2000

Quality teaching and its characteristics

Stanley Warren

University of Wollongong

Recommended Citation
NOTE

This online version of the thesis may have different page formatting and pagination from the paper copy held in the University of Wollongong Library.

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

COPYRIGHT WARNING

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site. You are reminded of the following:

Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.
QUALITY TEACHING AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

from

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

STANLEY WARREN
M Ed (Canberra), BA (New England)
Dip. Teach (Armidale)

Faculty of Education
2000
Declaration

This is to certify that the work presented in this thesis has not been submitted to any other University or Institution for the award of a degree or diploma and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no materials previously published or written by another person, except that which is acknowledged.

Stanley R. Warren
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge the contribution of a wide number of friends and colleagues who have added to this work by their involvement and their encouragement.

The study is distinguished by the participation of highly committed and professional classroom teachers who were willing to open their practice to discussion, observation and critical evaluation. The four teachers involved in the case studies have a stronger commitment to confidentiality than I believe is necessary, as I would like to have singled them out, proclaiming their practice as exemplars for others to see. However, in deference to their wishes, I thank them humbly for their inspiration and that I can call them my colleagues and friends.

I would like to thank the principals and staffs of the four schools in which the research was carried out. I realise the demands this can place on a school, but I am pleased you were able to offer me your friendship and encouragement, especially in the early stages of the work.

Particular thanks are due to my supervisors at the University of Wollongong, Professor John Patterson and Dr Wilma Vialle, who were willing to encourage me throughout the project, accepting my penchant for procrastination and guiding me constantly back to task.

I want to pay a most grateful tribute to my friends and colleagues Dr Diana Kendall and Dr Laurie Kendall who demonstrated the depth of our friendship by adopting the role of critical friends in the development of the written product, constantly prompting me to be confident that the work was valuable and that it demonstrated my capacity to write academically. I even came to appreciate the 'nagging' phonecalls.

My friends, who have been nothing but encouragement since the commencement of my academic work, together with the teachers with whom I work at school, have enabled me to continue to believe the study was worth pursuing and worth completing.

Most importantly, I want to celebrate the commitment and love of a faithful family who have been exceptionally patient throughout the whole time. I want to thank my wife, Janette and our children, Brodie, Ross and Sophie for the interest they have taken in my work and for believing in my capacity to achieve the final result.
ABSTRACT

Warren, Stanley Ross. 2000. Quality Teaching and its Characteristics. A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree Doctor of Education (Faculty of Education), at the University of Wollongong, NSW.

In 1994 the OECD implemented an international study of 'Quality Teaching' in an effort to examine the policies and practices that led to an improvement in the quality of teaching. In that study the OECD identified five characteristics that formed the basis for studying the phenomena in eleven countries. The outcome of the work was an extensive report that added to the understandings of what needed to be done to develop in all teachers, aspects of 'quality'.

This study aimed to elucidate the characteristics of quality teachers. Following the successful implementation of an inservice course in the South Coast Region of NSW entitled "Quality Teaching", there was a strong interest in the practices demonstrated by classroom practitioners.

Centred on naturalistic enquiry, this study presents four case studies of classroom teachers. It takes the characteristics of quality teachers outlined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD) and seeks to determine if there is congruence between those characteristics and the work of the four participants in the case studies. The research was carried out using the qualitative methods of interview and observation. After each process, the data collected was clarified in post-observation conferences with the participant and in sessions when the content of interviews was verified and validated. To identify participants for the study, teachers in a variety of different schools were interviewed in terms of their understandings of 'Quality Teaching'. They were asked to identify people they believed demonstrated quality teaching in their day-to-day practice. If the people identified had attended the "Quality Teaching Inservice Course" in South Coast Region, they were considered to be eligible to participate in the study. Participants were selected on the basis of school size and eventually became self-nominating as participants.

The review of the literature confirmed the aspects of quality that are examined in the study, emphasising the complexity of examining the practice of people in the teaching role. It enabled an understanding of each of the five characteristics: Knowledge of Curriculum Areas and Content; Pedagogical Skill; Reflection; Empathy, and, Managerial Competence.

The findings confirm the congruence between four of the characteristics and these people's work. In the case of the fifth area, 'Empathy with the Student', the findings suggest that these people do not regard this 'relationship-based' aspect of their work as the concept of empathy that is defined in the literature. The participants are sensitive to the needs of the students in their classes, but the communication of that sensitivity is focused on positive statements and encouragement rather than the nature of the empathic understanding defined by the literature. This does not decrease the professionalism of any of these teachers nor does it diminish the quality of their work. They are highly committed people who demonstrate both the art and the science of teaching in truly professional ways.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration

Acknowledgements ................................................. i

Abstract ................................................................ ii

Table of Contents ..................................................... iii

Chapter One - Introduction

Background ............................................................... 1

Statement of the Problem ........................................... 8

Purpose of the Study ................................................. 9

Significance of the Study ........................................... 9

Research Question .................................................... 10

Assumption ............................................................. 11

Limitations ............................................................. 12

Research Methods Chosen for the study ....................... 12

Definition of Terms ................................................. 13

Plan of the Thesis .................................................... 15
Chapter Two - Literature Review

Introduction ................................. 16

Quality and Teaching ............................ 16

OECD Review of Quality in Teaching ....................... 20

Teachers: Their Curriculum Knowledge and
Content Knowledge .............................. 23

Teachers and Pedagogical Skill ...................... 28

Teachers and Reflection .......................... 36

Teachers and Empathy ............................ 39

Teachers and Managerial Competence .................... 42

Summary ........................................... 45

Chapter Three - Method

Introduction ...................................... 46

Research Problem .................................... 46

Research Design ..................................... 47

Theoretical Underpinning ............................ 47

Case Study Method .................................... 48

Data Gathering Instruments ....................... 51

Data Recording ..................................... 55
Chapter Four - Results of the Study

Introduction .......................................................... 81

Results of the Case Studies ........................................ 82

Dimension One - Curriculum and Content ............... 82
| Dimension Two - Pedagogical Skill | 97 |
| Dimension Three - Reflection     | 126 |
| Dimension Four - Empathy         | 135 |
| Dimension Five - Managerial Competence | 143 |
| Summary of this Chapter          | 164 |

**Chapter Five - Conclusions and Recommendations**

| Introduction                          | 167 |
| Managerial Competence                 | 168 |
| Pedagogical Skill                     | 171 |
| Knowledge of Curriculum and Content   | 173 |
| Reflection                            | 174 |
| Empathy                               | 175 |
| Conclusions                           | 176 |
| Recommendations for Further Action    | 180 |
| Recommendations for Further Research  | 181 |

**References** | 184 |
List of Figures

3.1 Research Design ................................................................. 47
3.2 Phases of the Study .............................................................. 59
3.3 Coding Curriculum/Content Knowledge ................................. 78
3.4 Coding Pedagogical Skill ...................................................... 78
4.1 Characteristics of a Quality Teacher ...................................... 165

Appendices

A. Interview Schedule - Participants ......................................... 202
B. Interview Schedule - Peers and Supervisors ............................ 205
C. Emergent Criteria - Observations .......................................... 207
D. Field Notes Recording Sheet ................................................ 209
E. Sample Transcript of Interview Data - Participant ................. 211
F. Sample Transcript of Interview Data - Peers .......................... 221
G. Sample Observation and Debrief Transcript .......................... 227
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

This study looked at the practices of quality teachers and their inherent characteristics. It used a case study approach to compare these characteristics to a model presented by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1994 when it established an international study to gain insight into the dynamic nature of teacher quality and to exchange information about policies designed to improve it.

The conceptual framework that underpinned the OECD (1994:3) study consisted of three elements:

• the concept of teacher quality;

• policies aimed at improving or sustaining the quality of teachers or teaching;

• the context of schooling in which policies are to have an effect.

While these three concepts impact on each other, they can also stand alone as concepts that can be more widely researched. To that end, this study took the issue of 'teacher quality' as defined by the OECD and examined the five dimensions that encompass it in four classroom settings with four teachers who were identified as teachers of quality by their peers and supervisors.
Following the social and economic developments of the eighties there emerged an interest in the 'quality movement'. In the business world there was a renewed interest in the Total Quality Management practices espoused by W. Edwards Deming. His theories of 'total quality management' (1986) defined concepts that could be seen in a social, economic and cultural context and which penetrated the educational arena.

In recent times the issue of quality has impinged greatly on the educational arena. Growing out of the business and organisational literature (Covey, 1992; Senge, 1990; Deming, 1986), the concept of quality implies that there are degrees of success and achievement in all spheres of life. As education has such a dominant role in the development of human potential and productivity, it was not surprising that politicians, professionals and the public were keen to apply the concept of quality to schools, classrooms and teachers.

Throughout the late seventies and into the eighties a good deal of research was carried out to illuminate quality teaching practice and with a view to making the teacher's work more effective. Effective, or quality teaching was defined by Cole and Chan (1994:3) as "the actions of professionally trained people that enhance the cognitive, personal, social and physical development of students". This definition was supported by the work of Walberg (1984), Oliva and Henson (1986), Rosenshine and Stevens (1986), Pollard and Tann (1987), Marland (1994) and Perkins and Grotzer (1997).
Quality teaching and teaching effectiveness has gained prominence as an issue in education over the past decade in OECD countries as teaching performance has been tied to economic improvement. Governments have continually raised school education and its improvement as a platform for reform and student results as the indicator of that improvement. The growth in population, added to the impact technology has had on the commercial world and the reducing workforce, has forced governments to defend to their constituencies the quality of the educational services they are providing.

In 1988 the government in New South Wales commissioned a review of the education portfolio, appointing a professed management consultant as the chair of the review. The outcome of that work was entitled: School-Centred Education - Building a More Responsive Education System (Scott, 1990). The review resulted in schools being encouraged to be more entrepreneurial in their activities and more resource-conscious in their management processes. It defined a restructuring of the school system at all levels, as indicated in the new role of schools as self-managing entities. Teachers became involved in school-governance in a more dynamic way and the quality of teachers was seen to be a key concept in efficiency and effectiveness.

Scott (1990) stated:

The recommendations of Schools Renewal have given careful consideration to conditions under which teachers work at all stages: the system will languish unless the department maintains working conditions which will attract, motivate and retain teachers of high calibre. In the final analysis the quality of education depends on the quality of teaching (p.95).
The quality of teaching and subsequent school quality was the focus of work by Brandt (1992) who illuminated the theories of W. Edwards Deming as they relate to school quality. He postulated that the most important focus in considering quality is the process, not the product. However, he cautioned that to focus on the process without the appropriate knowledge or theory could be destructive. This view complemented research carried out by Shulman (1986) who identified the behavioural and organisational aspects of teacher work as being indicators of quality.

Researchers have come to a study of teachers' work in a variety of ways using a variety of terms to describe it. In the research literature of the late eighties and early nineties, concepts such as 'teachers with expertise' or 'expert teacher' were used to describe effective schools and effective teaching (Berliner, 1992 and Harlen, 1996).

