [T]hose students of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander decent who identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (2002:52).

In Broken Bay systemic primary schools there are a total of 1,972 (13%) ESL students requiring assistance and 222 (6%) students identified with disabilities.

> Students with disabilities do not include students whose only impairment is a specific learning difficulty or for whom remedial support is available (2002:52).

Two of the schools in this study were in the North Shore cluster and one in the Peninsula. One had 567 students, the second 392 students and the third was a small school with 183 students.

Professional Development in the Broken Bay Diocese

The Broken Bay Diocese has for many years been committed to providing teachers with quality professional development in the area of literacy and over that time a great deal of change has occurred in the type of professional development offered. 1997 was a period of major change, and this period began with the implementation of *Frameworks*. This staff development program ran for 3 years and involved 225 teachers. In the Annual Report (1998) it was stated:

> The cooperative Frameworks venture with the University of Wollongong, which began in 1997, continued in 1998. An additional seventy-seven teachers took part in the Frameworks professional development program, which for the first time included the opportunity for selected teachers from the 1997 cohort to share what they had been doing in their classrooms since their training…Overall, the results indicated that there had been positive changes in teacher beliefs and practices in literacy education. Findings from the student data demonstrated that there were increases by the student cohort of 1998 when compared to student data collected in 1997. When teacher and student data were examined together, it became clear that teachers' beliefs about literacy learning and the practices reflected in these beliefs are inextricably linked to student learning outcomes.
>
> The essence of these relationships is shown in the diagram that follows. [Here Figure 1 (page 2 of this thesis) was reproduced with no explanation of the model] (CSO, 1999:24).

The 1999 Annual Report simply stated:

> In 1999 a number of professional development initiatives were held in the diocese targeting early literacy development. *Frameworks*, a course run in conjunction with the University of Wollongong, was offered to teachers of Kindergarten-Year 2. Training in administration and analysis of *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* was provided for teachers. Workshops, that focused on early literacy development were offered to Kindergarten and Year 1 teachers (CSO, 2000:27).

The changes in delivery of professional development continued and the following activities were reported in the 2000 Annual Report:

> In 2000 the focus for literacy professional development in the diocese shifted to the primary years 3-6. The shift to the primary years came about as a result of consultation with Principals and the Primary Schools Consultants. A great deal of support had previously been offered to the Infant school teachers (K-2) in the past four years through *Frameworks* and *Observation Survey Training* so that the foundation for good first teaching was in place. A new professional development program designed for primary teachers (3-6) was designed and implemented.
>
> *Literacy in the Primary Years* was conducted in each of the three primary clusters for approximately 60 teachers. The course provided teachers with the opportunity to revisit their understandings about children's literacy development and encouraged them to reflect critically on their practice. A feature of the course was the teacher's commitment to working in a learning partnership with a colleague. During the course and between the sessions each teacher was encouraged to work with his/her colleague to improve teaching practice. Learning colleagues also visited each other to observe teaching during their literacy block. Each participant attended a four full-day inservice program, participated in a half day school visit to a learning partner and took part in a celebration of their learning attending a twilight session at which the teachers shared their learning from the course (CSO, 2001:33).

While changes were occurring in the form of professional development offered to teachers in the diocese so too were some of the key personnel and structures changing within the head office. In 1999 an Education Officer whose role was largely concerned with literacy, was appointed for the first time. There was a new Head of Curriculum and a new position created entitled, 'Senior Curriculum Officer Primary'. In late 2000 a new Director of Schools was appointed.

In June 2001 during a leadership team meeting, time was spent considering approaches to professional development with a view to forming a committee. As a result a professional development committee was formed for the first time in the Broken Bay Diocese. The committee was disbanded later in the same year with a proposal for it to be reformed in 2002 with clearer structures and purposes. In 2002, CSO moved to another major change in staff development which included an 'in-school' model and the introduction of Reading Recovery. This change meant two years after a shift in emphasis from the early years to the primary years (2000), the focus reverted to the early years.

In August 2001, the CSO put forward a 'Draft Professional Development Literacy Proposal' that was presented to school principals. The proposal contained 3 options and was preceded by some background statements concerning system responses to Commonwealth requirements and professional development initiatives since 1997. A second section of the document, also entitled 'System Response to Commonwealth Requirements' consisted of a series of graphs giving the following information:

- System analysis of Year 1 Observation Survey data
- Years 3 and 5 Basic Skills Tests results
- Primary Writing Assessment results.

The proposal concluded with the statement:

> In analysing and interpreting the Year 1 students' Observation Survey data in conjunction with Year 3 Basic Skills data it is evident that students are performing at lower levels given the general demographic of the diocese. The following proposal outlines a number of options for primary schools in Broken Bay Diocese that, if implemented, would ensure that the Commonwealth Government requirement for an early intervention program is met (CSO, 2001).

The document went on to describe 3 proposed options.

> It is proposed that the CSO provide the following options for literacy support in 2002. Options 1 and 2 support years K-2, and Option 3 supports years 3-6.
>
> OPTION 1: Adopt a whole school collaborative approach to Literacy professional development with an initial focus on Years K-2, and/or
>
> OPTION 2: Implement an Early Intervention Program [Reading Recovery] in schools where curriculum leadership is strong and good first teaching is in place, and/or
>
> OPTION 3: Rerun Primary Literacy Course for one cohort of primary teachers (CSO, 2001).

The Commonwealth Government requirement referred to relates to the National Literacy and Numeracy Goal agreed to by Commonwealth State and Territory Ministers in March 1997. The proposed outline was designed from within the office based on 'current research'. The research referred to is not stated but appears to be that of Crevola and Hill (1998). Details of this research will be outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

In 2002 all three options were implemented. Option 1 was put in place in 15 schools. Ten 'Primary Facilitators-Literacy' were trained to begin working one day a week in the schools selected. Two schools in each cluster were funded to begin Reading Recovery and the Primary Literacy Course was run for a cohort of 24 teachers from across all three clusters.

Personal Background in Professional Development

My beliefs about professional development have developed throughout my professional life as a teacher, executive, departmental consultant and continuing work in schools as a self employed consultant. Various roles have resulted in extended projects in public, catholic and independent schools in all states of Australia. In addition I have facilitated professional development activities in the United States of America and Papua New Guinea. These experiences have shaped my developing beliefs about teacher learning, professional development, change and how it occurs. More recent experiences of 'consulting' in schools on a more long-term basis have begun to shape my thinking and understandings about the culture of schools.

My involvement with the University of Wollongong and the *Frameworks* program led to my becoming a facilitator for that program. Consequently I co-facilitated Frameworks In NSW, Queensland, ACT and Victoria as well as Papua New Guinea and USA. This course had a profound effect on my beliefs about professional development. During this time I became more aware of:

- the impact of long-term staff development,
- the role of reflection on teacher learning (this was particularly evident working with the 'national' teachers in Papua New Guinea),
- the potential impact of professional development activities which has been carefully researched and constructed and
- the notion that change is a process and takes time.

As a self employed Education Consultant I have had an increasing involvement with the primary schools in the Broken Bay Diocese since 1996. I have been involved in various projects but two have particular relevance to this study. From 1997 to 1999 I worked with the authors of the F*rameworks* program facilitating the course in each cluster in each of the three years the course was in place. Following the co-facilitation of the weeklong course each year,

the diocese employed me to visit every teacher as 'follow-up' to the course. The purpose was to support the teachers in classrooms. When *Frameworks* was discontinued, it was replaced with the *Primary Literacy Course*, written by education personnel within the office. I was employed to co-present the *Primary Literacy Course* in each of the clusters from 2000-2001 plus one course in 2002. Following this course I was again employed to do follow-up, but this time only in selected schools.

Through these two major literacy projects I have developed an in-depth knowledge of the Catholic Schools Office and the schools in Broken Bay Diocese. Over this time I have also developed strong professional relationships with many of the principals and teachers. This familiarity made it very easy for me to work in schools for the purposes of conducting research.

Since very early in my career, I have been involved in professional development in many forms. From 1985-1986 I worked as a Language Consultant for the Department of School Education. During this time the 'one off' inservice course was extremely popular and presenting such courses occupied a great deal of my time. These courses were typically a couple of hours in length, held off site and often after school. I was a popular presenter and made the sessions practical and fun, always providing the much sort after handout. I was considered an 'expert' in my field by many of the teachers who attended. However, I have always been concerned about wearing the 'expert' label and the responsibilities that went with that label. This concern grew out of my awareness that my knowledge of literacy and learning was constantly evolving as I worked in classrooms with teachers and kept up to date by reading and attending conferences. I became increasingly curious over the years about how little of the information and strategies I 'presented' at an inservice course was transferred into the classroom. Later I was particularly interested when working with *Frameworks* in the impact of long-term staff development. Teachers were extremely positive about attending this five-day course and being provided with time to discuss, read and reflect. I also enjoyed this 'five day' experience, which gave me a chance to develop relationships with the participants, to watch their learning and genuinely be a learner myself. A great deal of learning took place 'in' the room not just from the front of the room. In visiting teachers over the three years of *Frameworks* 'follow-up' I noticed that despite this enthusiasm there were still teachers upon whom the course appeared to have made no impact at all either on their classroom or their teaching once they returned to school. Often these were people who participated at a high level and appeared to be part of the learning community. However, five years on I still encounter

teachers who claim that this particular course completely changed their teaching. Their classrooms demonstrate the ongoing use of the processes and strategies introduced during the course and their colleagues speak of the course and how they wish they could have had access to it themselves. Some of these teachers still have the course books in their classrooms. These observations raised a number of questions for me:

- Why the difference?
- How can this course be 'life changing' for some teachers and have no visible impact on others?
- Is it what happens back at school that supports some teachers and not the others?
- Is it the principal who makes the difference?

As I visited teachers who had completed the *Primary Literacy Course*, many again greeted me with enthusiasm. Some had made changes to their classroom practice and for some there appeared to be little or no change. Again I reflected:

- How do teachers actually learn?
- Is the critical factor the content, the structures, the processes or something else?
- What would best support their learning?
- Are there some schools whose teachers consistently apply what they have learnt better than other schools?

It is with these questions in mind that I continue to work in schools. It is also with these questions in mind that I approached this study. With over ten years of working with teachers and enjoying learning with them, I continue to hold teachers in high regard. I believe that the profession has become more demanding with increasing accountability. Quite often I work with teachers who are stressed and over worked. In my experience they approach the task of teaching with great seriousness. Despite this, I often become frustrated when I observe a lack of change in some classrooms, a lack of professional talk and an absence of professional reading amongst teachers. Three additional questions remain unanswered:

- Why do so many teachers see their professional development as someone else's responsibility?

- Have we as professional developers somehow contributed to this attitude?
- Is there something that happens or can happen in a school that will change this attitude and support teachers in becoming learners?

Professional development of teachers is both necessary and expensive and therefore must be effective. My personal interest in this topic is a continuing incentive to understand teacher learning.

Rationale of the Study

Over many years teacher professional development has been the focus of research by a variety of researchers including Barth (1990, 2001); Guskey (1989, 1995); Hargreaves (1994); Hixon and Tinzmann (1990); Lieberman (1990); Fullan (1990, 1993); Fullan and Hargreaves (1993); Joyce and Showers (1990, 2002); Sarason (1990, 1996); to name a few. Even with this array of research available there remains some unanswered questions about effectiveness of professional development. In an article posted on the web, Guskey (1995) argues:

> The research base on professional development in education is quite extensive. For the most part, however, this research has documented the inadequacies of professional development and, occasionally, proposed solutions [Epstein, Lockard, & Dauber, 1988; Griffin, 1983; Guskey, 1986; Joyce &Showers, 1988; Lieberman &Miller, 1979; Orlich, 1989; Wood & Thompson, 1980, 1983]. Still, reformers attempting to make sense of these various solutions quickly find themselves faced with seemingly incompatible dichotomies…which leave reformers feeling confused (Guskey, 1995:1-2).

Over the years a large financial commitment has been made to professional development and there is a continual call for more funds for teacher professional development and for more 'effective' professional development. Guskey (1995) goes on to argue:

> Questions are being raised about the effectiveness of all forms of professional development in education. And with these questions have come increased demands for demonstrable results…Legislators, policy makers, funding agencies, and the general public all want to know if professional development programs really make a difference. If they do, what evidence is there to show they are effective (Guskey, 1995:2)?

In the Review of Teacher Education in NSW (Ramsey, 2000), a number of recommendations were made regarding the establishment of an *Institute of Teachers*, 'whose primary purpose is to enhance the level of professionalism of teachers and teaching.' The recommendations encompassed many areas from training to accreditation, however in section 12.2, *Policy*

Directions, advice is given 'mainly to employers, universities and other stakeholders in teacher education and teaching on changes that should be made to current practice.' In regard to professional development items 44, 46 and 47 propose certain actions:

> …employers give teachers regular and diverse opportunities for professional revitalisation, including short term exchange placements in other schools and educational settings and, where appropriate, opportunities which will assist the transition from teaching to other employment…
>
> … employers and teachers support a system which encourages and rewards their professional development throughout their career…
>
> … employers and teachers support an approach to continuing teacher education which emphasises the responsibility the profession and its individual members have for further learning to improve the quality of professional practice (Ramsey, 2000: 218).

A Professional Summit on teacher standards, quality and professionalism was held in Canberra (April 2001) and the working document reporting on outcomes of the summit, 'Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism' (2001), states:

> Improving the quality of teaching and ultimately the education and training outcomes for young Australians has been on the agenda of the teaching profession for many years. Considerable emphasis was placed during the Summit on the extensive work that has already been undertaken by professional organizations, employers, unions and other groups in areas such as training, research and professional development (Australian College of Education, 2001:1).

The recent research cited suggests that there are issues related to professional development that are ongoing. These issues seem to be mainly about effectiveness and accountability. A deeper understanding of teacher professional development and related teacher learning is crucial to the successful future of professional development. More importantly that understanding must encompass an investigation of what happens to the learning resulting from the professional development. Getting professional development 'right' is only part of the puzzle. Identifying what supports teachers in applying and continuing their learning is just as important.

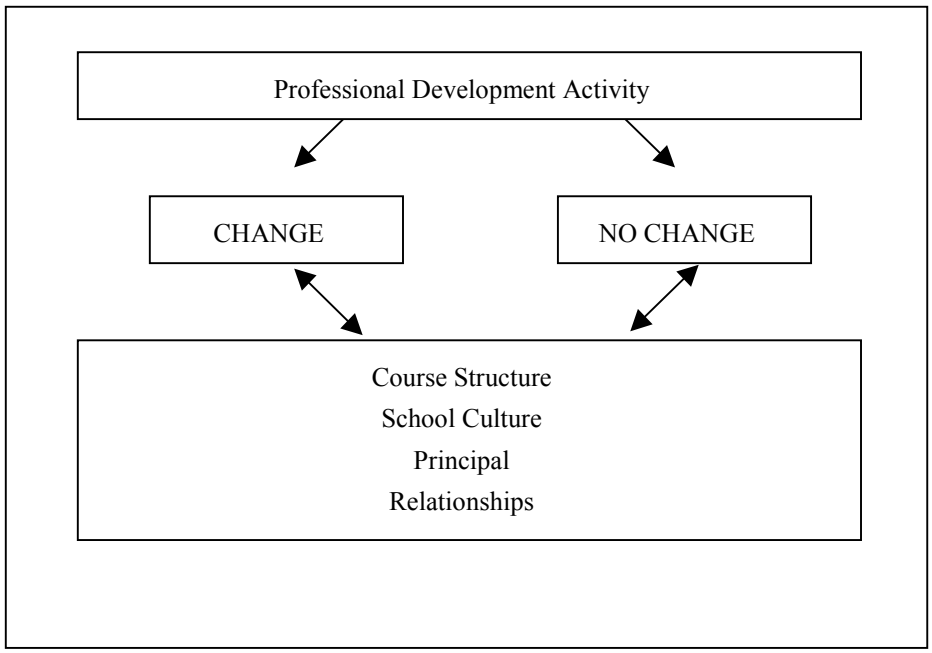

Figure 2 Factors Affecting Outcomes from Professional Development

Figure 2 summarises the themes arising thus far from my reading and my personal experiences. The type and mode of delivery of the professional development activity is one consideration. In addition course structure, school culture, the school leader and relationships in the school may also play a part in the learning that takes place.

School Culture

In order to explore the impact of school culture on teacher learning this study looks specifically at the nature of various school cultures and the shaping of the culture from within and from outside of the school. Working in schools and observing noticeable differences in schools, the principals, the relationships and approaches to teacher learning raise the following question for me:

- Can the 'answers' to what is effective professional development be applied across schools or do we need 'context specific' solutions?

In relation to this question Peterson and Deal (1998) cite a number of researchers who argue the influences school culture may have:

> Culture influences everything that goes on in schools: how staff dress, what they talk about, their willingness to change, the practice of instruction and the emphasis given to student and faculty learning [Deal and Peterson, 1994; Firestone and Wilson, 1955, Newmann and Associates, 1996] (Peterson and Deal, 1998:28).

I approached this research with these issues in mind. Some of the factors relating to my understandings about school culture that I take to the study can be represented in Figure 3 below.

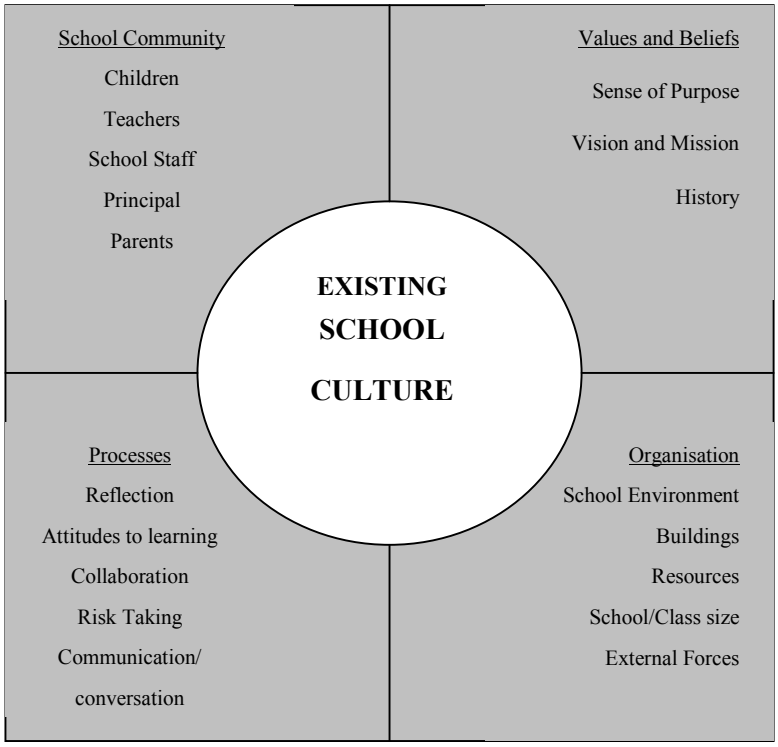

Figure 3 Factors Affecting the Existing School Culture

My experience working in Catholic schools suggests that the existing culture may well be related to the wider community, the Catholic Education Office, and to the church and parish in terms of the values, beliefs and ceremonies in place which form part of the observable culture of each of the schools. Stenhouse (1983) argues:

> However inexplicit or concealed the beliefs and values of a group may be, they lie at the heart of its culture (Stenhouse, 1983:12).

Dwyer (1993) gives his definition of culture, adding a perspective specific to the Catholic school:

> A group's culture is the way it has of meeting its members' needs, finding meaning in their lives, and expressing that meaning. It is the composite of ideas, values, symbols, customs and stereotype that are shared. It is what we learn from those whom we are with. In a nutshell, it is life as people understand and live it.
>
> We can talk, therefore, about Australian culture; we can also talk about the culture of Catholic people, which is, of course, very influenced by the wider culture; and we can talk about the culture of Catholic schools generally, and even, the culture of a particular school (Dwyer, 1993:2).

For the purposes of this study 'culture' is defined as the common beliefs and values that underpin the actions and relationships which exist in the school. The reference to culture in this study refers to the persons, events and processes that make up the culture in the schools investigated. Sarason (1996) argues the difficulty in defining this term:

> The word *culture* does not have a concrete, visible referent such as words like, *rock, stove*, or *hat*. We have to conceptualize culture so that we become sensitive to its meanings, interconnections, and directions. In the ordinary course of our days we are not aware of culture. Indeed, we take it for granted without examining it. Some people probably most never articulate a conception of culture (Sarason, 1996: 320).

While some people may not articulate a conception of culture, many researchers have attempted to do so. The definitions vary but the common elements include beliefs, values, traditions and the kind of talk or interaction that takes place. Stenhouse (1983) says,

> Though rooted in beliefs and values, culture develops through interaction, especially talk between group members (Stenhouse, 1983:12).

In addition, Barth (2001) provides a more complex definition encompassing the notion of history:

> The school culture is a complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, values, ceremonies, traditions and myths that are deeply ingrained in the very core of the organization. The culture is the historically transmitted pattern of meaning that wields astonishing power in shaping what people think and how they act. …And all school cultures are incredibly resistant to change. This is precisely why school improvement-from within or without-is usually so futile. Yet unless teachers and administrators act to change the culture of a school, all "innovations" will have to fit in and around existing elements of culture. That is, they will be superficial window dressing, incapable of making much of a difference (Barth, 2001:7).

This definition highlights the possible effects of culture on any professional development activity. Cole and Knowles (2000) provide a definition and suggest culture and climate are aspects of something to do with social organization:

> The ambience, tone, culture, or climate of schools has been a topic of interest over the past several years for educational researchers and educators who seek to understand the social organization of schools and the influence of school context or culture on teacher development, student learning, and school improvement (Cole and Knowles, 2000:112).

Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) also acknowledge the difficulty in defining this term when they argue:

> School culture is difficult to define, but it is best thought of as the procedures, values and expectations that guide people's behaviour within and organization. The school's culture is essentially the way we do things around here (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991:170).

By way of organising these views of culture, Barton (2000) suggests five categories emerging from and affecting school culture:

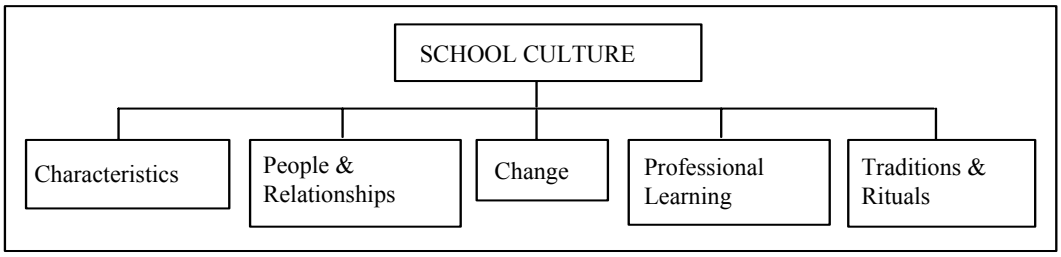

Figure 4 Five Categories of School Culture (Barton, 2000:287)

These factors may emerge as important when examining data for this research. Finally, Freiberg and Stein (1999) simply state, 'School climate is the heart and soul of a school'. Perhaps this sums up the opinions of various researchers of the importance of this topic. Freiberg and Stein go on to argue:

> School climate is about that quality of a school that helps each individual feel a personal worth, dignity and importance, while simultaneously helping create a sense of belonging to something beyond ourselves. The climate of a school can foster resilience or become a risk factor in the lives of people who work and learn in a place called school (Freiberg and Stein, 1999:11).

This research begins by accepting the important role of school culture as described in the available research but will also investigate how culture affects teacher learning. The 'status' of the culture or climate as described by Freiberg and Stein (1999), has the potential to have an impact on teacher learning. This is the area that this research will investigate.

The Relationship Between Teacher Learning and School Culture

This study will consider the nature of *'successful professional development*' especially as it relates to the teaching of literacy within a school culture. For the purposes of this study the terms staff development and professional development and will be considered interchangeable. Owen (1990) says:

> …We define *professional development* as a deliberate learning activity that has as its focus empowering teachers to effect improvement, policy and curriculum development and teaching with a view to providing better student outcomes…Effective professional development (a) is directly related to the commitment and support provided by principals in schools and is enhanced through collaborative leadership and (b) provides teachers with ready access to and development of relevant internal and external support services (Owen, 1990:175-176).

Much of the current literature supports the notion that the success of any professional development program should be judged in terms of student outcomes. (Sparks & Richardson, 1997; Guskey, 1995; Guskey, 1999). However, because schools are such complex places, the establishment of direct cause-effect links between staff development programs and student learning is problematic. This study focuses more on what factors impacted positively or negatively on teacher learning, leaving the inference that if that learning takes place, it will in turn impact positively on the students. Current research and theory in teacher learning argues strongly that:

- Staff development is a process, not an event (Fullan, 1990, 1991)
- The process takes time, often years, to show up in student learning (Fullan, 1991; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1993).
- The process necessitates that changes in student learning are preceded by changes in teachers' beliefs, understandings, and practices. (Fullan, 1993; Guskey, 1989; Turbill 1993, 2002).
- These changes are often accompanied by perceived changes in school culture (Sarason, 1990, 1996; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Hall & Hord, 1987; Fullan & Miles, 1992).

- Staff development is influenced by the setting in which it takes place (Wideen & Andrews, 1987; Barth, 1990; Frieberg,1999; Joyce & Showers, 2002).
- The principal is an important factor in determining school culture in which this learning takes place (Barth 1990; Sarason 1996).

Stallings (1989) argues that certain conditions are necessary for change in teacher behaviour. The cornerstones of the model, according to Stallings (1989), are:

- Learn by doing - try, evaluate, modify, try again.
- Link prior knowledge to new information.
- Learn by reflecting and solving problems.
- Learn in a supportive environment and share problems and successes (Stallings, 1989:3-4).

Cambourne (1988, 2002) describes his theory of learning as 'natural' learning. He argues learning takes place when certain conditions are operating. There are some similarities to how Stallings (1989) describes learning and how it takes place. The 'conditions' which Cambourne (1988:33) describe as a 'Model of Learning as it applies to Literacy Learning', are immersion, demonstration, expectation, responsibility, use, approximation and response. The first two conditions must be accompanied by engagement. How these conditions compare and relate to the principles of adult learning will be explored in Chapter Two.

School improvement programs, that is, staff development that ultimately results in improved student outcomes are described by a variety of researchers including Wideen & Andrews (1987), Barth (1990), Liebermann (1995), Sarason (1996) and Barton (2000). The respondents from the research schools and the personnel in the Catholic Schools Office expressed a variety of opinions regarding professional development and the form it should take. What is agreed upon is that the courses offered should result in change in teacher practice in the area of literacy with a view to improving student outcomes. For this reason the findings of this study have the potential to inform the provision of future professional development in literacy or indeed any curriculum area in the Broken Bay Diocese.

This research will explore the 'learning' conditions for teachers in the research schools and the importance of building a community. The research also seeks to report the teachers' opinions of their present school environment. The school as a learning community is argued by Barth

(1990:41), who says, 'we must improve schools from within and build a community of learners'. He points out that schools should be places where cooperation is paramount and places where all should see themselves as learners.

Locus of Study

The research involved 45 teachers from 3 different schools in the Broken Bay Diocese as well as key personnel from Catholic Schools Office. The selected schools were distinctly different and therefore easily recognisable. All efforts will be made to ensure the identity of the schools remains anonymous. The data collection took the form of surveys, interviews and prolonged observation on-site. The observation on-site resulted in a thick description of the observed practices and relationships in place in each school. It did not give a rich understanding of how or why they do what they do. Some data on the why and how was acquired during the interviews conducted on a one to one basis. In addition several interviews were conducted with personnel from Catholic Schools Office to investigate policies and collaboration with schools. Cole and Knowles (2000) comment on this process as a collaborative and cooperative one. Participation was voluntary and the agreement involved doing a survey and subsequently being interviewed later in the project. There were no additional expectations of teachers while I was in the school 'observing'. I observed interactions, the sharing of knowledge, reflection and conversations in the day-to-day running of the school and recorded my observations as field notes.

I anticipated that prolonged observation in the selected schools, a survey and in-depth interviews would lead to a better understanding of teachers' attitudes to professional development, their perceived learning and application of that learning. Further, I anticipated information could be gained as to how the teachers perceived the culture in their own school and how they believed that culture had impacted on their learning and subsequent application of their learning.

Conclusion

In outlining the focus and providing a context for this study, this chapter has the purpose of establishing why this research is important to the Broken Bay Diocese and to the wider educational context. The following chapters will expand on the areas of the study introduced in this chapter.

Chapter 2 will review the literature related to aspects of this topic. The review will be undertaken under several categories including, Professional Development, Teacher Learning and Teacher Change, The School Leader, and School Culture.

Chapter 3 will outline and justify the methodology chosen to explore the purpose of this study. It will describe the methods used to collect and analyse the data.

Chapter 4 will provide a non-interpretive account of the results evolving from the data. The results will be reported in themes: Teacher and School Demographics, Professional Development and Teacher Learning, Inhibitors and Enablers of Teacher Learning and Teacher learning and School Culture.

Chapter 5 will report on the findings of the research by interpreting the results reported in Chapter 4. The limitations to the study will be discussed in addition to identifying what further research could be done. Issues arising out of the research will be identified and recommendations offered.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The process of reviewing the literature in the area of teacher learning and school culture provided a huge range of material. As a consequence it was deemed necessary to investigate the literature in the areas of professional development, teacher change and school culture. This review therefore serves to inform the study in terms of what has been researched over many years in these domains of research as well as to identify the areas of tension and contradiction that may exist.

Organisation of the Literature Review

The literature review draws on three major pools of literature concerning the nature of professional development, the teacher and school culture. For the purposes of clarity these overlapping pools will be examined separately.

Thus, the first section reviews the research related generally to professional development. This is followed by a focus on the teacher, in particular teacher learning and teacher change. These areas encompass the role of the school leader. Finally literature in the area of school culture is examined. As the area of culture is large and complex, given the constraints of this project I will refer here only to those aspects related to professional learning, growth and change, namely; school culture, school climate, organizational culture, professional culture and community in schools.

The purpose is to explore the various aspects of what the literature says about school culture in order that I might explore the notion of the school culture as enabling or hindering teacher learning and therefore identify the particular elements of a school culture that enable teacher learning.

Professional Development

In any discussion about professional development we need firstly to understand what the term means. Secondly there needs to be some examination of the forms that professional development takes in order to consider which are the most effective.

Professional development is generally considered to be a critical part of teacher learning and teacher effectiveness (Wideen & Andrews, 1987; Barth, 1990, 2001; Hargreaves, 1994; Sarason, 1996; Guskey, 1989, 2002). The form that the professional development should take has been problematic. A variety of terms have been used to refer to teacher learning programs including 'professional development', 'training' and 'inservice'. While some researchers make distinctions between these terms, often they are used to mean the same thing. Fullan (1992) refers to the use of these terms by saying:

> The terms 'staff development', 'professional development', 'in-service' and 'on-going assistance' are used interchangeably in this chapter' (Fullan, 1992:97).

While I agree with Fullan's assertion that many writers, systems and teachers use the terms interchangeably to mean the same thing, it was deemed necessary for the purposes of this study to use the term 'professional development' as the key term.

Professional Development: A Definition

Over the years proposals to reform, restructure, or transform schools have emphasized teacher professional development as the primary vehicle in efforts to bring about needed change (Guskey, 1994). Owen (1990) defines professional development and presents a view of what it should entail, emphasising the complexity of learning and in his opinion the role of reflection and feedback. This is a reoccurring theme in the literature and will be explored more deeply in this review. Owen (1990) argues:

> …we define *professional development* as a deliberate learning activity that has as its focus empowering teachers to effect improvement in policy and curriculum development and teaching with a view to providing better student outcomes…Effective professional development (a) is directly related to the commitment and support provided by principals in schools and is enhanced through collaborative leadership and (b) provides teachers with ready access to and development of relevant internal and external support services (Owen, 1990:175).

Similarly, Dunlop (1990) defines professional development as being 'more than inservice'. He cites Fenstermacher and Berliner, (1983), arguing that professional development should be considered more broadly as the systematic and formal attempts to 'advance the knowledge, skills and understanding of teachers in ways that lead to changes in their thinking and classroom behavior' (Dunlop, 1990:1).

The thesaurus of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database defines professional development more broadly. Here professional development is defined as 'activities to enhance professional career growth'. Such activities may include individual development, continuing education, and inservice education, as well as curriculum writing, peer collaboration, study groups, and peer coaching or mentoring. Fullan (1991) simplifies these possibilities when he refers to professional development as:

> …[T] he sum total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one's career from preservice teacher education to retirement (Fullan, 1991:326).

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (1995) also refers to these 'formal and informal' experiences in a definition of professional development that is based on the opinions of the teachers:

> Professional development ... goes beyond the term 'training' with its implications of learning skills, and encompasses a definition that includes formal and informal means of helping teachers not only learn new skills but also develop new insights into pedagogy and their own practice, and explore new or advanced understandings of content and resources (NCREL, 1995:1).

All of these definitions refer to professional development as being about change and growth, with Fullan (1991) and NCREL (1995) making the point that this occurs not only through formal experiences but also through informal opportunities. This expands the notion of professional development from the 'formal,' system-initiated events through to the learning the individual teacher may engage in at the school or individual level. It is the school level that is the focus of this study, in terms of how teacher learning is 'nurtured' or 'enabled'.