Murgatroyd and Morgan (1992), in illuminating a model for Total Quality Management in the school, describe quality in terms of three implicit components as they applied to both the organisation itself and the individuals working within it:

Culture - the implicit rules, assumptions and values that bind an organisation together. A successful TQM organisation is one that has created a culture in which: (i) innovation is valued highly; (ii) status is secondary to performance and contribution; (iii) leadership is a function of action not position; (iv) rewards are shared through the work of teams; (v) development, learning and training are seen as critical paths to sustainability; (vi) empowerment to achieve challenging goals supported by continued development and success provide a climate for self-motivation.
Commitment - A successful TQM organisation engenders such a sense of pride and opportunity for development among its people that there is a great deal of ownership for the goals of the organisation among and between all employees. Commitment extends to taking risks so as to achieve goals as well as working systematically to keep others informed of the opportunities that exist for innovation and development.

Communication - A successful TQM organisation is one in which communication within and between teams is powerful, simple and effective. It is also based on facts and genuine understanding rather than rumour and assumption (pp. 65-66).

Whilst Murgatroyd and Morgan (1992) were referring to the total school organisation in their thesis, the principles introduced could be seen as pertinent to the classroom, particularly if the teacher saw the classroom as a unit of organisation in the total school setting. In the classroom sense, the teacher as manager has to see his/her students as members of the organisation with specific roles that complement and support each other. The teacher should see him/herself as a co-learner with other members of the organisation (or class) on some occasions and as the person who leads the learning on other occasions.

The teacher's view of leadership influences the quality of the teaching and learning that occurs in the classroom organisation. When students learn to trust the teacher and each other (often as a result of the teacher's input), the culture and commitment, as explained by Murgatroyd and Morgan (1992), could become a reality in the class as trust is the basis on which other aspects of the class depend.
Glasser (1993) emphasised the need for the teacher to see him/herself as a professional and to take the role of lead-manager. He suggested that being a teacher carries responsibilities to the main stakeholders. Students and parents, must have changes in curriculum and associated pedagogies explained so they can understand how teaching is being conducted. The work of a professional is distinguished by an 'improvement' and 'quality' orientation that can be explained clearly and reasoned logically.

Getting the job done, even done well, is good enough for nonprofessionals, but continually improving the way the job is done both for themselves and others is the hallmark of professionals (p. 12).

Parker (1997) explores the meaning of educational excellence and the qualities that distinguish those who demonstrate stronger teaching skills. She delineates the circumstances, experiences and structures that are needed in a classroom that aims to foster excellence in learning outcomes.

In NSW in the early nineties, the government referred to 'quality teaching' and 'quality teachers' in a document forwarded to all schools (NSW Department of School Education, 1993). This notion widened the characteristics of teacher behaviour, emerging from a personal base as well as from teacher practice, being embedded in pedagogical skill. As well, the teacher's qualities need to be interpreted in a broader sense.

Senge (1990) advocated a commitment to the multifarious demands of quality in education but tempered his position with a broader view. He proposed that education is a system of linked organisational elements
that attempts to satisfy the expectations of society. However, he expands on the system of linked organisational elements by suggesting that it should enable the education system to deliver results that are good for society as a whole, contributing to an ideal vision of an exemplary world.

Senge's (1990:127) model of effective organisation that should achieve change in schools, emphasised the need to be aware that the main players in the process are teachers. Senge proposed that to develop a quality environment, it will be necessary to make changes to classrooms that will eventually impact on the whole school. A key to classroom change is teacher quality in that it is the teacher who determines the nature of the classroom environment.

The goal of improved teacher performance and quality has engaged researchers in an effort to increase teachers' classroom management and organisational skills. Other researchers have examined teachers' knowledge of the work they do and the content they teach and their understandings of the relationship between teaching and learning. Still others have been involved in exploring teachers' knowledge about the indicators of good teaching and its impact on student outcomes.

This interest in the quality of education, schools and teaching has not been unique to the Australian context. In 1992, the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) commenced a study of teacher quality. Involving eleven OECD countries, the study looked at three distinct kinds of inquiry: case studies of policies to improve the quality of teaching, seminars for teachers to discuss the definition of quality and what affects it, and descriptions of new developments in initial teacher education (OECD, 1994).
The OECD Report (OECD, 1994) arising from the study was based on a definition of teacher quality that is described in five dimensions:

- knowledge of substantive curriculum areas and content.
- pedagogic skill, including the acquisition and ability to use a repertoire of teaching strategies.
- reflection and the ability to be self-critical, the hallmark of teacher professionalism.
- empathy and a commitment to the acknowledgement of the dignity of others.
- managerial competence, as teachers assume a range of managerial responsibilities within and outside the classroom (p.13).

These five dimensions provided a definition of teacher quality that could be applied to the NSW context. An examination of teacher's classroom practice to field test the OECD dimensions would provide a wider understanding of the quality of teachers in classrooms. In the experience of the researcher the characteristics were recognised by the teacher's peers, who were also able to explain them.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The problem is to identify if teachers who are perceived by others as 'teachers of quality' exhibit characteristics that can be classified in the following five dimensions:

- knowledge of curriculum areas and content;
- pedagogical skill
- reflection
- empathy
- managerial competence.
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine, describe and analyse the characteristics of teachers who were perceived by their peers to be 'quality teachers' and compare their characteristics with those identified in the OECD study (1994). The research was conducted as case studies of four teachers in schools in the South Coast Region of NSW.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In the late eighties in NSW teacher professional development was more closely supervised by school principals. At the same time there was a reduction in training and development funding, so professional development was more closely aligned with school priorities and it became the responsibility of middle management and the teacher him/herself. Studies which illuminated the understanding of characteristics of teacher quality, and how they are manifested in the classroom, would prove useful to principals along with university and school system personnel who had the responsibility of being involved in developing training/development courses for teachers.

This study is significant in terms of its potential contribution to the understandings of the attributes of 'quality teachers' and the way those understandings could be utilised by middle-management personnel in schools such as deputy principals, assistant principals and executive teachers. The teaching/learning process is conceptualised as an interactive construct involving a variety of activities that result in a
learner's achievement. By observing and analysing the practice of people who are perceived by their peers to be 'quality teachers', it could be possible to extend the existing knowledge about the characteristics these people demonstrate and how these characteristics could be developed in others.

Further, this study could provide a reference point for future studies into the role of teachers in developing successful learners, successful learning situations and successful learning outcomes for students. The outcomes of the study would be important to both learning theorists as well as teacher-educators who would be able to apply the outcomes of the study in the development of courses for undergraduate students.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Is there a congruence between the five dimensions of teacher quality designated by the OECD and the characteristics of people identified as 'quality teachers'? The five dimensions are as follows:

- knowledge of curriculum areas and content;
- pedagogic skill
- reflection
- empathy
- managerial competence
ASSUMPTION

• Teachers of quality have characteristics that are manifested in five dimensions:
  - knowledge of curriculum areas and content
  - pedagogical skill
  - reflection
  - empathy
  - managerial competence.

Sub-Assumption One: Teachers of quality are able to understand and explain the curriculum content relevant to the class they are teaching.

Sub-Assumption Two: Teachers of quality are able to explain and demonstrate their pedagogical skill.

Sub-Assumption Three: Teachers of quality are able to reflect upon their practice and explain their reflections clearly.

Sub-Assumption Four: Teachers of quality are able to demonstrate empathy with learners.

Sub-Assumption Five: Teachers of quality are able to explain and demonstrate managerial competence.
LIMITATIONS

The participants in this study were identified from four specific schools in the South Coast Region of NSW and its results may not apply to other schools in the district or in the state.

RESEARCH METHOD CHOSEN FOR THE STUDY

"The choice of method should be based on an informed understanding of the suitability of that method for the particular research" (Burns, 1994: p.241). This study adopted a naturalistic approach because it sought to explore teachers' work in order to understand more clearly the nature of quality in teaching. For this reason, a naturalistic approach utilising qualitative data gathering methods enabled the researcher to gain insights into a teachers' decision-making and reasoning as they worked with the students in their charge.

The effect of teacher characteristics on students and learning is a complex issue that depends on the personalities and relationships of students and teachers together with the various contextual conditions that occur in classrooms over time (OECD, 1994: 35). The task of the qualitative researcher is not to judge the rightness or wrongness of the relationships and contexts, but, as Bogdan and Biklin (1992:23) explain, the role of a naturalistic researcher is to better understand human behaviour and experience.

This study makes use of case study as a research method to generate its findings. Yin (1984:23) defined a case study as "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context".
DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study the following definitions are used:

Teacher of quality -

a teacher who has the following characteristics of professional behaviour:

• knowledge of substantive curriculum areas and content.
• pedagogic skill, including the acquisition and ability to use a repertoire of teaching strategies.
• reflection and the ability to be self-critical, the hallmark of teacher professionalism.
• empathy and a commitment to the acknowledgement of the dignity of others.
• managerial competence, as teachers assume a range of managerial responsibilities within and outside the classroom (OECD, 1994,p.3).

Curriculum knowledge -

an understanding of the theoretical framework that underpins the published curriculum statement adopted by the school or system.

Curriculum content -

an understanding of the course content that is listed in the various curricula, regardless of discipline.
Pedagogical skill -

the ability to plan approaches to meet the needs of students, including a wide selection of teaching strategies that are introduced flexibly to achieve desired outcomes; the implementation of appropriate management systems that enhance a productive learning environment, and, the use of effective monitoring and evaluation techniques that empower change and refinement of practice.

Reflection -

the ability to think critically and constructively about the work being carried out.

Teacher professionalism -

an understanding of all those behaviours and attitudes that are expected in this position by the clientele (students and parents), one's colleagues, employer and the wider community.

Empathy -

the ability to sense another's private world as if it were your own.

Managerial Competence -

the ability to establish classroom organisation and routines that enable a productive and stimulating working environment, together with systems for behaviour management that lead to focused and engaged learning.
PLAN OF THE THESIS

Chapter One presented an overview of the study including the purpose of the study and the method selected to carry out the investigation.

In Chapter Two, a review of the relevant literature is provided. This includes a consideration of the concepts of 'quality' currently emerging in literature as it applies to business and administration as well as education; the concepts of teacher quality; the characteristics of a teacher; curriculum and content knowledge; teachers and pedagogical skill; teachers and reflection; teachers and empathy; and, teachers and managerial competence.

Chapter Three gives a description of the sampling procedures, data collection procedures and the data analysis methods used.

Chapter Four consists of the presentation of the results of the data collection derived from the case studies.

Chapter Five presents an interpretation of the outcomes in terms of the research question together with conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The chapter reviews research which relates to five concepts of teacher quality that were defined by the OECD (1994). The literature review is organised under the following headings: Quality and Teaching; OECD Review of Quality in Teaching; Teachers and Curriculum Knowledge; Pedagogy and Practice; Teachers as Reflective Practitioners; Teachers and Empathy; and, Teachers' Managerial Expertise.

QUALITY AND TEACHING

The role of being a teacher calls for strong capabilities and qualities in a variety of areas: knowledge, welfare, interpersonal skills and organisational skills. Teacher qualities could be defined each within their own right but have to be seen according to different contexts. Research by Shulman (1987) suggested that the teacher must have a deep understanding of the curriculum and a range of pedagogical approaches to enable quality teaching. In recent years, educational systems required that teachers have a knowledge of the social development of children along with skilful management practices that enhance the classroom environment. The teacher was expected to demonstrate a quality of work
that ensured the individuals in his/her care make consistent progress in their learning.