Effective Professional Development

While the definitions indicate there is some agreement in defining professional development, the issue becomes more complex when considering what is 'good' or 'effective' professional development. Owen (1990) provides a definition of effective professional development:

> Effective professional development occurs when a design provides for recurrent participation of the learners. It is now almost a cliché that change is a process, not an event, and that the acquisition of educational knowledge and skills that result in lasting change is a complex process. The implementation of this principle also allows opportunities for reflection and feedback. This is predicated on the assumption that participants learn by applying new knowledge skills, that theoretical inputs must be accompanied by the opportunity to put such inputs into practice, and that the sharing of practice by participants further enhances learning (Owen, 1990:178).

This recursive nature of professional development stressed by Owen (1990) implies a time factor. In an article produced by the National Research Centre on English Achievement (2002), teachers shared their views about what they wished to gain through professional development. Their views appear to mesh with what Owen (1990) considers to be effective. The teachers quoted in the article indicated they sought:

1. new ways to think about their practice,
2. engagement in rich literacy experiences,
3. interaction with peers and other professionals, and
4. time. (NCRC, 2002:1).

Further, when asked what they needed to be more effective, the teachers cited the following as being important:

> Developing interdisciplinary units, collecting and analysing samples of student work, integrating state standards into their curriculum and instruction, facilitating meaningful and productive classroom discussion, and writing across the curriculum. They want to help struggling readers, motivate reluctant writers, group students wisely, craft good questions, make better use if technology, and find literature that will stimulate and inspire (NCRC, 2002:1).

These comments strongly suggest that teachers are concerned with practical day-to-day issues in the classrooms. Their comments also may indicate that teachers are constantly grappling to come to terms with a range of issues emanating from their professional worlds including curriculum, pedagogy, behaviour management and motivation.

Approaches to Professional Development

The professional development literature is filled with a variety of models that propose a range of approaches to professional development of teachers. Given the constraints of this study only some of these models will be explored.

The actual model that underpins the professional development which teachers undertake appears critical in the extent to which teachers' needs will be met. Certain 'models' are favoured by various experts in the field, however, in terms of what is considered 'right' or 'best' depends largely on beliefs held by the decision makers and the expected outcomes and learning. Current models of professional development can be broadly classified into two categories, 'Top Down' and 'Bottom Up'. In the 1980s, ELIC (Early Literacy Inservice Course) was a professional development course that represented a tremendous change in how teacher learning was approached. This particular professional development activity also proved to be very popular. Pryor and Hinton (1992) describe this course as a 'top down' model:

> It may seem a contradiction to say that a school-based course, run by the teacher from the school is a top-down model, but ELIC is indeed that! ELIC was a top-down model in that:
>
> • it was devised by a small group of educators with particular views on literacy and classroom literacy teaching
>
> • 'it makes a certain learning process obligatory. Participants must follow the prescribed process.' Garth Boomer [1987, p65]
>
> • it employs a "pyramid selling" model of "the word" being handed down from course developer to the student
>
> • it was strongly pushed by education bureaucracies as a means of up-dating teachers in primary schools (Pryor and Hinton, 1992:8).

Barth (1990) discusses another aspect of professional development, which can produce the same 'top down' effects. He argues that 'top down' effects are not only related to the form the professional development takes but also the means by which teachers come to attend:

> Many administrators are discovering what teachers have known all along: When a school or school system deliberately sets out to foster new skills by committing everyone to required workshops, little happens except that everyone feels relieved, if not virtuous, that they have gone through the motions of doing their job. So, by and large, the district staff development activities that we employ insult the capable and leave the incompetent untouched (Barth, 1990:50).

On the other hand Barth (1990) says of a 'bottom up' approach:

> Teachers in a learning community…engage in continuous inquiry about teaching. They are researchers, students of teaching, who observe others teach, have others observe them talking and teaching, and help other teachers (Barth, 1990:46).

Another approach that exhibits the elements of a 'bottom up' approach is known as 'Action Research' and has been in use in schools for more than 60 years. Calhoun (2002) describes action research:

> Action Research asks educators to study their practice and its context, explore the research base for ideas, compare what they find to their current practice, participate in training to support needed changes, and study the effects on themselves and their students and colleagues…My experience with action research has convinced me of its potential to transform professional development. Action Research can change the social system in schools and other education organizations so that continual formal learning is both expected and supported (Calhoun, 2002:18).

Crevola and Hill (1998) highlight the difficulty of transferring professional development to classroom practice and therefore improved student outcomes. They believe that professional development must become an experience that is embedded in teachers' work and suggest that when teachers participate in professional development that is designed within the school context they are more likely to be empowered to take control of the professional development processes and content. Putman and Borko (2000) agree but view the issue of in-school activities as a little more complex:

> A focus on the situated nature of cognition suggests the importance of *authentic activities* in classrooms. J. S. Brown and colleagues [1989] defined authentic activities as the 'ordinary practices of a culture' [p.34] -activities that are similar to what actual practitioners do. They claimed that 'school activities,' which do not share contextual features with related out-of-school tasks, typically fail to support transfer to these out-of-school settings (Putman and Borko 2000:4).

They (Putman and Borko, 2000) go on to describe the role of learning within and outside the school context:

> Teachers, both experienced and novice, often complain that learning experiences outside the classroom are too removed from the day-to-day work of teaching to have a meaningful impact. At first glance, the idea that teachers' knowledge is situated in classroom practice lends support to this complaint seeming to imply that most or all learning experiences for teachers should take place in actual classrooms. But the situative perspective holds that all

> knowledge is (by definition) situated. For some purposes, in fact, situated learning experiences for teachers outside the classroom may be important-indeed essential-for powerful learning (Putman and Borko, 2000:6).

Crevola and Hill (1998) argue for a more complex model that they call Children's Literacy Success Strategy (CLaSS) and describe nine elements that must come together in a particular way for school improvement to take place.

> The nine design elements are essential to participation in CLaSS, since they form the focus of attention for CLaSS schools as they review their early literacy provision, participate in ongoing professional learning opportunities and seek to improve literacy outcomes for their students (Crevola and Hill, 1998:6).

The design elements centre on 'beliefs and understandings' as indicated in Figure 5.

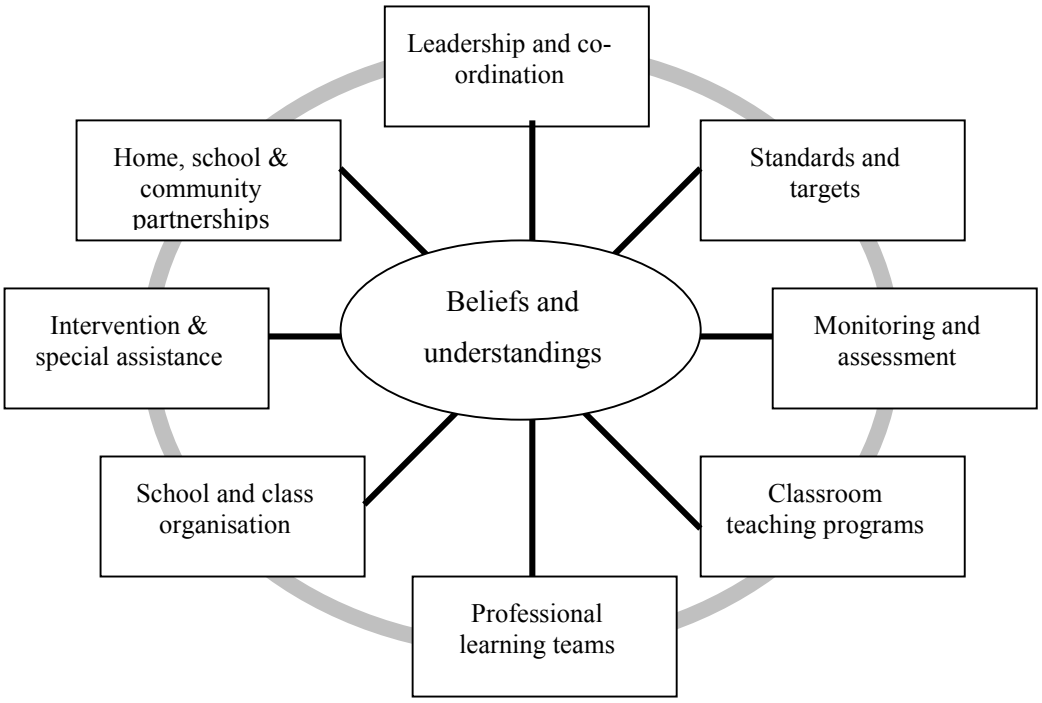

Figure 5 Design Elements of a General Model of School Improvement (Hill & Crevola, 1998:7)

Hargreaves and Fullan (1991) identified correlates for school improvement similar to those presented by Hill and Crevola (1998). Shaw (2000) argues correlates are of little use without an understanding of the change process:

> Our experience suggests correlates by themselves offer no prescription for improving schools nor are they purposes for schooling. In some ways the shear comprehensiveness of the descriptors, detract from the main purposes of improving curriculum, teaching and learning. Furthermore, school improvement factors such as these, without an appreciation for the change processes and how they facilitate the required participation to genuinely achieve them, do little to help teachers and heads with the work of school improvement (Shaw, 2002:5).

While developments in the models of professional development may have had an impact on the type of learning experiences that teachers are exposed to, less obvious perhaps is the effect they may have on school culture, which will be addressed in more detail later in this chapter. Sarason (1996) raises the issue of culture:

> ...one cannot truly understand the culture of the school independent of its relationship, present and past, to centres for professional training. These centres, by virtue of being vehicles for the selection and socialization of educational personnel, have an obvious impact on the school culture (Sarason, 1996:142).

Cambourne and Turbill (1999) propose a model of effective professional development that links teacher learning with school culture. They explain their model (Figure 1) as a schematic representation of the theory framing their research into teacher learning. They suggest a relationship between the form the professional development takes, school culture, teachers' beliefs, teacher practice and ultimately student outcomes. Their model emphasises the relationship between all of these factors and is useful in understanding the factors impacting on teacher learning.

An important aspect of this model is the suggestion that there is a two-way influence between school culture and professional development. The majority of evaluations in this field seem to focus on the student outcomes part of this model. However, rarely is the impact on school culture evaluated. The research of Cambourne and Turbill (1999) is an exception because it acknowledges this aspect of the professional development equation.

Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989), describe five models or categories of professional development in an attempt to 'classify' various professional development models that have been used. The five categories described in their research are listed below noting the learning process involved in each category.

1. Individually Guided Development. This refers to a process where the teachers set goals and from there design their own professional development. The model anticipates the teacher is goal driven and motivated and self-direction empowers teachers.
2. Observations and Assessment. This model involves teachers observing each other teach and providing feedback. The strength of this model lies in the aspect of reflection involved in the feedback portion of the strategy. The model anticipates risk taking and collaboration.
3. Involvement in a Development or Improvement Process. This approach involves assessing current practices in the school to identify a problem, which when addressed successfully will improve student outcomes. The processes involved in addressing the problem would involve a variety of approaches.
4. Training. This model involves having an 'expert' presenter who designs the professional development experience. Such programs are designed to change or improve teachers' thinking. Such programs may include some theory, demonstrations of practice and possibly coaching in the workplace.
5. Inquiry. This model is similar to action research where the teacher identifies an area or a problem and 'researches' the answer in the classroom. Then through data collection and analysis the teacher documents any changes. This may be done individually or in groups.

Barton (1992) uses a slightly different approach to overview the various models of professional development. Her organisational framework highlights the role the teacher plays in the various approaches. Barton cites the categorisation of professional development done by Ingvarson (1987), Johnson (1988) and Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) and argues her model is an extension of those models. There is a similarity between the Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) categories of 'Training', 'Involvement in a Development or Improvement Process' and 'Inquiry'. However the Barton model (Figure 6) does not acknowledge 'Individual Guided Development' or 'Observation and Assessment' as major models although elements of these do appear in her major categories.

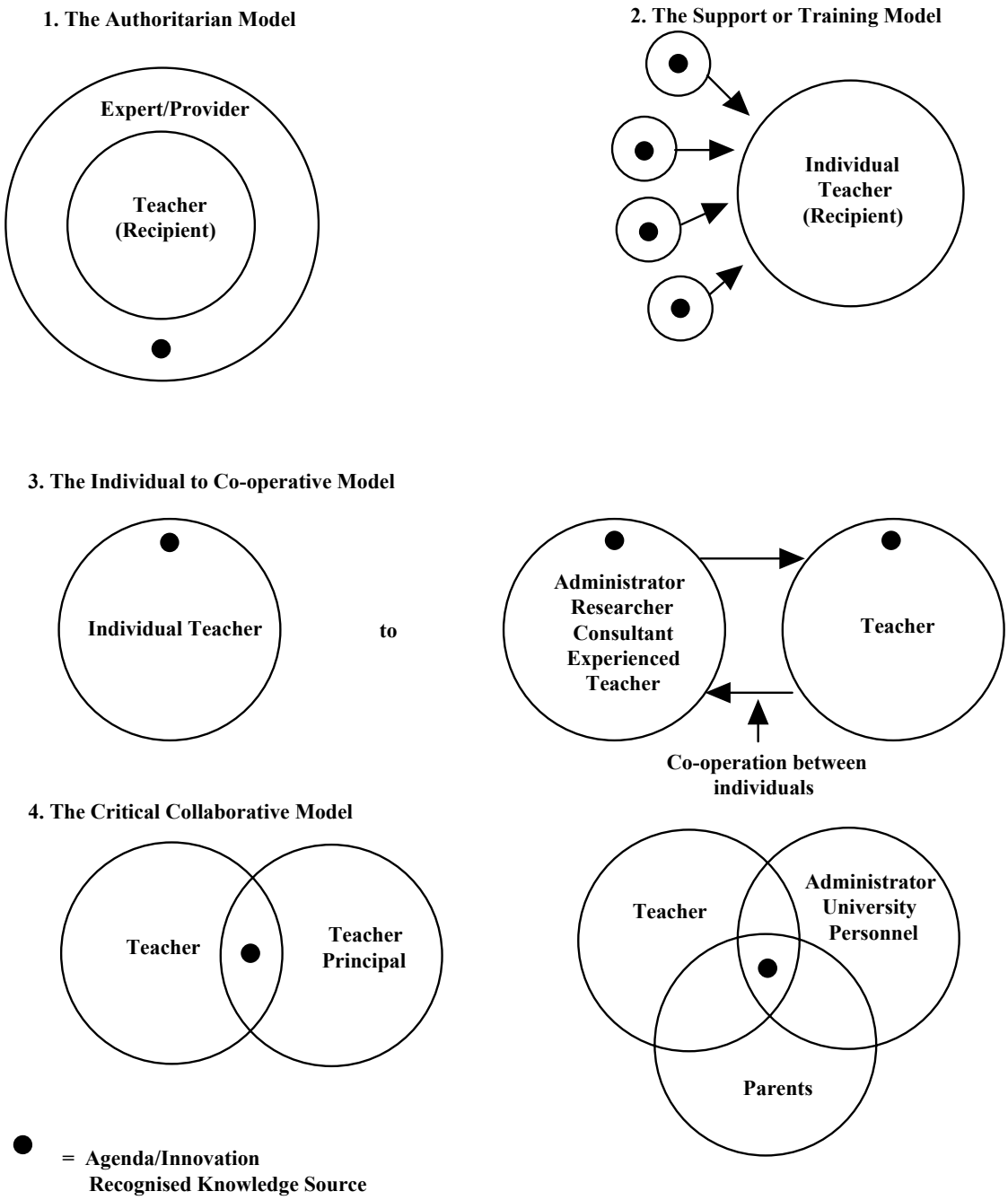

Figure 6 Models of Professional Development (Barton, 1992:25)

Frameworks (Turbill, Butler, Cambourne and Langton; 1991, 1994) is an example of a model of staff development that combines some of the elements of the models that Barton describes such as the expert provider, the support training model as well as aspects of the critical collaborative model. However, *Frameworks* depends on certain processes and structures to support teacher learning which highlights the difficulty of categorising some approaches to professional development. *Frameworks* was used extensively during the 1990s in Australia, Papua New Guinea, Saudi Arabi and USA and presents a more complex description of the

actual learning that takes place. It is based on a model of learning, developed by Turbill (1994). Turbill (2002) argues the potential of the impact of this professional development approach on school culture:

> *Frameworks* has the potential for changing the learning culture of schools in ways that empower teachers [Turbill 1994; Heckenberg 1994; Swain 1994]. Teachers, having experienced the program, began to view themselves as thinkers and learners rather than simply 'do-ers' or practitioners of someone else's thinking. Instead, they began to view themselves as perpetual learners who accepted that they are also change agents, whilst being in a constant state of change themselves. This in turn had the potential to lead to empowered students [Duffy 1990]. My research strongly suggests that the staff development model that underpins *Frameworks* can be viewed as a paradigm in professional learning-one which views school cultures as social systems [Betts 1991, Turbill 1994, Capra 1996] (Turbill 2002:2).

Turbill draws on Halliday's (1978) linguistic explanations of 'culture as semiotic systems'. Halliday interprets the social system as:

> …a system of meanings that constitutes the 'reality' of culture. This is the higher-level system to which language is related: the semantic system of language is a realization of the school semiotic system (Halliday, 1978:123).

Halliday (1978) expands this by arguing the role of language:

> Language is one of the ways in which people represent the meanings that are inherent in the social system. In one sense, they are represented [that is, expressed] also by the way people move, the clothes they wear, their eating habits and their patterns of behaviour. In this sense, they are represented [that is, metaphorized] by the way people classify things, the rules they set up, and other modes of thought. Language 'represents' in both of these senses. It is able to do this because it encodes, at one and the same time, both our experiences of reality and our relationship with each other (Halliday, 1978:162).

Turbill's (1994) model describes the interactions that take place due to the processes and structures in place in the professional development activity. She argues the language processes of collaboration, sharing and reflection are critical to success. Teachers can learn from each of the domains of knowledge represented in Figure 7. The learning can be more sustained and long term when these domains interrelate.

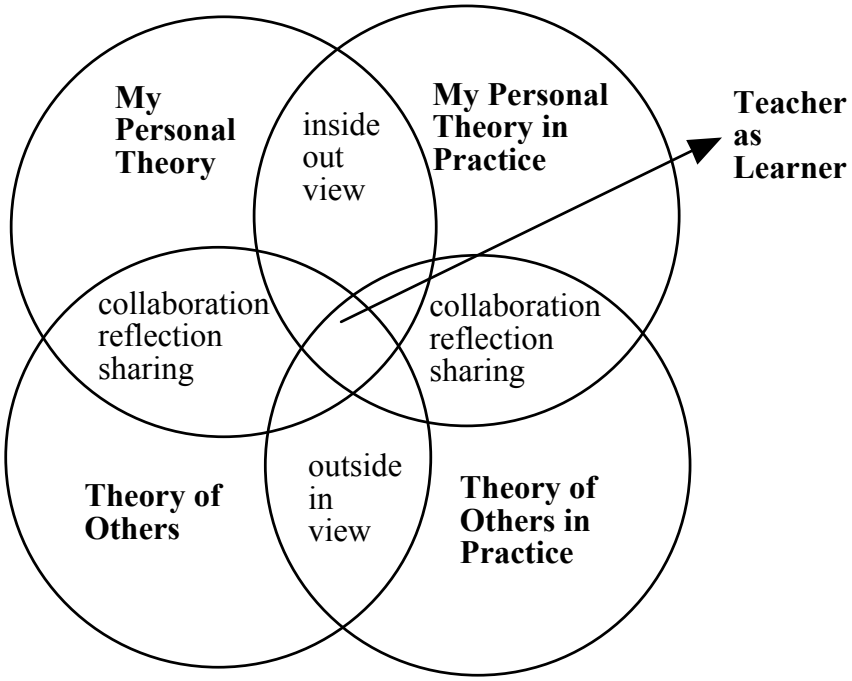

Figure 7 Interactive and Integrative Model of Professional Learning (Turbill, 1994).

The key to this model is how the structures, processes, language-in-use and relationships operate. Turbill (2002) argues:

> All have the potential to become *enablers* and thus facilitate learning, or *inhibitors* and thus act as barriers to learning. At various points in time one or all of the above could have the potential of inhibiting learning. The key to success is having sufficient enablers in place so that barriers or inhibitors have only a temporary life span. Inhibitors need to be recognized by both the individual and the group for what they are so that something can be done about them. Fullan [1993:28] supports this when he says, 'problems are our friends; but only if we do something about them.' It is knowing what can be done, or at least where to start, which needs to be in place (Turbill, 2002:17).

The literature in the professional development field highlights the complexities of professional development and the difficulties in describing various approaches due to the apparent need to look not only at the model but the beliefs underpinning the approach and the processes and structures in place within the approach. This leads to the issue of evaluation in relation to professional development.

Evaluating Effective Professional Development

While not focusing on evaluation, Crevola and Hill (1998) are explicit in describing the characteristics of effective professional development. The characteristics described are very

similar to those outlined by Hargreaves and Fullan (1991). Crevola and Hill state that professional development programs need to:

- be purposeful in support of specific and important outcomes that have the backing and commitment of the whole school,
- involve the whole staff or a significant proportion of the staff within a school, rather than individual teachers,
- allow time for teachers to reflect upon their practice and share their experiences of teaching with other teachers in their school and other schools,
- introduce teachers to new and challenging understandings that are directly relevant to achieving agreed outcomes,
- be well researched and draw upon the latest professional literature,
- be theoretically based yet emphasise practical situated learning,
- mix both input from outside experts and opportunities for participants to work through issues and engage in learning activities,
- value the knowledge and experiential base of teachers and encourage the contribution of teachers to the learning process by providing opportunities for them to help shape key components of the professional development program,
- be ongoing, with opportunities to try out new ideas and approaches and then to come back and reflect upon the impact of implementing change in the classroom,
- provide opportunities to observe good practice and to be involved in coaching and mentoring processes,
- involve systematic processes for ongoing support and assistance between sessions,
- be structured, well planned and well presented; and
- be conducted in a pleasant environment that puts participants at ease, respects them as professionals and is attentive to their personal requirements (Crevola and Hill, 1998:20).

If this list proved to be the essential elements for effective professional development it may well be useful as a 'checklist' for those organising, providing and evaluating professional development. However, the list presents a challenge to systems and professional developers to include them all, given limited time and budgets.

There needs to be some clarity around the purposes of professional development and if indeed they achieve these purposes. In recent times education systems are being held increasingly accountable and the result is often a move to measure the professional development only by the impact on student outcomes. In reality the purposes include helping teachers keep up to date, introducing current research and methods and ultimately refining teacher practice. This may well result in improved student outcomes in the short and long term but the professional development offered needs to be evaluated on several levels. Sarason (1996) suggests that there is a belief that schools exist for the intellectual and social development of students and argues the important role of teacher learning in achieving student learning:

> …to create and sustain those conditions that enable its faculty to learn, change and grow…[T] he assumption is that if those conditions exist for faculty, it increases the chances that the faculty can create and sustain those conditions for students. In no less than our public school, the teachers have to come to see that if conditions for their growth do not obtain, they cannot create and sustain them for students (Sarason 1996:137).

On a similar theme, Willis (2002) quotes Stigler who argues that teachers need to learn three things to expand their power in the classroom. The first is to learn to analyse practice-both other teachers' practice and their own. The second is the need to expose teachers to alternatives and the third is that teachers need judgement to know when to employ what method.

How effectively the professional development contributes to these or other goals is determined by the evaluation procedures in place. Guskey (2002:45) suggests that little attention has been paid to evaluation of professional development efforts largely because of the time consuming and costly nature of the task. He argues that not only should this evaluation take place but also that there are five critical levels of professional development that should be evaluated. He describes the levels as Participants' Reactions, Participants' Learning, Organization Support and Change, Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills and Student Learning Outcomes.

Bell and Kerr in Kilpatrick (1998:97) refer to Del Grazio's four-level model that demonstrates parallels to Kilpatrick and Guskey's (2002) levels. Kilpatrick (1959,1998) describes a simple four-stage model or taxonomy, which emphasises evaluative criteria. The four steps of Kilpatrick's model are:

1. Reaction. How do learners feel about the speaker, topic, and program? In the business world this is about 'customer satisfaction', in education 'teacher satisfaction'. This is the level most commonly evaluated.
2. Learning. This includes knowledge acquired, skills improved and attitudes changed depending on the aims of the program. Do the teachers show mastery of the skills/strategies taught?
3. Behaviour. This refers to the extent to which participants change on-the job behaviour, that is, 'transfer of training'. Is there indication the teachers are reflecting on practice, continuing their professional reading?
4. Results. In business this refers to the measure of results of the training, such as increased sales or bigger profits. In schools this would relate to the question, do student outcomes increase?

The parallels of these models are demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2 Comparison of models for evaluating professional development

Level	Kilpatrick (1959)	Grazio (1984)	Guskey (2002)
One	Reaction	Happiness	Participants' Reactions
Two	Learning	Learning	Participants' Learning
Three	Behaviour	Practical Application	Organisation Support and Change
Four	Results	Bottom Line	Participants' Use of Knowledge and Skills
Five			Student Learning Outcomes

The similarities highlight the 'levels' referred to in each of the models. Interestingly the most recent research (Guskey 2002) specifically mentions 'Student Learning Outcomes' as a separate category or level to 'participant's use of knowledge and skills'. These factors are included in the final level of the other models. The importance of separating these factors may be of importance.

Brookfield (1986) cites Guba and Lincoln (1981) who declared traditional evaluation approaches to be "bankrupt" and to be "doomed to failure":

> …because they do not begin with the concerns and issues of the actual audiences and because they produce information that, while perhaps statistically significant, does not generate truly worthwhile knowledge. [Guba and Lincoln (1981:ix]. To replace this approach, Guba proposes what he calls naturalistic evaluation. The crucial feature of naturalistic evaluation of facilitation is that it takes into account participants' definitions of key concerns and issues. It seeks to use language and modes of presenting findings that are accessible to those being evaluated (Brookfield, 1986:273).

This links with the model of professional development described by Cambourne and Turbill (1999, Figure 1), where they suggest that there are several layers of teacher change necessary before teacher practice changes and before there can be a change in student learning outcomes. It seems evident that the process is a long one.

Overall the literature indicates some agreement concerning issues of evaluation of professional development. Firstly, that it is presently not done effectively and secondly as to the 'levels' that need to be considered in evaluation of professional development activities.

Teacher Learning and Teacher Change

Research into various aspects of the teacher is vast. This section will review the literature in the areas of teacher learning and teacher change as well as the role of the school leader. Scherer (2002) cites Burney (2001) in regard to teachers and what they viewed as important in their learning in terms of effecting change when he said:

> As long ago as 1945, in a survey by Henry Atwell, educators described what would improve the quality of their teaching. A professional library, a supervisor who acts as a consultant, demonstration lessons, conferences to discuss common problems, visits to outstanding schools, participating in creating school policies, and inservice courses and workshops topped their wish list (Scherer, 2002:5).

Understanding teacher learning is central to this study. If teacher learning is critical to student learning as Fullan (1993) argues, 'teachers must succeed if students are to succeed, and students must succeed if society is to succeed' (Fullan, 1993:46), then the investigation into what enables teacher learning to take place is critical. Further, Routman (1996) suggests that being a professional actually demands that as teachers 'we continue to grow and continually re-examine our beliefs and practices' (Routman, 1996:71).

While the actual professional development model and the school culture may impact on teacher learning, clearly the teacher is an integral factor. Willis (2002) cites Stigler, as she refers to the role of the teacher as critical and goes so far as to suggest we need 'smarter' people in the profession.

> There are three ways to improve the quality of teaching that students experience. One is to improve the applicant pool. You can get better people-smarter people, more charismatic people, more articulate people-to go into teaching. Two, you can try and improve the competence of the people who are in the teaching profession. And, three you can try and improve the methods that teachers use, apart from the teachers who are delivering them (Willis 2002:10).

Willis seems to assume better 'quality' people equals better teaching. She also assumes a high correlation between intelligence and achievement. It may be a more positive approach for systems to consider what they offer the teachers already in their service. For example, to maintain morale and learning, Sarason (1990) cites Levine (1966), who argues:

> From their inception our public schools have never assigned importance to the intellectual, professional and career needs of their personnel. However, as the aims of the schools were articulated, there was never any doubt that schools existed for children. If, as I have asserted, it is virtually impossible to create and sustain over time conditions for productive learning for students when they do not exist for teachers, the benefits sought by educational reform stand little chance of being realized (Sarason 1990:140).

Fullan (1993) supports Sarason and stresses the role of teacher learning when he says:

> It is not obvious to many of those trying to bring about educational reform: you cannot have students as continuous learners and effective collaborators, without teachers having the same characteristics [Sarason, 1990]. This is not a matter of teachers having more enjoyable jobs. It is simply not possible to realize the moral purpose of teaching-making a difference in the lives of students-without similar developments in teachers (Fullan 1993:46).

The question therefore arises, 'whose responsibility is this learning?' It is a simple task to identify various types of teachers from those who take care of their own learning, to those who show no interest at all. Therefore, it might be useful to try to glean some insights by reviewing the characteristics of teacher learning. Treston (2001) refers to the impact of teachers' beliefs on teaching and learning when he states:

> How teachers conduct learning reflects their credo of human nature. The beliefs of teachers provide the wellsprings for the facilitation of teaching and learning (Treston, 2001:6).

Characteristics of Teacher Learning

Professional development takes many forms but one that is fundamental to education is personal reading. Routman (1996) states the importance of a variety professional activities and is strong in her opinion of professional reading:

> Teachers tell me they can't find time to read, I say we must. I could not put my trust in a doctor or lawyer who didn't keep up with current research and practices. It should be no different for us as teachers (Routman, 1996: 172).

Routman is strong in her opinion of the responsibility that teachers must take for this form of learning. 'Taking responsibility', appears to be described in the literature as 'self directed learning'. Brookfield (1986) cites Knowles (1975), by saying:

> In the most commonly cited definition, that of self directed learning, is defined as a process in which individuals take the initiative in designing learning experiences, diagnosing needs, locating resources, and evaluating learning (Brookfield 1986:40).

However, how teachers' needs for learning are met, may well be a shared responsibility. For many teachers it is a complicated process taking care of their own learning and just as complex is the aspect of adult learning in a more formal setting. Brookfield (1986:vii) highlights the complexity of working with adult learners.

> The facilitation of learning-assisting adults to make sense of and act upon the personal, social, occupational, and political environment in which they live-is an important, exhilarating, and profound activity, both for facilitators and learners. It is a highly complex psychosocial drama in which the personalities of the individuals involved, the contextual setting for the educational transaction, and the prevailing political climate crucially affect the nature and form of learning (Brookfield, 1986:vii).

What are the specific needs to be considered in the design of learning for adults? The first use of the word 'andragogy' to refer to the art of teaching adults has been attributed to Knowles (1980) although it had remained undetected in Lindeman's work in the 1920s. Andragogy is described by Knowles (1980), as:

> …simply another model of assumptions about learners to be used alongside the pedagogical model of assumptions (Knowles, 1980:43).

Brookfield (1986) stresses the importance of teaching adults in terms of developing a sense of personal power:

> Developing in adults a sense of their personal power and self-worth is seen as a fundamental purpose of all education and training efforts. Only if such a sense of individual empowerment is realized will adults possess the emotional strength to challenge behaviours, values, and beliefs accepted uncritically by a majority (Brookfield, 1986:283).

Implicit in naming adult learning in this way are certain beliefs, primarily that there are differences between adult and child learning. Knowles (1985) suggests that the differences include the self-direction of adults and that adults have clear purposes and often incentives for learning as well as more experiences to support their learning.

Brookfield (1986) refers to political climate and it could be argued that this adds to the complexity described. It could also begin to explain the variation in the self-direction of teachers as adult learners. One example may be the increasing 'bad press' teachers receive. Teachers feel despondent as headlines such as 'Literacy improves but can do better,' continue to appear. This particular article (Sydney Morning Herald April 7, 2002) reported that 'Reading skills among primary school students are improving on average across the nation.' However, most of the report was critical and did not offer any significant congratulations or encouragement to the work done by teachers. This is one example of the type of reporting that is prevalent, which is well documented by Routman (1996).

Despite the complexities, Brookfield (1986) describes six principles of 'teaching' adults, which he believes, have implications for practice. Brookfield's (1986) principles in summary include the following:

1. Voluntary Participation. With this in place participation will be high because there is a desire to learn and develop new skills.
2. Mutual Respect. Adults need to feel valued and respected so, central to this, is the role of the facilitator in creating a climate for learning where adults can feel comfortable, be challenged and challenge each other. Knowles (1980) describes this as building a group culture.

3. Collaborative Spirit. Collaboration is developed by acknowledging the experiences of adults through some kind of collaborative strategy.
4. Actions and Reflection. This is based on the need to engage the adult learners in a process of exploration and reflection on action followed by further investigation. This notion of 'praxis' as alternating and continuous engagements by teachers and learners in exploration, action and reflection is central to adult learning. 'In education and training of adults, the term praxis is closely associated with the ideas and literacy activities of the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire' (Brookfield 1986:15).
5. Critical Reflection. This aspect introduces the distinction between education and training. Training occurs in a situation where a specific set of skills is required to be learnt. In education the learner has a responsibility to examine the information provided by the facilitator and place it in a broader context. Therefore the value of the learner being critically aware is acknowledged.
6. Self Direction. This factor suggests that facilitators have a role to assist adult learners to become self-directed learners. At the heart of self-direction is the adult getting control of setting educational goals and applying meaningful evaluative criteria.