The use of the word "quality" became highly significant in the nineties in all parts of life. The term "quality" had been used in industry in reference to management and organisational efficiency eg. Total Quality Management (Deming, 1980). Throughout the eighties, its use grew as part of the literature in all spheres of scholarship through business, government, economics and education.

Deming (1986) conducted research in the area of Total Quality Management. He examined industry practices and produced fourteen indicators of quality that have been applied across a range of work places, including schools. Deming argued that any work can be seen as 'quality', if the work carried out demonstrates a consistent standard - however inferior this may be - and the work delivers results that were satisfactory. Deming claimed that quality work meant the development of 'uniform and dependable' practices that were congruent with delivering services at low cost with a quality suited to the market.

Further, Deming (1986) postulated that people would welcome, be committed to and benefit from, an approach that enabled them to take a pride in what they do. The removal of excessively close supervision, the unreliability of services received from other departments, and the softening of hierarchical relationships, needed to occur so that 'involvement', 'participation', 'teamwork' and 'empowerment' could become the keywords of success.
Branson (1987), on the other hand, in relating the theories of Total Quality Management to school effectiveness, argued that current school systems had reached their upper limits of effectiveness and efficiency. He suggested that significant improvements could only be made through restructuring, and that Total Quality Management principles provided a framework for this achievement. Teachers needed to be conscious of the quality of their work and their work environments.

Research conducted by Gage and Needels (1989) examined the way teachers behaved in the classroom and its effect on student behaviour. They found that specific teaching behaviours are correlated with beneficial outcomes in terms of students' learning and they concluded that all teachers should use these patterns of behaviour in the classroom so the quality of the work would be enhanced.

Pascale (1991) described quality in terms of products and service to the consumer in order to improve market demands. He suggested that:

> Quality can be a compelling value in its own right. It is robust enough to pertain to products, innovations, service standards and calibre of people. Everyone at every level can do something about it and feel the satisfaction of having made a difference. Making products that work, or providing first-class service, is something we can identify with from our own experience. (p. 248)

More recently there was a greater interest in the quality of service and service provision as they applied to education and other service industries. Brown et al (1991) argued that:
...quality is determined by imprecise individual factors: perceptions, expectations and experiences of customers and providers, and, in some cases, additional parties such as public officials. In addition to being elusive, quality means different things to different people. (p. xiii)

The principles espoused by Deming (1986) were applied to schools by Brandt (1992) who reached similar conclusions about the service provided. Particularly evident in schools and classrooms was the wider involvement in decision-making of classroom teachers, their students and the parent-community of the school, a trend which was gradually becoming the norm in many places. According to Brandt, the acceptance of greater responsibility for student outcomes, and the professional readiness of teachers in defending these outcomes, were becoming hallmarks of 'quality' schools.

More recently, Wilkinson and Willmott (1995) claimed that the word 'quality' had no meaning and had been used "... to legitimize all sorts of measures and changes in the name of a self-evident good... the word conveyed the suggestion of subtle and nebulous factors that were not readily quantifiable". However throughout the years leading up to the late eighties, researchers were trying to describe the work done by teachers using ideas that reflected the value and quality of the work being carried out.

The concepts of quality in teaching are greatly dependent on the individual teacher. Research by Cole and Chan (1994) showed that classroom work approached in an organised and focused manner assists the needs of the learner. If the work carried out by teachers was meant to
demonstrate quality, it would always be implemented to facilitate the
students' learning. It would demonstrate a warmth of relationship and
respect for the individual along with a strong knowledge of how to
approach the work and why the work is important.

A study by Ellis (1996) revealed how teachers who create a positive
discipline program with the students in their classes demonstrated
quality in teaching. The increased instructional emphasis on social skills
in this cooperative learning setting decreased classroom misbehaviours
and allowed more time for classroom instruction. The teachers'
orientation towards improved instruction was the catalyst for quality
classroom practice.

OECD REVIEW OF QUALITY IN TEACHING

Governments in developed countries have generally demonstrated a
strong interest in education and its impact on the lives of people who
live there. The promotion of good teaching has long been the subject of
research studies, with teachers and their work being a focus for the OECD
for many years. In the mid-seventies there was a significant report on the
recruitment and training of the teachers required to educate the large
numbers of children moving through compulsory schooling.

In the early eighties the focus of research by this organisation shifted to
issues..."concerning the organisation, contents, methods and
requirements for in-service teacher education" (OECD, 1982). The
introduction of in-service training was seen as a way of achieving rapid
change and it was targeted at teachers and school staffs determining their
own needs and developing appropriate activities to address those needs.
This became a trend across the industrialised countries of the world throughout that period.

Towards the late eighties there developed an interest in the improvement of schools and the teacher and his/her work was seen to be central to this concept (OECD, 1989). There was a call for greater involvement of teachers in school decision making and a move to holding teachers more accountable for the outcomes attained by the students in their care. Further, the teachers had more flexibility in determining how teaching and learning would occur in their schools.

All this led to a new distribution of roles and responsibilities (OECD, 1992) stronger decision-making powers by local schools and their communities and, therefore, new responsibilities for the teachers who work in those sites. The extension of the roles and responsibilities of the teachers would have a strong effect on the nature of their work and its quality. They were expected to be more intimately involved in activities wider than their classrooms, but there were still very high expectations of the outcomes to be attained by students.

In 1992 a group of researchers from eleven countries came together "...to gain insight into the dynamic nature of teacher quality in primary and secondary schools, and to exchange information about policies to improve it" (OECD, 1994). The OECD study was a comparative study of policies aimed at improving teacher quality. The focus of the investigation was "...particular teachers, schools and institutions who demonstrated positive examples of good or innovative practice" (p. 7).
This research, undertaken for the OECD (1994), was predicated on a simple conceptual framework consisting of three elements:

- the concept of teacher quality;
- policies aimed at improving or sustaining the quality of teachers or teaching;
- the context of schooling in which policies are to have effect.

(p.13)

As a base for understanding the role of teachers, the researchers generated a definition of teacher quality that encompassed the following five dimensions:

- knowledge of substantive curriculum areas and content;
- pedagogic skill, including the acquisition and ability to use a repertoire of teaching strategies;
- reflection and the ability to be self-critical, the hallmark of teacher professionalism;
- empathy and the commitment to the acknowledgement of the dignity of others;
- managerial competence, as teachers assume a range of managerial responsibilities within and outside the classroom. (p.13)

These five dimensions were not determined as a set of competencies. The study saw teacher quality and relevance as a combination of the dimensions (1994) and it acknowledged the complex nature of the teaching role. The New Zealand study revealed "...people have
rationalised these characteristics into a set of steps and put them into boxes, but really you must work more holistically" (Ramsay, 1993, p.55). However, the five dimensions established by the OECD study were similar to a list published in the United States by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS, 1991). This board sets standards for the accreditation of expert teachers.

The OECD study involved researchers from eleven countries and the methods used were:

- Case Studies of Schools
- Teacher Seminars
- Teacher Education Reviews

A consideration of the literature which considers teachers' work in terms of the characteristics supports the five dimensions as an acceptable statement of effective teacher characteristics.

Teachers: Their Curriculum Knowledge and Content Knowledge

A consideration of teacher quality needs to recognise the importance of the characteristics of the person fulfilling the role of teacher. Teacher characteristics have been the focus of a series of research studies.

Teaching knowledge covers pedagogical skills as well as the teacher's knowledge of curriculum issues and learning area content. Research concerning the importance of a teacher's knowledge of the content to be taught was recorded by Shulman (1987). He indicated that teachers need to be able to manage, to provide feedback, to make practical plans and
wise decisions. He argued that teachers need to become lifelong learners of subject matter and ways to represent it.

Results from studies by Berliner et al (1988) found that teachers placed emphasis on the importance of the teacher having a thorough knowledge of content before embarking on the teaching path. Berliner conducted a study that required a group of teachers to teach the concept of probability. Interviews with the subjects, after the analysis of the lessons presented, indicated that the teacher seemed to take large amounts of time to fully understand the topic themselves and to plan, step-by-step, activities to help their students understand the topic. According to Berliner, an emphasis on understanding what he or she has to teach becomes the hallmark of the quality teacher.

In the area of mathematics, Leinhardt (1990) made an extensive study of expert teaching in the elementary school. Her work demonstrated that teachers who have a clear expertise in mathematics are able to cover a larger modal number of problems in their classroom delivery than other teachers. Leinhardt concluded that the difference is due to the fact that experts move more cohesively and with greater flexibility through the stages of a lesson and are not constrained by having to think about the discipline problems that confront a teacher, whereas discipline constraints appear to distract the less mathematically able teacher.

The type of curriculum being taught may also have an impact on teacher quality. Studies by Glasser (1992) asserted the importance for teachers to teach "quality curriculums", pointing out that:

No matter how well the teachers manage them, if students do not find quality in what they are asked to do in their classes, they will not work hard enough to
learn the material. The answer is not to make them work harder; the answer is to increase the quality of what we ask them to learn (p. 91).

Marzano (1992) examined the way in which teachers 'constructed meaning'. He defined connections between learning and teaching that recommended a shift in the instructional paradigm. By this he meant that learning was a process of constructing meaning, therefore, teachers must "systematically promote students as constructive learners" (1992 p.3), who took responsibility for their own learning, and with the knowledge of how to "assess and describe their own growth" (1992, p. 3). Marzano emphasised the need for the teacher..."to become an expert on learning and to use that knowledge to align and integrate curriculum, instruction and assessment to support genuine understanding" (1992, p. viii).

Berliner (1992) reported characteristics of expert teachers in his studies of their practice. His research identified superior practice by a smaller percentage of people with wide experience in their chosen field which could be classified as 'expert'. Berliner described the expert teacher as one whose:

learning is highly motivated and is probably reflected upon more than is the learning in which others engage. What is learned...is better coded and remembered by the expert...What they learn also appears to be more effectively linked to other knowledge they possess. Such knowledge is easier to retrieve in appropriate situations, and it is more readily transferable to new situations (p.43).

In research studies undertaken by Berliner (1992), teachers' work was categorized as "novice, advanced beginner and expert". Berliner
examined the way teachers responded to a series of tasks with set parameters. He used the reaction to the problem encountered to classify teachers' behaviour according to their experience. Results showed that not all teachers make it to the 'expert' level. Berliner argued that expert characteristics are developed by all teachers as a result of time and practice. In fact, he suggested that the expert teachers who are seen in a cohort are in a similar proportion to 'experts' in other areas such as painters, jewellery-makers, radiologists or computer programmers. Descriptors that can draw comparisons between the work of one teacher and another are elusive. Berliner worked with the concept of 'expertise' and goes on to explain that experts mainly excel in their own domain and in particular contexts.

Cole and Chan (1994) defined several personal characteristics that they claimed would enhance the positive relationships with students which would, in turn, increase the quality of teaching and learning that goes on in the classroom. The characteristics identified by Cole and Chan were: a commitment to professional and ethical standards; self-efficacy; reflective cognitive style, and a knowledge of the subject matter.