These principles go some way to explaining the pace of change and sometimes the lack of any change from some teacher learning activities. Perhaps there needs to be more reflection on the design of professional development activities and more consideration given to the role of the learner in this process. Table 3 summarises the principles of facilitation Brookfield (1986) considers essential for adult learning, the andragogical principles described by Knowles (1998) and the model of natural learning described by Cambourne (1988) where he argues that when certain conditions are operative in a learning context then learning will take place.

Table 3 Comparison of factors influencing learning

Cambourne 1988 Principles of Natural Learning	Brookfield 1986 Principles of Facilitation	Knowles 1998 Andragogical Principles
Immersion	Voluntary Participation	The learner's need to know.
Demonstration	Mutual Respect	Self-directed learning.
Expectation	Collaborative Spirit	Prior experiences of the learner.
Responsibility	Action and Reflection	Readiness to learn.
Use	Critical Reflection	Orientation to learning and problem solving.
Approximation	Self Direction	Motivation to learn.
Response		
Engagement		

The similarities of motivation and action occur in all three models. The aspects that may indicate some differences in learning for adults would be the role of prior experiences of the learner and the clarity of purposes for learning. Brookfield (1986) cites Simpson (1980) in regard to this observation:

> …the two distinguishing characteristics of adult learning most frequently advanced by theorists are the adult's autonomy of direction in the act of learning and the use of personal experience as a learning resource (Brookfield, 1986:25).

This is particularly pertinent in the area of education. Generally teachers are successful in what they do. Teachers have a great deal to draw on and therefore one might expect teachers would have very specific purposes for engaging in any professional development. However, it is common for teachers to be forced to participate in professional development activities and this may explain why some teachers 'block' learning when instructed to attend. Brookfield (1986) discusses the role of the facilitator in this process and the desirable attributes of the person assuming the facilitator role:

> Facilitators of learning see themselves as resources for learning, rather than didactic instructors who have all the answers. They stress that they are engaged in a democratic, student-centred enhancement of individuals learning and that responsibility for setting the direction and methods of learning rests as much with the learner as the educator…. Teachers of older adults should allow more time for reflection by learners, and there should be a general atmosphere of flexibility, regard for learners, and openness (Brookfield, 1986:62).

Perhaps more time needs to be given to exploring ways of encouraging self-directed learning through the structure of professional development activities and actual facilitation skills. Teachers often exhibit a dependence on the facilitator but there are exceptions to this and indicators that this is changing. The present research does not delve into this area sufficiently to make judgement as to whether there is a pattern to the change related to factors such as years of teacher experience. However, enthusiasm about learning may be connected to the culture in the school if learning is valued and supported on a day-to-day basis. This does not alleviate the need to explore the nature of professional development offered and in particular the role of the 'facilitator'.

Teacher Change

It could be argued that unless there is some change as a result of the professional development experiences offered to teachers, it has been of little use. Teacher change therefore is an important aspect of the whole teacher learning process. Fullan (1991) makes the following comments about the change process:

> We have accumulated considerable knowledge and insight into the process of change over the past decade. Some of these lessons were not self-evident at the outset, although they make common sense once discovered. The main revelations in this journey include a combination of elements that we usually think of as mutually exclusive or as not operating in the manner that they do. There are four main insights that were not predictable, but have turned out to be important.
>
> 1. active initiation and participation
>
> 2. pressure and support
>
> 3. changes in behaviour and beliefs
>
> 4. the overriding problem of ownership (Fullan, 1991:90).

Fullan goes on to comment on the complexity of reform and how it may begin with a small group of people and build from there. He believes there is a positive role for pressure in change. Fullan (1991) cites peer coaching as an example of an approach that involves pressure and support:

> Successful change projects always include elements of both pressure and support. Pressure without support leads to resistance and alienation; support without pressure leads to drift or waste of resources (Fullan, 1991:91).

Fullan's insights into changes in behaviour and changes in beliefs and understandings are important as he describes them as reciprocal and ongoing which is one of the challenges of professional development. It is also an aspect which may be difficult to evaluate. Fullan (1991) summarises by saying:

> In summary, the broad implications of the implementation process have several interrelated components. The first is that the crux of change involves the development of meaning in relation to a new idea, program, reform, or set of activities. But it is individuals who have to develop new meaning, and these individuals are insignificant parts of a gigantic, loosely organized, complex, messy social system that contains myriad different subjective worlds (Fullan, 1991:92).

Rapid change in many areas in education has forced a shift in beliefs in many schools. It could be argued that the 'business' of schools is more and more focussed on results. This is not to say that this has replaced other purposes of schools as it has not, but schools are becoming more results driven. This view appears in the Catholic Schools Office 2000 Annual Report (2001):

> There is a strong connection between the significant professional development that has occurred in recent years, and improved teaching and learning. Schools have been supported in their work concerning analysis of student performance data, particularly external tests, and the use of this analysis to inform teaching and learning (2001:18).

Sarason (1996:95) presents further complexity by arguing:

> The attempt to introduce a change into the school setting makes at least two assumptions; the change is desirable according to some set of values, and the intended outcomes are clear (Sarason, 1996:95).

The issue of teacher change is complex and from the literature appears to be related to the effectiveness of the professional development undertaken. This study aims to investigate if

there is also a relationship to the school culture. One important aspect of that culture may be related to the school leader.

The School Leader

The role of the principal or the school leader in the change process and in establishing or maintaining the school culture is regularly referred to in the literature (Barth, 1990, 2001, 2002; Goodlad, 2000; Wideen and Andrews, 1987; Beck and Murphy, 1996; Freiberg, 1999; Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2001). Peterson and Deal (1998) state the role of the school leader in relationship to other major stakeholders in the school:

> School Leaders-principals, teachers, and parents-are the key to eliminating toxic culture and building positive culture…[S] trong positive cultures are places with a shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, and a shared commitment to helping students learn (Peterson and Deal 1998:28).

Barth (2002:6) argues the school leader has a specific role in regard to changing the prevailing culture of a school. Whereas, DuFour (2002:12) argues that research has described the primary role of the principal as an instructional leader for more than 30 years and suggests that this focus is flawed. DuFour (2002) argues:

> Principals foster this structural and cultural transformation when they shift their emphasis from helping individual teachers improve instruction to helping teams of teachers achieve the intended outcomes of their schooling. More succinctly, teachers and students benefit when principals function as learning leaders rather than instructional leaders…Educators are gradually redefining the role of the principal from instructional leader with a focus on teaching to leader of a professional community with a focus on learning…By concentrating on learning, today's school leaders shift both their own focus and that of the school community from inputs to outcomes and from intentions to results (DuFour 2002:13-15).

Fullan (2002) and Shaw (2002) argue strongly as to the critical role of leaders in developing relationships:

> The single factor common to successful change is that relationships improve. If relationships improve, schools get better. If relationships stay the same or get worse, ground is lost. Thus, leaders build relationships with diverse people and groups-especially with people who think differently (Fullan, 2002:18).

Shaw (2002) sums up his thoughts on the role of leaders in relation to school improvement:

> I have suggested that successful schools and their leaders need to identify morally compelling purposes that are grounded in the needs of the children in their community and are likely to improve their life chances…Pressure to improve is helpful if it reflects morally compelling purposes and includes substantial support at the local level for all teachers. This is where relationships are so important, as they are in the classroom (Shaw, 2002:12).

Moreover, Shaw (2002) provides advice to school leaders under the six categories listed below:

- Make time for your own professional growth.
- See yourself as a designer.
- Develop the capacity of others.
- Develop the theory and practice of participation.
- Model learning for others.

This research (Shaw, 2002; Fullan, 2002) emphasises the potentially changing role of the leader or principal in the school in influencing student and teacher learning. Such a shift in emphasis would depend on or impact on the existing culture in the school. Fullan (2002) refers to his earlier work (2001) where he describes the principal of the future as the 'Cultural Change Principal'. Such a principal he suggests transforms the school through people and teams:

> The Cultural Change Principal treats students, teachers, parents, and others well. Such a principal also works to develop other leaders in the school to prepare the school to sustain and even advance reform after he or she departs. In short, the Cultural Change Principal displays explicit, deep, comprehensive moral purpose (Fullan 2002:17).

The role of the leader seems to be inextricably linked to the culture of the school and an understanding of the change process and the conditions, which will nurture that change.

School Culture

This section will refer to the research in the area of culture in a broad sense, which will encompass various terms used in the literature including 'school culture', 'school climate', 'organizational culture', 'professional culture' and 'community' in schools.

Researchers in the field present various arguments related to the issue of school culture ranging from the role of the principal in determining the school culture, (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991; Barth, 1990, 2001, 2002; Wideen and Andrews, 1987 and Sarason, 1990), through to the role of relationships and the notion of building community in schools (Sergiovanni, 1994; Peterson and Deal, 1998; DuFour, 2002; Shaw, 2002; Fullan, 2001, 2002). Barth sums up the role of the school culture thus:

> The school's culture dictates, in no uncertain terms, 'the way we do things around here.' A school's culture has more influence on life and learning in the schoolhouse than the president of the country, the state department of education, the superintendent, the school board, or even the principal, teachers, and parents can ever have (Barth, 2002:6).

Sergiovanni (1994) presents a theory of schools as communities in relation to the notion of culture:

> This theory [of community] can help schools become places where relationships are family like, where space and time resemble a neighbourhood, and where a code of values and ideas is shared. This theory, in other words, can help schools become communities by kinship of place and of mind (Sergiovanni, 1994:xvi).

Exploring the various aspects of what researchers say about the school culture may begin to establish the aspects of the school culture with the potential to enable or hinder teacher learning and therefore identify the particular elements of a school culture that will enable teacher learning. Barth (2002) argues that a school culture can work for or against improvement and reform:

> Unless teachers and administrators act to change the culture of a school, all innovations, high standards, and high-stakes tests will have to fit in and around the elements of the culture…To change the culture requires that the instructional leader become aware of the culture, the way things are done here (Barth, 2002:7-8).

Categories of School Culture

Rosenholtz (1989) and Hargreaves (1994) both present 'categories' which may be used to describe culture. Cole and Knowles (2000) cite Rosenholtz and Hargreaves as they describe observable differences in school cultures.

Rosenholtz (1989) describes two distinct observable cultures, 'high consensus' or 'collaborative' schools and 'low consensus' or 'isolated' schools. Hargreaves (1993)

describes four categories, 'fragmented individualism', 'balkanised', 'collaborative' and 'contrived collegiality' (Cole and Knowles, 2000:112-113).

The categories of these researchers summarised in Table 4, broadly describe cultures in schools and will be used as a basis for looking more deeply into the literature available in this area. Summarizing the categories by these two researchers acts as a point of reference while exploring the complexity of the term.

Table 4 Broad categories of school culture

Rosenholtz (1989)	Hargreaves (1993)
High Consensus/Collaborative school. These schools work towards commonly defined, shared goals.	Collaborative In these schools there is a broad agreement on educational values. Shared goals. Teachers work together with sincerity. Support by school administration.
	Contrived Collegiality The pattern of interaction is recently adopted. Teachers work together but without the will and commitment to do so.
Low Consensus/Isolated Schools These schools work towards individual goals, there is no common purpose.	Balkanised Teachers sometimes form groups defined by attitudes, professional goals, subject orientations or personal interests.
	Fragmented Individualism In these schools teachers are private, isolated and conservative. There is a lack of enthusiasm for change.

Alternatively, some of the literature refers to school climate rather than school culture although the definitions have similarities. Freiberg and Stein (1999) state what they perceive to be the value of the school climate:

> A school's climate can define the quality of a school that creates healthy learning places; nurtures children's and parents' dreams and aspirations; stimulates teachers' creativity and enthusiasm, and elevates all of its members (Freiberg and Stein, 1999:11).

Similarly, according to Hoyle (1986) 'climate' is described as a changing condition:

> … climate is essentially concerned with the quality of relationships between pupils, between pupils and teachers, between teachers and between head and teachers…it follows that a school's climate is not a fixed or permanent condition (Hoyle 1986:131).

For the purposes of this study the terms 'culture' and climate' will be taken to mean the same thing, bringing together schools' qualities and relationships as factors which affect the school environment and perhaps teacher learning.

Organizational Culture

At times the literature refers to 'organisation' to describe culture and climate. Halpin and Croft (1982) describe 'organizational' climate:

> The set of internal characteristics that distinguishes one school from another influences the behaviour of people in it is called organizational climate (Halpin and Croft 1982:175).

Schein (1985) examined the culture in organisations and described the cultures as deep, complex and difficult to understand. Schein refers to his and the research of others (Goffman, 1959,1967; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Tagiuri and Litwin, 1968) into culture with the purpose of understanding culture to create more effective organizations. He suggests that organisational cultures as he defines them are highly visible. The concept of culture may be rooted in theories of group dynamics and evolve with new experiences. Schein (1985) argues:

> …the term 'culture' should be reserved for the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and the environment (Schein 1985:6).

Schein (1985) continues by describing various levels of culture. The first level is described as 'artefacts' that he says are the most visible. The second are 'values' where there is a greater level of awareness and thirdly, 'basic assumptions' which are often taken for granted.

The data for this study was collected in Catholic schools. A significant part of the culture in Catholic schools may well be linked to the mission and vision statements that are developed to guide school-based decisions and express certain values. As Dwyer (1993) suggests:

> School community groups and system administrators have long been reflecting on the distinguishing features of an authentic Catholic school. Vision and mission statements that result from such reflection have, as one would expect, a great deal in common. They seem to share a commitment to four basic orientations:
>
> towards evangelism

towards a deep respect for the individual;

towards the building of Christian community;

towards service (Dwyer, 1993:17).

Dwyer (1993) continues to elaborate on the Catholic school drawing on Flynn (1989):

> Each school has its own particular culture which potently expresses what is believed and valued there. Researchers have been increasingly focusing on culture when trying to explain a particular school's distinctiveness and effectiveness.
>
> The leading Catholic research in this field, Brother Marcellin Flynn, of the Australian Catholic University, identifies four dimensions of school culture:
>
> the core beliefs and values of the school-the school's soul;
>
> the traditions of the school-its history;
>
> the symbols of the school-its models;
>
> the patterns of behaviour in the school- its way of life [Flynn, 1989, Faith and Culture: The Culture of Catholic Schools] (Dwyer, 1993:24-25).

In fact many organizations believe in the value of a clearly articulated mission statement. The creation of such a document should involve communication and expert leadership. Covey (1992) says in reference to mission statements:

> Many organizations have a mission statement, but typically people aren't committed to it because they aren't involved in developing it; consequently it's not part of the culture. Culture, by definition, assumes shared vision and values, as represented by a mission statement put together and understood and implemented by all levels of the organization (Covey, 1992:165).

Professional Culture

Johnson and Kardos (2002:14-15) describe three types professional cultures. They describe these as 'Veteran-Oriented Professional Cultures, Novice-Oriented Professional Cultures and Integrated Professional Cultures'. The first describes a culture, which is aimed to serve veteran teachers. These schools had well-established routines and patterns of work. In contrast Novice-Oriented Professional Cultures were places, which were largely staffed by beginning teachers, so they were young and enthusiastic, but received little professional guidance. The third category, Integrated Professional Cultures, clearly catered more efficiently for both

groups of teachers through the encouragement of an ongoing professional exchange. These categories classify the culture in relationship to the type of teacher in the school. The possible influence of the teacher in effecting the culture may be a feature affecting learning communities in schools.

Community and Collegiality in Schools

Senge (1990) argues that organizations for the 1990s must become learning organizations or learning communities. He defines a learning community as 'an organization where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together' (Senge, 1990).

Uchiyama and Wolf (2002) suggest that the responsibility for this is shared by the principal and staff:

> Principals must also create an environment in which teachers collaborate, exchange ideas, and develop tight collegial connections-and in which principals share governance with their staff members [Evans, 1996; Sergiovanni, 1996] (Uchiyama and Wolf, 2002:81).

Moffett (2000:36) suggests that a sense of professional community is more important than any other factor in terms of its effect on student achievement. This notion of a school as a learning community is related to aspects of the culture. In a school which functions as a learning community, the culture would be more likely to be 'developing' because of the adaptive and responsive nature of school of this kind. In drawing on the work of Little (1987) Shaw (2002) describes collegiality as an aspect of building professional communities:

> Collegial work as defined here, demands shared responsibility for the work of teaching, shared responsibility for the learning of each and every child and a relinquishing of the professional privacy and isolation, which for so long has characterized the work of teaching. It requires relationships grounded in openness, curiosity, trust, honesty, equality, care and respect (Shaw, 2002:7).

Having said that Shaw admits that he has found little evidence in recent years of teachers working collegially. Nias (1989) expands the notion of collegiality encompassing shared understandings and relationships:

> Shared understandings and agreed behaviours enable staff in schools where this culture is dominant to trust and learn from one another. The relationships, which they create in the

process, are tough and flexible enough to withstand shocks and uncertainties from within and without. 'Collaborative' staffs tended to be both happy and resilient (Nias 1989:74).

Fullan (1992) presents his thinking in a model (Figure 8) with two major sets of influences on the teacher as a learner. The first are related to classroom improvement and the second to school improvement. It is in the area of school improvement where collegiality and shared purpose are featured. These understandings reflect the comments by Nias (1989). The notion of shared meaning is also a strong feature of Turbill's (1993) model. Shared meaning would be possible with shared purpose and collegiality in place.

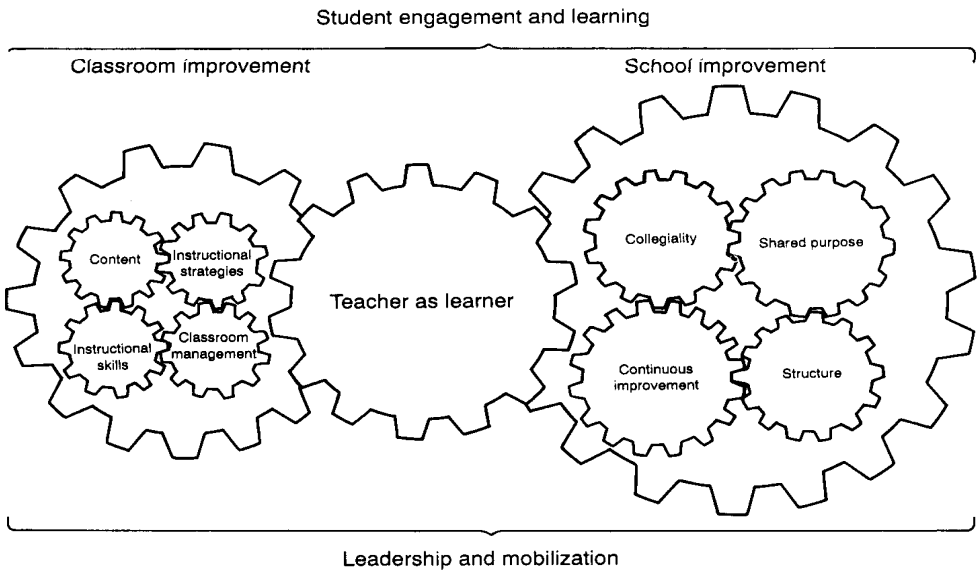

Figure 8 A Comprehensive Framework for Classroom and School Improvement (Fullan, 1992:108)

Although Burney (2002) refers to public schools, his statements may well transfer to schools in general regarding communities:

> In public schools, we need to think about learning communities in ways that deepen teaching and learning—deepen our knowledge of content, of each other as adults, and of our children and their families and communities. Everything we do needs to focus on the core of schooling: how children learn, how teachers teach, what gets taught to whom, and how schools are organized to support teaching and learning…Informed dissent means having the capacity and the will to confront issues without condemning each other as people. It is listening to the voices of the very people with whom we might not agree, and hearing them in deep and powerful ways. It means becoming comfortable with conflict in order to check our perceptions, look at our biases, examine our inferences, and begin to discuss exactly what we observe in classrooms, based on what we know. It means

> discussing our points of view honestly and making our practice public (Burney, 2002:35-36).

Barth (1990:41) also argues that to improve schools from within we must build ‘a community of learners’. Schools need vision to accomplish goals. The role of ‘vision’ is part of the culture. Barth (2001) describes the notion of vision:

> A vision is a kind of moral imagination that gives school people, individually and collectively, the ability to see their school not only as it is but also as they would like it to become... We need to honor learning, participation and cooperation above prescription, production and competition (Barth 2001:196).

He argues that all those who are part of a school culture should see their role as learners first and foremost. Everyone has his/her own agenda but what is common to all, whether that person be a child, a teacher, an administrator, a parent, is that he/she perceives learning to be 'endemic and mutually visible'. This view is strongly supported by Fullan (1993:63).

What then becomes important, according to Barth (1990) is the need to 'discover the conditions that elicit and support human learning and to provide these conditions'. Barth (1990) summarises the concept thus:

> A community of learners seems to work from the assumptions…
>
> - schools have the capacity to improve themselves, if the conditions are right. A major responsibility of those outside the schools is to help provide these conditions for those inside.
> - when the need and purpose is there, when the conditions are right, adults and students alike learn and each energizes and contributes to the learning of the other.
> - what needs to be improved about schools is their culture, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and the nature and quality of learning experiences.
> - school improvement is an effort to determine and provide, from without and within, conditions under which the adults and youngsters who inhabit schools will promote and sustain learning among themselves (Barth, 1990:45).

Barth continues by saying:

> If these assumptions were taken seriously there would be a change in the way those in the school culture perceive each other. The role of relationships between and among people would change. All would begin to value each other for the expertise that each has. But all

> would be perceived as learners, including the principal who still may be viewed as being the leader but a leader who is perceived as being the 'head learner.' Thus the role of relationships would no longer be depicted as hierarchical but interconnected in more a web-like structure (Barth, 1990:46).

Similarly Lambert (2002) argues the role of the principal as learner in developing relationships:

> Today's effective principal constructs a shared vision with members of the school community, convenes the conversations, insists on a student learning focus, evokes and supports leadership in others, models and participates in collaborative practices, helps pose the questions, and facilitates dialogue that addresses the confounding issues of practice. This work requires skill and new understanding; it is much easier to tell or to manage than it is to perform as a collaborative instructional leader (Lambert: 2002:40).

Creating such conditions so that an effective learning culture exists, highlights two issues, namely, the need for an explicit learning theory and an exploration of the role that language plays in this learning. It appears that these two issues are inextricably linked and when understood and put in place may impact on teacher learning. Peterson and Deal (1998) state:

> Strong positive cultures are places with a shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, and a shared commitment to helping students learn (Peterson and Deal, 1998:29).

A synthesis of these findings from the literature could be viewed as follows in Figure 9. The model suggests that culture is affected by a variety of influences that have the potential to be either negative or positive. As a result the culture may change. The factors being influenced by and influencing the culture include the professional development experiences of the staff within and outside the school setting, the principal, the teachers particularly in how they view themselves as learners, the students and to some extent the community. The 'status' of the culture has the potential to have an impact on all of these factors including teacher learning just as these factors may have an influence on the existing culture.

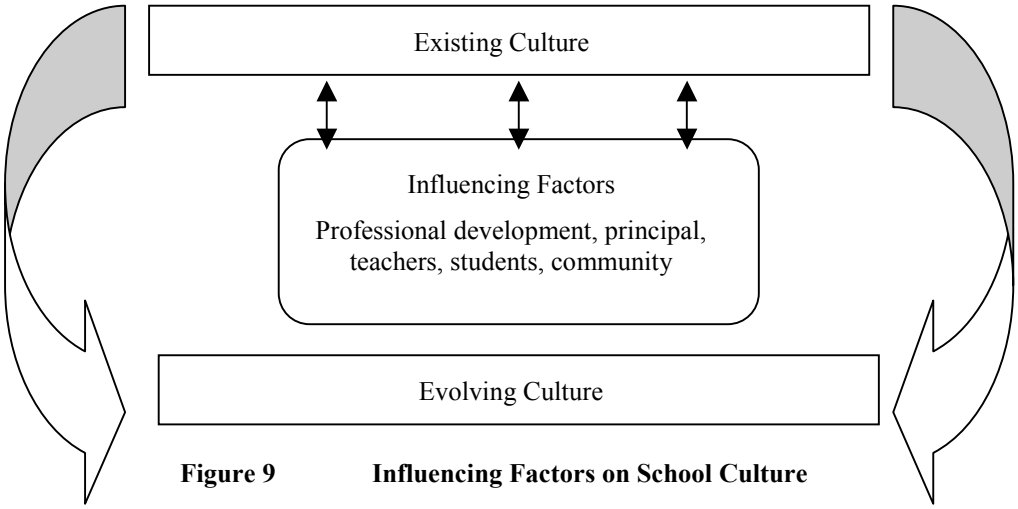

Figure 9 Influencing Factors on School Culture

Conclusion

Turbill (1993) argues the role of language in learning and thus the change process:

> I have suggested that a future staff development agenda needs to be driven by an explicit learning theory; one which focuses on what we know about 'natural learning' and the role that language plays in such learning. I have further suggested that such a learning theory not only inextricably links language and learning but also the concept of change. The cyclic argument goes something like this: the process of change involves learning; the process of learning involves change; the process of learning involves language; the process of change involves language and so on. Thus the nature and process of language, of learning and of change are clearly one and the same thing. All begin within the individual teacher - however individual teachers are elements of a larger supra system called school cultures.
>
> Cultures, I have argued, are social semiotic systems which are in themselves 'an edifice of meanings' (Halliday, 1978). Language, and the way language functions, is one of the social semiotic systems which constitutes the 'supra semiotic system' - the social semiotic culture. Language is the social semiotic that is vital in the supra semiotic system as it also serves as an encoding system for most of the other semiotic systems within the supra social semiotic system (Turbill 1993:54).

I find Turbill's conceptualisation of 'culture' most useful. Like Turbill I agree that language is the pivotal force in the overall process; it is both the meaning maker and meaning encoder; it serves to both construct knowledge, as well as exchange knowledge; it establishes the relationships between and among people within the system and maintains or changes the roles these relationships create. Thus, a more in-depth understanding of language and the nature of language, learning and the nature of learning, would add to what we are beginning to understand about change and the nature of change.

Turbill's (1993) arguments are persuasive and offer a helpful perspective on the issues of change, professional development and culture. I propose that because of the critical role of language in constructing knowledge, establishing relationships and maintaining or changing the roles these relationships create, certain types of cultures exist which can be maintained, developed or fragmented by the way certain things operate. Each of these possibilities could have positive or negative effects. These things then may impact on the culture as a potential learning culture for the teacher.

Peterson and Deal (1998) argue the complexity of this relationship:

> Culture is the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions and rituals that have built up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges. This set of informal expectations and values shape how people think, feel and act in schools. This highly enduring web of influence binds the school together and makes it special. It is up to school leaders-principals, teachers and often parents-to help identify, shape and maintain strong, positive, student-focused cultures. Without these supportive cultures reforms will falter, staff morale and commitment will wither and student learning will slip (Peterson and Deal, 1998:28).

In this chapter I have sought to clarify the major terms related to this study by referring to the literature in the field. In particular the nature of professional development, teacher learning, teacher change and the role of the school leader were investigated to assist in describing the school culture and the role it may have on teacher learning. In order to present a clearer understanding of school culture, the aspects of organizational culture and professional culture were described. This led to a brief description of the role of various relationships within those cultures, particularly the aspect of collegiality.

In the following chapter I will describe the methodology used to investigate the culture in the research schools and its relationship with teacher learning.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to develop a grounded theory of the role that the school culture plays in teacher learning. In order to achieve this purpose the study aimed to observe teachers in the school context and seek their perceptions as to what enables or inhibits their professional learning within the school setting. To this end the study was guided by the following research questions:

- What 'events' and 'processes' within the school setting do the teachers specifically identify as factors that affect the implementation of learning from professional development activities?
- What is the role of the principal and other staff members in the professional learning of teachers in the school setting?
- What is the relationship between school culture and teacher learning?

This chapter aims firstly to outline and justify the methodology chosen to explore the stated purpose of the study. Secondly it will describe the methods used to gather relevant data and finally it will describe the processes used for analysing these data. It is also hoped that the reader will be able to gain an impression of the schools from the encounters described as well as an understanding of how the grounded theory emerged from the analysis of these data. It was vital that the anonymity of the schools be protected. Thus the challenge in writing this chapter has been to provide sufficient information for the reader to get the 'feel' of the school settings experienced by the researcher while at the same time provide information about the data collection procedures and the processes of data analysis that led to the interpretation of the results without destroying the anonymity of the schools.

Methodological Orientation of Study

This study is set within the qualitative research paradigm. This paradigm is also referred to as a 'naturalistic paradigm'. It involves focused observation, recording, analysis and checking for

reliability through the use of credible measures. The following statement by Lincoln and Guba (1985) summarizes the complex nature of this approach:

> Naturalistic inquiry is always carried out, logically enough in a natural setting, since context is so heavily implicated in meaning. Such a contextual inquiry demands a human as instrument, one fully adaptive to the indeterminate situation that will be encountered. The human as instrument builds on his or her tacit knowledge, and uses methods that are appropriate to the humanly implemented inquiry: interviews, observations, document analysis, unobtrusive clues and the like. Once in the field, inquiry takes the form of successive iterations of four elements: purposive sampling, inductive analysis of the data obtained from the sample, development of grounded theory based on the inductive analysis, and projection of next steps in a constantly emergent design. The iterations are repeated as often as necessary until redundancy is achieved, the theory stabilised, and the emergent design fulfilled to the extent possible in view of time and resource constraints (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:187-188).

Likewise, qualitative research, broadly defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) refers to any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. In the case of this study, qualitative methods were chosen to gain new perspectives on an area about which much is already known. It sought to describe what was observed rather than explain. Patton (1990) describes the value of the inquiry paradigm of research chosen for this study:

> …[A] naturalistic research paradigm which advocated more ‘qualitative’ and naturalistic approaches to inductively and holistically understand human experiences in content-specific settings was better than a ‘logical-positivist paradigm which used quantitative and experimental methods to test hypothetical-deductive generalisations (Patton, 1990:37).

Within the broad qualitative or naturalistic paradigm there are many methodologies. Rather than align with one methodology or another it seemed that Patton's notion of a 'paradigm of choices' was more pragmatic. Patton argues that 'a paradigm of choices’ rejects methodological orthodoxy in favour of *methodological appropriateness* as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality' (Patton, 1990:39). The issue then became 'whether one has made sensible method decisions given the purpose of the inquiry, the questions being investigated, and the resources available' (ibid).

To this end it seemed that a mix of phenomenological and ethnographic methods would be most appropriate in order to achieve the purpose of this study. A phenomenological approach was selected as an appropriate mode to attempt to understand the meaning of events observed

and the interactions of the teachers. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) describe the origins of this mode of research:

> Phenomenological sociology has been particularly influenced by the philosophers Edmund Husserl and Alfred Schutz. It is located within Weberian tradition, which emphasizes "verstehen" the interpretive understanding of human interaction. Phenonenologists do not assume they know what things mean to the people they are studying [Douglas, 1976] (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992:34).

Within the 'naturalistic paradigm' methodology I employed, I made use of ethnographic and phenomenological data collection procedures. The latter were used in an attempt to understand teachers' perceptions through their surveys and interviews, the former through observations and field notes taken from simply 'being there' as a member of the school setting. It was through the mix of these two approaches that I attempted to construct an enquiry that would best illuminate the research questions and thus achieve the purpose of this study.

Phenomenological inquiry involves the gathering of 'deep' information through qualitative methods such as participant observation and interviews. Lester (1999) describes this approach:

> Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasise the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such they are powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter for taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom…Phenomenological research has overlaps with other essentially qualitative approaches including ethnography, hermeneutics and symbolic interactionism' (Lester, 1999:1).

It was considered important to employ these methods in this study to attempt to better understand the nexus between school culture, teacher learning and student learning at the classroom level. For access to such data there needed to be a focus on ethnographic data collecting methods, namely observations and field notes of the culture and society in which the teacher/student interact and the classroom and the culture and society in which the teacher/teacher/student interact.

Understanding how teacher learning is translated into practice and ultimately into student learning can best be achieved by employing an ethnographic methodology. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) describe ethnography as:

> The attempt to describe the of aspects of culture is called *ethnography*…Geertz borrowed the term "thick description" from the philosopher Gilbert Ryle to describe the task of ethnography (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992:38).

Therefore the data collection methods were resource intensive requiring me to be a participant observer over prolonged periods spending time in one place observing and talking to the members of the classroom and school society. Such practice allowed for a 'thick description' of each setting to be developed.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) describe five features of qualitative research as they define it. They qualify this finding by acknowledging that not all qualitative studies exhibit all five features equally but their categories help in summarising the degree to which this study utilised the features of qualitative research. The features are described below with a brief description of how these features were represented in this study.

1. Qualitative research has a natural setting as a direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.

   In this study the natural setting was the school and the staff of the school and this setting was the direct source of data. A major part of the study was the time spent on-site in order to gain an understanding of the participants in the study. The study was concerned with culture and the investigative processes were therefore constructed in order that the culture could be observed in the setting in which it occurred.

2. Qualitative research is descriptive.

   This feature relates to the methods of collecting data which in this study was done through recording what was said and observed. The 'descriptive' nature of the data in this study came from interviews, transcripts, written surveys, field notes and a reflective journal. Throughout the analysis of the data every effort was made to maintain the richness of the data collected. The qualitative approach allows for the observation of those things which may have otherwise been taken for granted in that there were aspects of behaviour or communication which could best only be observed. This included such things as the 'tone' of communication within the setting. I was able to observe various communications and responses and entered the schools with the presumption that everything was important. The result was rich, descriptive data.

3. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply outcomes or products.

   This feature was of particular importance in this study. There was no product that was envisaged to emerge from the study. Rather the study rested on a set of questions investigated through a variety of procedures. The emphasis on process is particularly useful in educational research due to the nature of learning itself, the variety of procedures in place in any educational setting and the nature of interactions occurring throughout the day.

4. Qualitative researchers tend to analyse their data inductively.

   The analysis of data went through many phases before any interpretations could be drawn. This was because of the range of data collected and the fact that no data was collected to disprove or prove anything. I did not embark on the study with a set of hypothesis that needed to be proved or disproved. Rather the data were gathered, grouped in a variety of ways and interpreted. So the grounded theory that began to develop in this study emerged from the bottom up, that is, from bringing together seemingly disparate pieces of information to form new understandings. I found myself constructing a picture that came together from the examination and re-examination of the various forms of data collected. As described, the process of data analysis became more specific as the process developed.

5. Meaning is an essential concern to the qualitative approach.

   Bogdan and Biklen (1992) suggest, 'qualitative researchers are concerned with what are called *participant perspectives* [Erickson, 1986; see Dobbert, 1982, for a slightly different view]'. I was concerned with accuracy and employed a variety of strategies to ensure this. In particular, data were collected through a variety of means to allow for triangulation. Throughout the collection of the data there was a constant dialogue with participants in the study.

In embracing these understandings I gained entry into the schools and interacted with the participants in order to understand the meanings teachers constructed through their interactions. My goal was to '…share in the meanings that the cultural participants take for granted and then to depict the new understanding for the reader and the outsiders' (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992:39). To this end surveys and interviews were used to gain information about

teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of professional development enterprises; the perceived impact that these have had on their understandings and beliefs about teaching and learning, and the reported changes in classroom practice that have occurred.

Locus of Study

Three Catholic primary schools in the Broken Bay Diocese became the sites for the collection of data. Forty-five teachers and three principals became the main participants in the study. A secondary source of data was gathered from four personnel from the Catholic Schools Office.

The schools were selected through purposive sampling involving senior staff from the Catholic Schools Office. These schools were regularly visited during a five-month period from August to December 2001 with return visits in 2002 during the data analysis.

The Research Process In Action

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) refer to the research of Glaser (1978) where he recounts the steps in the constant comparative method of developing grounded theory as follows:

> Begin collecting data.
>
> Look for key issues, recurrent events or activities in the data that become categories of focus.
>
> Collect data that provide many incidents of the categories of focus with an eye to seeing diversity of the dimensions under the categories.
>
> Write about the categories you are exploring, attempting to describe and account for all the incidents you have in your data while continually searching for new incidents.
>
> Work with the data and emerging model to discover basic social processes and relationships.
>
> Engage in sampling, coding, and writing as the analysis focuses on core strategies (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992:74).

My data collection encompassed the steps described above. The process was complex and recursive although it appears to be a series of steps in the explanation below. The phases are represented in Figure 10.

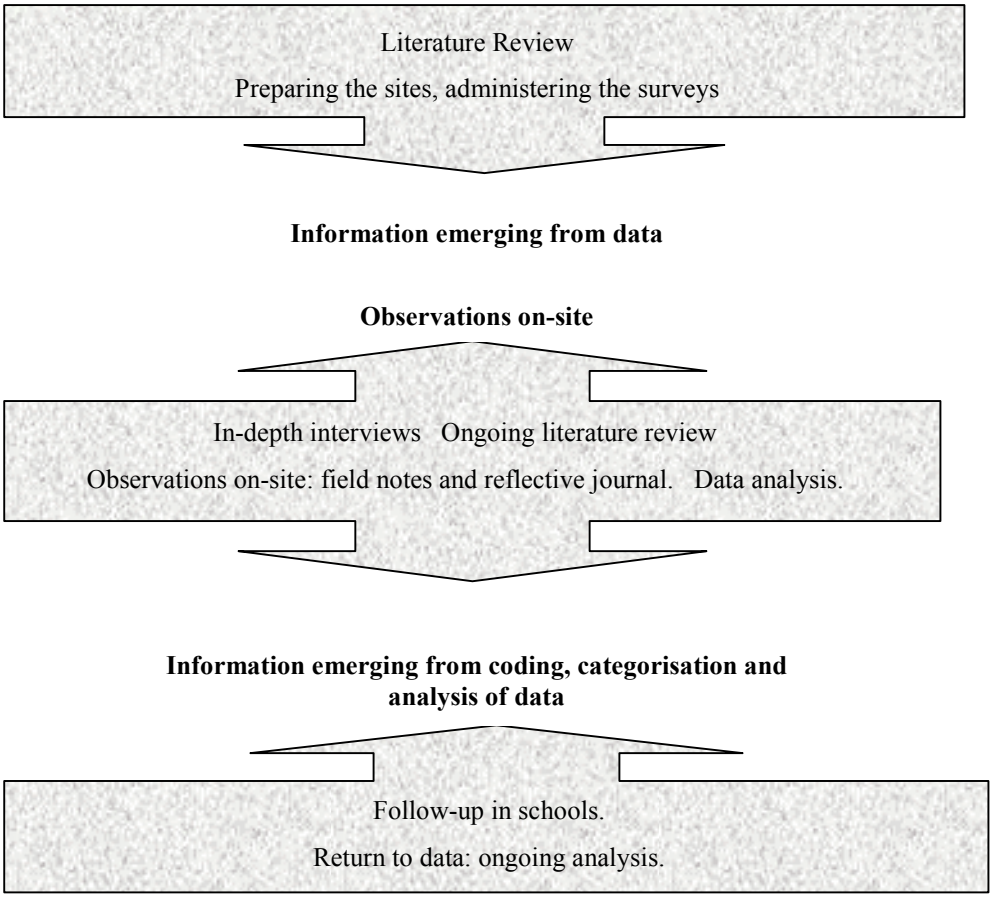

Figure 10 Schematic Representation of the Data Collection Process

These phases will be described in detail in the following section.

Phase 1. Preparing the Ground

- Conduct an extensive literature review in the field.
- Summarise all existing research data and findings from previous projects.
- Clarify the research question and develop a clear and 'teacher friendly' proposal for teachers and administrators in the research sites so they can understand the project and its intended outcomes.
- With the support of the Industry Partner (Catholic Schools Office), select schools to be involved in the study.
- Gain approval from the ethics committee.

Entry into the schools was recognised as a critical first stage of the process. Because of the diocese being a 'partner' in the project the process of gaining access was simplified. At the time of the application for the original SPIRT grant, Doherty (1998) then Head of Curriculum Services made a commitment to the project:

> The Early Learning project has been a major focus within the Diocese from 1996-1999. It aims to provide 'quality, focused professional development' in literacy for all its K-3 teachers. In order to understand how the professional development of teachers impacts on the changes in classroom practice and hence increased student learning, the Diocese is committed to being involved in 'research, review and planning.'
>
> It is this interface that both parties are keen to research. For the Diocese they are keen to develop a knowledge base that will further inform the ongoing professional development of its teachers; will support the schools and teachers as they continue to develop curriculum that 'best meets the needs of all students.' (Doherty, 1998).

In 2001, the schools were selected by purposive sampling by CSO officers. Consideration was given to selecting schools representative of size, socio economic status, and student population. Senior officers also considered the present involvement of schools in other projects, the commitment of principals and staff to various projects in the diocese and therefore only short-listed those schools which they considered were in a position of taking on another commitment. In other words they did not put forward the names of schools that they believed were already committed elsewhere. Four schools were proposed by senior office personal. All four were approached and three accepted. My field notes show:

> Principal immediately agreed and set a date for a staff meeting. She said it was important and set a date immediately. She stated that she was confident staff would be ready to voice their opinions. Field notes July 24, 2001:School B
>
> Principal was delighted to be approached and would speak to the executive and get back to me. She stated that when she received the letter from the Diocese explaining the research she would call and make a date for the meeting. Field notes July 24, 2001: School C
>
> Principal said she was delighted and would love to be involved. She offered to call back the following week and make a date for a staff meeting after she had spoken to the staff. She said she would be surprised if the staff were not interested. The principal expressed a personal interest in the topic of the research. Field notes July 24, 2001:School A

Following the verbal acceptance and subsequently confirmation in the form of a letter (Appendix A) from the Catholic Schools Office regarding involvement, a staff briefing was organised in each of the schools. An outline of the research project and proposed process was

presented at a staff meeting including a detailed account of the ethics involved as stipulated by the University of Wollongong. The information was provided verbally and a summary provided in writing. All respondents to the survey signed consent forms (Appendix B).

In gaining entry to the schools, I aimed at all times to be flexible. I was friendly, discreet and aimed to blend in to the school. Trust was evident from the beginning and continued to develop.

Phase 2. Preparing the Sites

- Meet with each school staff and explain the project outlining involvement of teachers and executive.
- Explain the ethical procedures that will be in place.
- Set up suitable dates for school and classroom visits.
- Set up interviews with key people in the Diocese including Senior Education Officer Primary Curriculum, Education Officer-Literacy and Consultants.
- Administer the survey in research schools.

The ethnographic approach required the data gathering to be systematically collected and recursively analysed, which made the process a time consuming but interesting experience. Cole and Knowles (2000) comment on the process as a collaborative and cooperative one. I presented the time I would spend in schools as an ethnographic study, telling participants that I would spend time 'being there'. Participation was voluntary and the agreement involved doing a survey and volunteering at a later date to be interviewed.

My usual time in schools as a consultant is scheduled and very busy. Being an 'observer' felt like I was not working and I was anxious not to 'get in the way' of the day-to-day school business. I was sensitive to the enormous demands made on teachers, principals and schools in general. I had done a lot of consultancy work in School C, which had advantages and disadvantages. There was already some trust developed with the staff and certainly with the executive, but that felt shaken for a short time while I settled into my new role.

I had not worked in School A for many years but knew some of the staff from previous visits and professional development activities in the Diocese. Since previous visits to the school a new principal had been appointed. Interestingly, I felt most at ease here. The principal was keen to talk, show me work in progress and to ask my opinion of developing ideas. She was keenly interested in the research and in learning in general. The staff at School A was welcoming and very friendly.

I had worked in School B for a couple of days earlier in the year funded by the Catholic Schools Office. On those occasions my work was restricted to specific staff members. Initially I felt uneasy at this school and felt some staff were not keen to be involved. I made a mental note to stay away from some staff members in the early stages and met with and chatted with the more open members of the staff while I established my presence in the school. The process of establishing relationships is a complex one as Cole and Knowles (2000) describes:

> ... because relationships were central to my research efforts, the ethics of procedures, methods, analysis, and writing were foremost in my mind ...I not only engaged in ongoing discourse about the ethics and procedures of research in order to safeguard the teachers and the authenticity of the research but I also engaged in self-reflections. I inquired into who I was as a researcher and teacher educator and my positions on issues relating to field of research, literacy education (Cole and Knowles 2000:196).

Stenhouse (1983) also describes the complexities of this form of research, which proved to be similar to my encounters in the schools:

> Some things became important in understanding each of the schools, although the schools were so different. The organization structures in the school, the people (personal histories, particularly past experiences in the school) who worked there and the history of the school. The interaction which took place and the people involved in the interactions (Stenhouse, 1983:12).

It was these understandings that I took with me into the data gathering stage of the study. The three schools studied showcased a variety of elements, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. However, in the early stages, the aspects of the school cultures, which seemed to make a positive impact included those where there was reflection and inquiry, where there was a shared commitment to improving student outcomes, where there was regular analysis of student achievement and where the school goals were linked to student achievement.

Phase 3. Data Collection

- Administer survey.
- Begin organising data to observe emerging themes.
- Visit the selected schools for a minimum of 10 full days per site taking observational notes.
- Return to schools and conduct interviews.

The data collection methods included:

- observations in the form of field notes
- teacher and principal surveys
- collection of artefacts relating to the school organisation
- teacher and principal interviews
- CSO personnel interviews
- researcher's reflective journal.

The success of the data collection depended to some extent on the development of a good level of rapport with the participants in the research schools. Data were collected in the form of surveys and participant and non-participant observation in classrooms and at staff meetings. Semi structured interviews were taped and transcribed and various artefacts collected and studied. Field notes were gathered though observations on-site, spontaneous discussions and documents. The processes were determined to some extent as the study proceeded as Winter (2000) explains:

> Unlike quantitative research, there are no standardised or accepted tests within qualitative research and often the nature of the investigation is determined and adapted by the research itself (Winter, 2000:4).

The process was recursive involving the returning to the data and the literature as well as the participants in the study. In regard to the validity of this approach, Winter (2000) argues:

> The traditional criteria for 'validity' find their roots in a positivist tradition, and to an extent, positivism has been defined by and bolstered along by a systematic theory of 'validity'. …Qualitative research, arising out of the post-positivist rejection of a single, static or objective truth, has concerned itself with the meanings and personal experience of

> individuals, groups and sub-cultures. 'Reality' in qualitative research is concerned with the negotiation of 'truths' through a series of subjective accounts. Whereas quantitative researchers attempt to dissociate themselves as much as possible from the research process, qualitative researchers have come to embrace their involvement and role within the research. For quantitative researchers this involvement would greatly reduce the validity of a test, yet for qualitative researchers denying one's role within the research also threatens the validity of the research (Winter, 2000:4).

Field Notes

Field notes were taken during and after time on-site in each of the schools. On average one to two days per week were spent in each of the schools between August and December. Kell (1999) comments about the length of time spent in the field:

> The length of time a researcher spends in the field depends on a number of factors, including the nature of the study, time and budgetary constraints and the ability of the researcher to maintain continuous access to the research setting. The amount of time also has implications for the trustworthiness of the study (Kell, 1999:3).

It was necessary to be flexible in order to observe a variety of activities throughout the time on-site and to be sensitive to the daily demands and routines. Discussions took place with participants throughout the day, most often informally and occasionally by appointment. I also attended a range of school functions including swimming school, the end of year concert at School A, an end of year sports challenge between students and teachers at School C as well as assemblies and staff meetings. In all schools I had limited contact with parents.

After returning from each observation, interview, or other research session, I would record what happened. These notes included descriptions of people, objects, events, activities, and conversations. In addition, as part of the field notes, I recorded ideas, questions, reflections, and hunches, as well as noting any patterns that began to emerge. Bogdan and Biklen define field notes as:

> … the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992:107).

Therefore, as suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) my field notes contained personal reflections, quotations from people and impressions of my time on-site. I took particular care with my journal that it was with me at all times due to the nature of my reflections and notes in

general. Mostly the notes were taken at the end of the day and never in front of subjects. Sometimes notes were made on-site when I was alone, in the car outside the school before leaving or at home. Often a great deal of reflection took place in the car on the way home.

Most sessions lasted for a full day, and occasionally part of a day. On some occasions I attended the school on request of the principal or a teacher for special events. On one occasion I joined several staff for coffee after school by invitation. All these occasions occurred towards the end of the data collection and it seemed important to attend events where I was invited. It was impossible to record everything that occurred in a whole day observation but insights were gained by simply being present. Stenhouse (1973) argues:

> Culture is a product of social interaction…It is by taking part in the communication system of a group that one learns about the culture (Stenhouse, 1973:8).

I aimed to be part of that social interaction in order to glean insights from the communications occurring. My field notes were descriptive and were often used to describe the 'feel' of the school while trying to be conscious of avoiding evaluative comments. However the notes often included a sentence or paragraph of a reflective nature. Often there were also questions or thoughts, jotted down to reflect on at another time. Primarily the field notes provided portraits of the subjects, a description of the setting and at times reconstruction of dialogue. In this case my descriptions were general and the focus was on relationships and interactions rather than individuals.

There were times when I quoted subjects in my notes in regard to informal conversations we had or conversations observed between staff members. While this information appeared in my field notes and informed my interpretation of data it does not appear anywhere in this study in the form of direct quotes in the description of data. I needed to be vigilant in considering the request for anonymity and where I believed comments would reveal the identity of a person or a school, the information was used only to guide my interpretation of other data collected.

Either in the field notes or my journal I would note how I felt in various situations. All aspects of the field notes contained descriptive material and some reflection. At times I speculated on what I was learning, made links to what I had read and often recorded questions with the purpose of focussing my thinking on a particular point at another time. Reflections were

ongoing as I began the process of analysing the data collected and from the beginning of data collection there was reflection on method. See Appendix H for sample field notes.

The Survey

All staff from the three schools were asked to complete the survey. (Appendix D). In Schools A and B, the staff elected to complete the survey in staff meeting time, School C chose to complete it in their own time. In School A one teacher out of 10 chose to complete the survey at home and did not return it. In School B all the surveys distributed were returned. School C teachers completed the surveys in their own time and only one was not returned to me from the full time permanent staff members. Several from part time or specialist members of staff were not returned, however they attended the briefing and were aware of the research and the reason for my presence in the school. The principal at School C gave regular reminders to teachers to take the time to complete the survey. All teachers participating completed a consent form, which appears in Appendix B.

Interviews

The final question on the survey asked the respondents if they were willing to be interviewed. The response was so high that in Schools B and C, the executive selected teachers to take part. One day was allocated in each school for interviews. All schools found it difficult to set a day aside given various commitments within and outside the school.

In School A all respondents except one indicated they were willing to be interviewed and they were included in the process. Two were not willing to be interviewed in School B and three from School C. In Schools A and B the teachers taking part in the interviews were selected from respondents who had indicated they were willing to be interviewed. The selection process was based on trying to ensure a range of experience of participants. To keep the project manageable and in response to the difficulties experienced by schools to set time aside, six teachers were interviewed from School A, seven teachers were interviewed from School B, and seven from School C. The principals from all three schools participated as well as four senior officers from CSO. Before beginning each person was assured that what was said in the interview would be treated confidentially and written permission was gained to record the conversation. All interviewees completed a consent form. (Appendix C).

I prepared questions for my semi-structured interviews but modelled the interview on a conversation. (See Appendix E for questions used to guide the interviews). Even so I cannot totally eliminate the possible effect that my presence may have had. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) describe the interview, thus:

> An interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes involving more [Morgan, 1988] that is directed by one in order to get information from another. In the hands of the qualitative researcher, the interview takes on a shape of its own [Burgess, 1984:101-121] (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992: 96).

In this research, interviews were used in conjunction with participant observation, surveys and document analysis. They were used to gather descriptive data in the subject's own words to help me to interpret the other data collected. 'On the run' interviews also provided data and these conversations were recorded as field notes while the question driven semi-structured interviews were recorded. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) comment on the form the interview takes:

> Qualitative interviews vary in the degree to which they are structured. Some interviews, although relatively open-ended, are focused around particular topics or may be guided by some general question [Merton and Kendall, 1946]. Even when an interview guide is employed, qualitative interviews offer the interviewer considerable latitude to pursue a range of topics and offer the subject a chance to shape the content of the interview (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992:97).

In this case 'latitude' was offered to the interviewees. The interviews were not 'controlled' and often by letting the subjects talk, several of the areas planned through the questions were covered naturally in the conversation. The semi-structured interview was used to ensure comparable data were collected across subjects. Not all the subjects were equally articulate so the questions provided an opportunity to probe and encourage subjects to share their opinions and perceptions. The questions served as a stimulus for conversation.

Respondents were asked if they minded the use of a tape recorder and were given an explanation of how the recordings would be used. They were assured that they would not be made available to any other person and would be coded and used solely for the research being undertaken. It was not essential the tape be used, however all subjects agreed to its use. Two teachers from School B requested the tape to be turned off at several points during the interview.

Initially, in addition to the tape recording some notes were taken during the interviews. For many of the respondents, the action of me writing appeared to be distracting whereas the tape was not. For that reason, once this observation was made, few notes were taken.

In consultation with the school executive, we timetabled approximately 45 minutes for each interview. This was a school decision made in terms of releasing teachers and the potential disruption to teaching and learning. I was satisfied with the decision and believed the time would provide enough information without giving the subject a feeling of being rushed. It was also realistic in terms of the time required to transcribe and analyse the information. My equipment was high quality designed specifically for interviews resulting in high quality recordings.

I knew all of the teachers in varying degrees before the interviews took place and most prior to the commencement of on-site observation. For this reason the conversation style structured by a series of questions was appropriate. Very little time was needed to establish rapport and the participants were fully informed of the parameters of the research and the ethics involved.

A casual teacher (provided by Catholic Schools Office) was used to release the teachers from class for this part of the research. In all cases the subjects spoke freely and honestly and appeared very willing to give their opinions and thoughts on the questions proposed. This was also true of the principals, however in the case of two of the principals it was difficult to plan an uninterrupted time and the interview was rushed, requiring me to return to the school for short follow-up sessions.

Official Documents

A small range of documents was collected from the schools and the Catholic Schools Office. In particular the school vision and mission statements were of interest and any documentation regarding professional development of teachers. These materials were readily available and provided willingly, again with the understanding of maintaining each school's anonymity. See extracts in Appendix F.

Phase 4. Data Analysis

- Engage in coding, analysing and categorising data.
- Use contrastive-comparative interactive methods to analyse the surveys, field notes and interviews from teachers from each site as well as any key system personnel.
- Undertake a further analysis of the multiple realities of the data from each site until there is a joint construction of the realities, and a case report that represents a sophisticated level of consensus of these realities.
- Reflect on the process.

One problem with qualitative research is the quantity of data that is generated through the processes described above including field notes, surveys, interviews and documents. Initially the data were broadly grouped to identify emerging themes to begin the process. In the first phase of analysis the surveys were coded and mined for themes. These themes influenced the development of the interview questions in order to probe the respondents more deeply to check the interpretation of the survey data.

Initially the interviews were transcribed and no evaluation took place. Once the transcription was complete the information was categorized within schools and subsequently across schools. At this stage of the analysis I also referred to my field notes.

In the next phase all the collected information was synthesised into emerging categories. To begin the process I listed all the data I had collected and the purposes for collecting these data. (Appendix G). This helped me to catalogue the data for easy access and to form a plan for the data analysis.

I decided to begin with the data collected from the surveys, continually checking my field notes as I worked. I then moved to a more deliberate search through my field notes and journal entries based on emerging themes from the first wave of analysis. Finally I went to the interview data previously transcribed and continued the process.

Throughout the process the emerging hypotheses were continually being grounded back into the data as themes and categories were being identified and checked against further data. I

began to read and reread the interviews and survey data, constantly referring back to my questions and guiding questions.

Using highlighter pens and post it notes, emerging categories were flagged and I began to reorganize the data on the computer. The process continued, fine tuning initial decisions as I continued to work though the data and connect the pieces together. I constantly represented my findings by sketching models that helped me to reflect on what I was finding. At this stage, I found I was identifying broad categories or themes described by Lincoln and Guba when they explain this process (1985:341). I also referred back to the literature review findings and continued to read in areas emerging from the data. For example, it was not my original intention to refer to specific professional development activities but two began to emerge as being particularly important to the respondents. Another theme that emerged was the role of the principal as a key influence in the school culture. The third seemed to be something to do with the 'history' of the school.

Where statements made on the interview transcriptions were unclear I went back to the tapes and where necessary back to the respondents to check for meaning. This process was simple, as good relationships had been built while in the schools. Phases 3 and 4, the data collection and analysis can be represented in the following model (Figure 11).

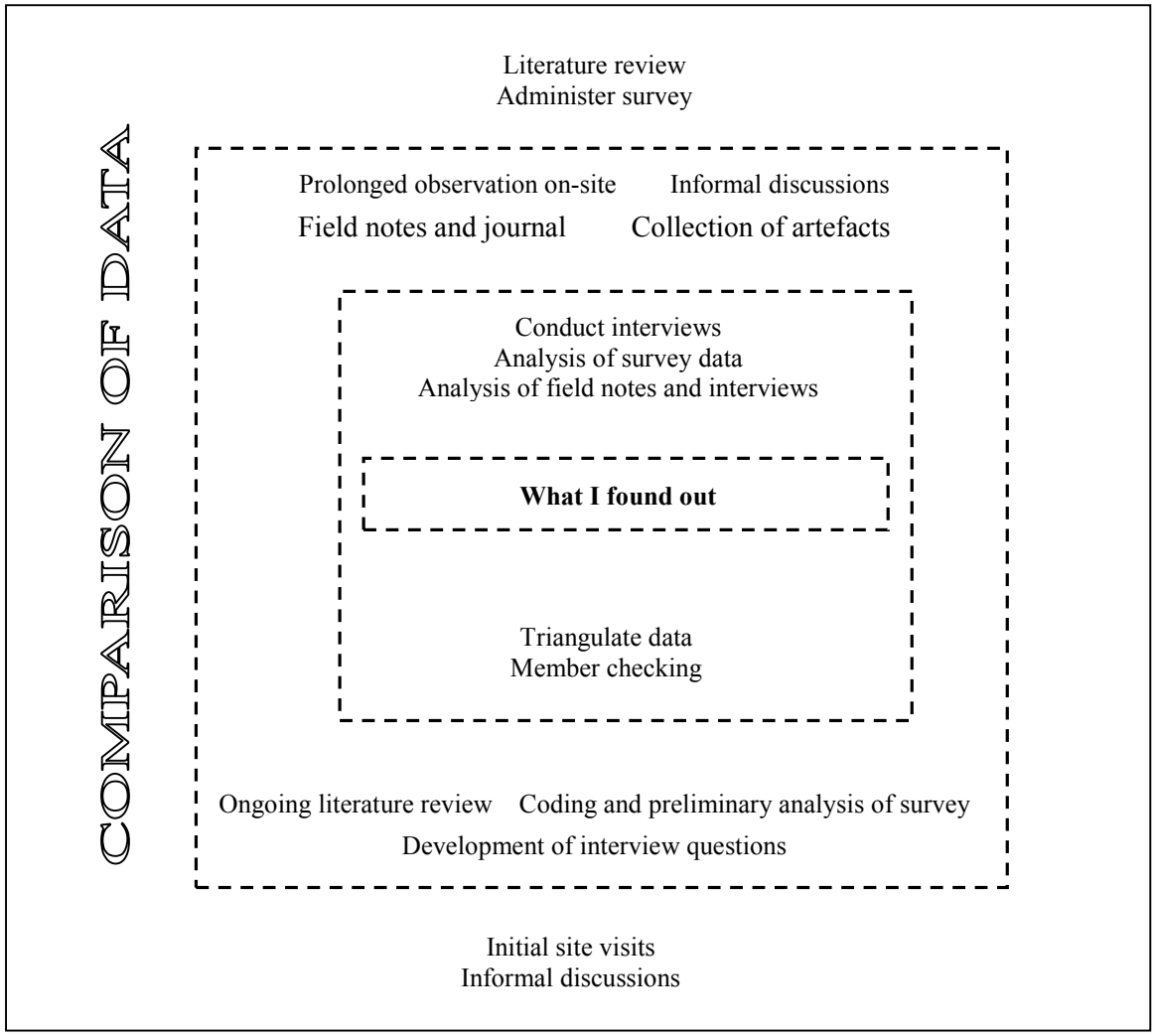

Figure 11 Representation of Data Collection and Analysis

Developing a Grounded Theory

The data collected were analysed using the 'constant comparative' method (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:339) evolving into a grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss developed grounded theory in 1967. More recently, Glaser describes 'grounded theory' as 'a general methodology of analysis linked to data collection that uses a systematically applied set of methods to generate an inductive theory about a substantive area' (Glaser, 1992:16). Similarly, Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that grounded theory is a method, which can be used to develop a theory and to ground that theory in systematically analysed data.

In order to understand what was happening in the research schools I used the methods of observation, conversation and the slightly more formal methods of survey and interview. In

keeping with this qualitative method, I did not start with a hypothesis. The comparison of data began in the early stages of data collection and was ongoing. As the data was compared, a theory emerged which continued to be compared to the data and developed. There was constant comparison through coding first the surveys and then the interviews, which also required returning to the literature. This constant comparison helped make sense of the data and to describe the theory implicit in the data.

Patton (1990) argues that the issue of credibility when using qualitative methods centres on three interrelated elements: rigorous techniques and methods, the credibility of the researcher, and the philosophical belief in the interpretive paradigm and qualitative methods. He asserts that all three are critical. With these elements in place, the data provided the evidence for theories to be generated throughout the process and with the help of the interpretative procedures described, moved towards the development of a grounded theory explained in Chapter 5.

Trustworthiness of Data Collection and Analysis

Lincoln and Guba (1985) nominated criteria for appraising the trustworthiness of a study. Kell (1999) cites Lincoln and Guba when she argues:

> These criteria refer to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirm ability of the study. Of these criteria, credibility is associated to some extent with the researcher's ability to maintain access to the field. Lincoln and Guba suggest that the credibility of the study is heightened by prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation, triangulation of data, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and member checking of participants' constructions (Kell, 1999:3).

To better understand the relationship between teacher learning and school culture it was necessary to engage in these processes to unpack several complex concepts, human experiences and behaviours within a number of contexts. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the process:

> [T] he methodology of the constructivist is very different from the conventional inquirer …[it] is iterative, interactive, hermeneutic and at times intuitive and certainly open … [I] t makes demands of its own so heavy that anxiety and fatigue are the constructivist's most constant companions. It is a different path, one strewn with boulders, but one that leads to an extravagant and hitherto virtually unappreciated rose garden (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:183).

It was accepted that the researcher in an ethnographic study is not an impartial observer, nor the school community indifferent to the fact they are being studied; so various processes were put in place to ensure validity of data collected and the trustworthiness of the conclusions drawn from that data. The observance of school culture can be difficult to do while remaining completely neutral, however, opinions of the culture were not only based on the researcher's prolonged observation but on the opinions of the staff and executive in the research schools. Checking with head office personnel who spend a great deal of time in the schools further triangulated these data. In Chapter 4 the complex culture in each of the schools will be revealed through a description of the data, in addition to the relationships that exist as part of that culture.

Conclusion

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) refer to the changes in behaviour of the people studied as 'observer' effect. They suggest that asking people to sit down and fill out a survey changes their behaviour. Asking opinions informally or formally might create an opinion. I tried to interact in a natural way and this was made relatively simple because I was known in the schools. I took an interest in the day-to-day running of the school, helped out and participated in various activities. This approach helped me to 'blend in'. By the time the taped interviews took place I felt as if I was in a place of trust and felt confident the teachers were frank and honest in their responses. There was a great deal of trust that I would maintain their anonymity.

In my experience of working in schools I have often asked questions and engaged in inquiries and have arrived at some conclusions. The difference in this case was that my primary duty was the research. I was not at the school for any other purpose and could therefore devote my full attention and energy to being 'on-site'. The other difference was the records I kept. On this occasion I had no stake in what might emerge. Subjectivity is often a concern of qualitative researchers (Le Compte, 1987) but the methods used helped me to guard against this. The lengthy collection and review of the data often held surprises based on what I might have expected. I worked actively against allowing my expectations to influence results by the use of detailed field notes including reflections on my own subjectivity.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

While the overall aim of this study is to explore the relationship between school culture and teacher learning, the specific purpose of this chapter is to describe the data collected and the themes emerging from that data. The interpretation of these data will be presented in Chapter 5. As such, what is described in this chapter is the cumulative result of the aims, rationale and theoretical orientation described in Chapter 1, the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, and the methods of data collection and analysis described in Chapter 3.

These data were collected from three study sites in the Broken Bay Diocese over a five-month period. Survey data were provided from 45 respondents and interview data collected from 19 teachers and three principals. These respondents were invited to express their views on the relationships between school culture and teacher learning through a series of questions presented in the form of a survey and interview. These data were used to identify the roles, which the principal and other staff members played in promoting the transfer of learning from professional development to teacher learning and classroom practice. In addition, data were collected in the form of field notes resulting from prolonged observation on-site.

As a result of the first analytic cut of these data (see Chapter 3), certain themes relating to teacher learning and the impact of school culture, emerged. These themes are listed below, and will be used as the basis of the grounded theory developed in the following chapter.

- Theme One: Teacher and School Demographics
- Theme Two: Professional Development and Teacher Learning
- Theme Three: Choice of Professional Development Model
- Theme Four: Inhibitors & Enablers of Teacher Learning
- Theme Five: Teacher Learning & School Culture

Theme One: Teacher and School Demographics

The schools participating in the study were in the Broken Bay Diocese, New South Wales. A description of the diocese can be found in Chapter 1. While the teachers and principals were willing to participate in the study they chose to remain anonymous. Accordingly the study sites will be referred to as Schools A, B and C.

General Demographic Parameters #1

Teachers and principals were asked to supply some broad demographic details including class taught, present position and years of teaching. A summary of these data showing the general features of the schools involved is shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Summary of general demographic parameters in 2001

General Demographic Parameters #1	School A	School B	School C
Length of appointment of principal in current school.	2	4.5	2
Number of teaching staff	10	24	32
Number of pupils	183	392	567
Range of years of teaching: staff	1-30	1-33	2-30
Mean years of teaching: staff	14	16.1	16.5

The table shows that School B's principal had been in her position for more than twice the time than that of the principals of the other two schools. The mean length of experience, and the range was roughly similar across the respondents from each school. With respect to size however, the schools were distinctly different. School C was significantly larger than the other schools with School A being the smallest.

General Demographic Parameters #2: Teaching Duties

The distribution of stages taught by respondents in each school is shown in Table 6. The term 'Stage' refers to the organization of curriculum used in NSW schools. Early Stage One refers to the first year of school, which is Kindergarten. Stage One refers to Years I and 2. Stage 2 encompasses Years 3 and 4 and Stage 3 Years 5 and 6.

Table 6 Distribution of stages taught by survey respondents at each site.

Stage	School A	School B	School C
Early Stage 1	1	2	3
Stage 1	4	4	3
Stage 2	2	4	3
Stage 3	1	4	4
K-6 (Library, ESL, RFF)	1	4	2
No class	1	1	1
Total of teachers completing survey	**10**	**19**	**16**

Table 6 shows that while teachers from each of the stages were represented in the sample of respondents across the three school sites, they were not distributed in proportion to school size, with school B having a higher degree of representation than the largest school. It is also of interest to note that each of the schools had part-time and specialist staff completing the survey including teachers of English as a second language, relief from face to face teachers and teacher librarians.

General Demographic Parameters #3: Gender Distribution of Respondents

The distribution of gender of respondents is shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Distribution of respondents by gender across the schools.

Gender	School A	School B	School C
Male	0	4	1
Female	10	15	15
Total	**10**	**19**	**16**

Table 7 shows that in the three schools, the majority of teachers were female. All three principals at the study sites were female. While this seems to be unbalanced it is representative of the teaching culture in Broken Bay. For example, at the time of the study, out of a total of 36 primary principals in the systemic schools in Broken Bay Diocese, 26 were female.

General Demographic Parameters #4: Summary of Observations Recorded in Field notes

In addition to survey and interview data, observational data in the form of field notes were also collected. Table 8 summarises these data by school site. The data in Table 8 is intended to offer impressions based on prolonged observation on-site.

Table 8 Summary of observations recorded in field notes

School A	School B	School C
• Small staff. • School presents as cohesive. • Relaxed and friendly. • Lots of staffroom talk. Some professional talk. • Relationships positive between staff, support people and children. • Principal open and available. • Emphasis on principal supporting staff through resources, practical documentation and classroom support. The support is based on the belief that teachers are busy. • Children appear happy and play well together. • Community involvement in the form of canteen, parent forums, play practices.	• Large staff. • Welcoming. •Undertones of tension between some staff. • Slightly formal approach to some things, for example, staff meeting. • Use of intercom to rooms for messages. • Children appear happy and play well together in a small playground. • Range of staff eg some very welcoming and polite but some prefer to be left alone. • Awareness of union rules and issues. • Sense of most people keeping to themselves. • Rooms attractive, positive learning environment and learning valued. • Sense of 'satisfaction' from several staff with what they are doing.	• Large staff. • Presents as busy. • Staff relationships appear positive with lots of discussion and laughter in the staffroom. Some groups have formed such as the younger members, however this does not present as exclusive. • Executive are very visible, available, approachable, relaxed and friendly. •Relaxed atmosphere despite beginning of a building program. •Children friendly, polite and happy. • Intercom used to communicate messages into rooms. • Supportive environment. • Teacher support in terms of resources. • Professional development highly valued by executive.

While these data are not intended to be comparative, some interesting differences emerge. While some of the observations may be possible indicators of differences in school culture, their significance for this study (if any) is difficult to ascertain at this stage of the analysis. Is school size a factor in teacher learning? Does the nature and quality of staff room talk play a role in teacher learning? Is a "busy" school more supportive of teacher learning than a "cohesive" school? The answers to these and other questions may emerge in the analysis.

General Demographic Parameters #5: Teacher Perceptions Of Selves As Literacy Teachers & Learners

Further insight regarding the teachers completing the survey can be gained from their responses to Question 4 and 4.2. Question 4 asked: *How confident do you feel as a literacy teacher? Please tick.*

Not confident	*OK*	*Very confident*

In responding to this question, the teachers were generally positive regarding their ability. The response from all teachers indicated they approached professional development and their teaching in relation to literacy positively. 40% in School A; 36.2% in School B; and 50% in School C felt 'very confident' about themselves as literacy teachers. The respondents created the category OK/Very confident, possibly because they did not feel 'very confident' in all areas of literacy. One teacher from School A nominated 'Not confident'. This teacher had 6 years teaching experience and had just done *The Primary Literacy Course*. Also one teacher from School B nominated 'Not confident'. This teacher had 3 months teaching experience and had not attended any courses. Table 9 summarises the responses to this question by school site.

Table 9 Teacher perceptions of selves as literacy teachers and learners

Category	**% School A**	**% School B**	**% School C**
Not Confident	10.0	5.2	0.0
OK	30.0	36.8	31.2
OK/Very Confident	20.0	15.7	6.2
Very Confident	40.0	36.2	50.0
No Comment	0.0	5.2	12.5

Theme Two: Professional Development and Teacher Learning

This section reports the data collected related to professional development activities experienced by the respondents. Question 4.2 asked respondents: *How do you best learn?*

While the question was open ended, in general teachers responded to this question with reference to how they learn at formally organised professional development courses. None of the responses specifically referred to learning outside of an organised professional development activity. The factors nominated by respondents are summarised in Table 10.

Professional Development and Teacher Learning #1: Preferred Learning Styles of Respondents

Table 10 Preferred learning styles nominated by respondents.

Factor nominated	Percentage
Combination: lecture, group work, reading	46.0
Hands on/practical	20.0
Visual and rote	11.4
Other/no comment	11.4
Working in teams	8.8
Lecture	2.2

While a range of factors was nominated, the combination of lecture, group work and reading was by far the most popular type of learning. It was preferred more than twice as often and the next most favoured option (hands on/practical). These two categories alone accounted for more than two thirds of the total number of preferred options. Lecture was by far the least most favoured option while teamwork was the second least popular. Any significance of the figures for the other two categories (visual/rote and other/no comment) is not apparent at this stage of the analysis.

Professional Development and Teacher Learning #2: Frequency & Popularity of Past Professional Development

Survey questions 1 and 1.1 asked respondents to identify the literacy professional development they had completed recently (in the last 5 years) and to judge which they found the most successful. Table 11 presents a summary of the courses most attended and the teacher rating asked for in Question 1.1.

Table 11 Frequency and popularity of past professional development

Course Nominated	'Most successful' rating
Frameworks	24.5%
Primary Literacy Course	24.5%
Other	20.0%
No course nominated	17.7%
Observation Survey	13.3%

In the last five years in Broken Bay Diocese there have been two major courses, *Frameworks* (1997-1999) and the *Primary Literacy Course* (2000-2002). In addition some smaller courses have taken place, the one most often mentioned being the training to administer the *Observation Survey.*

The responses revealed that very few teachers had done both of the major courses. Where either *Primary Literacy Course* or *Frameworks* had been attended it was equally nominated as the course that had had the most positive impact. Both of these courses outpolled the Observation Survey course by almost 2:1 The high percentage of "Other" and "No course nominated" responses while at first glance is puzzling, can be explained as an artefact of the level of experience or status of the respondent. For example at the time of the survey, beginning teachers would have had few opportunities to have attended any formally organised professional development. Furthermore, in some instances respondents nominated neither of their recent professional development experiences as being successful. It should also be noted that none of the three principals had attended any literacy courses. The 'Other' category included a range of courses such as Leadership or English as a Second Language courses attended in other dioceses.

In order to clarify some of these details a breakdown of the teachers attending these courses in each school was carried out. Table 12 shows the details of this breakdown.

Table 12 Breakdown as number of respondents from each school attending the major literacy courses

Course	School A	School B	School C
Primary Literacy Course	3	4	4
Frameworks	4	5	6
Number not attending either course	3	10	6
Total number of teachers	**10**	**19**	**16**

In proportional terms it seems that in the larger schools there were a greater number of teachers who had not attended either course. This should not be interpreted as an indirect measure of professional "keen-ness" but rather it is an artefact of the way professional development is funded and supported in the Broken Bay Diocese. Typically when courses are funded by the Catholic Schools Office funding can restrict the number of places offered. Places are offered on the basis of one or two places per school. Therefore, these figures are most likely the result of these kinds of systemic factors including funding and staff changes.

Professional Development and Teacher Learning #3: Perceived Criteria of 'Successful Professional Development'

Question 1.2 aimed to probe the question of 'a successful course' by asking*: What were the highlights of this course for you?* Table 13 presents a summary of respondents' responses.

Table 13 Summary of teacher descriptors of course highlights

Course	Course highlights nominated	% of total responses
Primary Literacy Course	Strategies	22.5
	Sharing	10.0
	Learning partner	5.0
	Presenters	5.0
	Follow-up	2.5
Frameworks	Time to share	15.0
	Length of course	15.0
	Practical	12.5
	Presenters	5.0
	Follow-up	2.5

Teachers from the three schools made similar comments about the major courses they nominated. When referring to *Frameworks* the time to share and the length of the course were the most important. When reference was made to the *Primary Literacy Course* the strategies were the most popular aspect of the course. Teachers saw both courses as positive and were enthusiastic about the changes they had made.

Question 2 asked: *List 2 or 3 things that you think make a professional development course good or useful.* The responses to this more general question are organised into the categories that emerged. Table 14 lists the percentage of participant responses nominating each factor, accompanied by a comment as to how the factor nominated was represented in the course. All respondents nominated several factors.

Table 14 Factors nominated by respondents that make professional development 'good' or 'useful'

Factor nominated in survey	Percentage: All respondents	Comment re factor nominated: Frameworks	Comment re factor nominated: The Primary Literacy Course
Practical content	57.7	Very practical. Some theory, discussion leading to practice.	Very practical. More focus on specific strategies.
Sharing	31.1	Significant time for sharing in pairs, small groups, whole group.	Some time for sharing in pairs, small groups, whole group.
Presenters	31.1	Co-presenters	Co-presenters
Relevance	31.1	Current content.	Current content. Linked to the English K-6 Syllabus.
Follow-up	17.7	Half or full day follow-up by one of the facilitators in classroom for every teacher attending.	3 or 4 days follow-up in schools selected by CSO. No formal contact with schools not selected.
Course structure	11.1	5 consecutive days. 8.30-5.00pm. Whole day follow-up later in year. Structure of each session involved input, activity, sharing, reflection. Principals involved on Day 5.	4 days. 9.00-4.00pm. First 2 days consecutive. The 2 other days spaced. After school session follow-up later in year. Structure of each session varied. No time built in for reflection. Learning partners and between schools visits built into the course. No principal involvement at course.
Well targeted audience	8.8	Early years target. Years K-3	Years 3-6 target.
Resources	8.8	Books from a variety of companies on display over the 5 days.	Limited resources on display during each of the sessions.

When asked what made the nominated course 'good 'or 'useful', teachers from across the 3 schools nominated factors such as sharing time, relevance and practicality of content, the quality of presenters, course structure and the availability of resources. Practicality of content was by far the most important. Course structure and resources were the least important. Comments made in the last two columns are based on researcher familiarity with both courses and are included to indicate the general format of each of the courses.

Teacher comments made during the interviews provide more detail into the opinions expressed regarding particular professional development courses. The transcripts provided below represent the range of responses. Comments are included from the three schools on each of the major courses. Both teachers from School A are extremely enthusiastic concerning their learning, the two teachers from School B are enthusiastic about certain changes they made and the teachers from School C are generally positive about both courses. The majority of the teachers quoted nominated themselves as very confident as teachers of literacy.

School A: Teacher comments on nominated courses

> I did Frameworks not Primary Literacy Course. It was fantastic, as I had moved from primary to Year 2. It opened my mind. It came at the perfect time. I put quality time into things. I wasn't getting value before. I went with a friend who had been team teaching with me so while we were different it was great to go with her. Frameworks came at the most opportune time and got me so excited about teaching infants. The time out was brilliant. The cooperative groups etc made you think and it was so practical. Having the time to sit back and think about getting the best for the children was good. I still use many of the strategies to this day. (InterviewA5) (Nominated self as 'very confident' as a literacy teacher in the survey).

> I did the Primary Literacy Course last year. I had been teaching 13 years. 5th year here. The course heavily impacted on me. The 2 things were critical literacy and Reciprocal Teaching. It was great to get that 'oomph'. It gives you motivation to make changes. I made big changes in Spelling and saw changes straight away. The emphasis on the explicit literacy time was important. (Interview A10) (Nominated self as 'very confident' as a literacy teacher in the survey).

School B: Teacher comments on nominated courses

> Frameworks. I came back and tried things, had a break, tried some more things. It changed the way I looked at the children and changed the way I looked at myself. It was the time frame-the 5 days were very important because I did not have to come straight back to school. When I went home I had time to think about it instead of worrying about school. I had never reflected at such a deep level before. I had reflected but not that deeply. The

> timing of the course was right for me, a time when I had some literacy questions. Some courses you do not reflect because you are too busy and too rushed. I still use some of the material. It taught me how to make the connections. I like the model of Frameworks where you are treated as a professional. Having the readings and so forth. The time is very important. (Interview B12) (Nominated self as 'OK' as a literacy teacher in the survey).
>
> Primary Literacy Course. I made changes in Reciprocal Teaching, which I had done as a whole class. In small groups I can see more clearly what the children are doing. The way proofreading was done and doing my own. It would be good to come back together later and share what has been successful. Also there were only 2 of us who did it so it's hard to get the dialogue going, it would be good if more could do it. (Interview B19) (Nominated self as 'very confident' as a literacy teacher in the survey).

School C: Teacher comments on nominated courses

> Frameworks. The main thing is it was very affirming. It was quite a while ago. I have not had a Literacy focus in PD since then. There was a lot of time to talk, which was good. The week block was good. A day is rushed. Having 5 consecutive days rather than a day here and a day there gives you a chance to think. You are not rushing back to school to get things organised. The long days I don't even remember now. (Interview C3) (Nominated self as 'very confident' as a literacy teacher in the survey).
>
> 3rd year here. Primary Literacy Course. It was my first course as a teacher. I did not know about Reciprocal Teaching and Reader's Circle so that was new. I use those strategies every day and I am going to change my literacy block but it's really hard to fit everything in. (Interview C14) (Nominated self as 'very confident' as a literacy teacher in the survey).

Professional Development and Teacher Learning #4: Perceived Criteria of Unsuccessful Professional Development

Question 2.1 asked respondents to articulate why a course is not useful by asking: What was the least useful course you attended over the last 5 years? List the things that made it ineffective.

The responses to this question were too disparate to analyse. No course was selected more than once and the range of courses mentioned spread across all areas of the curriculum. The reasons were just as varied with teachers commenting on the lack of follow-up, unrealistic expectations, lack of relevance, poor presenters plus some personal responses.

However, when teachers were asked to comment in the interview as to the appropriateness of the professional development offered by the Catholic Schools Office, there was considerable

variation in responses across the three schools. Table 15 lists the respondents' opinions as to the relevance of professional development offered by the Catholic Schools Office.

Table 15 Relevance of professional development offered by Catholic Schools Office

	Course relevance	Course not relevant
School A	100.0%	0.0%
School B	16.6%	83.3%
School C	50.0%	50.0%

The teachers from School A were the most positive. During observations on-site, it was noted the principal of School A commented on the value she placed on professional development activities. She demonstrated this belief by ensuring teachers never attended courses alone. If one place is offered by the system she funds another participant. She explained this action by saying, 'more learning takes place if teachers have someone to talk to during and after the course'. The teachers from School B were least satisfied with 83% indicating they believed what was offered was irrelevant while the respondents from School C were split with 50% finding the courses relevant and 50% finding what was offered irrelevant.

During the interview, teachers were asked, *If you could make one suggestion to CSO regarding professional development what would it be?* Responses varied including, 'more follow-up', 'survey to assess needs', 'listen to teachers', 'more hands on', 'more of it', 'more opportunities to visit other schools', 'refresher courses', 'follow-up to revisit course content.'

Again the comments were insufficient to draw conclusions, however, the category of follow-up was mentioned most often. Respondents expressed a need to 'revisit' their learning in some way. They saw this as occurring as structured course follow-up provided by the system. None of the teachers interviewed articulated that they saw this need being met in the school setting. The comments from the teachers that follow reflect the feelings expressed in regard to the professional development offered by the system.

Teacher comments:

> It doesn't seem to be systematic enough. Most teachers do not feel any sense of a big plan. (Interview C12)

> There needs to be more of it. I am searching for things outside because it's not there. I would love to get back together for a Frameworks follow-up. Get rid of the model where only one or two on staff go and have to share with others. It just doesn't work. I don't like that model. (Interview B12)

> Sometimes when you go to an inservice and get that motivation you need follow-up. Either meeting together 6 months down the track or someone coming to your school to follow-up. Someone from CSO came to the school to follow-up for several days. The Kindergarten course worked by going to see other classrooms and teachers. You get heaps of ideas. The other thing is that unless you have the support of the principal and they know what it is, nothing happens. We had that here. (Interview A10)

Professional Development and Teacher Learning #5: Desire to Change Teaching of Literacy

Question 4.1 asked teachers: *Do you wish to change your teaching of literacy? If so what would you like to learn more about? If not why not?* Responses to this question were very specific. Respondents mentioned specific changes such as text types, use of technology, writing, integration, reading, new strategies, special needs, ESL, managing time, K-2 literacy. Three said they would like to learn 'anything'. All of these responses have been grouped as 'specific change' in Table 16.

Table 16 Teacher comment on changing the teaching of literacy

Factor nominated	% School A	% School B	% School C
No change but develop	20.0	15.7	18.7
No change	0.0	26.3	6.2
Specific change	80.0	52.6	62.5
No comment	0.0	5.2	12.5

The changes nominated by respondents varied greatly. Perhaps this can be interpreted as 'development' in the eyes of the teachers. Teachers from School A appear to indicate by their responses that they view development of skills or knowledge as ongoing. In contrast the 26% of the respondents from School B indicated they would make no change at all. Teachers from all schools mentioned a specific change they wished to make, the highest result being 80% from School A and the lowest 52.6% from School B.

Theme Three: Choice of Professional Development Model and Content.

Teachers were asked: *What future professional development opportunities would you like to be made available?*

When teachers were asked to consider future professional development their responses varied. This is not surprising given that decisions regarding 'formal' professional development are generally made by CSO. A range of topics were mentioned, including literacy in general, refresher courses, listening and talking, writing/text types, assessment and evaluation, support in class, access to university courses, organization and management, visiting schools and within school inservice. All the topics listed referred to 'courses', except for support in class (1 respondent), visiting schools (2 respondents) in school inservice (2 respondents) and university courses (3 respondents).

Choice of Professional Development Model #1: Criteria for Selection

At the time of this study, personnel in the Catholic Schools Office select, design and implement the majority of professional development activities. Sarason (1996) comments on the relationship between school culture and the role of 'the centre for professional development', in this case the Catholic Schools Office. With the potential role of the system in mind, similar questions to those used in schools were used to obtain the opinions of key officers, including the Senior Education Officer Primary, Education Officer Literacy and two of the School Consultants.

Interview question 2 asked: *What criteria are used to select PD*? During the data collection, the researcher was made aware that in the last five years there appears to have been a commitment by CSO to providing substantial professional development in the Diocese in the area of literacy, evidenced by five years of major initiatives. During the last five years there have been office staff changes, that appear to correspond with changes in approach to professional development. The CSO personnel interviewed expressed a range of responses to the question regarding criteria used to select professional development activities. The use of student data emerged as a consistent factor across the four interviews. This may relate to funding arrangements, particularly from the Federal government, which requires increasing accountability. The same theoretical underpinning as to beliefs about literacy has remained constant over the last five years. The changes appear to be related more to models of delivery,

for example the shift from five successive days to four spaced days and the more recent shift from ‘a course’ to an in-school model.

Interviewees D1 and D2 comment on what they perceive to be the inclusiveness of the process and the use of ‘data’ to inform the changes instigated. D3 acknowledges the range of opinions amongst those making the decisions and D4 suggests that the consultation that takes place is not as thorough as it could be.

> We have a new PD committee. The reason for the committee is to have some statement about what we believe about PD which informs our offerings as a system, which moves the focus from system responsibility for PD to something that there is a tri -responsibility for: system, school and teacher. That PD isn’t just what CSO offers. Statement of principles is being done now. This has informed the offerings for next year…We have been informed by data. Trend data has informed where the needs are. The review process is revealing trends. And what we hear from principals and AP’s. There has been an intentional move from packages or programs. (Interview D1)

> We have looked at data collection such as the collecting of Observation Survey data, lowest 20%. There has also been consultation with the school consultants. This year we have moved towards a school based model that has come from professional reading and the experience of the diocese with lighthouse schools and the belief that whole school professional development is where it is at. (Interview D2)

> The new model was decided by the consultants with the leadership team. There is a split opinion about what PD is. Some still believe, in the sheep dip treatment-bring them in and give them a dose and send them home. While there is a need for that information type gathering it is not professional development. In primary we are more successful in more consolidated programs where it is a mix of expectations etc. The key is who the principal sends. The way the literacy course has run has paid dividends in a number of schools. That’s what we are aiming for but we haven’t got there. I was involved with the PD committee. After mixed success it was declared with the committee’s support that it was a defunct committee and needed to be restructured with some clearer terms of reference and some criteria for next year. It is on hold for next year. (Interview D3)

> I guess …I put a lot of trust in people. There is some continuation of initiatives started. A lot of it stems from committee recommendation too. Usually it’s a cycle of 2-3 years. We canvass schools and Basic Skills results also inform. I do think we put up the canvass and ask but I have to be honest and say I don’t think most of them know. We don’t do enough long term planning. We often step on a lot of corns because although we might have the intention right and even the priorities we haven’t taken the troops with us sometimes. And that is true this year. There is some angst against the CSO generally, not really PD. (Interview D4)

The comments indicate an awareness of the officers for a need for consistency, further evidenced by the formation of a committee. The Professional Development committee produced a draft policy statement (2001) describing a rational for professional development:

> Professional development in the Broken Bay Diocese Catholic School System is based on a belief that all members of the school community are valued and have a capacity to grow to wholeness. Ultimately the success of professional development is determined by the degree to which it improves student outcomes and school and system needs. Professional development may include Training, Development and Renewal.
>
> *Training* emphasizes building individuals' skills in order to meet the requirement of their roles.
>
> *Development* emphasizes building authentic Catholic communities to find meaning and fulfillment as they discern authentic pathways that align vision and action.
>
> *Renewal* emphasizes building a learning community that encourages reflection and engagement in conversation and discourse. (Draft, 2001)

The committee was disbanded after several months with the intention of reformation in 2002 based on a change in committee structure. As there seemed to be some confusion around this committee, interview question 5 sought clarification concerning policy and asked*: Is there a policy document in CSO regarding Professional Development?* Responses from those interviewed indicate a lack of information concerning this committee.

> No, but there is one being done, a committee has been initiated to do that. (Interview D2)
>
> A committee has made an attempt and are producing a draft document. (Interview D3)

A Professional Development Policy was subsequently identified in the artefacts collected. The committee was formed in 2001 to review and develop the existing policy. An attempt was made to draft a 'Belief/Rationale that Underpins a System's Approach to Professional Development'. This emerged as a result of a Leadership Team Meeting, June 2001, and was followed by consultation with principals at a meeting the following month. Several draft 'position statements' were presented to the committee by committee members before the group was disbanded.

Choice of Professional Development Model #2 Decision Making Responsibility for Professional Development.

Interview question 2 probed further by asking teachers and officers: *What if any decisions about professional development made centrally would be best made at the school level? Reverse?*

Some differences in decision-making responsibility appear to exist in relation to the perceived head office role, evidenced by teacher comments and the comments from officers. Comments from both groups are summarised in Table 17.

Table 17 Comparison of teacher comments and Catholic Schools Officer comments

Teacher comments	Officer comments
Office should oversee. They have to budget.	System should lead and serve.
CSO should seek more feedback from schools, teachers and principals in a variety of forms.	Office is in a better position to make decisions (more information).
Should ask teachers what they need.	Can use trend data for diocese (not available to schools).
Local initiatives are good.	Should be a partnership.
More collaboration.	Schools receive 15 days provided they have a plan.
Teachers should make decisions about their development.	Local agendas should determine PD.

The comments indicate there is some agreement concerning the role of the office in providing professional development activities, although respondents in schools 'feel' they should be consulted more. None of the teachers comment on the use of 15 days funded by CSO to every school (provided they have a plan) to use for professional development activities within the school. The actual comments from the interviewees indicate the range of issues being considered by office personnel including improving communication, responding to local issues and the role of leaders in the process.

Comments from Catholic Schools Office personnel:

> There are probably better ways that we could listen to schools and have our decisions informed by schools. (Interview D1)

> There is a balance between what the system is offering and what the schools can do. (Interview D2)

> That is a good question because consultants have tried to get schools to shape their PD based on an analysis of their own needs. We have given then 15 days to do that and support them in their key focus. I am disappointed about the quality of submissions we get around that. I think though it is improving. (Interview D3)

> There are sometimes local agendas like on the Peninsula. They are doing some things themselves. As a principal I never had a problem doing what I wanted to do. I think it's the way people perceive things. They are always waiting for CSO. A lot of it is an excuse because they are not educational leaders. (Interview D4)

Finally those interviewed from the office were asked*: If you could make one change/suggestion about PD in CSO-what would it be?* The following quotes present the range of opinions offered by the various officers. When teachers were asked this question the response was also varied. Teachers suggested 'more follow-up, a survey to assess needs, listen to teachers, more hands on, more of it, more opportunities to visit schools, refresher courses and follow-up to revisit course content'. Catholic Schools Officers seem to agree more autonomy should be given to schools but express some reservations based on the readiness of schools to assume this role and the need for improvement of some internal structures.

> I think we are moving towards the change. I think what we are proposing for next year is moving towards what I feel it should be. Ultimately developing the skills in schools. However expertise in literacy does not necessarily mean the person has facilitating skills. I would like to see schools taking more responsibility. To have a PD plan. There should be dialogue beyond the school. It's a mix. We probably don't have the expertise in the schools we would like. There is a difference between pedagogy and andragogy. (Interview D1)

> I believe in giving schools greater control over the resources and the support to develop quality proposals so it really addresses needs. (Interview D3)

> I guess we need to have stronger conversation and links with Ed Services. Closer communication and closer networking and tighter role definitions are needed. There has to be some sort of timeline that pulls us together. Our structures are bad. Out intentions are usually right. (Interview D4)

Theme Four: Inhibitors and Enablers of Teacher Learning

In the survey, Question 3.1 asked teachers to list the things that happened in their school which they thought supported their implementation of some of the teaching strategies, organisational procedures, learning activities, etc, which their nominated course recommended. Respondents from the three schools nominated a number of categories including principal support, staff support, resources and in-school follow-up which they

believed supported their post-course learning. These factors are shown in Table 18 as percentage of responses.

Inhibitors and Enablers of Teacher Learning #1 Enablers of Teacher Learning

Table 18 Factors perceived by teachers to support their learning

Type of Support	% School A	% School B	% School C
Principal support	25.8	30	23
Staff support	25.8	17.5	12.8
Resources	32.2	20	15.3
Follow-up	3.2	12.5	41
Other	9.6	12.5	2.5
No comment	3.2	5.0	5.1

The comments from School A in 'Other' category (Table 18) were principal related, referring to teachers being given time out of class or money to buy resources. The comments in the 'Other' category for School B seemed unrelated to the question. School C 'Follow-up' was provided by an outside consultant organised by the principal and school funded. The principal regularly 'released' teachers in 'stage' groups to work together on a particular area of literacy. The consultant's role was to facilitate the meetings. The strategy of releasing teachers to work together may also have been perceived by the teachers from School C as being 'principal support'. All categories varied across the schools. The consistent factor across the three schools is principal support. While principal support was highly rated across all the schools, descriptors of what the support looked like varied. Table 19 summarises how the teachers in each of the schools described principal support.

Inhibitors and Enablers of Teacher Learning #2: Perceived Role of the Principal

Table 19 is derived from Question 3.2, which asked: *Did you feel you were given support in implementing what you learned? Please explain your response*.

Teachers nominated that the most important factor was support from the principal. This response was probed by asking the following questions during the interviews. *What does that look like at your school? Is it only the principal?* Table 19 shows the responses when these further questions were asked regarding the role of the principal.

Table 19 Teacher descriptors of principal support

School A	School B	School C
Principal teaches	Interested	Interested
Hands on	Provides resources	Provides resources
Develops materials	Talks	Encourages
Provides resources	Does not go into rooms.	Is practical
Encourages		Approachable
		Gives time

While principal support was perceived as important across the three schools, comments by teachers summarised in Table 19 indicates that the principal support took a different form in each of the schools. The common response was provision of resources and the main difference is the practicality of support indicated by the comments relating to Principal A described as 'hands on' and Principal C as 'practical'.

In the interview with officers from the Catholic Schools Office a question regarding their perception of the role of principals was asked. *In the survey almost 80% of teachers said the thing that most supported them in implementing their learning from the course they mentioned was the principal. What does that look like? Is it only the principal?* The comments below indicate there is strong agreement with the teachers as to the importance of the role of the principal describing this person as the 'lynchpin' and the 'key factor'.

> This does not surprise me. The principal is the lynchpin. A good leader provides opportunities for dialogue to happen where they do feel supported. (Interview D1)

> The principal is the key factor. Key to how PD runs, to the whole professionalism to the school. Even a principal who does not have the knowledge around literacy but knows about learning and PD can support teachers. I see it as a principal who does teach and is able to teach. Plus you need time, resources and professional conversations and reading. It's the principal that can organise it and have it happen. (Interview D2)

> I agree. I have a clear picture of what it should be like. What it looks like at School C is what it should be like. Providing resources, asking questions, giving time, readings etc. (Interview D3)

> I would think they need ongoing planning time. I felt as a principal I looked better if my school was flying. So if I could help on a class on a regular basis or take a grade to release a teacher most able to help the team, that's what I would do. But do it on a regular basis. If I couldn't do it I would budget for it. I always blocked RFF time and they never baulked at using it in that time. I was always guided by them for resources. Things that aggravate

> teachers are small things and you must take care of personal needs. They must sense their physical needs are looked after. You cannot ignore physical and emotional needs of staff. (Interview D4)

Inhibitors and Enablers of Teacher Learning #3: Inhibitors of Teacher Learning

In question 3.3 teachers were specifically asked what hindered their learning: *Were there things that seemed to hinder your implementation of some of the teaching strategies, organisational procedures, learning activities, etc, which the course recommended? Please explain your responses.* Responses fell into the categories of time, parents and resources. Percentages of responses are shown in Table 20.

Table 20 Factors that hindered implementation of teacher learning

Category	% School A	% School B	% School C
Time	20.0	36.8	38.4
Parents	10.0	5.2	0.0
Resources	20.0	10.5	15.3
Other	0.0	15.7	7.6
Nothing	20.0	21.0	7.6
No comment	30.0	8.8	30.7

Opinions of the factors perceived to hinder learning were spread across the categories. The 'Other' category included comments such as, 'other teachers, older teachers who won't change, class size and lack of relevance'. Time was the most mentioned factor across the schools and appears to be more significant in the larger schools. The high percentage in 'No comment' from schools A and C could possibly be interpreted as nothing being a problem. One teacher from School B mentioned class size.

Question 3.4 offered the opportunity for teachers to name what they might have done to implement their learning if nothing had got in the way by asking*: What extra things might you have done to implement your learning from the course if you had the opportunity to do so?* Teachers saw this question as similar to 3.5 so responses have been combined. Question 3.5: *What would help you to continue to make positive and beneficial changes to the way you*

teach? While some teachers nominated some action they may have taken, a large percentage either did not comment or stated they would do nothing. Percentages are shown in Table 21.

Table 21 Actions teachers might have taken to implement learning

Action	% School A	% School B	% School C	% Total
More Reading	20	0	0	4.4
More planning	30	31.5	25	28.8
More sharing	10	5.2	18.8	11.1
Another course	0	5.2	0	2.2
No comment	40	31.5	37.5	35.5
Nothing	0	26.3	18.8	17.7

Responses varied across the schools but the two most consistent responses are 'more planning' and 'no comment'. More teachers from Schools B and C said that even given the opportunity they would do nothing. Reading is cited as an important factor for School A only.

Theme Five: Teacher Learning and School Culture

The questions asked in this section probed the respondents to think about the environment in which they worked. Question 3.5 asked*: What would help you continue to make positive and beneficial changes to the way you teach?* The responses to this question were varied; only one person saw the making of changes as a personal responsibility:

> I believe it is our responsibility as educators to make changes and not the responsibility of others. Support is great but ultimately it depends on the motivation of the teachers. (Interview B4)

Teacher Learning and School Culture #1 The School as a Context for Teacher Learning

In the interview, respondents were asked, '*Does the school provide a context for your learning*?' Table 22 shows responses, which reveal the same ratings in Schools A and C. School B was less positive. It was also noted that School B was also the least satisfied with what the CSO offered when asked about the relevance of professional development in the Diocese (Table 15).

Table 22 Respondents' perceptions of the school as a context for their learning

School	School as a Context for Learning
School A	100%
School B	33.3%
School C	100%

The comments from teachers taken from the interviews expand on their perceptions of the school as a learning environment as reported in Table 22. The interview question asked was; *Does the school provide a context for your learning?* In response to this question the main response was related to the principal. The teacher from School A is positive regarding the role of the principal and her own professional reading whereas the teacher from School B infers some difficulties in the school that need to be avoided to maintain learning and the teacher from School C sees the environment as positive but is less definite than the teacher from School A.