They examined the role of the primary teacher in terms of the way teachers viewed the practice of teaching and they concluded that there were two opposing philosophical positions regarding teaching, namely: the "traditional view" and the "humanistic view". The "traditional view" they defined as that which "advocates a strong commitment to academic learning, formal examinations and conformity to conservative social norms. It stresses the value of strong discipline and the orderly behaviour of students in schools". In contrast, they described the "humanistic view" as that which "encourages the development of
individual learning goals, personal responsibility and social skills." The way a teacher views the process of teaching could affect the way that a teacher would deliver the curriculum and organise the classroom.

As an outcome of their research studies Cole and Chan (1994) identified three major stages in teaching and learning which they defined as "Three Orders of Principles". First Order Principle - classroom communication; Second Order Principles - lesson planning, demonstration and explanation, motivation and reinforcement; Third Order Principles - classroom management and the promotion of independent learning. They claim that teachers need to draw from all three orders if their classroom work was to be effective. Tied to these 'Orders' are extensive lists of principles a teacher may activate in developing a program of instruction for a particular class.

Clark (1995) asserted that one could not teach well what one did not understand. As a teacher takes over any class, s/he has the role of organizing the academic content which that class is to learn. Clark maintains that teachers who are seen as delivering a quality of teaching that is exemplary not only demonstrate high level communication skills, but they are enthusiastic about the information they are presenting and they have a strong understanding of the material and have a sense of joy in the topics they present.

Elmore, Peterson and McCarthey (1996) examined change in school organisation to see if there was an improvement in teaching and learning. Their research showed that a significant factor in the improvement of teaching and learning was the teacher's understanding of desired teaching practices and the associated organisational practices.
that foster their development. The teachers in this study demonstrated an active understanding of how to develop a curriculum for the students they were teaching and the associated strategies that would enhance the students' understandings of the content.

Teachers and Pedagogical Skill

The development of an understanding of pedagogical skill takes time. It ranges through the skills of being able to articulate and explain the content of what is to be learned, the selection of appropriate strategies to facilitate learning and practice and the interactions between teacher and students that lead to effective learning.

The way the teacher establishes opportunities for individual students to receive feedback while they are pursuing their allotted tasks, is an important pedagogical skill. A study by Stallings (1980), involving classroom interactions between teachers and students, when the students had been given individual work to do, indicated that the talk between teachers and students, related to the task being done had a significant effect on the outcome of the students' work. There seemed to be a relationship between student-teacher interaction and achievement gains on behalf of students.

The teacher has the role of ordering learning tasks so the engagement of students is optimised. Fisher et al. (1980) looked at forty-six primary classrooms, and found that over fifty percent of the school day was taken up by academic tasks as opposed to subjects that may be seen as non-academic, such as music and art. The study found that students did not spend all of the time identified by the teacher on the tasks as set. Rather,
the on-task time was less than the allocated time. It is the challenge for the teacher to be able to extend the on-task time if s/he is to establish learning patterns that will impact the achievements of the students in the class.

In order to achieve successful and effective teaching, it can be assumed that there are some skills that take time to be developed. The learning of these skills commences during training either at Teachers' College or at University and, more often than not, with further reflective practice, improve thereafter. Perrott (1982) proposed that teachers acquire and develop their teaching skills over time, and in three stages: a) involves developing an awareness, by study and observation, of what the skill is, its purpose and its benefits; b) practice - usually in classrooms; and, c) feedback - enabling the teacher to improve the performance of the skill. Research by Perrott found that the third stage of "feedback" leads back into the first stage creating a cyclic process.

It is accepted practice in teacher education and training that teachers should plan to use a variety of illustrations and examples to ensure the students engage in learning and that understanding is clear. In a study by Engelmann and Carnine (1982) it was shown that the use of visual representations of ideas and concepts, when supported by precise verbal explanations, enhanced the learning of most students.

Anderson, Evertson and Brophy (1982) purported that it was important for teachers to develop good principles of instruction. Their research in elementary school classrooms, which examined the success of small group instruction in reading, demonstrated that principles of instruction were useful across a wide range of classroom situations.
A study reported by Levin (1983) examined the use of pictures when teaching. This work demonstrated that some elementary school students were able to recall knowledge more effectively when the presentation of the information was supported by pictures and other visual cues.

The establishment of groups within the classroom to cater for the needs of the different abilities in the class is an important pedagogical skill. Decisions about the composition of groups and the tasks they will be assigned are the prerogative of the teacher. Johnson and Johnson (1987) studied cooperative learning to examine the way in which the teacher structures the group and they claim that the group can have an effect on learning. A teacher's knowledge of the way in which group characteristics may affect an individual's learning is an example of the way a teacher's pedagogical knowledge is important to the teaching-learning process. A teacher of quality would be expected to have comprehensive knowledge to inform their practice.

Pedagogical skill can be articulated by teachers who are confident in their work and whose tacit knowledge of students and learning is finely tuned. Carter, Cushing, Sabers, Stein and Berliner (1988) conducted a study of the perceptions of classrooms held by people characterised as 'novice', 'advanced beginner' and 'expert' teachers. They were shown slides of classrooms in action and were asked to describe what they saw. The research indicated that the 'novices' and 'advanced beginners' gave literal descriptions of what was on the screen while the 'experts' provided a description that was more related to pedagogical knowledge. The 'experts' inferred aspects of what the students in the room might have been engaged in and tried to give explanations as to why the room was organised in the way it was. The information provided by the 'experts'
was more closely related to the students and the instructional atmosphere of the room in the picture.

Pedagogical skill, however, is not necessarily a construct that resides within an individual. Macmillan and Garrison (1988) proposed that the nature of teaching is an intentional activity involving two players: the teacher and the learner. They pointed out that if the learner did not intend to learn, the teacher’s efforts in planning and implementation were wasted, and, conversely, if the teacher's work is not intentional and merely represents a model, the learner may not necessarily learn anything that is pertinent to life, but merely a representation of the teacher's action and thought patterns. Macmillan and Garrison argued that:

...teaching in particular and human action in general is irreducibly intentional, that human beings act in accord with beliefs that they hold about the meaning of things in their environment, for the achievement of goods or values (p. 3).

Further, Macmillan and Garrison contended that the teacher must make the explanations and demonstrations overt, so that the teaching becomes more than a "model" of the skill being introduced. The inference appears to be that models need to be intentionally included into the teaching repertoire for the purpose of achieving predetermined goals for the learner.

Research work by Macmillan and Garrison (1988) generated a manifesto for understanding research on teaching. It forms the basis of an intentional theory of teaching that they claim embraces rigour and precision. The manifesto sets out ten Articles:
Article 1: People believe things about the world. Belief is a patently intentional notion; it is, however, non-veridical. Belief and true belief are distinct, and both of them are distinct from knowledge, although all are related in pedagogically important ways.

Article 2: People's beliefs change....Something changes, that seems apparent. We, at least, do not hesitate to call that 'something' beliefs.

Article 3: Changes in beliefs can be explained. What is more, the explanations may be rational, even logical, although the pattern of explanation may differ....

Article 4: The explanations of these changes in belief are (at least sometimes) causal explanations.

Article 5: Teaching must involve attempts to change beliefs; and, insofar as it does, it must include a causal analysis of some sort.

Article 6: Teaching may function as a cause of changes in belief. This does not exclude other explanations about what takes place in learning, but only suggests some limitations and attempts to overcome them.

Article 7: Teaching acts, functioning as rational causes of changes in beliefs, must involve the meaning (semantic content) of the beliefs.

Article 8: The cause of a belief is, at least sometimes, also a justification of the belief. Why not always? Consider two forms of explanation of beliefs: "I believe p because my parents did" vs "I believe p because of evidence for p". Both involve intentional causes and both involve reasons, but only the latter
implies a rational justification for the belief. In any case both must be honoured by researchers.

Article 9: Teaching, at its logical or rational core, involves rational causes.

Article 10: Teaching acts and the belief contexts they give rise to may be studied in a manner that is logically rigorous and precise as any to be found within the citadel of positivism.

Macmillan and Garrison (1988) proposed that there must be "an intention to teach someone something", or the verb "teach" should not be used. They assert that teaching is characterised by interaction between people and that therefore some intellectual act on behalf of the teacher and the learner is inferred. Further, they postulate a theory of teaching that they call an "erotetic" theory:

*To teach someone something is to answer that person's questions about some subject matter*...[their] contention is counter-intuitive. It does not match up with many contexts in which one might say that one person was teaching another. For example, such things as a teacher's praising and blaming students, assigning materials for study, and drilling students can all be subsumed under the characterisation of the situation called teaching. Yet none of these (which we shall call "peripheral acts" of teaching) is *prima facie* analyzable as the answering of questions.

Tom and Valli (1990) conducted research that examined teaching strategies which followed predetermined steps in order to find out if these strategies were too mechanistic to be transferred to classroom practice. They argued that teachers need to select strategies to suit the
needs of the individuals in their class and which suit their personal approach to teaching. They emphasised that teachers present lessons according to what they believe about teaching and learning. Results of their study indicated that teachers had difficulty in implementing these learned predetermined strategies if they did not believe in the strategy as one that would help students.

Cochrane-Smith and Lytle's (1990) research studies were designed to examine how teachers arrived at the strategies they chose to implement. Their results showed that the beliefs teachers hold about teaching and learning are highly influential in determining the way teaching is approached in the classroom and the effectiveness, or quality, of that work.

Research by Kyriacou (1991) found that teaching skills can be defined as discrete and coherent activities which foster student learning. He examined teaching strategies used by teachers and measured the change in students' learning by testing the students, both before the strategy was introduced and after it had been implemented. Kyriacou found that these strategies seemed to lead to learning. However, he emphasised that these skills should not be seen as the only skills of teacher activity in the classroom. Apart from the actual teaching strategies that have to be selected, planned, implemented and evaluated, the primary classroom teacher is involved in a range of administrative and management tasks outside of instruction. The success of the instructional role of the teacher is often dependent on the manner in which these other tasks are systematised and organised.
Teachers tend to choose approaches that suit the needs of their students and their purposes as instructors. Glasser (1993) proposed an eclectic and comprehensive view of the dynamic strategies and attitudes exhibited by teachers who demonstrate exemplary practice. Research by Glasser in one hundred schools identified six conditions that form the basis of quality in teaching: a warm, supportive classroom environment; only useful work is done; students are always asked to do the best work they can; students are asked to evaluate their own work and improve it; the work always feels good; and the work is never destructive.

Teachers draw from a range of teaching strategies they have learned. There are varieties of models of teaching put forward in both pre-service and in-service training programs that enable the teacher to make selections of approaches s/he believes are appropriate to the particular situation. The 'behaviourist' model put forward by Engelmann and Carnine (1982) led to the development of 'direct instruction' as a classroom model of excellent practice. Based on Skinner's theory of "conditioning", it used a set approach that the teacher followed and reinforcement was provided for achievement of the task. More recent research by Cole and Chan (1994) suggested it is an approach suited to some teachers only. They claimed that teachers found it too restrictive because of its inflexibility and they argued that it was not suitable for the teaching of higher order thinking skills.

Applebee (1996) promotes a view of pedagogy as 'knowledge-in-action'. In an examination of how teachers make decisions about their curriculum, he suggests that the approach encourages ongoing conversation embedded within the discourse of the various subject areas. At the same time, instruction becomes a matter of helping students learn to
participate in the conversations that occur. He emphasises the skill of the teacher in redressing the position of teacher as arbiter of knowledge into empowering the students to activate the knowledge they already have.

**Teachers and Reflection**

According to Smith (1982, p. 72), people had a theory of "what the world was like", a theory that was the basis of all our "perceptions and understanding of the world, the soul of all learning, the source of all hopes and fears, motives and expectancies". For the teacher this implied that, to enhance the quality of his or her work, there must be a comprehensive understanding of learning in order to make the teaching relevant and productive.

Schon (1983) described the way in which teachers called on their knowledge while teaching and made changes to their practice for the sake of the learner. This constant reflection on what was happening in the classroom led the teacher through the teaching day.

Research by Lampert (1984) demonstrated that teachers hold a commitment to life-long learning, because, as the teacher thinks of, and experiments with new actions and observes the outcomes of those actions, s/he is learning about the effects of his or her teaching. The emphasis is on the idea of shared knowledge and the person in each role (teacher and learner) adopting a view of themselves as learners.

Critical thinking about performance in the classroom situation has more recently been described as 'reflective teaching' (Pollard & Tann, 1987). It is widely recognised by teachers and their supervisors that it is impossible to
meet classroom demands without planning, organising, monitoring and evaluating the activities that are carried out in the course of a lesson or a day's lessons. If the teacher has a wide range of teaching strategies on which to call, it is possible for the teacher to change a teaching method to increase the expectation of success for the learner or learners involved, even in the process of teaching. The capacity to reflect "on-the-run" and modify practice is often an aspect of the teacher's work that is automatic.

Research by Morine-Dersheimer (1989) demonstrated an increase in the number of main categories included in concept-maps produced by teacher trainees as a result of their analysis of micro-teaching. This forced reflection seemed effective in promoting richer conceptual networks, similar to those of experts.

A study of the planning, teaching and post-lesson reflections of novice and expert teachers by Borko and Livingstone (1989) found that novices found it more difficult to respond to students' needs than did expert teachers. The experts were able to improvise on the spot, as a result of constant reflection, to achieve engagement and learning on behalf of the students in the group.

Teacher education and training faculties have actively promoted reflective thinking as an aspect of teacher development. This was shown in the work of CITE (Collaboration for the Improvement of Teacher Education). Sparks-Langer, Simmons, Pasch, Colton and Starko (1990) structured field experiences, micro-teaching, journals and writing assignments to help beginning education students focus on, analyse and question the issues confronting people training as teachers. Results showed that student teachers were able to function more successfully if
they took time to think through ideas that would influence their classroom practice.

Research studies by Markus and Ruvulo (1990) of the psychology of self-image, analysed attitudes and perceptions as part of the learner's 'self-system'. They postulated that the task in which the learner was engaged was continually filtered through this 'self-system'.

To lead to change in their practice, teachers had to think about the success or failure of the strategies they used. They had to examine what they said and what they did along with how the students reacted and whether or not they learned. A research study by Canning (1991) examined the effect of reflective questions on classroom teachers. The study showed that teachers became more specific about describing their practice, they learned to anticipate consequences of their actions and they started to identify underlying assumptions about their learners.

According to Turbill (1993), the way teachers worked in the classroom demonstrated a direct relationship to their beliefs about teaching and learning. Turbill's research examined the professional development of teachers in both Australia and the United States to find that teachers needed to reflect on their teaching and have their core beliefs about teaching and learning challenged in order for change to occur. Turbill purported that:

[The teachers]...created a learning culture in which they began to identify and articulate a personal theory [which was]...reflected in their classroom practices and developed from their interaction with the theory of others and how this theory looked in practice. (p. 333)
Research by Cambourne, Turbill and Butler (1994) outlined a framework of teacher considerations about teaching and learning as they applied to literacy. It was asserted that teachers needed to be explicit about how they believed children acquired literacy skills because these beliefs affected the way they designed their teaching. As teachers considered, and accepted or rejected the sets of principles (or beliefs) on which their actions and decisions in classrooms were based, they established the model of teaching and learning that could be identified as part of their classroom practice.

For the "quality teacher" this was an important part of their work. Schoenbach (1994) highlighted the importance of teacher reflection as something which "invited teachers to step away from their classrooms to better understand and consider new interpretations of what was happening there." (p.25)

The need to promote reflection in teaching was highlighted in the work of Nichols, Tippins and Wieseman (1997). They provided a variety of tools to empower science teachers to critically reflect on their work with a view to reforming it. The tools suggested include portfolios, journals, learning maps and metaphors. These ideas enable teachers to think about their work in different ways, thus facilitating changes in pedagogy.

Teachers and Empathy

Empathy was seen as an important indicator in the development of human relationships. It emerged as one of the central tools in psychoanalysis in the fifties, being identified as the 'working force of any
helping relationship' (Buber, 1953). Fliess (1942) described an empathic relationship as:

depending essentially on the ability to put oneself in the other's place, to step into his shoes, and to obtain in this way inside knowledge that is almost first-hand. The common name for such a procedure is "empathy" (p. 212).

There was considerable evidence which demonstrated that a supportive and safe learning situation encouraged students to grow academically as well as in feelings of personal worth. In a study in the early sixties, Reed (1962) concluded that teachers characterised as considerate, understanding and friendly, and with a tolerance for some release of emotional feelings by students, had a favourable influence on their students' interest in science.

Spaulding's research (1964) found significant correlations between the height of the self concept and the degree to which the teachers were calm, accepting, supportive and facilitative. Purkey (1970) states:

Entering a person's private world in order to understand how the individual is seeing things is difficult, for the individual self can only be approached through the perceptions of some other person...Fortunately, however, most teachers have a great supply of sensitivity...To the degree to which a teacher is able to predict how his students are viewing themselves, their subject, and the world, to that degree he is in a position to become a successful teacher. (p. 57)

The relationship between teachers and students could have an effect on the quality of learning that was achieved in the classroom. Ramsay (1993)
developed a case study as part of the OECD study of quality teachers. He argued that teachers of quality demonstrate extreme patience and perseverance in their teaching role. He recognised the importance they believed self-esteem had in the learning situation, using humour to help develop a relationship with their pupils.

Teachers used the physical environment to help the children in their classes feel safe and secure in the learning situation. According to White and Roesch (1993) the learning environment was an important consideration for teachers. Their study showed that effective teachers modify the classroom to make it cheerful and comfortable. The teachers in these classrooms saw the classroom as an extension of the home and worked to maintain the same emotional tenor where possible.

In a study by McRae (1993) it was found that teachers provided an environment that led to security and risk-taking without fear of negative response that may challenge self-esteem. In this study the use of "pastoral care groups" illuminated the way in which teachers tried to ensure the learning atmosphere was student oriented and safe.

Cooper, Smith and Upton (1994) proposed:

...the development of empathy through the exercise of skills, such as active listening, reflection and paraphrase. The absence of empathic understanding between teachers and students would seem...to be a major factor in the development and maintenance of behaviour problems. The use of empathy by teachers would add to the reflexive quality of the ecosystemic approach with regard to teacher behaviour, by encouraging teachers to continually analyse the
experience of schooling from the students' standpoint. (p.45)

More recently, Tauber (1997) encourages teachers to think about the students they teach in preparation for the work that will be done with them. He gives a warning of the danger of developing a self-fulfilling prophecy in relation to the children, in that it is likely that the teacher will form unrealistic expectations of the student and treat the student according to the expectation. This form of reflection can sometimes be counter-productive. However those teachers who are aware of the pitfalls here, tend to use the process for the benefit of the learner, designing ways of encouraging the child to learn more productively.

Teachers and Managerial Competence

Classrooms were places where a single adult worked closely with a comparatively large group of students, each of whom had a complex and individual personality. The development of the group dynamics in that learning environment was dependent on the manner in which the teacher approached the task of establishing the processes and strategies that would lead to quality learning on behalf of the students. As well as the room arrangement, organisation of appropriate resources and carefully planned lesson strategies that would result in an effective classroom, the teacher needed to demonstrate the capacity to manage the work and behaviour of the students in their class in an ordered and productive manner.

The need to ensure that all aspects of the classroom experience are planned and implemented both effectively and with sensitivity, provided
the hallmark of managerial competence for the classroom. Much of the literature on classroom management examined the 'discipline' aspects of classroom experience, assuming that the other aspects of the classroom were already effective (planning and presentation, classroom organisation and availability of resources).

In a study by Doyle (1985) he described classroom management as "an intellectual skill that requires sound decision-making strategies" (p.31). As the teacher got to know the students s/he could develop approaches that would engage the students in learning and continue to foster a positive classroom environment. Doyle emphasised the importance of teaching children to maintain control over their behaviour in class, for their own benefit as well as the benefit of others.

Kounin (1970) has written a definitive work on classroom discipline. The study that was the basis of this work was the analysis of videotapes of classrooms that demonstrated the successful characteristics of classroom management. Kounin's study demonstrated that if teachers were able to anticipate inappropriate behaviours and be sensitive to changes in mood in the classroom, together with the ability to maintain the pace of lessons so students remained engaged, the outcomes for student learning were more effective. Kounin concluded that sensitivity to the student group was a key attribute of the effective classroom manager.

Sanford (1984) researched class management in science classrooms. She found that workable routines and careful monitoring of student work were influential in effective learning. This study also highlighted the importance of teachers establishing rules that cover a range of class activities: student talk; movement around the classroom; student
interactions; what students should do when their prescribed tasks are complete, and the way students should enter or leave the classroom. Sanford maintained that these routines or expectations were explicit and they established a more effective learning environment.

Swanson, O'Connor and Cooney (1990) examined the approaches taken in classroom discipline by expert teachers and novice teachers. The expert teachers were found to be more concerned about the specific areas of difficulty that caused the problem behaviours. The novice teachers were more oriented to quick problem solutions, looking for immediate answers. This study emphasised the fact there are a range of strategies available to the quality teacher and that subtlety is a key ingredient to solving class management problems. There is no one strategy that can be applied to the wide range of management issues that arise in a classroom.

Corrie (1997) examined the ways in which teachers manage pervasive and disruptive classroom behaviours. The results of her study show that the management of the classroom is active in that the teacher uses conversation and classroom talk as dynamic aspects of the situation. The effective teacher is able to reorder the classroom to cater for the needs of students of this type in the ongoing nature of classroom lessons, providing a positive model without interrupting the work of others in the class.