School A: Comment on the school as a learning environment

> Yes very much so. Not just going out to learn but here. We have staff meetings on various curriculum, beliefs, problems etc. There are other voluntary meetings at lunchtime to explore various things. The principal comes into our room. She gets professional reading, reads it first and marks things. We read a lot and share our books. I am also a member of PETA. The PENs are really good because they are quick. (Interview A10)

School B: Comment on the school as a learning environment

> Yes, what I had to do was remove myself from all that and mix only with the people I can learn from. One teacher helps in regard to building relationships with children. I learn from going into another teacher's classroom. Different things… academically I can talk to the principal. Overall if you keep it superficial the staff is friendly. (Interview B4)

School C: Comment on the school as a learning environment

> I think it does. If I find there is a need for my own professional development I can go to the principal or any of the executive. Usually they will do something. (Interview C3)

A similar question was asked of principals; *Does the school provide a context for learning?* There is some correlation between the comments of teachers and principals, particularly in School A where the principal refers to the focus on professional development in the school and the active role she takes to encourage a learning environment. Interestingly the Principal

from School B acknowledges there is more to be done to promote an environment for learning. Principal C refers to a particular strategy she has in place and perceives it as contributing to a change.

Principals' comments on the school providing a context for learning for teachers.

School A

> We have a strong focus on PD. I would hope that as an executive, that the leadership has high expectations of teachers to do a good job. A lot of learning comes after school bouncing ideas around. There is a range of experience and a range of talents. People are very generous. We are lucky because we get lots of opportunities because of various contacts. If there is an inservice, one will be funded but I will always send 2 so they can talk to each other. That's my learning style. People are generous. It's no big deal. It's puzzling why it is a big deal some places.
>
> I think of…hierarchy of needs, making people comfortable etc. Its important if someone believes they need something they get it and we are lucky to have a budget to do it. They also have their own budget to control if there are things they want without asking me. It makes people think before they buy plus they have to make the decisions.

School B

> There is a lot more to be done. Need to create a climate for discussion and shared wisdom. The biggest thing was making time available at staff meeting for discussion. We do general business for the last 10 minutes. The other items are on the agenda.
>
> The teachers usually have half a day for planning but this time they had a whole day, however much more is expected of them. They have to do the whole grid for next year plus perspectives. They really like getting this time and like that they are talking and thinking ahead.

School C

> The casual relief to allow for grade meetings have been my best strategy. In the smaller groups planning, and developing the learning support team and changing their role to support for teachers was more achievable. This has encouraged the teachers to take responsibility but still have support. We have slowly changed the pullout model. We are now working at changing the top end of the school. The AP will give in class support develop strategies for meetings with teachers and parents.

Teacher Learning and School Culture #2: Respondents Perceptions of the School Culture

The factor of relationships emerged as being important in a school in relation to being a place for learning. Both teachers and principals mentioned this. Further questions were asked: *'How would you describe the culture in this school?' and 'How would you describe the relationships in this school?'* A summary of teacher descriptors appears in Tables 23 and 24.

Table 23 Descriptors used by teachers to describe the relationships in the school

School A Relationships	School B Relationships	School C Relationships
Very good.	Good. Some factions.	Get on well.
Teacher/teacher good.	A lot of politics.	Parents can be demanding.
Teacher/child good.	Difficulties are dealt with privately to minimise effect on others.	Democratic.
Teacher/parent OK	Some people are negative.	Professional.
People friendly.		There are groups but they are not dividing.
No groups.		Good, open, friendly.
		Grade teams work well together.

Table 24 Descriptors used by teachers to describe the culture in the school

Culture School A	Culture School B	Culture School C
Very positive	Staff politics.	Changed-positive. OK to share now.
Staff friendly.	Union issues.	Lots of expectations (positive and negative).
High expectations.	Not professional, 'us' and 'them'.	Democratic. Supportive.
Collaborative.	Lack of communication.	Changing quickly.
Lots of discussion.	A good place.	Changing to a learning culture.
Supportive.	Good standards.	More staff discussion.
Christian Culture/Catholic ethos.	In the process of changing.	Starting to come together as a school.
Children valued.	Happy children.	Some resistance to change. Demanding, busy.
Professional.		
Conversational.		

Observations taken from field notes and artefacts collected regarding the history of the school indicate the presence of longstanding positive relationships in School A. It was also noted that the school has had a very positive history and is seen by others as harmonious. It was noted that the comments on relationships were inconsistent in School B. Field notes indicate the school has had an unsettled history. The relationships in School C were described in field notes as 'developing'. It was also noted that this school has had an unsettled history prior to the current principal being appointed to the school. Tables 25 and 26 below show the descriptors principals used to describe relationships and culture in the schools. These descriptors are very similar to those used by the teachers and link to the observations recorded in the field notes.

Table 25 Descriptors used by principals to describe the relationships in the school

School A Relationships	School B Relationships	School C Relationships
Good. Parents are fine. Everyone works as a team.	Protecting.	Changing. Good relationships across the school. Respectful.

Table 26 Descriptors used by principals to describe the culture in the school

School A Culture	School B Culture	School C Culture
Positive, friendly. Strong sense of collaboration and teamwork. Welcoming. Teachers interested in their own learning. 'I believe the teachers are the keepers of the culture'. Cohesive, affirming, people work as a team.	Unique. Not always professional. Changing. Value ceremony. Teacher discussion developing.	Changing. Not a learning culture. Friendly and nice. No curriculum talk/this is developing. Working relationships. Developing. Respect for each other developing.

Actual comments made by teachers and principals are transcribed below. Teachers from School A described the school positively in terms of teachers and children. School B is described as having some problems that are attributed to union issues and School C is described as changing. The comments, which follow on the relationships in the school, appear to link into the descriptions of the cultures.

School A: Teacher comments on culture

> It is a culture with very high expectations from both parents and staff. Where everyone has the belief before they even start school that everyone will achieve and they will learn to read. There is lots of emphasis on basic things like literacy and numeracy. The staff is collaborative and is more and more so with parents. It was not always like that.
>
> With the principal the expectations on us are higher now. The accountability is more succinct. If you say this is happening the response is, show me. It has always been a culture where the staff agrees on the same sort of philosophy. When we talk about how children learn to read etc there is never much disagreement. When there is some disagreement on some things it leads to discussion. No one is afraid to discuss. I have worked harder here

than anywhere but it is all for good. Everything is improving my teaching or their learning. (Interview A10)

School B: Teacher comments on culture

It has changed a lot. It has its ups and downs. There is some 'us and them'. One person drives union issues but others have joined in. It's very difficult when there is a union issue. AP spoke at one meeting and she was spoken back at. It has always been here but now there are more people on side.

Generally the culture is it is a good place but when there is stress the worst comes out. (Interview B16)

School C: Teacher comments on culture

It is changing from the old guard to a learning community. People are willing to have a go and they are talking educational talk. People are willing to share at staff meetings and have others come into their classrooms. It is becoming a learning culture. We are learning to be part of a diocesan system.

It's a school in a state of change. There are a lot of people who haven't moved and young ones who have not been anywhere else. (Interview C8)

School A: Teacher comments on relationships

Relationships are good. The children are well supported by their parents.

The relationship between parents and teachers is mostly good. We have a fairly open policy about the parents helping and learning. They help for a few weeks then they don't come so that is a problem.

Between teachers relationships are very good. (Interview A2)

School B: Teacher comments on relationships

There are individuals that get together and then they separate and get together again. Even that is not solid. I chat the people and we are friendly, I avoid getting into private conversations. It makes it hard to share. I would be very nervous having someone in my room but I don't feel that way with the infants. It's just not a happy place at the moment. Certain people react really negatively. I wonder if they don't feel valued. I say that not meaning just the principal but the consultant, the parish and the priest. (Interview B12)

School C: Teacher comments on relationships

> There will always be groups in a big school. Everyone seems to have someone who they get on with. We only have one grade team who do not get on well together. All the other grade teams do work well together. Grade 5 and 6 usually meet in the holidays. They are willing to share. (Interview C8)

During time on-site, some teachers were observed to exhibit some influence on 'how things are done' in each of the schools. In each of the schools there were several staff members who had been at the school longer than the principal and assistant principal.

Being Catholic schools, each school had particular rituals and ceremonies including attending Mass, feast days and prayer times. In all three schools this was the most obvious area of shared beliefs and values. During the interviews, the teachers rarely referred to the aspect of values and beliefs. Other rituals including things such as celebrating birthdays and successes were observed in all schools. This was usually done in the recess break by bringing and sharing food. All organized and had end of term outings. School assemblies, which included all staff and students were common across the schools but differences were apparent in aspects of implementation. The large schools by necessity were much more formal.

During the interviews principals were asked to describe the culture they observed in the school. The principal from School A commented on the positive feel of the school, whereas there was some resistance to change in School B experienced by the principal. The principal from School C commented on attitudes to learning.

Principal A comment on culture in School A

> This was a lovely place to walk into. It's always been positive, friendly. Very pleasant environment. Strong sense of collaboration and team work and I guess a general interest in professional development. Very open and subsequently welcoming to anyone new. Found the parents and children welcoming too but sometimes the parents test out the teachers.

Principal B comment on culture in School B

> The culture? It was a huge change for me when I came here in an acting capacity. The AP had been acting principal for almost a year. He went on long service as soon as I arrived. The staff seemed to like things the way they were. It was comfortable and they were resistant to change. There was a feeling that what they were doing was pretty good and

progressive. It is hard to change culture so I began by putting the emphasis back on children's learning.

Principal C comment on culture in School C

It was a school… a lot wasn't happening in terms of curriculum. I got a sense people were pretty much doing what they liked. There was not much thought put into things. Teachers were left alone to teach as they saw fit. There had been a bit of professional development and not much follow through. They were not supported when they got back so learning did not continue. People were a bit suspicious of PD and taking risks. They though they were doing a really good job already. Not a learning culture. It was just this is where we came to work. People were friendly and nice but it was not about learning. No curriculum talk in the staff room. It was a bit of a void in a sense.

Interview question 6 asked the officers from Catholic Schools Office: *How would you best describe the school culture in School A, School B and School C?* Table 27 summarises the comments made by office personnel from each of the schools regarding the observed culture in the research schools.

Table 27 Summary of comments on culture from office personnel

School	Office Personnel Comments
School A	Very reflective. Collaborative. Professional conversations. Good leadership. Sharing of good practice.
School B	Excellent teachers. No whole school discussion on big issues. A belief there is a challenging teaching situation. Teachers tolerant, accepting and valuing of all children. Sense of satisfaction.
School C	More positive environment. Rapid change. Good leadership. Principal vision articulated to all. Opportunities for learning.

The comments from teachers, principals and the office personnel demonstrate similar opinions as to how the culture is perceived from within and from outside.

Interview question 7 asked Catholic Schools Officers: *What role do you think school culture has on teacher learning?* The comments indicate the importance these officers attach to this factor. D1 and D2 suggest a link to school leadership.

> Very significant. School culture as it relates to shared vision and mission. I could name many examples where there is not synergy between what they say they believe and what they practise and that just causes tension and stress in a learning environment and its not just because teachers don't want to practice what they teach, the dialogue has to be there. Relationship between culture and practice needs to be facilitated through school leadership. A lot of principals would not know how to go about it. They are not close to the issues. It is important there is open dialogue happening so that the beliefs are grounded in reality not just rhetoric. It must inform. They get better at talking about what they believe in when they are asked to do. In service for leaders comes through human services. (Interview D1)

> It's very important. It goes back to the leadership. It determines the ethos of the school, the professionalism in the school, the relationships in the school and how they work. The leader can change it with a team if they work together. I would say the values are embedded in the culture and are critical to underpinning it all. If you value each other as professionals, as learners and within the Catholic context as Christian educators, you deal with people I would hope differently than if you don't. (Interview D2)

Teacher Learning and School Culture #3: Perceptions of School Vision and Mission

The final interview question asked teachers and principals to describe the Diocesan mission and vision and the school's mission and vision statements. Further, teachers were asked if they could articulate the principal's vision for the school. Table 28 summarises responses.

Table 28 Summary of teacher comments on the school, principal and diocesan visions

Question	Teachers School A	Teachers School B	Teachers School C
What is the school mission or vision?	Comments ranged from 'yes' through to 'don't really know'.	We are working on it.	Comments ranged from 'yes' through to 'have a general idea'.
How was it arrived at?	We have reviewed it.	Reviewing it now.	Done with the previous principal at a series of staff meetings.
Principal's vision?	Enunciates her vision to staff and the children. She wants the school to become a leader in the way we teach. Excellence. That the children be happy. Catholic core values are high. To be accountable.	A caring, happy place. Children learning. She wants to change practice and for the school to be academically strong.	Allowing each child to achieve. Excellence and consistency. That we learn from each other. Collaboration. To be up to date and improve standards. To unite the school. To be accountable.
Your own vision?	Matches with what the Principal/school vision says.	A harmonious environment where we all work together.	Fair expectations. Comfortable as a professional. Consistency, good things happening in classrooms.
What is the Diocesan vision?	Don't know.	Don't know.	Don't know.

In all cases the teachers were far more aware of the principal's vision than they were of the vision of the school or the Diocese. In response to the same question, Table 29 summarises the principals' responses to the question about the school vision and mission and their own.

Table 29 Summary of principal comments on their own and the school's vision

Question	Principal School A	Principal School B	Principal School C
What is the school mission or vision?	No direct response.	In review.	No direct response.
How was it arrived at?	When I came to the school we reviewed it and updated it.	Was done before I came to the school.	Done before I came. Have not yet reviewed it.
Principal's vision?	I believe we have to make a difference. That each child does the best they can. Academic but well rounded.	I want the new one to be something expressed very simply so we can refer to it a lot.	To provide a school environment that is a learning environment for the children and teachers. That there be a culture of learning. A school of excellence.

In the case of Schools A and C, the teachers' opinion of what they believed was the principal's vision to be correlated with the description provided by the principal. The comments transcribed from the interviews elaborate on the summary in Table 30. Comments from the teachers in School B confirm that the school vision is in the process of being rewritten. All the teachers interviewed articulated their own vision for the school.

Table 30 Summary of the teachers' views of the principal's vision

	School A	School B	School C
Summary of teachers' views of the principal's vision	Enunciates her vision to staff and the children. She wants the school to become a leader in the way we teach. Excellence. That the children be happy. Catholic core values are high. To be accountable.	A caring, happy place. Children learning. She wants to change practice and for the school to be academically strong.	Allowing each child to achieve. Excellence and consistency. That we learn from each other. Collaboration. To be up to date and improve standards. To unite the school. To be accountable.

Teacher comments on vision and mission

> I should know the school vision but I don't. We have done the strategic plan and the mission was in that. We did some work on our core values. Own vision, I don't know what the vision is but I felt the school culture supported my vision. My vision is to make a

> difference and I think in a school like this you do. The children grow up with so much knowledge and spirit. Diocesan mission? Don't know. The principal wants excellence in education within the Christian or Catholic value system. (Interview A4)

> We are working on the school vision at the moment. The staff has changed and you have to be able to 'own' the vision. You want something that everyone will work towards. The principal would want a happy place and caring and to see the children learning. I believe the same things. You have to have your heart and soul in it. It is whether you see this as a job or a vocation. You have to love kids. Diocesan vision-I do not know. (Interview B16)

> I know the vision statement but not off by heart. Principal? To unite the school. She wants more collaboration between teachers and teachers, and teachers and parents, and even the school and the parish. She wants to improve the standards. I think that is very evident. She wants everyone to be accountable, not just certain teachers. I think she is going about it in a nice way. There needed to be improvements and we don't think it is too quick. She gives a lot of thought to things before she acts. My own vision is to improve the literacy standards. To make the children independent learners who enjoy school and their learning. To have a good self image of themselves. To be independent learners. Diocese? I don't know what it is. (Interview C11)

Interview Question 8 asked CSO officers: *What is the Diocesan mission? Your vision*?

The respondents in schools had slim or no knowledge of the content of the Diocesan mission statement although they did know of its existence. The CSO officers interviewed were more certain as to the current status of the document than the teachers and principals.

> We have just released a new one. It does not clearly articulate educational outcomes. We have been talking about making it explicit. There is a fair bit of dialogue that needs to happen. (Interview D1)

> There is a diocesan mission statement now out of that comes the strategic plans and we are developing the CSO strategic plan. I am having input into the strategic plan so what I want will be embedded in there. (Interview D2)

Conclusion

The data collected from office personnel appear to indicate the value CSO personnel place on quality professional development for teachers. This has been demonstrated through the provision of funding to conduct substantial courses in literacy over the past five years and the plans to continue funding in this area. As part of the Diocesan schools research project 'Shaping Our Future' begun in 1998, progress has been reported in the three key areas of the plan. Excellence in teaching and learning is one of those areas. The report states:

> As a result of the increased focus on curriculum and professional development, principals are now much more able to fulfill their roles as the educational leaders within schools. A cultural change has occurred in this area. There is a strong connection between the significant professional development that has occurred in recent years, and improved teaching and learning. Schools have been supported in their work concerning analysis of student performance data, particularly in external tests, and the use of the analysis to inform teaching and learning. (CSO, 2001: 17-18)

The data collected also indicate some differences as to perceptions of professional development from those in schools and those in the office. These differences will be explored in the following chapter.

The data collected through surveys, on-site observation and interviews present the following initial, broad findings.

- the most popular professional development activities were *Frameworks* and the *Primary Literacy* Course,
- the perceived most significant supporting factor across the three schools was the principal,
- staff support, resources and follow-up were rated highly but not consistently across the schools,
- the teachers' comments indicated a belief that professional development must be practical, relevant and be conducted by good presenters to be useful,
- all teachers made changes as a result of the professional development course they nominated, and
- the principal was perceived as being supportive.

These broad findings and the data reported in this chapter will be interpreted using grounded theory procedure in Chapter 5. The themes, Teacher and School Demographics, Professional Development and Teacher Learning, Choice of Professional Development Model, Inhibitors and Enablers of Teacher Learning and School Culture which emerged in the data analysis informed the development of this theory.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Chapter 5

Interpretation of Results and Conclusion

This chapter presents an interpretation of the data reported in Chapter Four using grounded theory procedure as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Strauss and Corbin describe the purposes underpinning the use of grounded theory procedure thus:

> A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge (Strauss, 1990: 23)

Furthermore, according to Strauss & Corbin (1990) the 'analytic procedures of grounded theory are designed to':

> 1) Build rather than test theory.
> 2) Give the research process the rigor necessary to make the theory 'good' science.
> 3) Help the analyst to break through the biases and assumptions brought to, and that can develop during, the research process.
> 4) Provide the grounding, build the density, and develop the sensitivity and integration needed to generate a rich, tightly woven, explanatory theory that closely approximates the reality it represents.
>
> (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:57)

For these reasons, I found grounded theory to be an appropriate procedure to apply to this research because it allowed me to take emerging concepts and then develop these findings into a theory, which could be compared between sites, contexts and the literature. The data were generated from the responses to surveys, observations and interviews with teachers, principals and senior office personnel undertaken to explore the relationship between school culture and teacher learning. This chapter will explore the relationships between and among those data and the literature.

The general findings referred to in the conclusion to Chapter 4 include:

- the most popular professional development activities were *Frameworks* and the *Primary Literacy Course*,
- the perceived most significant supporting factor across the three schools was the principal,

- staff support, resources and follow up were rated highly but not consistently across the schools,
- the teachers' comments indicated a belief that to be useful, professional development must be practical, relevant and be conducted by good presenters,
- all teachers made changes as a result of the professional development course they nominated,
- the principal was perceived as being supportive.

The developed grounded theory is reflective of Fullan's often quoted claim that 'professional development is a process not an event' (Fullan, 1990). Figure 12 below is a schematic representation of this 'process' as described by Fullan. As such it is an attempt to develop a coherent explanatory account of what these findings 'mean' and is based predominantly on two sources of information:

i) the data collected and analysed during the course of the study

ii) analysis of relevant literature.

This schematic representation of the grounded theory explains the relationship between teacher learning and school culture formally grounded in the real world of teachers and the schools in which they operate. Rather than stand alone, each of the sections of the model overlap and are linked by the processes which enable or inhibit teacher learning.

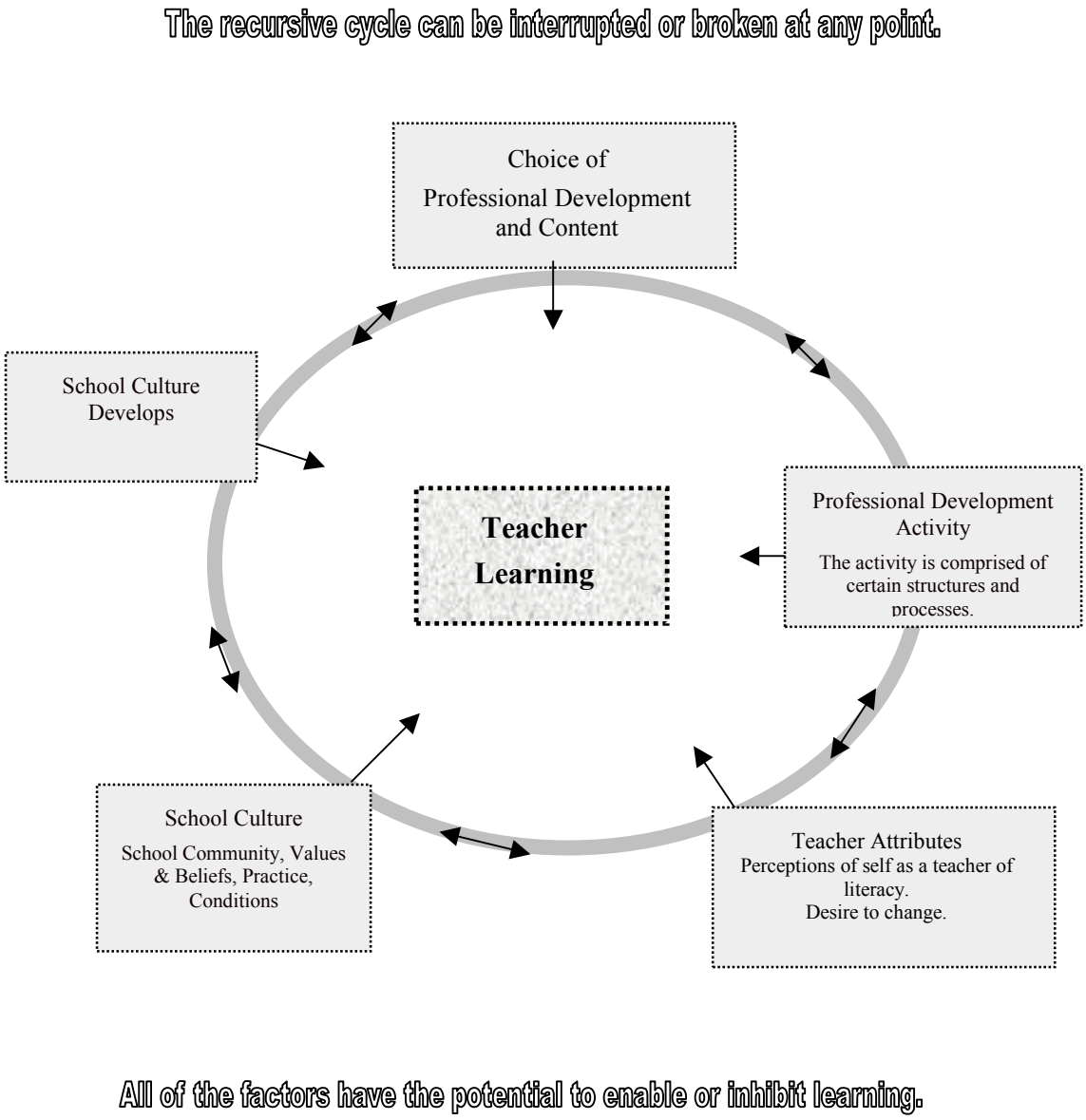

Figure 12 **Schematic Representation of the Grounded Theory Representing the Recursive Relationship Between Teacher Learning and School Culture**

This grounded theory highlights relationships between teacher learning and school culture. While the recursive cycle can be entered at any point, for the purposes of explanation I will begin with 'Choice of Professional Development'. This choice can be made by a variety of people, in the case of this study, it was made by 'the system' (Catholic Schools Office). A variety of factors affect the decisions made such as guidelines for government funding and beliefs of the personnel making decisions. The decisions made result in the actual professional development activity represented in the second part of the model.

The chosen professional development activity is comprised of certain processes and structures, which may be a matter of design or be accidental. These processes and structures can have an effect on enabling or inhibiting teacher learning and it seems may also influence the development of the culture in schools.

The people, in this case the teachers, involved in the professional development activity are also critical, and are represented in the third part of the model. The teacher brings certain beliefs and attitudes to the learning experience including their perceptions of self as a teacher of literacy and their desire to change. The theory argues these teacher attributes influence the learning that takes place.

Once the learning has taken place the teacher returns to the school and hence the school culture. The make up of the existing culture is complex and involves the community, the values and beliefs in place, the physical conditions and the processes in place related to communication, relationships and reflection. This fourth part of the model acknowledges the development of the culture. The complexity of the school culture may be impacted upon by all of the factors, further inhibiting or enabling the learning.

This grounded theory seeks to explain how teacher learning can be enabled and hindered as these factors interact. This grounded theory may be useful in identifying and explaining some of the factors, which have the potential for enabling and/or inhibiting teacher learning, especially those which relate to the role of the school culture in promoting and supporting the professional learning of teachers. The components of the model shown in Figure 12 will be used as a framework for drawing out and explaining some theoretical principles, which address the original questions that motivated the study (see page 1). While the grounded theory represented in Figure 12 appears simple, it is not. Unfortunately a two dimensional representation is unable to capture the complexity, interactivity, and synergy of the parts. Hopefully this will emerge in the following explication of the schematic representation. Each of the sections, Choice of Professional Development, the Professional Development Activity, Teacher Attributes, School Culture and the Development of Culture will be described in detail to show the relationships between and among the factors. This will be organised by describing the factor in more detail, describing the factor as it appeared in the research schools and finally by describing the factor in general as ‘Theory in Action’.

Part One of the Model: Choice of Professional Development Model and Content

The choice of professional development has the potential to impact on all the factors within the recursive model. This part of the model refers to the decision makers, how the choice is made and why a particular choice is made. The 'why' is important particularly in light of Barth's work which strongly suggests not paying sufficient attention to school culture could be counterproductive to effective professional development (Barth 1990). The grounded theory suggests that teacher learning is more likely to be positively impacted upon if the teachers understand the reasons behind the choice. This would be applicable to a professional development activity initiated from outside or within the school. For commitment and engaged participation the theory suggests teachers need to know how decisions are made and feel confident about ongoing support. Owen (1990) supports this when he argues the role of internal and external support in effective professional development:

> Effective professional development (a) is directly related to the commitment and support provided by principals in schools and is enhanced through collaborative leadership and (b) provides teachers with ready access to and development of relevant internal and external support services (Owen, 1990:176).

The theory argues that principals and teachers need to be guided to understand the various proposals and funding arrangements.

Theory in Action in Broken Bay

In the Broken Bay Diocese the major decisions about professional development are made in head office. The data from this study provide an historical overview of professional development in the Diocese which included an intensive five-day professional development experience, a spaced learning experience and finally an in-school model.

In 2001 principals were presented with a literacy proposal (for 2002) from the Catholic Schools Office. This proposal represented a significant change in approach in the sense that it involved moving to an 'in-school' form of professional development. This shift appeared to have been influenced by the work of Crevola and Hill (1998). While the proposal was preceded by some background statements concerning system responses to Commonwealth requirements the principals in this study seemed unsure of what had prompted the change and in turn were not positive about the proposal. The principal from School A commented:

> What teachers want is a genuine proposal of the best options and then be asked for a response. What was unclear in this year's proposal was what was driving the proposal. It is time to consult the teachers and I would not have said that a couple of years ago. (Interview Principal School A)

There is some agreement from the office personnel with this principal, which is evident in Table 17 and the following statement.

> The new model was decided by the consultants along with the leadership team. There is a split opinion about what PD is. Some still believe, in the sheep dip treatment-bring them in and give them a dose and send them home. While there is a need for that information type gathering it is not professional development. In primary we are more successful in more consolidated programs where it is a mix of expectations. The key is whom the principal sends. The way the literacy course has run has paid dividends in a number of schools. That's what we are aiming for but we haven't got there. (Interview D3)

Respondents had a range of opinions as to how they regarded the professional development provided by the Catholic Schools Office, which may be associated with the view of professional development in general or the view of Catholic Schools Office held by the teachers in each school. During time on site it was observed that the teachers from School A were the most positive regarding learning in general and this could be attributed to the principal and the value she placed on professional development activities. It is possible that the beliefs of this principal makes a difference as to how the staff perceive professional development initiatives. Barth (1990) supports this finding when he argues that the effect of the means by which teachers come to attend professional development. He suggests little learning takes place when teachers are coerced to attend; rather he promotes the aim of having a learning community where teachers engage in continuous learning.

In relation to the grounded theory several things can be noted. The proposal broadly referred to the research undertaken but it was not made explicit to the reader, that is, the principals and subsequently the teachers. The impact of the lack of explicitness for the reader is not completely clear but when interviewed several teachers did say they would like the process to be more open. It seems likely that the teachers perceived the reason for change to be solely related to the comment made regarding achievement of standards. The principals in the research schools confirmed this as to the impression gained from the proposal.

Overall the schools in the study did not feel totally satisfied with the approach taken by the office and reported that they would like more opportunities to voice an opinion in the area of provision of professional development. There are several changes planned within the office,

which may address some of the concerns and be effective in enabling teacher learning. One is the re-establishment of a Professional Development committee. Sarason (1996) discusses the power issues involved as well as the notion of consultation being called for by teachers:

> By underemphasizing how power suffuses all relationships in the culture of the school I was at the same time underemphasizing the complexity of the change process. Any nontrivial attempt to hang a feature of the school culture immediately brings to the fore the power basis of relationships, i.e., "someone" decides that something will be changed and "others" are then *required* appropriately to implement that change. If others have had no say in the decision, if there was no forum or allotted time for others to express their ideas or feelings, of others, come to feel they are not respected, if they feel their professionalism has been demeaned, the stage is set for the change to fail. *The problem of change is the problem of power, and the problem of power is to wield it in ways that allow others to identify with, to gain ownership of, the process and goals of change. That is no easy task; it is a frustrating, patience-demanding, time consuming process. Change cannot be carried out by the calendar, a brute fact that those of power cannot confront. The change process is not an engineering one.* You cannot engineer school change the way engineers build bridges, roads, dams, and much more (Sarason, 1996:335).

However Sarason (1996) also argues the skill base required to participate in the this decision making:

> With the usual few exceptions, school personnel hardly read books, journals, and similar periodicals that could make them knowledgeable about the important criticisms and controversies surrounding school reform (1996:328).

Sarason's suggestion that decisions cannot be made from a point of ignorance is acknowledged by the comments from teachers and principals. The problem becomes how to bridge this gap and provide the information required to involve teachers and principals in informed decision making keeping in mind that funding considerations drive many of the decisions made within the office.

Theory in Action

The grounded theory suggests that enhanced communication to schools, which provides more background information, may assist teachers in understanding the decisions made around professional development and ensure that teachers see more relevance in what is being offered. This will be aided by insuring research informs professional development decisions and articulating more clearly the role of professional development in the diocese. Further the

grounded theory suggests that teacher learning benefits from reflection and learning new strategies with the purpose of refining practice and improving standards. Examining the enablers and inhibitors to learning leads to thinking about differentiating the content of professional development to better meet needs of the teachers. As suggested by Turbill (1993) this may involve examining the structures and processes within all forms of professional learning. The system has a key role here.

> The central office provides service and expertise to the schools so that they can fulfill their missions without distraction…Central office staff members do serve behind the scenes. If they perform their jobs well, their efforts often go unnoticed or at least without credit (Grove 2002:47).

Whatever form professional development takes, some form of evaluation should be put in place. As a system some goals could be set to position professional development activities for appropriate, transparent evaluation. Possible goals may be:

- To improve student learning and therefore achievement.
- To ensure a teaching body which feels supported by the system.
- To enhance familiarity with current mandatory documents.
- To encourage the growth of learning communities in schools.
- To support teachers and leaders to develop the culture in the school where professional discussion takes place to the benefit of all learners.

Better communication processes will assist principals and teachers to better understand the internal and external forces which affect professional development decision-making. How the choice is made and how that process is articulated to schools is a critical factor.

The next section of the model seeks to explain the structures and processes within a chosen professional development activity and the influence those factors may have in relation to teacher learning and the school culture.

Part Two of the Model: Professional Development Activity

When broken down into core components, all professional development activities comprise, either by design, accident, or a bit of both, certain structures, processes, language-in-action

and people (Turbill, 1993). The way in which certain structures and processes are used and perceived, will impact on the enabling and hindering of teacher learning. The role of the components of language-in-use and people were not part of this study but my intuition tells me they are of importance. Turbill (1993) argues that all of these components used effectively will not only enable learning but can change the culture.

Theory in Action in Broken Bay

While this study did not set out to critique the type of professional development, the data suggest, that certain structures and processes of each of professional development activities in Broken Bay were identifiable and did have an influence on the type of learning that took place, and that this learning was later affected by the school culture. While the data show teachers and principals received the two main professional development courses very positively, the courses were very different in terms of processes and structures. How did these differences impact on the ultimate professional learning of the participants?

First the data strongly suggest that reflection is an important aspect of a professional development activity for teachers. This is borne out by the tenor of the comments regarding *Frameworks.* The comments below confirm that for some of these teachers it was the aspect of reflection, which sustained their learning.

> The highlight was reflecting on teaching practice (B12)
>
> The time allowed, practical activities, working with other teachers over a week, mixing groups and sharing. (A 5)
>
> Time to share thoughts, concerns and ideas. (C3)
>
> I still used the materials, regularly refer to the books and was most grateful for the course at the time it was offered. *Frameworks* 'fed me'. A source of rejuvenation and a stimulus for reflection. (B12)

Although both of the courses referred to by respondents involved the processes of reflection to some degree, the comments made by teachers indicate that structures, which coerced reflection, were more prominent in the *Frameworks* course. The duration of this course over five days appears to have provided more time for reflection to take place. Also reflection was a mandatory pre-requisite of the course. On day one of the Frameworks course it is made very clear to participants that they will be expected to keep a learning journal. Furthermore time was allocated at the end of each session for participants to write in their journals, which were

subsequently read and responded to by the facilitators. On the other hand, there was no mandatory requirement for reflection in *The Primary Literacy Course*. Instead there was a requirement to work with a learning partner. The nature of the change reported was consistent across the three schools and fell into two categories. Respondents from all schools saw the strengths of the *Primary Literacy Course* being strategy related and for *Frameworks* more process related (see Table 13).

The literature strongly suggests that these outcomes for teachers are related the structure of the course. These observations are supported by Turbill (1993) who argues:

> *Structures* are those components in the learning culture, which are set up to facilitate the learning process. These include activities and workshops, input sessions, readings, keeping a learning journal, to name a few. The purposes of each structure need to be made explicit so that learners not only know what is expected of them but why participation in that structure is worthwhile for their learning. The structures incorporated into any learning setting need to allow for learners to not only access new knowledge (i.e. the theory of others) but also to coerce participants to begin the process of 'looking inside themselves' so they begin to make explicit their own thinking; their tacit knowledge, beliefs and strategies (Turbill, 1993:337).

The structures cited above by Turbill were also identified by respondents in response to a question related to 'good' or 'useful' professional development. Teachers nominated factors such as 'sharing', 'relevance and practicality of content', 'quality of presenters', 'course structure' and 'availability of resources'. Table 14 lists the percentage of participant responses nominating each factor.

The teachers' comments were positive about both of the courses, so in order to conclude that one course is 'better' than the other there would need to be a more intensive long-term evaluation relating to sustained change and student outcomes. There is a possible effect of the time when the courses took place and the possibility of change in the needs of teachers over the 6 year time period. Barth (1990) comments on some of the possible effects on teachers' professional growth:

> The crux of teachers' professional growth, I feel, is the development of a capacity to observe and analyse the consequences for students of different teaching behaviours and materials, and to learn to make continuous modifications of teaching on the basis of the cues students convey.

> Teachers also need to be able to relate their classroom behaviour to what other teachers are doing in their classrooms. Teachers think they do that. Many do, but many do not do it very systematically or regularly. (Barth, 1990:49)

The link between the professional development activity and the teacher will be explained in the next section, Teacher Attributes, which is also linked with the final section of the model. Fullan (1993) and Sarason (1990) both argue that we won't have students who are learners and we won't make a difference in the lives of our students unless teachers become effective and continuous learners. This raises the question as to whose responsibility it is to do this. Few teachers in the study saw it as their responsibility; rather they saw it as a system responsibility to provide the learning opportunities for them.

Theory in Action

Teacher attributes, in the form of perceptions of self as a teacher of literacy, and relationship with own school staff are important factors. The links between the actual professional development activity and the teacher and subsequently the school culture are the factors, which have enabling or hindering effects on learning.

The processes and structures, within a chosen professional development activity, impact on teacher learning. Turbill (2002) describes the role of these enabling factors on teacher learning:

> Within a natural learning setting there are certain structures, processes, people and language-in-use which have the potential to either enable or inhibit the whole process.
>
> *Structures, Processes, Language-in-use and People* are all key components in the natural learning setting. All have the potential to become *enablers* and thus facilitate learning, or *inhibitors* and thus act as barriers to learning. At various points in time one or all of the above could have the potential of inhibiting learning. The key to success is having sufficient enablers in the setting so that any barriers or inhibitors have only a temporary life span. (Turbill, 2002:17).

Therefore decision makers need to select or design professional development, which provides the structures and processes, which will enable teacher learning. These will involve opportunities to be involved in processes which coerce teachers to reflect on beliefs, current

practices and learning and opportunities for reflective sharing of understandings brought to the professional development activity by participants as well as what is being taught.

The need for more extensive evaluation of professional development by providers is a means of achieving this. Little attention has been paid to evaluation of professional development. Guskey (2002) suggests evaluation should go well beyond participants' reactions and explore participants learning, organization support and change, participants' use of new knowledge and skills and student learning outcomes. Such an approach would highlight the most effective structures and processes and inform further professional development activities.

Part Three of the Model: Teacher Attributes

Certain teacher attributes are identifiable in relation to teacher learning. These appear in Figure 12 as perceptions of self as a teacher of literacy and desire to change. The quality of relationships with school staff is related to teacher attributes but is also a major factor in school culture, which is where this aspect will be discussed. 'Relationships' forms a connection between the part of the model referring to teacher attributes and the section on school culture. The grounded theory explains the impact of the teacher engaged in professional development when they already perceive themselves as competent teachers of literacy. Further the grounded theory suggests that this factor should be a consideration in the choice and subsequently the structure of the learning activity. Certain processes and structures need to be in place to coerce the teacher to engage in the learning allowing for the possibility of change.

In general the perceptions of self as a learner and in particular of themselves as a literacy learner which teachers take to a professional development experience impact on the learning which takes place and can act as an enabling or inhibiting factor. In addition to the choice of the model and the structures and processes within the chosen model the teacher is a critical factor.

Theory in Action in Broken Bay

The teacher respondents in this study were very positive regarding themselves as literacy teachers (Table 9). No data were collected to confirm or reject these perceptions. This attitude was not related to teaching experience or gender. Barth (1990) suggests several categories to

describe teachers in relation to attitudes to learning, which are helpful in understanding the data.

> Although I have always been reluctant to label or categorize teachers, in considering staff development I sometimes find it helpful to consider teachers as members of one of three groups:
>
> 1. Teachers who are unable and unwilling to critically examine their teaching practice and unable to have other adults-teachers, principals, parents-examine what and how they are teaching. Most schools have a few teachers whom appear to go through unexamined motions and who grow defensive if others begin to examine these motions.
>
> 2. Teachers who are quite able and willing to continually scrutinize and reflect on what they do and make use of their insights to effect periodic changes. They plan tomorrow on the basis of how things went today. But these teachers are uncomfortable accepting examination of their practice by other adults. A large number of otherwise professionally capable teachers work in schools. They are the ones about whom Dan Lortie speaks when he concludes that "for most teachers, learning, success, and satisfaction come largely from students within their classrooms. All other persons (parents, principal, teachers) without exception are connected with undesirable occurrences. Other adults have potential for hindrance, but not for help" [1975, p.169].
>
> 3. A small number of teachers who are able and willing to critically scrutinize their practice and are quite willing, even desirous, of making their practice accessible to other adults. The teachers in this group are the ones with who most staff developers, teacher centres, universities, and principals spend the most time. They seek us out, tend to be the most able, and make us feel the most comfortable and successful, although they probably need us the least (Barth, 1990: 54-55).

There was evidence from observations on site that some teachers from School A were functioning in category three as described by Barth (1990) whereas the teachers from Schools B and C appeared to function across categories one and two. One reason for this may be a school culture, which results in the willingness of teachers to examine their teaching and engage in reflection.

The desire to change is another factor related to the learning that takes place. When asked if they wished to change their teaching of literacy the responding teachers' indicated that although being confident most wished to change or develop an aspect of their teaching.

These data raise the issue as to the model of professional development appropriate for teachers already feeling confident about their teaching but prepared at some level to make further

changes. As indicated by the range of experience and teacher comments, there are those teachers who already know a lot about literacy and those who are novices. Therefore there will be those who will find the professional development activity 'affirming' of what they already know about literacy and those who will find the activity helps them to change their views about literacy teaching. This connects with the importance of the structure of any professional development activity discussed in part two. Certain structures and processes within any professional development experience will be critical in order to cater for the range of needs of various teachers. Willis (2002) quotes Stigler (2002) who supports this finding when he suggests that teachers need to learn three things. First to reflect on their teaching and the teaching of others, second to learn about alternatives and third they need the judgement to know when to employ what method.

It should be noted that teachers gave a range of responses when asked how they learn. This may be related to either their previous professional development experiences or their learning experiences within the school culture. Nearly half the respondents nominated a combination of lecture, group work and reading, as preferred learning style followed by 20% mentioning 'hands on' or 'practical learning'. Further to these chosen modes of learning when asked what they would like to learn more about, respondents mentioned very specific topics which were wide ranging. A specific change was nominated by 80% in School A, 52.6% in School B and 62.5% in School C.

When teachers were asked what actions they might have taken to implement their learning given the opportunity, responses were varied (see Table 21) but important when considering the culture. For example only 17.7% said they would do nothing, however another 35% made no comment. That means that overall nearly half would have done more had there been the opportunity. The role of the school culture in continuing and/or supporting whatever learning has taken place is therefore important.

Theory in Action

Change is a slow process and some teachers may not be interested in change and therefore not interested in professional development in any form. This could occur for several reasons.

- Age-looking toward retirement, therefore the teacher will continue as they are. These teachers can lose interest.

- Beginning teachers who are confident they know the latest.
- The over burdened teacher feeling the strains of teaching.

Some teachers indicated a lack of enthusiasm for learning and possibly even skill. Their lack of interest in learning can obstruct their own learning opportunities and those of others. Teachers need time to reflect, learn new strategies, refine practice and improve standards and this may be enhanced if the reasons for a particular approach to professional development are made clearer to schools. Where teachers do not see the issues faced in teaching as opportunities for learning, developing learning culture may well be a goal for all schools. When this occurs professional development in all its forms can be seen as a vehicle for learning. As such professional development needs to provide information in order that the teacher finds a new way to look at problems, it also needs to come in the form of some collegial sharing in order that the teacher gets time to articulate the problem and listen to others. Turbill's (1994) model (Figure 9) suggests that these things must exist together. For these factors to become a reality teachers need to work in a culture where they can present problems without fear of failure. Cole and Knowles (2000) raise an important point concerning a teacher's work:

> Teachers' work traditionally has been characterised by norms of isolation, independence, privacy and survival (Cole and Knowles. 2000:135).

This aspect of isolation must be taken into account as the system moves to collaborative arrangements, mentoring, peer coaching, visiting classrooms and the like.

More investigation into the needs of teachers at particular 'stages' of their careers may provide some insight into needs and consequently inform decision making related to the provision of professional development activities. Smith (2001) argues:

> Great teachers are always learning they have a real passion for the art of teaching and learning and a strong and defensible belief that they can and do make a difference. Our challenge in school and at a systems level is to ensure that our structures, processes and spending priorities, promote a learning culture and the sense of professional self-esteem that comes with quality teaching and learning outcomes and knowing we are making a difference (Smith, 2001:12).

Professional development is complex, as it must respond to each teacher's needs while teachers need the knowledge to respond to the diverse needs of learners. To achieve this

teachers have to be effective, flexible and responsible. What is required is 'on time' professional development. Action research is an example of an approach suited to meeting individual needs. Calhoun (2002) argues:

> When used as an organization-wide process for school improvement, action research changes the context and provides a way of organizing collective work so that professional expertise is tended and extended, helping to build a strong professional learning community (Calhoun, 2002:23).

Teacher attributes, in particular desire to change and perceptions of self, as a teacher of literacy, require consideration in relation to the choice of professional development and the structure of that professional development activity. Teacher attitudes are linked to the school culture and the attitudes to learning within that culture. Processes need to be put in place that provide opportunities whereby teachers:

- have a clear understanding of the requirements of the professional development activity prior to commencing
- prepare for participation through some sort of reflection on their teaching prior to commencing
- anticipate there will be on going support within the school
- choose to participate willingly.

Developing an environment that is more reflective may be a goal for both school leaders and staff developers. If this occurs then external professional development can become a vehicle to enhance school-based learning. Teachers need to work in a culture where they can present 'problems' without fear of failure or judgement. Whether or not schools are places that encourage reflection and by inference value teacher learning will impact on whether the teacher exhibits any desire to change the way he/she operates.

Part Four of the Model: School Culture

The school culture has an impact on teacher learning and certain factors within the school culture interact with the teacher attributes described in part three of the model resulting in the enabling or inhibiting of teacher learning. The factors identified within the school culture, have been organised into the four categories of Values and Beliefs, School Community,

Processes and Conditions. To elaborate on how the grounded theory works it is necessary to explain each of the categories in sequence and describe how they interact and affect the overall culture.

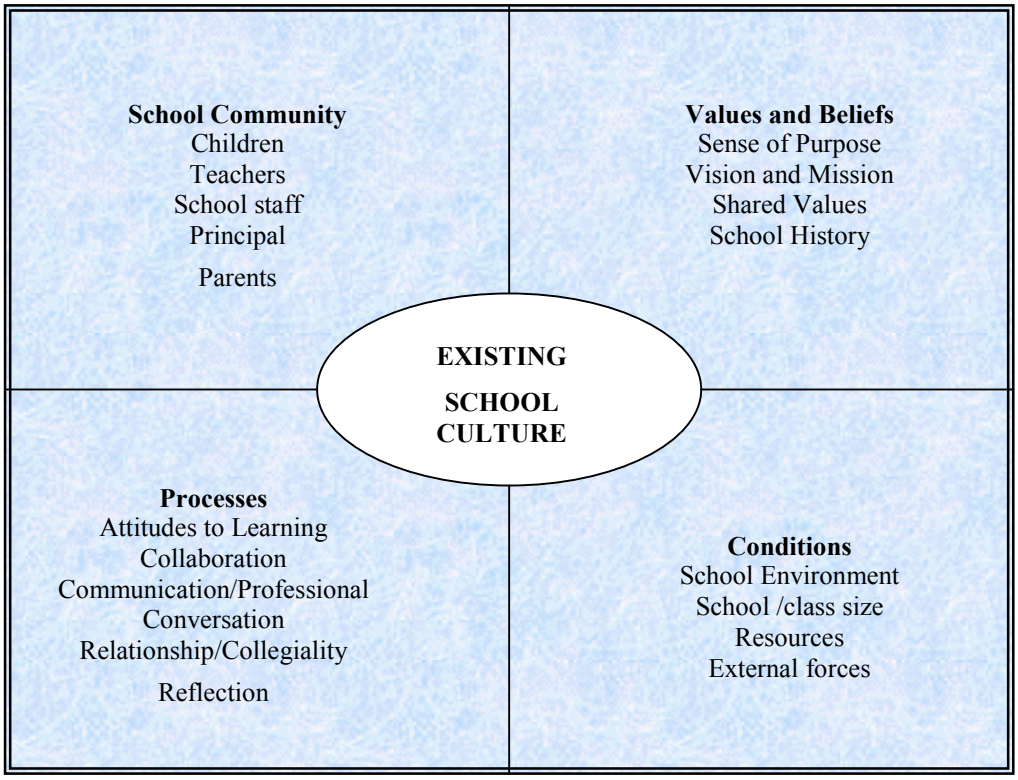

Figure 13 School Culture Quadrant

Figure 13 summarises the four categories identified which help unpack the school culture. Each of the research schools exhibited a particular culture that developed over time and had a number of influences. Each of the quadrants will be explained, however it should be noted there is considerable overlap among and between the factors within each quadrant.

Theory in Action in Broken Bay

School Community

The school community is made up of the children, the teachers, the school staff in general, parents and the principal. In Catholic schools it may well be related to the wider community of the parish and the parish priest. Little reference was made to parents except a small percentage (10% in School A and 5.2% in School B) who named parents as one of the factors that

hindered the implementation of their learning. On the whole teachers were positive about parents and there is evidence in my field notes in all three schools of parent involvement. All three schools had full time voluntary helpers from the community. Again little comment was made regarding the parish or parish priest as supporting or hindering teacher learning, however several teachers from one of the schools discussed some difficulties but were anxious details were not reported.

Likewise the children were not specifically mentioned in the interviews or surveys although there were some references in my field notes regarding challenges associated with teaching particular children. My work in a range of schools in varying circumstances suggest that the children may have some impact where there are needs which teachers strive to meet in regard to special needs, gifted and talented, socio economic, or ESL. Where there are needs such as these, it may well impact on the type of professional development required.

The role of the staff, specifically staff support was a factor highly rated by respondents from School A and is also argued by Schein (1985) as important. Hoyle (1986) also refers to the importance of relationships in the school:

> Shared understandings and agreed behaviors enable staff in schools where this culture is dominant to trust and learn from one another. The relationships that they create in the process are tough and flexible enough to withstand shocks and uncertainties from within and without. 'Collaborative' staffs tended to be both happy and resilient (Hoyle, 1986:74).

The difference in perceptions regarding the importance of staff support is evident in Table 18. The statistic was high on the smallest staff (25.8%). If the size has an impact, various models might be investigated in larger schools to nurture this aspect in order to encourage better sharing and conversation. During on site observations in School C, the change to 'stage groups' for meetings and planning resulted in what appeared to be more fruitful professional conversations.

In all the schools, those teachers who had been in the school for some time were observed to exhibit some influence on how things were done in the school. The influence was greater in School B, and observably reducing in School C. In School A this was a positive influence because of the reported long-standing harmonious culture in the school, which had been sustained through several staff and principal changes. In School B, efforts by some staff to

maintain a culture that for some is based on a negative history were not so positive. For these teachers it seemed to be simply that they understood why it was the way it was.

The role of the principal appeared to be inextricably linked to the culture of the school and the understanding of the change process and the conditions, which will nurture that change. Shaw (2002) suggests that to be successful, principals must make time for their own professional growth, see themselves as a designer, develop the capacity of others, develop theory and practice of participation and model learning for others.

The principals commented on how they responded to the culture as they perceived it, and their comments were interpreted thus; for the principal of School A, it is protecting and affirming something that is perceived by those in the school as a particularly successful culture. For the principal of School B, it is devising a direction for a culture that does not appear to be cohesive. For the principal of School C it is continuing to develop what is perceived as an emerging desirable culture. This interpretation is reflected in the teachers' opinions as to whether the school provided a context for learning with all staff from Schools A and C agreeing the school provided a learning culture and a third of the staff from School B agreeing the school provided a learning culture (Table 22).

The relationship between the principal's role and the culture of the school is a complex one. This view is supported by Murphy, (1988) who argues that to be successful the principal and teacher needs to be working in a particular culture:

> Principals' teacher development strategies seem most likely to be successful within a school culture in which teachers are encouraged to consciously reflect on their own practices (Oberg and Field 1986), to share ideas about their instruction, and to try out new techniques in the classroom. Principals need to develop norms of reflection through the substance of their own communication with teachers and the example of their own teaching. Principals also need to take specific actions to foster norms of collaboration. As Rosenholtz points out, 'Norms of collaboration don't simply just happen. They do not spring spontaneously out of teachers' mutual respect and concern for each other (in press, p.44)'. Rosenholtz identifies four conditions that influence the extent to which teachers are likely to engage in technical collaboration: Teachers' certainty about their own instructional competence, and hence, self-esteem; shared teaching goals; involvement in the school's technical decisions; and team teaching opportunities that create the need to plan and carry out instruction with colleagues.
>
> This guideline suggests, in sum, that principals look below the surface features of their schools-at how teachers are treated and what beliefs, norms, and values they share-and

> redesign their schools as learning environments for teachers as well as students (Murphy, 1988:82-83).

The respondents experienced principal support in all of the schools (Table 18). Sarason's (1996) comments confirm the importance of this supportive role of the principal:

> The available literature on educational change efforts points to the principal's crucial role, especially in regard to the seriousness with which he or she redefines the role of teachers in planning and implementation (Sarason, 1996: 295-296).

Processes

This quadrant includes attitudes to learning, collaboration, communication and professional conversation, relationships, collegiality and reflection. While appearing in this quadrant, all of these factors can also be applied across the other quadrants. Attitudes to learning were explained in part three of the model and relationships, collegiality and collaboration were referred to in explaining the School Community. Reflection was recognised as a critical part of the professional development activity and seems to be an outcome of all the aspects of 'Processes' described as working effectively. The conditions for collaboration seem to be related to collegiality. Collegiality is also a factor often cited in relation to school culture. Barth (1990) offers an operational definition of collegiality in schools:

> Collegiality is the presence of four specific behaviors, as follows: Adults in schools *talk about practice*. These conversations about teaching and learning are frequent, continuous, concrete, and precise. Adults in schools *observe each other* engage in the practice of teaching and administration. These observations become the practice to reflect on and talk about. Adults engage together in *work on curriculum* by planning, designing, researching, and evaluating curriculum. Finally adults in schools *teach each other* what they know about teaching, learning, and leading. Craft knowledge is revealed, articulated, and shared (Barth, 1990:31).

Barth (1990) goes on to explain the role of the principal in developing collegiality:

> There is growing evidence that principals who value collegiality can help a school move toward it. Principals may not have tremendous resources at their disposal, but most have more than they think. For instance, Little (1981) found that the prevalence of the collegiality in a school was closely related to four specific behaviors of the principal:
>
> 1. States expectations explicitly for co-operation among teachers, "I expect all of us to work together, help one another, and make our knowledge available."

> 2. Models collegiality, that is, enacts it by joining with teachers and other principals working collaboratively to improve conditions in the school.
>
> 3. Rewards collegiality by granting release time, recognition, space, materials, or funds to teachers who work as colleagues.
>
> 4. Protects teachers who initially engage in collegial behavior and thereby risk the retribution of their fellows (Barth, 1990: 33).

Point three was observable in School C. A large financial commitment was made to 'release' teachers to work together for extended time periods in 'stage groups'. In Little's words, 'granting of release time rewards collegiality.' The principal of School C commented on the impact of the strategy of providing to work in smaller groups:

> The casual relief to allow for grade meetings has been my best strategy…They are sharing ideas and listening to each other at planning meetings. (Interview Principal School C)

Some attempt was made to tap into this notion of collegiality with the introduction of 'learning partners' in the *Primary Literacy Course*. However, respondents in the surveys or interviews did not cite this as a strategy they valued. This may be related to the form it took or to the existing culture in the school coupled with the teachers' attitudes to learning. Shaw (2002) supports this link between the critical roles of relationships, which are dependent on a certain culture:

> We have been quick to recognize the intellectual, conceptual, and academic nature of teaching and learning. However we have been slow to acknowledge that good teaching and improved learning depend very much on the relationships between teachers and students and between teachers and their colleagues and parents. When we study the relationships between fine teachers and their students, it quickly becomes apparent that we are entering the world of soul, the world of spirit and the world of values. What is the quality of relationships that nourish the soul of students? Whether it is a relationship to ones self, to others or to the world, the experience of deep connection arises when there profound respect, a deep caring and a quality of being with that honors the truth of each participant in the relationship (Kessler, 2000). Spirituality is nourished not through formal rituals that students practice in school but by the quality of relationship that is developed between person and world (Miller, 1995). The capacity to be in relationship with ones inner self, to maintain a deeply caring, mutual, respectful relationship with another, to connect meaningfully with a group or community and to nature, are critical for the well being and thus the learning of young people. In a successful school, teachers and leaders alike have given careful thought and take deliberate action in modelling, demonstrating, enjoying and fostering these relationships among students and between students and themselves (Shaw, 2002:7).

Shaw (2002) reports that while this aspect is important, observing it in action is more difficult.

> Almost every study on school improvement, acknowledges the need for collegiality amongst teachers. Despite the rhetoric, in my own research over the last five years, I have found little evidence of teachers working collegially. In describing collegiality, I draw upon the work of Judith Warren Little (1987). She defines collegiality explicitly as follows:
>
> • Adults talk about practice. The conversations about teaching and learning are frequent, continuous, concrete and precise.
>
> • Adults in schools observe each other engaged in the practice of teaching. These observations become the practice to reflect on and talk about.
>
> • The adults engage together in work on curriculum by planning, researching, and evaluating curriculum.
>
> • The adults in schools teach each other what they know about teaching, learning and leading. Craft knowledge is revealed, articulated and shared (Shaw, 2002: 7).

Several of the factors cited by Shaw (2002) were observable in School A. Responses related to change and continued learning are supported Barth (1990) and Shaw (2002). Table 21 shows the respondents intentions to change. These data lead to a need to interpret and understand the role of a school culture, which may support or hinder this change. Schein (1985) argues the impact on the educational practice in a school similar to the emerging picture of School A.

> Its existence (culture of collaboration) made it possible for head teachers, teachers and ancillaries routinely and unself-consciously to work as a team, that is, to behave, despite all their differences, as if they all shared a common goal, to feel collectively responsible for its attainment and always to be ready to help one another towards it. It was also a culture, which helped staff members, including the head, to identify as a group, that is to see one another as friends and to feel a satisfying sense of social cohesion.
>
> This culture arises from and embodies a set of social and moral beliefs about desirable relationships between individuals and communities of which they are part, and not from beliefs about epistemology or pedagogy. It does however have a multiple effect, over time, on the educational practice of the schools in which it exists (Schein, 1985:73).

Schein (1985) goes on to argue the shared responsibility for the development of this type of culture:

> Although the heads consciously initiated and fostered the 'culture of collaboration', cultures cannot be built by one person. They therefore relied extensively on their staff to follow their lead and upon the schools' other leaders for support. (Schein, 1985:75).

During the interviews all the principals commented that they were trying to change the ways the staff worked together. Two were actively trying to change the culture, one trying to maintain it. These findings related to culture and change are again supported by Barth (1990) who argues:

> A community of learners seems to work from assumptions fundamentally different from those of the list makers:
>
> • Schools have the capacity to improve themselves, if the conditions are right. A major responsibility of those outside the schools is to help provide these conditions for those inside.
>
> • When the need and the purposes are there, when the conditions are right, adults and students alike learn and each energizes and contributes the learning of the other.
>
> • What needs to be improved about schools is their culture, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and the nature and quality of learning experiences.
>
> • School improvement is an effort to determine and provide, from without and within, conditions under which the adults and youngsters who inhabit schools will promote and sustain learning among themselves.
>
> Taking these assumptions seriously leads to some fresh thinking about the CULTURE of schools and about what people do in them. For instance, the principal need no longer be the "headmaster" or "instructional leader", pretending to know all, one who consumes lists from above and transmits them to those below. The more crucial role of the principal is as *head learner*, engaging in the most important enterprise of the schoolhouse experiencing, displaying, modelling, and celebrating what is hoped and expected that teachers and pupils will do well.
>
> ...However, *that* a teacher or principal is learning something is probably far more important to the creation of a CULTURE of learning in a school than any list of *what* a teacher or principal should know (Barth, 1990:45-46).

Principal as 'head learner' was not observed, however, in School A the value placed on learning for the staff was observable. There was a strong focus on professional development. The principal from School A commented in the interview, 'a lot of learning comes after school bouncing ideas around.' Further comments by the principal from School A may explain:

> The culture is positive. This is so valuable and makes a big difference about making people happy and feeling good about their work. It's a place where they are interested in their own learning. (Interview Principal School A)

The research of McLaughlin and Talbert (1983) and Rosenholtz (1989) support this approach. Their research describes the positive outcomes, which result from collaborative inquiry. Principal support was not rated equally in all the schools but was positive. The difference in School A was that the teachers said 'the principal is hands on'. Several teachers commented that the principal in School B does not go into classrooms. While the principal may have certain plans and opportunities in mind for the development of teachers it seems the teachers see value in a 'hands on' principal.

Attitude to learning is also reflected in the statistic of 25.8% of teachers in School A when referring to staff support. Several factors could contribute to this statistic. One factor may be that the teaching staff is small in number. I observed how easily conversation flowed in meetings and informally with a small group of teachers. It was easy to be heard and there was time for everyone to voice an opinion. Secondly the principal from School A actively promoted professional sharing by ensuring teachers attended outside courses in pairs. The principal of School A states:

> …'professional development that our staff go to tend to be issues in the school, so it's about moving the school along not just a teacher.' (Interview Principal School A)

Thirdly, all staff from School A appeared interested in learning which was reflected in professional discussion during break times and optional get togethers before and after school. 80% of the teachers from School A named a change they would like to make in their teaching (Table 16). The principal of School B indicated she recognised the importance of discussion when she commented, 'I need to create a climate for discussion' (Interview Principal School B). However at School B union issues were observed to be impacting on staff cohesion. Sarason (1996) argues that the influence of teacher unions have a definite effect on culture especially with respect to the processes and pace of change. This influence appeared to be evident at School B.

Values and Beliefs

The explanation of the role of the principal in the last two quadrants describes the role in relation to the culture in general and specifically in relation to creating an environment which values collaboration and fosters collegiality and supportive relationships. A 'sense of purpose' is listed in this quadrant and is related to those findings.

Being Catholic schools, each school had particular rituals and ceremonies and a written vision and mission statement. Treston (2001) sees the rituals and ceremonies as opportunities for teachers to grow into spirituality:

> The school year includes assemblies, rituals, retreats, religious education, liturgies, multicultural religious rites and practices, school chaplains, justice projects, celebrations of the liturgical seasons, prayers, professional formation times and sacred symbols. (Treston, 2001:36).

Responses varied when respondents were asked to describe the Diocesan mission and vision, the school's mission and vision statements and the principal's vision for the school. Respondents were largely unaware of the diocesan vision and mission and the vision and mission of their own school but were confident they knew the vision of their principal. Tables 28 and 29 show the teacher's opinion of their principal's vision and each principal's description of their own vision. The data indicate a sense of purpose clearly articulated by the principals and that the teachers were aware of that purpose. According to Schein (1985) the articulation of vision by the leader is crucial:

> …Organizational cultures are created by leaders, and three of the most crucial functions of leadership may be the creation, the sustaining and – if and when that may become necessary – the destruction of culture (Schein, 1985:102).

Schein also argues that leaders shape and develop culture. Interestingly, he talks about leaders at the stage of creation needing 'the ability to articulate and enforce a vision' *(ibid*.p.317). Schein (1985) also argues that the clarity of the vision plays an important role in building a cohesive school culture. Only then is it possible for the vision to be 'played out' in daily activities. The complete school vision and mission statements from the research schools can be found in Appendix F. These are coded to preserve anonymity but contain statements such as '…working together with a positive, Christian environment…', '…an educating community…support each other in pursuing the highest quality education…' and 'to be a school where individuals will reach their full potential…'.

The data indicate that the culture evolving from or supported by the vision of the principal or combined vision of the school can be observed. This is supported by the observations and opinions of several of the office personnel.

School A

> School A. Very reflective learning culture. A very collaborative K-6 culture. They are a staff that is well led. They do have conversations about improving learning and standards and reflect how they can do it better. I have seen 2 principals in that school. It was never held up for outstanding practice but it has come a long way as a team. She thinks outside the square. She is not daunted. I like to go there because I like the talk. She processes well but so does some of the other staff. She has very good linking processes. She mentors strongly with another Principal. (Interview D4)

School B

> School B is unusual. There are some excellent teachers. Well-intentioned leadership team. They do not seem to gel. There is not whole school discussion about the big issues. (Interview D1)

> School B would perceive themselves as being different from other schools in the diocese by virtue of the students. They would believe that had more challenging and difficult teaching situation than others. They are very tolerant, accepting and valuing of the kids. It appears to be a happy place for kids. The teachers in the main are fairly good basic teachers. I am not sure many of them would be aware of the need to change their practice. They are fairly comfortable with where they are at. It's been over a number of principalships where there has been a high degree of pastoral care. While I have no problems with that it can make it a comfortable place for teachers. That's OK but kids should always come first. It is a harmonious for kids and has been for some time. (Interview D3)

School C

> School C, I am not there much but have noticed a huge change. There is a far more positive environment. Very rapid change. Her leadership style is quite extraordinary and is hands on. She is not just the principal who supports with resources and time. She is hands on and rolls up her sleeves and models. She is an excellent teacher. (Interview D1)

> School C. There has been quite a significant shift in terms of how the staff perceives themselves. Under this leadership she has made opportunities for learning. She has been sensible enough to target key people in the school and trust that ripple effect. Some have a bit of responsibility now and see themselves as leaders in the school. She is appointing new vibrant people. There is a mix now of the old and the new. Before they were quite autonomous. Some say she is moving too quickly and the expectations are too great but most see they are on a journey and it's not a bad journey to be taking. She has been pretty reasonable but they haven't had expectations before. She reads the situation well. She has held her vision up front from the start. (Interview D3)

These observations and data collected indicate the feasibility of being able to accurately observe the culture in a school from within and from outside. In addition, the history of the

school appears to have impact on the existing school culture. Table 23 summarises the teacher descriptors of the culture and the relationships in place in the school. Field notes and artefacts collected indicate a history of positive relationships in School A and that others see the school as harmonious. The comments from Schools B and C were inconsistent and the details regarding those schools cannot be commented on if anonymity is to be preserved. However, the data collected indicate that the existing culture in both of those schools has been affected by various past events. There were long-standing staff members in each of the schools some of whom appeared to be exhibiting some resistance to changing the way things are done. Barth (2001) refers to this when he argues:

> [T]he school culture is a complex patterns of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, values, ceremonies, traditions and myths that are deeply engrained in the very core of the organization. The culture is the historically transmitted pattern of meaning that wields astonishing power in shaping what people think and how they act…And all school cultures are incredibly resistant to change (Barth, 2001:7)

Dwyer (1993) also refers to the traditions of the school or its history when referring specifically to the culture in Catholic schools.

Conditions

School environment, school and class size, resources and external forces were all factors observed or mentioned in the research schools as having some impact on their learning and are also related to the school culture. The issue of size of staff, particularly in relation to the quality of professional conversation, was observed. Class sizes varied across the research schools, however only one comment was made as to this being a factor which hindered the teacher making change.