Lickona (1997), in his study of the teacher as a caregiver, model and mentor, describes the teacher as valuing the instruction s/he provides. Further, he indicates the importance of the way co-operative learning is built into the management strategies of the classroom along with the skills of conflict resolution. He observes that the teacher in this scenario
uses reflection to review and change his management strategies to enhance the success of his/her teaching.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter explored the understanding of the word "quality" as it applies to teaching. It described the characteristics of a quality teacher and how this may have a positive influence on students and on the way in which a classroom operates. Further, it described the research that was pertinent to each of the five dimensions of 'quality teaching' determined by the OECD (1994).
CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

INTRODUCTION

As indicated in the first chapter, the purpose of this study was to examine, describe and analyse the characteristics of teachers who were perceived by their peers to be 'quality teachers'. The research was conducted as case studies of four teachers in schools in the South Coast Region of NSW.

This chapter describes the research design, the procedures for gaining permission to conduct the study, the selection of the subjects for the case studies, methods used to collect the data and the processes for analysing and interpreting the data.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Do teachers who are identified by others as 'teachers of quality' exhibit characteristics that can be classified in the following five dimensions:

- knowledge of curriculum areas and content;

- pedagogic skill

- reflection

- empathy

- managerial competence?
RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design selected for this study was conceptualised as depicted in Fig 3.1. It was grounded on a case study method in four classrooms to determine if the dimensions defined above could be seen in the practice of the four teachers and if their peers and supervisors were able to recognise the dimensions as part of the participants' practice.

Fig. 3.1: Research Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATURALISTIC ENQUIRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Case Study Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sample: Teachers who were described by their peers and supervisors as 'quality teachers' and who had completed the inservice course of that name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Data Gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interviews of peers and supervisors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interviews of identified teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Observation of teachers in their classrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Observations: Constant comparative method of data analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interviews: The data collected defined criteria that could be applied to each of the dimensions identified in the research problem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theoretical Underpinning

The research problem was centred on teacher practice and teachers viewing the way other teachers functioned professionally. It was considered that naturalistic enquiry utilizing case study methodology,
was appropriate for the study. Data gathering tools selected for the case studies were observation and interview.

A naturalistic enquiry research paradigm encompasses a range of methodologies that are appropriate to natural settings. The researcher strives to become immersed in the natural setting of the subject, endeavouring to understand and describe the complex nature of the social and interactive processes that occur. The researcher tries to experience the world as the subject sees it, to grasp the motives, unconscious behaviours and actions of the subject in the natural environment.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) assert that:

"qualitative researchers deal with multiple, socially constructed realities and qualities that are complex and indivisible into discrete variables. They see their task as coming to understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them. (p. 6)"

Case Study Method

The choice of research strategy employed within a naturalistic enquiry framework is influenced by the nature of the research problem. A case study method was selected as being appropriate for the study which sought to examine teachers' practices within discrete sites and in specific school settings.

Stake (1978) posited that a Case Study method enabled a researcher to gain an understanding of "that which is already known" and to "increase the conviction about it" (p.6).
The focus on a real-life context is cited frequently in the literature as a strength of the case study approach. Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis (1976) maintained that the case study method is 'strong in reality' because it is generally down to earth and attention holding.

Case study method enables a researcher to gather rich and complex data. Isaac and Michael (1983) assert that case study method has particular value as "an exploratory technique capable of generating rich data which can bring to light variables, phenomena, processes and relationships that may deserve more intensive investigation." (p.48)

Lawton (1976) contended that the case study method was a particularly valuable 'step to action'. Such research not only begins in the realm of action, but can also contribute to it. He acknowledged:

"Given the variety and complexity of educational purposes and environments, there is an obvious value in having a data source for researchers and users whose purposes may be different from our own." (p.184)

McDonald and Walker (1980) viewed the case study method in terms of artistic achievement, claiming that it is "the way of the artist, who achieves greatness when through portrayal of a single instance locked in time and circumstance, he communicates enduring truths about the human condition." (p.3)

Case studies are conducted on particular sites and with a particular focus upon phenomena in order to describe, explain and interpret that particular 'case'. The explanation and interpretation that may be derived from the case study finding serves to generate understandings of the
phenomena from which may emerge a theory calling for further examination.

According to Burns (1994) the conclusions reached through case study research are 'instrumental rather than terminal'. He describes the value of case study method as "allowing an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. Its focus is on a particular case in its idiosyncratic complexity, not on the whole population of cases". (p.313)

Research findings are drawn from deeper understandings of particular settings and can contribute to theory building and assist in focusing the direction of future investigation. Isaac and Michael (1983) described its value "in terms of pioneering new ground and being the source of fruitful hypotheses for further study" (p.48). The case study method was considered appropriate for the natural settings of the study as the examination of characteristics of teachers selected for the case studies is conducted in the setting in which the teaching occurs.

The use of a multiple case study format enables a greater degree of authenticity to be derived because the data emerge in a variety of natural settings. The multiple case study format enhanced the validity of the study and enabled tentative conclusions to be drawn from the investigation of one site in comparison with another. Owens (1995) asserted that a multiple case study approach was particularly useful to acquire an understanding of the culture of the site. To do this it was important to draw comparisons between the different sites in which the study took place, to talk to the people who made up the organisation, to
hear the language they used, to discover the symbols that represented their unique working situations.

Barker (1968) and Lortie (1975) each contended that the behaviour of people in schools was powerfully influenced by the organisational context in which they worked. A multiple case study design facilitated an exploration of real teachers in their respective classrooms and staffrooms. Research undertaken in a natural setting "does not attempt to manipulate or control what goes on in the setting..." (Burns, 1994, p.313). The researcher endeavours to be as inobtrusive as possible, trying to minimase his impact on the setting so that the data can emerge as naturally as possible.

Data Gathering Instruments

The data gathering instruments selected as appropriate for the case studies consisted of interview and observation. As teacher behaviour in the school, both in the classroom and interacting in the professional setting, was the focus of the study, interviews with the teachers in the study and with relevant professional colleagues of the teacher, together with observation of the teacher in their own classrooms, were considered to be appropriate ways to gather information pertinent to the research problem.

- Interviews

In-depth interviewing as a data gathering technique is used extensively in the case study method. According to Yin (1984), "one of the most important sources of case study information is the interview" (p.82). A
well conceived and well constructed interview can turn what might be merely a respondent into a critical informant, with the interviewee providing many more facts, insights and opinions than could ever have been anticipated by the researcher. Yin proposes that:

interviews are an essential source of case-study evidence because most case studies are about human affairs. These human affairs should be reported and integrated through the eyes of specific interviewees...and well informed respondents can provide valuable insights into a situation. (p. 84)

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) contend that "for qualitative enquiry, the interview is rightly conceived as an occasion to get to the bottom of things" (p.65). It provides the researcher with "the opportunity to learn about what you cannot see and to explore the explanations of what you do see."

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) describe interviews as powerful conversations that occur usually between two people, though for some purposes it is appropriate to involve more people at the one time. Interviews are used "to gather descriptive data in the subject's own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world."(p.135)

Guba and Lincoln (1981) contend that interviewing is the most common form of information gathering in naturalistic research studies. They propose that interviews are the 'backbone of field and naturalistic research' (p.154) and that interviewing has a wide variety of forms and the processes of conducting interviews are many and varied.
The interview process can be varied according to the degree of structure that is applied to it. Minichiello et al (1990) purport that in-depth interviews are used to gain access and understanding of activities and events which cannot be observed directly by the researcher. The purpose of the interview is to obtain valid and reliable information, which enables large amounts of data to be retrieved quickly that can be followed up immediately through clarification processes.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1981), a relationship exists between unstructured interviews and naturalistic enquiry. They contend that naturalistic enquiry "presupposes that social settings have developed a pluralistic set of values which may cause conflict in the management of social enterprises" and in order to understand values and value conflicts, it is necessary to "ground the inquiry in the multiple perspectives" (p.156) held by the participants. Further, they argue that the use of unstructured interviews takes into account these "multiple-world" views, as opposed to standardised interviews or survey methods which assume value consensus.

Cohen and Manion (1989) proposed that non-directive interviews provide "a situation in which the respondent is responsible for initiating and directing the course of the encounter and for the attitudes expressed in it" (p.324) and that non-directive interviews reach the deeper attitudes and perceptions of the respondent in a way that leaves them free from interviewer bias.
Guba and Lincoln (1985) posited that there are multiple, intangible realities in natural settings that can be studied only holistically and observation is an important way to do this. The researcher becomes part of the reality of the situation, so it is unlikely that prediction of the situation can be an outcome of the work, and there is a strong expectation that understanding can be achieved. Guba and Lincoln argue that the subject of the enquiry is able to explain the action being observed and make sense of it in the context of other actions and processes and the researcher is able to probe with greater confidence that what is being observed is intentional and in the control of the subject. As well, the purpose of the action being observed is able to be explained in relation to others in the learning situation.

The use of observation and fieldnotes as research tools is common in case study research. Cohen and Manion (1989) emphasise the fact that the case study researcher wants "to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the situation with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population" (p.120). The researcher not only examines the situation in which the phenomena are occurring, but he or she wants to examine it over time and to gather from the participant those aspects of the situation that influence the phenomena as they occur.

Cohen and Manion (1989) distinguish two different types of observation: participant observation and non-participant observation. The former engages the researcher actively in the situation, using field notes to document participatory experiences, while the latter, leaves the
researcher to stand separately from the target group and simply record his or her observations in the form of field notes.

Field notes are a useful way of recording observations made in a research setting. In particular, for non-participant observation, with a particular event, the researcher has a strong sense of recall from personal experience of the research situation. The field notes describe what has been observed usually together with some observer comment. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) legitimise the use of observer's comments:

> Whenever you feel strongly about an event witnessed or a dialogue engaged in, note the images that come to mind...the idea is to stimulate critical thinking about what you see and to become more than a recording machine. (p. 157)

The goal of observation as a research tool is to capture 'a slice of life', striving for accuracy as much as possible. The researcher presents as much detail as possible so the situation can be dissected and analysed. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) posit that in naturalistic enquiry the analysis 'emerges' and the picture generated enables some generalisations to be made.

Data Recording

With observation data gathering methods, the recording of observations and memos, or field notes, depend on a particular context or focus being used. One way of recording observation is by "thick description". This method was generated in the early seventies. Thick description is able to record and describe observations that encompass the social context of a classroom and the complex interactions that occur during teaching. Case Study Method focuses on the complex nature of the social situation and
enables the researcher to gain a more holistic view of that which is happening in the situation.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue for the need to use "thick description". There is more to the teaching situation than the movements, interaction and processes used by the teacher. In interactive situations such as teaching and learning, the social context of the classroom must be taken into consideration. The interactions of teacher-student, student-student and student-teacher as a collective, greatly influence the nature of the environment and the outcomes that are achieved.

A study of classroom practice required a design that would reveal the complex realities and meanings that the teacher held in relation to the strategies being used. Mair (1979) considered that an alternative, personal way of knowing was part of research in the field of psychology and suggested that such 'personal enquiry' would seek out the stories that people have to tell and research could then be a "lived, personal experience" (p.43). Such a model of enquiry was appropriate for this study which sought multiple meanings from four individuals from which comparisons could be drawn.

The study required a holistic view of the teacher's classroom practice in its natural setting. The need to be able to provide explicit descriptions of the teacher's actions in relation to the responses of the students was a crucial aspect of the quality of the work. The interactions of the people in the classroom provided one facet of the reality of the practice.
Data Analysis

In naturalistic enquiry data gathered through observation and interview needs to be organised and analysed. The method of analysis of qualitative data depends on the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data collected. Bogdan and Biklin (1992) contend that the "fit between what the researcher records as data and what actually happens in the setting under study is more important than literal consistency across different observations" (p.48).

Criticism of qualitative research, and of case study research in particular concerns the quality of the data as being vulnerable to unreliability and prone to invalidity with findings unable to be generalised to other situations. Guba (1981) put forward a model for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative data. The elements of that model are: truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality.

According to Guba, the "truth value" in qualitative data analysis involves identifying the real world that is experienced by the respondents. This world will be perceived differently by different people, and obviously the task of the researcher is to represent the perceptions or multiple realities as accurately as possible. "Applicability" refers to the way in which the data are organised according to the concepts being examined. In Guba's terms "Consistency" ensures the data are related to other data that support the ideas being examined. Finally, "Neutrality" refers to the fact that the data are collected in a specific setting and it refers to that setting alone.

In this study the researcher used methods of 'thick description', to report what was seen in the classroom observations. The teachers' descriptions of their practice as well as the perceptions of their peers were recorded in
order to triangulate the data. The researcher endeavoured to preserve the uniqueness and variety of each case in recording the intended data. Eisner's (1979) claims that "evidence is structurally corroborative when pieces of evidence validate each other". Eisner uses the term "structural corroboration" to describe the process of validation of data. He refers to the process as "gathering data or information and using it to establish links that eventually create a whole that is supported by the bits of evidence that constitute it" (p.215). He argues that this is the way of determining the credibility of data collected.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest the importance of "...findings that emerge in the constructions of the respondents themselves." The process of data reduction is used to enable the ideas of the respondents to be identified. Guba and Lincoln highlight the importance of findings that emerge. The themes emerging from the data should be "grounded in the data" so that the resulting conclusion will be more focused and will meet the criteria identified by Guba and Lincoln as "truth value" (p.179).

THE STUDY

Sample

- Gaining Permission

A submission was made to the Department of School Education (South Coast Region) seeking permission to conduct the study with teachers in its schools. The submission set out the problem, explained some of the literature that supported a study of this nature and gave a brief outline of the method to be used.

Permission to proceed was received, outlining the conditions under which the study could be carried out. Procedures regarding ethics of
research using human subjects were deemed to conform to the NSW Department of School Education requirements as well as the Ethics Committee of the University of Wollongong.

Permission from the principal of each of the schools, involved in the study, was gained initially by phone, then by letter. The purpose of the study was outlined and a request was made to enable the researcher to speak at a staff meeting where the three phases of the research proposal would be described in greater detail. In all cases this was approved and a suitable time was made for the meeting within a week.

- Selecting the Sample

The study was conceptualised in three phases:

**Fig. 3.2: Phases of the Study**

**PHASE ONE**

Identifying Possible Participants

- a) Selecting Schools
- b) Staff Meeting Explanations
- b) Interviewing peers/supervisors

\[ n = 1700 \]

**PHASE TWO**

Identifying Teachers for case studies

- a) Interview with potential subjects.
- b) Teachers volunteer to become involved.

\[ n = 50 \]

**PHASE THREE**

Case Studies

- a) Interviews with subjects
- b) Observations of subjects at work.
- c) Debriefing interviews with subjects.
- d) Interviews with peers

\[ n = 4 \]
The assessment of teachers is a complex and demanding concept and it was important to determine some way of identifying appropriate people for the study who demonstrated some aspects of 'quality' in their daily work. The teachers in the study were identified from a cohort of people who had attended a course developed and implemented in the South Coast Region of the Department of School Education. The course was entitled "Quality Teaching" and during its implementation some 1700 teachers were involved. It was assumed that teachers who attended this course indicated their interest in, and concern for, their own practice by applying to attend the course. This was taken as an assent that they held an interest in enhancing their classroom practice.

At staff meetings held to outline the purpose of the research study, all teachers who had been involved in the "Quality Teaching" inservice course, conducted by the South Coast region Department of School Education, were invited to be participants. Teachers were informed that involvement was voluntary and the data-collection process and instruments were explained. The researcher stated that all aspects of the study would respect the confidentiality of the participants, and that those who were identified to progress into later phases of the study could withdraw at any time.

The researcher decided to consult with those who knew the teacher's work best: the people with whom they worked. Peers form strong opinions about the work of others in their workplace. It was decided that if three people indicated a personal perception of a particular teacher as demonstrating 'quality' in terms of teaching then that teacher was identified as a potential subject.
Clearly, different people may hold differing perceptions of the concept of quality. However, for the purpose of this study, there was likely to be larger consensus than would otherwise be anticipated because all of the sites had been directly involved in the Quality Teaching Project. Further, the use of multiple recommendations could strengthen the researcher's confidence that such a judgement of quality could be made about the individual teacher concerned.

A person in a supervisory position in a school has the responsibility of monitoring the work of those who are supervised. The perception of the supervisor that a particular teacher was a "teacher of quality" reinforced a decision that the teacher could be identified as a potential subject for the study.

In order to ensure that teachers selected for the study were representative of teachers in primary schools considered by their peers to be teachers of quality, the researcher decided to select schools for inclusion in the study according to the following criteria:

- **SIZE** - There is variation in schools according to the size of the school, and a greater number of teachers in a larger school providing a greater pool of teacher knowledge. It was considered important to try to select a sample that represented the range of schools according to their size. The classification identifies the number of children for whom the Primary Principal (hence PP) is responsible (Primary Principal 6 to Primary Principal 1). A PP6 is generally a one-teacher school where there would be no peers/supervisors with whom to consult, and, there are no PP1 schools in the South Coast Region. For the purposes of this study the range was limited those schools which included PP5 to PP2. A PP5 usually
has an enrolment between 45 and 150 students; a PP4 has an enrolment between 150 and 350 students; a PP3 has an enrolment between 350 and 500 students; and, a PP2 has an enrolment between 500 and 700 students.

• PROFESSIONAL ETHOS - In order to ensure that the schools selected had an ethos of interest in "quality teaching" then it was considered that, for the purpose of this study, a school should have at least 20% of the teaching staff who had attended the course on "Quality Teaching" in order to be included in the study.

In the South Coast Region there are two hundred and twenty schools. The schools were sorted into lists according to size: PP5s, PP4s, PP3s and PP2s (as explained above), each in alphabetical order.

The researcher visited each school to gather information regarding the number of teachers on the staff who had attended the inservice course entitled "Quality Teaching". Schools with less than 20% attendance were deleted from the list. Of the 220 schools in the South Coast Region, 84 met the criteria of more than 20% staff attendance at the course.

If a school met the professional ethos criteria, the researcher arranged to interview members of the executive of the school in order to identify potential teachers for the case study. Of the 84 schools in the South Coast Region a total of seven schools met the criteria of professional ethos. Of the seven schools, three were PP2s, two were PP3s, one was a PP4 and one was a PP5. Each of the seven schools was visited and a total of 22 teachers was identified as potential subjects as a result of interviewing supervisors and three teachers from each identified school.
Four teachers were selected from these 22 teachers according to school size with one teacher being from each school size group. Only one teacher was identified from each of the PP4 and PP5 schools so they were included in the study. In the remaining five schools a self selection process occurred in that only one teacher from the PP3 schools and one from the PP2 schools agreed to participate.

CONTEXT OF THE SITES

The study examined four teachers in four different schools in the South Coast Region of NSW. In order to consider the results concerning the characteristics of quality teachers it is relevant to describe the context in which each teacher worked, as the four sites were selected to reflect a range of schools in the South Coast region.

School A

Size: School A was a middle-sized school in the South Coast Region of NSW. There were nine classes in the school and the total enrolment was approximately 250.

Socio-Economic Nature of the Community: The area in which the school was situated is distinguished by a middle to upper socio-economic population that is mainly Anglo-saxon in its cultural heritage. There were no children of Aboriginal background enrolled at the school, and the few children with other ethnic backgrounds were children of people who work in academic positions or in the field of medicine.
The school community articulated a strong belief in, and commitment to education as a basic need for all. The people held high expectations of their children, valuing good results in tests and academic competitions. The Basic Skills Test results were widely discussed and used as an indicator of the worth of the school's input to the life and development of individual children.

Further, the children who attend the school were actively involved in a wide range of activities outside school. Their parents supported their involvement in sports clubs, music lessons, art lessons and computer-based activities outside school time. There was an expectation that the school would celebrate success in these external activities by publishing the information in its weekly newsletter.

**Geographic Setting of the School:** The suburb where the school was located exuded a village-atmosphere and the population encouraged this view of their lives. Situated on the coastal fringe of the district, the school setting was attractive and well maintained.

**Janice - The Teacher Identified from School A**

Janice was a teacher who had only been teaching for ten years. She was in her late twenties, and prior to gaining a full-time teaching position she had worked as a casual teacher in four or five schools and said she believed this experience had added greatly to her perception of what a 'good teacher' was. She had been at School A for 12 months and said she was enjoying teaching there. However, she believed some of the other teachers thought she was a threat because she was young and comparatively inexperienced. The executive of the school, on the other
hand, spoke very highly of her work and her commitment to the children with whom she worked.

School B

Size: School B was a small school in the South Coast Region of NSW, with an enrolment of 58 students. The children were taught in two classes, one included the grades from Kindergarten to Grade Two and the other the grades from Grade Three to Grade Six.

Socio-Economic Nature of the Community: The school was established in an upper socio-economic area of the city of NSW, where it was located. The community demonstrated strong support for the school, and the School Council worked hard to support the principal in the quest for the highest level outcomes for the students who are enrolled. The community had extremely high expectations and ideals for their children, things they were keen to share with the staff and the principal.

The school had achieved above average results on the Basic Skills Tests since their introduction to NSW schools. The results were widely discussed in the community and there was a degree of competition between the parents that was evident when they were discussing such things. The community was friendly and recognised the school as its focus.

Geographic Setting of the School: The garden setting where this school was established reflected the nature of the homes and buildings surrounding it. Many families lived in homes that were set on larger
blocks of land with mountain views which provided a peaceful atmosphere.

Rosalind - The Teacher Identified from School B

Rosalind had been teaching for twenty years and the majority of those years were in this same school. She was a woman in her late thirties who demonstrated a strong commitment to the school in which she worked. She proudly described the challenge of 'initiating' those who had come to be principal since she started at the school. At the same time these people held Rosalind and her work in very high esteem. A person who was clearly committed to the children across the school, she spoke positively of her own class and the work they were able to achieve.

School C

*Size:* Built in the late seventies, School C had an enrolment of about 350 students. The students were taught in 12 classes, each of which had a range of abilities.

*Socio-Economic Nature of the Community:* School C was in a mid-to-lower socio-economic area of the city. The school had an active, though small, parent group, each member being involved in the P & C and the School Council. The principal of the school had a good relationship with the school community and worked to involve more parents in the life of the school.

Many families in the school were single-parent families with the parent having a full or part-time job. The children wore school uniforms, but
they were not well looked after, many being torn and some not washed regularly. The children did not reject the use of the uniform and seemed to be proud of their school.