Availability of resources was rated highly for School A. 33.2% of the teachers indicated that availability of resources enhanced their learning. The principal of School A provides each teacher with their own budget in order that they can make decisions as to needs. Other items are readily purchased from the school budget.

Schools B and C indicated support across the categories of staff support, resources and follow up. School C highly valued what they called ‘follow up’. Two types of follow up were referred

to across the responses from all teachers, the follow-up provided by the system (CSO) and the follow up provided by the school.

The 'resources support' preferred by this principal was to bring in an outside consultant with the brief to facilitate a series of 'stage' meetings with clearly articulated outcomes. The smaller groups were productive and professional conversation began to develop as the meetings continued. This model involved a large number of relief teachers to free the classroom teachers for the meetings. Implicit in this action is the value the principal placed on this process and on the teachers' participation in these meetings. 41% of the respondents from School C cited this as an effective strategy. This approach is argued by Fullan (1990) when he cites Stallings (1989), and states that teachers are more likely to change their behaviour and continue to use new ideas under the following conditions:

> they become aware of the need for improvement through their analysis of their own observation profile;
>
> they make a written commitment to try new ideas in their classroom the next day;
>
> they modify the workshop ideas to work in their classroom and school;
>
> they try the ideas and evaluate the effect;
>
> they observe in each other's classrooms and analyze their own data;
>
> they report their success or failure to their group;
>
> they discuss problems and solutions regarding individual students and/or teaching subject matter;
>
> they need a wide variety of approaches; modelling, simulations, observations, critiquing video tapes, presenting at professional meetings;
>
> they learn in their own way continuity to set new goals for professional growth (Fullan, 1990:3-4).

Time was the factor nominated as having the greatest negative effect on teacher learning (Table 20). It was a greater problem in the larger schools. Resources had an effect and parents were mentioned in schools A and B. 15.7% nominated 'Other' in School B and this included a variety of comments including 'older teachers who won't change', 'class size' and 'children's backgrounds'.

Theory in Action

Where teachers have knowledge and clarity around the school vision and mission statements there is a positive impact on the school community and subsequently the school culture. These statements should say something about the learning in that particular community. Retallick, Cocklin and Coombe (1999) confirm this belief:

> Communities are organised around relationships and ideas. They create social structures that bond people together in a oneness and that bind them to a set of shared values and ideas. (Retallick, Cocklin and Coombe. 1999:15).

For change to take place all must agree and acknowledge the value of change. This may be achieved through striving to become a learning community and reviewing the role of the leader. The further exploration of this aspect may be a great benefit to schools, particularly those where the culture can be described as 'fragmented'. Sergiovanni (1994) argues the importance of this:

> Becoming a community of learners, by contrast, is an adventure not only in learning but an adventure in shared leadership and authentic relationships. (Sergiovanni, 1994:155).

The culture of the school can be viewed through the areas of school community, values and beliefs, processes in place and existing conditions. The grounded theory provides a means of observing the culture and identifying areas requiring development. In addition to Figure 13, Table 3 provides a guide to observing and planning for change in staff support, models to nurture better sharing and conversation and directions for the principal to develop a school culture which provides for reflective learning for students and teachers.

Table 31 Guiding questions for reflection on the school culture

School Community	Values and Beliefs
What is the number and make up of the student population? What are the observable leadership behaviours? How does the principal perceive the role of leader? How does the staff perceive the principal? What is the number and make up of the teachers? What are the professional stages of development of the teachers? What home/school partnerships are in place? What is the quality of parental involvement?	What is the climate in the school now? What might it become? Is there evidence of shared values? How was the school vision and mission arrived at? How is the vision and mission visible in the day to day running of the school? What is the history (positive and negative) of the school?
Practice	**Conditions**
What is the nature of the interactions between staff and between staff and students? What evidence is there of collegial work? What opportunities exist for teachers to reflect on their teaching practice? What is the level of professional conversation? When does this conversation take place? Who is involved?	What is the size of the school? What is the general layout and implications of that layout? Describe the environment. Describe the conditions of the building and school property? Are there any other influencing factors from outside bodies? What is the quality of the relationship between the school and head office?

The school leader is acknowledged in all four quadrants. My research and the research of others (Barth, 1990, 2001, 2002; Goodlad, 2000; Wideen and Andrews, 1987; Beck and Murphy, 1996; Frieberg, 1999) highlight the role of the principal in developing or maintaining a culture of learning in a school. In addition there are strong indications of other factors involved. These factors (Figure 12) interact with each other in the development of a learning culture along with the model of professional learning experienced by the teacher. This grounded theory concludes the role of the leader is only one factor within the four quadrants but none the less a critical one. Fullan (1994) offers some practical advice for the principal committed to building learning schools:

i) Understand the Culture of the School
ii) Value your Teachers: Promote their Professional Growth
iii) Extend What You Value
iv) Express What You Value
v) Promote Collaboration; Not Cooptation
vi) Make Menus, Not Mandates
vii) Use Bureaucratic Means to Facilitate, Not Constrain
viii) Connect with the Wider Environment (Fullan, 1994:60).

This grounded theory provides a framework for leaders and school communities to better understand the culture of the school recommended by Fullan (1994) in the above quote.

Part Five of the Model: Culture Develops

The factors identified within a school culture (Figure 13) have the potential to consolidate a learning culture, fragment a culture or develop a culture. Further if viewed within the grounded theory the culture can be influenced by the choice of professional development activity, the actual professional development activity, the teachers' perceptions of self and the existing school culture. All the parts of the model are recursive and highly interactive. Further the model highlights the enabling or inhibiting effects of these factors on teacher learning.

Theory in Action in Broken Bay

None of the respondents described their school as a learning community but the teachers from School A commented on the staff support, professional conversation and a general interest in learning. Barth (1990) comments on similar factors:

> Teachers in a learning community engage in continuous inquiry about teaching. They are researchers, students of teaching, who observe others teach, have others observe them talking and teaching, and help others teach (Barth, 1990:46).

In the survey, teachers commented on the need for follow up as an enabler of their learning. They expressed a need to 'revisit' their learning in some way although this was reported as a greater need in School C. Respondents saw this as occurring as structured course follow up provided by the system. None of the teachers interviewed saw this need being met in the school setting but perceived it as a system responsibility. The past plans for professional development activities in the diocese have not allowed for recurrent participation, as described by Owen (1990) when he comments on change as a process and the need for follow up and reflection:

> Effective professional development occurs when a design provides for recurrent participation of the learners. It is now almost a cliché that change is a process, not an event, and that the acquisition of educational knowledge and skills that result in lasting change is a complex process. The implementation of this principle also allows opportunities for reflection and feedback. This is predicated on the assumption that participants learn by

> applying new knowledge skills, that theoretical inputs must be accompanied by the opportunity to put such inputs into practice, and that the sharing of practice by participants further enhances learning (Owen, 1990:178).

The data confirm the positive role of reflection for the teachers involved in this study. Barth (1990) argues the development of learning of all through a variety of processes. He stresses the importance of the development of a community of learners to enhance reflection on learning:

> We talk constantly about the importance of student achievement, of teachers' staff development, and of the professional growth of principals as if they occur on different planets during different epochs. In a community of learners, adults and children learn simultaneously and in the same place to think critically and analytically and to solve problems that are important to them. In a community of learners, learning is endemic and mutually visible (Barth, 1990:43).

Twenty per cent of the teachers in School A said they would do 'more reading' and no teacher made this comment in the other schools. It was observed in School A that professional reading is valued and materials are made available. Learning is important, as the principal says, 'everyone wants to learn'. This appears to be a school with a learning culture in place and a principal aware of the need to maintain and develop that culture.

> It's a place where they are interested in their own learning. I was mindful that unless we kept a focus on that it might disappear, so we talk about it regularly. We are quite affirming of each other. (Interview Principal School A)

However, it was a teacher from School B who said:

> I believe it is our responsibility as educators to make changes and not the responsibility of others. Support is great but ultimately it depends on the motivation of the teachers. (B4)

When discussing professional development the principal from School C commented:

> I have not encouraged much professional reading and would like to do that. It will fit into the new stage meeting structure next year. It was probably not the right time this year anyhow. It's been more important giving them planning time and time to talk. (Interview Principal School C)

Figure 14 serves to further 'unpack' and explain school culture. It presents the observable aspects of the 'existing school culture' suggesting that the impact of these aspects may have several effects.

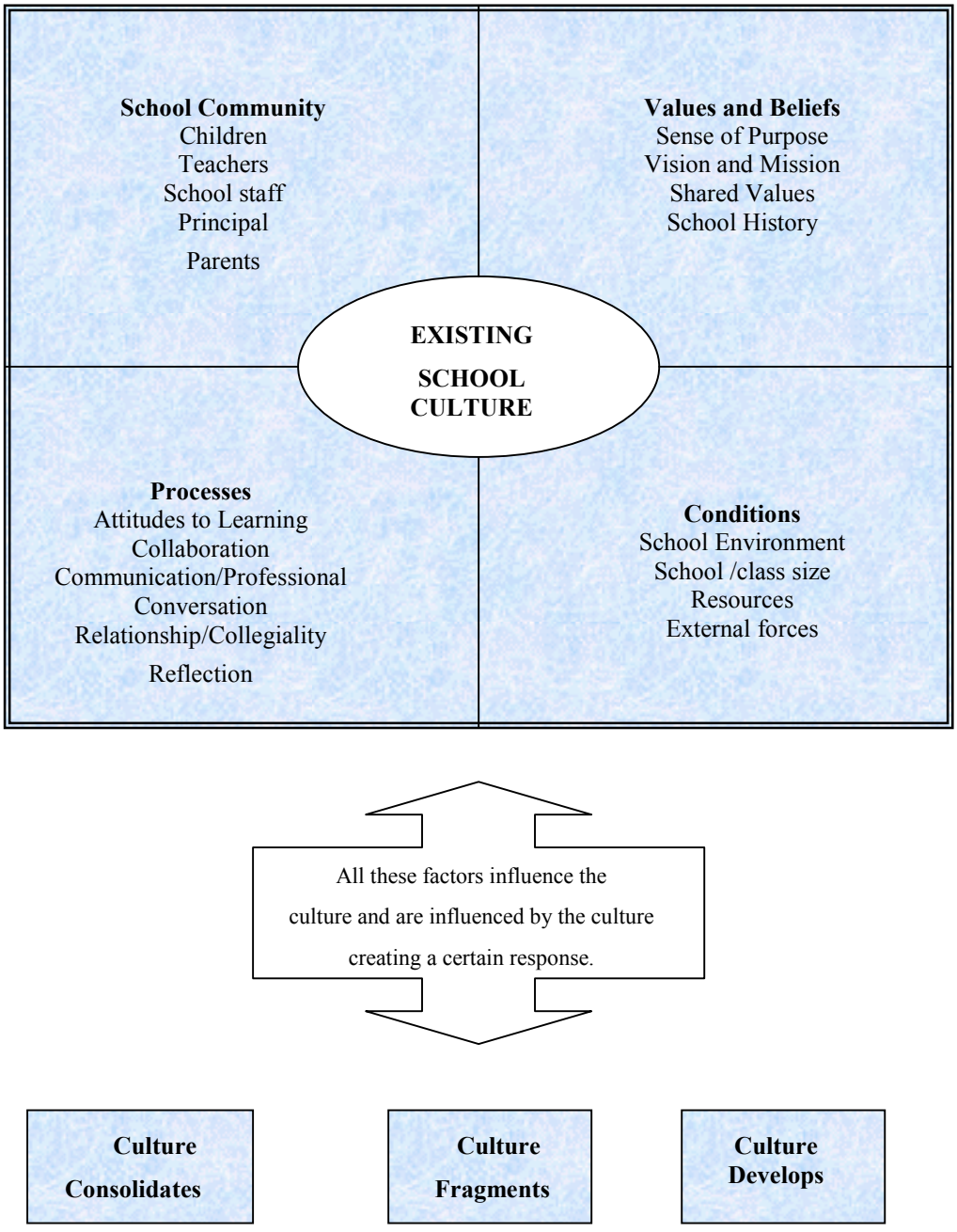

Figure 14 School Culture Quadrant and Effects

Figure 14 shows the effects observed in the research schools. In one, the culture appeared to consolidate. That is, whether the existing culture is positive or negative, certain factors can

work together to consolidate that culture. School A was a positive example of this. In another the culture appeared to be fragmented. This is the result of certain factors working against each other resulting in a fragmenting of the existing culture. School B appeared to be an example of this. Lastly, the culture may develop. This was observable in School C. This was a culture, which historically had some negative features. Due to changes in all four quadrants of this model there were visible signs of the culture developing in a positive way in terms of it becoming an environment for learning. The literature argues the difficulty in changing culture. Rossman, Corbett and Firestone (1988) cite Sarason:

> Sarason (1971) convincingly argues that the culture of schools poses a considerable obstacle to change. Every alteration affects in some way an existing regularity. Reinforced by myth and ceremonies, those regularities become stubbornly entrenched. Often they are the force that repels the change, rather than the change being the force that alters operations (Rossman, Corbett and Firestone, 1988:90).

It seems that for change to occur there has to be an awareness of the culture which was observable in School C. As Barth (2001:12) says, 'to change a culture we must be aware of the culture. The way things are here.'

Theory in Action

The guiding questions proposed for reflection on the school culture (Table 31) used in conjunction with the categories described by Rosenholtz (1989) and Hargreaves (1993), summarised in Table 4 provide a tool to examine a school culture and identify the areas where there may be change. The final guiding question is, 'Does the existing school culture have the potential to increase student learning?' The questions (Table 31) are designed to lead to informed theorising which suggests professional development should be context specific, developmental, continuous and involve reflection by participants and evaluation by the provider.

A culture favourable to learning is linked to purpose and clarity, pleasure in learning for all, discipline and order, shared planning, efficient management, shared goals and values and teachers who know what they are doing and why. The relationship between the professional development activity, the teacher and the school culture is evident in the schematic representation of the grounded theory (Figure 12). The grounded theory suggests that as these factors interact, learning can be enabled or hindered.

Conclusion

Strauss and Corbin (1990) state that a grounded theory should adequately represent the phenomenon that was studied:

> A well-constructed grounded theory will meet four central criteria for judging the applicability of theory to a phenomenon: fit, understanding, generality, and control. If theory is faithful to the everyday reality of the substantive area and carefully induced from diverse data, then it should fit that substantive area. Because it represents that reality, it should also be comprehensible and make sense both to the persons who were studied and to those practising in that area. If the data upon which it is based are comprehensive and the interpretations conceptual and broad, then the theory should be abstract enough and include sufficient variation to make it applicable to a variety of contexts related to that phenomenon. Finally, the theory should provide control with regard to action toward the phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin 1990:23).

The grounded theory, which has emerged from my data, fulfils these four criteria. It 'fits' the substantive area because it represents the findings of the study. It provides a set of principles, which explains the process of teacher learning in relation to school culture. These principles do not stand-alone and are interdependent.

The data and subsequently the grounded theory arising from this research provide insights into the relationship between teacher learning within the context of the Catholic Schools Office schools and in the wider context. Greene, (2001) argues:

> As a general rule, teachers have to accept professional development that is often low quality in structure, content and preparation. Of all professional callings, one would think that educators would not only receive, but would demand, professional education of the highest standard. Regretfully, for whatever reason, this is not the case. The typical activities, such as one-day subject conferences, curriculum briefings auspiced by the Department (or its statutory offshoots) and one-off professional development activities have their purpose, but they do not lead to skill development and intensive professional reflection. When these activities are of high quality, they tend to be more of the same, therefore not leading to a change in practice or really expanding the professional horizons of the participating teacher. I would argue that these activities only have a marginal relationship to the core work of teachers and their career advancement. (Greene, 2001:12)

While the Broken Bay Diocese has a history of providing high quality professional development there are opportunities to reap greater benefits from the investments made in this area. North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (2002) cites Knowles (1980) who recommends that adult education programs should do the following:

> Adult education programs should have a climate of respect.
>
> Adult education programs should be conducted in a collaborative mode.
>
> Adult education programs should help learners achieve self-direction and empowerment.
>
> Adult education programs should capitalize on learners' experiences.
>
> Adult education programs should foster participation.
>
> Adult education programs should foster critical, reflective thinking.
>
> Adult education programs should foster learning for action.
>
> Adult education programs should foster problem posing and problem solving.
>
> These recommendations are helpful when planning effective professional development for teachers (NCREL, 2002:1).

While the list is not new regarding findings related to adult learning it does provide challenges for providers of professional development. However, in addition to these guidelines schools as well as the system have to value learning for adults as much as they do for children. It is possible and even desirable to promote collaborative work and collegiality but much harder to develop a culture where teachers ask the hard questions of each other and are prepared to provide 'critical' feedback and debate.

Based on the review of the literature, data analysis and ultimately the grounded theory which grew out of that data, it is concluded that choice of professional development, the structures and processes within that professional development, the attributes of the teacher and the school culture all affect teacher learning. The grounded theory is represented as a framework that has the potential to assist schools in examining the issues involved in making professional development decisions (Figures 12 and 13) and further provides a framework to examine the culture in which they are working (Table 31). The role of the school culture warrants more attention. If perceived differently Barth (1990) argues:

> The role of relationships between and among people would change. All would begin to value each other for the expertise that each has. But all would be perceived as learners, including the principal who still may be viewed as being a leader but a leader who is perceived as being 'head learner' (Barth, 1990:46).

The grounded theory suggests changing the form of professional development may not have any effect on teacher learning. More likely it is the school culture that will determine what happens to the learning that takes place. Moreover, it seems that the structures and processes that are built into professional learning experiences will be critical in determining the learning that takes place. In other words the grounded theory describes a complex, recursive process.

Given the findings from my own data and others referred to in the research it is interesting to conclude by referring to Joyce (1990) who argues:

> The future culture of the school will be fashioned largely by how staff development systems evolve (Joyce, 1990:xv).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Invitation to Schools

CSO Letterhead

7th August, 2001

The Principal

School name

School address

I would like to invite you to be part of a project funded by an Australian Research Grant awarded to the University of Wollongong and Broken Bay Diocese. The final year of the project will undertake to investigate the 'Relationship Between Professional Development and School Culture'. The research will take place under the supervision of Dr Jan Turbill and Associate Professor Brian Cambourne.

The research will involve 4 schools in the Broken Bay Diocese identified by purposive sampling, to undertake an in-depth investigation of the links between teachers' professional learning and literacy teaching. Specifically it seeks to identify and explain those factors within the school culture, which support and/or hinder the way teachers turn professional learning experiences into classroom practice. The findings of this project will inform the provision of future professional development.

The research will be carried out by Wendy Bean. If you choose to take part it will involve providing a short staff meeting time during August for the project to be explained to the staff in view of teachers gaining information prior to agreeing to take part. Once a commitment is made all staff will be asked to complete a survey and will be involved in one to one interviews. Relief will be provided to allow the interviews to take place during school hours if required. The researcher may also seek to spend some time in the school to observe various aspects of the school day.

All information collected will be used as data for the project and will treated as confidential and will be securely stored. At no time will actual schools or teachers be identified.

Shortly you will be contacted by Wendy Bean in order to ascertain your willingness to take part in this project. If you choose to accept the invitation a date will be set for the initial meeting at that time.

I commend the project to you, and trust that you will consider taking the opportunity to reflect on professional development activities and to share your experiences and recommendations.

Please contact me for any further information.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Dr Mark Askew Head of Educational Services

Appendix B

Consent Form: Survey

Research Title: An investigation of the 'Relationship Between Professional Development and School Culture'.

Researcher Wendy Bean

Funding Body Australian Research Council

The research will involve 3 schools in the Broken Bay Diocese to undertake an in-depth investigation of the links between teachers' professional learning in literacy teaching and their classroom practice. Specifically it seeks to identify and explain those factors within the school culture which support and/or hinder the way teachers turn professional learning experiences into classroom practice. The findings of this project will inform the provision of future professional development. The research will be used as part of a Masters Honours Thesis being carried out by Wendy Bean supervised by Dr Jan Turbill in the Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong.

You will be asked to fill out a survey and volunteers will be sought from each school to take part in an interview at a later date. You can indicate your willingness to be a volunteer to be interviewed at the end of the survey. Those who volunteer to be interviewed will be asked to complete a separate consent form before the interviews take place.

Although you are asked to write your name on the survey, strict confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained. The original surveys will be coded with a number and the names removed. The coded list with names will be kept separate from all surveys and locked in a filing cabinet within the office of my supervisor.

If you would like to discuss this research further please contact:

Dr Mark Askew, Dr Jan Turbill or Wendy Bean.

Dr Mark Askew on 94873777 Email:mark.askew@cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au

Dr Jan Turbill on 02-42 214 133 Email: jan_turbill@uow.edu.au

Wendy Bean on 02-94187910 Email: **wbean@zeta.org.au**

If you have any enquiries regarding the conduct of the research please contact the Secretary of the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee on (02) 42214457.

Please sign the attached form and return it with your completed survey.

Many thanks,

Wendy Bean

To be returned to Wendy Bean, PO Box 88, Lane Cove NSW 1595
Phone: 94187910

Research Title

'Relationship Between Professional Development and School Culture'.

I, ...(Teacher's name) will participate in the research conducted by Wendy Bean. The project has been described to me in the information sheet and by my principal. I understand that the data collected will be used to aid in the compilation of research documents that will address the above research and I consent for the data to be used in that manner.

I understand that I can discontinue my participation in the abovementioned research at any time and withdraw any information provided.

Signed_____

Date _____

Appendix C

Consent Form: Interview

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

Interview date: _____

Interview to be conducted by Wendy Bean.

Research Title

'Relationship Between Professional Development and School Culture'.

I, ...(Teacher's name) will participate in the research conducted in the form of a taped interview by Wendy Bean. I authorise that the interviewer may make a transcript of the interview.

The project has been described to me in the information sheet and by my principal. I understand that the data collected will be used to aid in the compilation of research documents that will address the above research and I consent for the data to be used in that manner.

Signed_____

Date _____

To be returned to Wendy Bean, PO Box 88, Lane Cove NSW 1595

Phone: 94187910

Appendix D

Teacher Survey

School_____

Name _____

Class taught _____

Present position _____

Years of teaching_____

1. List the professional development (literacy only) you have attended in the past 5 years:

1.1. Which one was the most successful for you?

1.2. What were the highlights of this course for you?

2.0 List 2 or 3 things that you think make a professional development course good or useful?

2.1 What was the least useful course you attended over the last 5 years? List the things that made it ineffective?

3.0 How schools/administration can support Professional Development. Reflect on the professional development course you listed in 1.1

3.1 Make a list of the things that happened in your school, which you think supported your implementation of some of the teaching strategies, organisational procedures, learning activities, etc, which this course recommended?

3.2 Did you feel you were given support in implementing what you learned? Please explain your response.

3.3 Were there things that seemed to hinder your implementation of some of the teaching strategies, organisational procedures, learning activities, etc, which the course recommended? Please explain your response.

3.4 What extra things might you have done to implement your learning from the course if you had the opportunity to do so?

3.5 What would help you to continue to make positive and beneficial changes to the way you teach?

4.0 How confident do you feel as a literacy teacher? Please tick.

Not Confident	OK	Very Confident

4.1 Do you wish to change your teaching of literacy?

If so what would you like to learn more about?

If not, why not?

4.2 How do you think you best learn?

5.0 What future professional development opportunities would you like to be made available?

6.0 Are you willing to be interviewed? Please circle.

YES	NO

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix E

Questions Used to Guide Interviews

TEACHERS

Professional Development

1. What changes have taken place as a result of you attending (nominated course)?
2. How relevant is the professional development that CSO offers in the area of literacy?
3. What if any decisions about PD made centrally would be best made at the school level? Reverse?
4. If you could make one change/suggestion about PD in CSO-what would it be?
5. In the survey 80% of teachers said the thing that most supported them in implementing their learning from the course they mentioned was the principal.

   What does that look like?

   Is it only the principal?

School Culture

6. How would you best describe the school culture in this school?
7. How would you describe the relationships in this school?
8. Does the school provide a context for your learning?
9. Do you know what the school mission or vision is?

   How was it arrived at?

   What is your own mission or vision?

   What is the Diocesan mission?

PRINCIPALS

School Culture

1. How would you best describe the school culture in this school?
2. How would you describe the working relationships in this school?

3. Does the school provide a context for teacher learning?
4. How was the school mission/vision arrived at?

   What is your own mission or vision?

   What is the Diocesan mission?

Professional Development

5. What is your main focus in the school?

   What do you want to change?
6. In the survey 80% of teachers said the thing that most supported them in implementing their learning from the course they mentioned was the principal.

   What does that look like?

   Is it only the principal?
7. What if any decisions about PD made centrally would be best made at the school level?

   Reverse?
8. If you could make one change/suggestion about PD in CSO-what would it be?

OFFICE PERSONNEL

Professional Development

1. What criterion is used to select Professional Development activities?
2. What if any decisions about professional development made centrally would be best made at the school level? Reverse?
3. If you could make one change/suggestion about PD in CSO-what would it be?
4. In the survey 80% of teachers said the thing that most supported them in implementing their learning from the course they mentioned was the principal. What does that look like? Is it only the principal?
5. Is there a policy document in CSO regarding Professional Development?
6. How would you best describe the school culture in School A, School B and School C?
7. What role do you think school culture has on teacher learning?
8. What is the Diocesan mission? Your vision?

Appendix F

Mission Statements

In the CSO Annual Report (2001) the Vision and Mission statements of the Diocese are stated as:

Vision:

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Broken Bay is a community, which exercises a ministry of leadership and service to Catholic Schools. This community recognises and values the unique gifts of all and aspires to foster a climate in which these can be nurtured and shared. This community believes that the foundation of its ministry is the Gospel values lived and taught by Jesus Christ.

In its ministry the Office promotes the Kingdom of God through the development of relationships based on truth, hope, love, justice and the opportunity for growth. The Catholic Schools Office seeks to exercise a leadership style that inspires, empowers and challenges individuals, groups and schools in their parish communities to accept responsibility for their own growth and development. The Catholic Schools Office adopts a prophetic role in today's diverse and pluralistic society leading to an integration of faith and culture.

Mission:

The Catholic Schools Office works to support communities in their provision of quality education. It aims to achieve excellence in all teaching and learning offered in Catholic faith and values, in Religious Education and all Key Learning Areas. It challenges school communities to provide opportunities to all students to reach their full potential and to become wholly integrated individuals who, as active members of the community, are being empowered to embrace the future with faith, hope, tolerance and love (CSO, 2001:11).

The schools' mission and vision statements are as follows. The codes have been changed to maintain anonymity.

School 1

Mission: School X is a community of love and faith.

As such, we are committed to working together within a positive, Christian environment reflecting the Gospel values in the pursuit of excellence.

Core values: Respect, Hope, Justice, Service, Celebration.

(Strategic Management Plan, 2000-2004. 2001)

School 2

Vision: Our vision is that our school will be an educating community in which children, teachers, parents and pastor support each other in pursuing the highest quality education for each individual child in a context that is given energy and direction by the Catholic faith and the values of Jesus Christ.

Mission: It is the mission of all members of this community to work together to provide a learning environment which:

- proclaims the Good News that life is meaningful; that people can make a difference and that there is every reason to hope;
- reflects a Catholic philosophy of life and is energised by such gospel values of love, compassion, responsibility, reconciliation and service;
- is safe, caring, happy and stimulating;
- responds to individual needs, promotes self-confidence and challenges all to give of their best;
- is inclusive, inviting pupils, teachers, parents and pastor into real partnership;
- is educationally appropriate, offering challenging programs, committed to excellence,
- promotes a strong commitment to justice.

(Parent Information Booklet, 2001)

School 3

Vision: Is to be a Catholic school of excellence where individuals will reach their full potential in a safe and caring environment.

Mission: As an integral part of our parish we are committed to:

• Enhancing faith development within a welcoming Catholic community.

• Being a school of excellence in teaching and learning.

• Treating all as individuals with their different potential for development.

• Providing a safe and caring environment for learning.

(Strategic Management Plan 2001-2004, 2001)

Appendix G

Initial Organisation of Data

Note: Some information has been removed to maintain the anonymity of the schools.

Data	Who	Why	What is it Telling Me?
Survey	Teachers X 3 schools Total 45 responses	To find out what PD teachers had done. What PD they thought was successful. What supported them back at school?	The most significant supporting factor was the principal. Most popular course was FWS and PLC. PD must have practical content, sharing, good presenters and relevance to be useful. Principal support key in all 3 schools. Follow up rated very high in one school only. Thing that most hindered learning was time. In all schools 50% or more were very confident as a literacy teacher.
Data	**Who**	**Why**	**What is it Telling Me?**
Field Notes	3 schools over 24 days	To observe interactions in the school. To observe procedures in the school. To observe the 'culture'. To observe relationships.	School A small and friendly. Small but well maintained site. Principal classroom based, and organised. Good relationships. A lot of practical support given such as organising resources and writing materials. The principal does a lot of this. School B large, 2 stream. Small site. Some staff conflict with the major issue being the union. Principal has been there 4 years. Took over a school with issues, Principal calm and interested. Good results. School C 3 stream. Large, mix of teachers who have been there 20 plus years and young ones. Principal keen to lift standards. Thoughtful of process. Staff gets on well but some quite outspoken particularly in staff meetings. A lot of support given by bringing in outside support. All 3 schools have volunteers who work regularly. All get good results (BST).

			All effective, energetic APs.
Data	**Who**	**Why**	**What is it Telling Me?**
Interviews	Teachers	What they changed as a result of most recent PD? Relevance of PD offered? How the principal supported them? How they describe the school culture, and relationships in school. Is the school a context for learning? What is the school, principal, personal vision?	All teachers made changes as a result of the PD they nominated. Most cited the principal as being very important. Most stated the principal as being supportive. Would like follow up courses to consolidate learning. School A High expectations. Very child centred. Dedicated teachers. All very positive about the school culture describing it as collaborative, high expectations, child-oriented etc School being small makes communication easier. Everyone 'pulls their weight' or they are noticed. School B High expectations. Teachers would like more affirmations and for the principal to visit classes. Definite groups/camps among staff. Most had trouble describing the culture. Meetings difficult for everyone to have their say because of size and relationships. School C Teachers feel the principal has high expectations. Some difficulty describing the culture but all cautiously positive. Size makes meetings/communication difficult. Some teachers' feel more stressed with the new principal because they are now accountable. Most feel they are supported. Several commented they feel the principal wants them to be more up to date.
Interviews	Principals	How they describe the school culture, and relationships in school. Is the school a context for learning? What is the school, principal personal vision? Role of principal in supporting teachers learning after PD?	School A Clear about goals and expectations. School B Clear about goals. Thinks the school is hard. School C clear about goals. Wants to improve curriculum knowledge.
Interviews	Office Personnel	Criteria to select PD	Confident about choices being made.

		in diocese. What decisions should be made at school? How does the principal support staff? Comment on school culture in research schools.	See themselves as consultative but schools do not see that. Move to in school PD based on research/reading. No CSO policy on PD. Decided by small group. Attempts to get a PD committee. It began but has been disbanded to be reformed next year because of lack of a brief for the committee. Say there should be stronger conversations with schools/principals re PD. Schools get 15 days that they decide how to use. School A seen as a reflective learning culture. School B perceive themselves as different. The school provides a harmonious environment for children. School C there has been a shift. More opportunities for learning.

Appendix H

Sample Field Notes

28/8/01 School B

Arrived at school early to do a staff meeting describing the research. The principal had given the staff a brief introduction and it was planned they use the meeting time to complete the survey. She felt this would ease the pressure by not asking the teachers to do the survey in their own time, even though it is voluntary.

The principal had attended a meeting the previous day regarding professional development and considered the plan offered for the following year not to be equitable.

In the meeting the staff were quiet and did not ask many questions. Most wrote for about 30 minutes. There was 15 minutes left of meeting time and some general business took place. The principal thanked the staff for their participation.

25/9/01 School A

Certainly feel most comfortable here although I definitely do not feel unwelcome at the other schools. Perhaps it is because the principal is so relaxed and wants to talk. Spent some time looking at the targets the staff is setting for the BST. The practices continue for the end of year production. The staff appears very willing to be involved wherever they are able. It is quite disruptive to normal routines but the staff is positive about the benefits. Several parents are heavily involved. The behaviour at the practise was excellent. Generally the school is very welcoming.

30/10/01 School A

Attended a staff meeting ran by the principal due to finish at 4.30pm. It finished a little later and no one seemed bothered. When it was wrapped up one teacher left and everyone else stayed. A few chatted; others worked on the task they had begun. I left at 5.15pm and there were still 3 or 4 there and I noticed the ones that had left the staff room in their rooms working.

2/11/01 School C

The building program is underway so there is quite a bit of upheaval in terms of accommodation. Two of the teachers who had to move believe the temporary accommodation is better so are quite happy. Teacher X invited me into her room—she talked about grades for next year but is concerned about who her grade partner will be as she doesn't want to work with anyone 'negative'…over morning tea I spoke to the principal who spent the morning in meetings. She was keen to talk about plans for next year and her plans for professional development.

5/11/01 School C

Did a quick interview with the AP today but she had to leave due to an unscheduled appointment. Was willing to be interviewed and offered to do more at another time. Teacher X came to me to make changes, or rather to add to what she said in the interview last week. She chatted for a while about things happening at the school. Was keen that her thoughts were recorded accurately.