The homes in the drawing area of the school were mainly public housing provided by the government. The maintenance of the houses in many instances needed work. Despite that, some houses indicated care through well-kept gardens.

The school buildings were well maintained, but there was evidence of graffiti, much of which happened at weekends. The Principal indicated that the school was broken into on a regular basis.

*Geographic Setting of the School:* Set in an industrial area, the school demonstrated the dust and grime associated with areas such as this. There had been clear attempts to establish gardens at one time, but these areas were overgrown and uncared for.

Simon - The Teacher Identified from School C

Simon was a teacher who had been teaching for around fifteen years. He was in his mid-30s but took an interest in modern music and clothes, so the students and staff at School C saw him as being younger than he was. Simon spoke of his love for surfing and a variety of other sports and was highly esteemed by the staff as a whole. He taught a middle primary class and was very positive about his role in the school and teaching generally.
School D

Size: With 16 classes, School D had a total enrolment of four hundred and sixty-three students. The classes consisted of students with a wide range of abilities and the teachers worked hard to meet the needs of individual students.

Socio-Economic Nature of the Community: The school was situated in an area that was distinguished by middle class families that worked hard to provide an appropriate lifestyle for their children. The nature of the school population was Anglo-Celtic in background. The small percentage of multicultural families blended into the school population, not providing any specific cultural identity. The multicultural families seemed to be valued by the school and its wider community as they were actively represented in the activities of the parent groups.

The homes surrounding the school were tidy structures that gave an impression of order and cleanliness. There was a definite attempt to keep the homes well-maintained and the vehicles parked nearby were recent models of cars in the mid price-range.

The children in the school were tidily dressed in the correct school uniform. Several teachers also wore the polo shirt that was part of the uniform. This was thought to provide a sense of team effort in the school.

Many of the parents encouraged their children into sporting teams that were an intimate part of the fabric of the area and the children were proud of their local teams. This was reflected in the school parent notes wherein children were commended for their teams' successes and individuals were congratulated for their performances that week.
Geographic Setting of the School: Established in a suburb of a larger town, the school was viewed by the community as a valued part of the fabric of the society of the area.

Merv - The Teacher Identified from School D

Merv was in his early-40s but had come into teaching a bit later, so he had only been teaching full-time for around ten years. He was highly respected by the staff at his school and worked hard to help others with a variety of tasks which greatly eased the load for everyone. He was obviously passionate about the teaching role and was eager to talk to others about what he was doing and how he could do it better. The students at the school wanted to be in his class and children in the playground approached him happily with anything that was concerning them. He taught a senior primary class but always said he would be happy to take any class in the school.

Data Gathering

Interviews

A successful interview is a dynamic, interpersonal experience that is carefully planned to accomplish a particular purpose.

(Van Dalen, 1983, p.160)

Design of Interview Schedule

The questions for the semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix A) were designed in order to generate data pertaining to each of the five
dimensions defined in the research question for the study. Initially a series of questions were derived by the researcher and then they were taken to three departmental officers to gain some expert opinion about them. Two of these experts were principals of schools who had been involved in writing and presenting the Inservice Course on 'Quality Teaching.' The third was a senior officer in Training and Development in the South Coast who was also happy to respond.

As a result of these interactions, a total of fifteen questions relating to the five dimensions of "Quality Teaching" described by the OECD, were designed, with three questions for each dimension.

"Knowledge of Curriculum Areas and Content" - Three questions concerning knowledge of curriculum areas and content were framed. The questions were:

What do you believe is the relevance of curriculum, syllabus or policy documents for a classroom teacher?

Would you describe how you think a particular Key Learning-area explains how children learn.

What changes would you make to the primary syllabus if you had the power?

"Pedagogical Skill" - The three questions were:

Explain the skills you believe are essential to successful teaching and learning.
What skills do you believe form the strongest aspect of your own teaching?

Think of a person whose teaching you know is lacking in some way. Describe what the lack is and suggest ways in which that person could be helped to improve.

"Reflection" - The three questions were:

Teaching a class of students is a highly complex undertaking. How do you believe teachers take the time to think about what they are achieving with their students?

Outline the reasons that you believe this time for reflection is beneficial.

Describe the ways in which you believe your approaches to reflection have been enhanced.

"Empathy" - The three questions were:

Describe the relationship you believe you have with the students in your class.

Think of the children who need more time to achieve a particular outcome. How do you feel about them?
What needs of the learners in your class do you most comfortably empathise with? How does that empathy effect your teaching?

"Managerial Competence" - The three questions were:

What importance do you give to routines and organisation in your daily work?

Describe how you organise your class to meet the needs of different learners in your class.

Considering your successful teaching practice, describe what your classroom looks like in operation, day by day.

Opening Questions - Three questions sought information regarding teachers of quality, in a general way, in order to "set the scene". The questions were:

What do you believe a 'quality teacher' is?

In what ways can 'quality teaching' be recognised in an individual's work?

Describe a classroom where 'quality' would be seen in action.

Closing Questions - In order for the participants to draw the interview to an effective close, two final questions were designed to enable the participants to emphasise any issues they wanted to highlight, and/or to
raise additional material they thought was relevant to the study. The questions were:

*We've discussed five different concepts related to your teaching along with your ideas about 'quality'. Please elaborate on anything you believe needs further emphasis from our discussion.*

*Are there any other issues you would like to raise?*

**Administration of Interview Schedule**

Each of the four teachers selected as subjects for the study was contacted and informal interviews were arranged according to their convenience. The teachers were informed of their selection for the study and their agreement to be involved was sought. During these initial interviews with the four identified teachers, a series of open ended questions were posed to enable them to share information, ranging through descriptions of a variety of situations in their respective schools and classrooms, their opinions about the issues being examined by this study and the manner in which they conducted their classroom practice. At the end of this informal meeting the researcher made an appointment to meet the teacher during his/her relief time to implement the schedule described above.

The interview schedule (Appendix B) was also used with the teacher's supervisor and one or two peers. While the questions retained the same intent, the manner of asking was made appropriate to the respondent to determine if the subject's position was able to be identified by those with
whom s/he worked. For example the questions on Curriculum/Content knowledge became:

Does the subject recognise the relevance of curriculum, syllabus or policy documents? How do you know?

Would you describe how you think the subject implements a particular Key Learning-area and his/her beliefs about how children learn.

What changes would the subject make to the primary syllabus if s/he had the power?

Each of the questions was re-worded in this way for the collection of the data from these subjects.

Recording Data from Interviews

The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed overnight to enable the participant to read the set of data collected. This transcript contained some reconstruction of sentences and some removal of repetition in order to increase clarity. The transcript was presented to the participant on the next day for its accuracy to be verified.

Observation

Data concerning the research questions which related to pedagogical skill, empathy and managerial skill, was to be gathered by observation as well as interview. In order to capture a view of the teacher's practice, the researcher decided that there would be at least twelve visits to each
participant's classroom over a year. Each classroom was visited every three weeks (i.e. three observations per term) over a period of twelve months. While the attendance on site was random, the researcher tried to vary the day each week a visit took place, and the time of arrival was changed from visit to visit, wherever possible. The researcher considered these classroom observations to be essential in enabling the observation of the instructional repertoires of the identified participants. This process enabled the researcher to be immersed in the setting and also provided an authentic record of the strategies being employed in the classroom.

A set of criteria (Appendix C) was designed for the observation of the teachers and their classrooms. The teachers provided access to their working life, their students and the daily events that provided the depth of experience necessary to a study of this nature. The criteria developed included items such as:

- Uses a wide variety of strategies for specific purposes.
- Understands and can explain curriculum structure.
- Responds to student's emotional needs.
- Is constantly positive in dealings with students.
- Develops warm relationships with students and expresses concern for the students (e.g. issues from home; issues from the playground).
- Creates stimulating environments by making alterations to the furniture arrangements or positioning of children for particular lessons.
- Use of stories and analogies that support the concept being explained in particular lessons.
- Demonstrations and models that enable the students to engage with the topic.
At the conclusion of each observation a debriefing session was held. The purpose of this debriefing process was to verify the accuracy of the data gathered.

Administration of Observation Schedule

The presence of the researcher in the classroom environment was an initial concern for both teacher and researcher. However, as the process developed, the children reacted less and less until they appeared to ignore the presence of a second adult in their classroom.

In this study the researcher was in the respective case study classrooms every three weeks (i.e. three observations per term) over a period of 12 months. Each of the participants agreed that they were happy if the researcher made an unannounced visit to the classroom and the researcher was invited to sit quietly and as unobtrusively as possible at the edge of the class. Each visit lasted approximately one hour.

The teachers involved were supportive of this method of observation and the accompanying debriefing session.

Recording Data from Observations

The researcher prepared a double page format (Appendix D) for recording fieldnotes during an observation visit. The left hand page was open, and the researcher took notes about the general form of the teaching as it progressed, including phenomena related to the criteria as defined. The right hand page was divided into four areas, one for each of the dimensions described by the OECD that could be observed in practice. The
researcher noted here any overt practice that was related to that concept, either positive or negative.

The researcher took fieldnotes during every visit to the classroom. At the end of the observation the researcher was invited to use the school staffroom where more detailed contextual information could be included in the fieldnotes and specific points highlighted. This preliminary description was discussed with the participant before the researcher departed from the site each day.

Following an observation visit, the researcher wrote up a detailed account of what had been observed. The description of the observations of a teacher was taken back to the participant for clarification of any points and to seek a verification that it was a true record of what had been observed and what the teacher believed happened during the session. The discussion that took place was audio-taped and transcribed. The transcript of the discussion was also discussed with the participant within a week of the observation. This verification of the post-observation discussion enabled the data gathered to be triangulated at the analysis stage.

Analysing Data

Following the clarification process for interview data and the subsequent verification by each participant that the transcribed data (Appendix E) formed a true record of the interview, the transcripts were analysed according to responses made which could be assigned to each of the five dimensions relating to the question asked.
The following table provides one example of the codes used to classify the data from the OECD dimension: Curriculum and Content Knowledge.

Fig. 3.3: Coding Curriculum/Content Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CURRICULUM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Understands Structure</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Checks content to be taught</td>
<td>Cus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Find new strategies</td>
<td>Ccc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Understand theory</td>
<td>Cns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Applies new ideas</td>
<td>Cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observation data consisted of field notes made by the researcher according to the set criteria for the observation schedule. These field notes were grouped according to the dimensions of curriculum/content knowledge, pedagogical skill, empathy and managerial competence. The dimension of reflection was not observed during the classroom visits.

The codes used to analyse the data from classroom observations were the same as those for the interview data. The following example indicates the codes used to classify data from the OECD dimension: Pedagogical Skill.

Fig. 3.4.: Pedagogical Skill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Understanding learning</td>
<td>PS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Questioning Skills</td>
<td>PSul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Planning/Programming</td>
<td>PSqs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Varieties of strategies</td>
<td>PSpp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Sets clear expectations</td>
<td>PSvs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Motivates/Engages students</td>
<td>PSce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Design Curriculum*</td>
<td>PSme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>Bdcd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A constant comparative method of data analysis was used for the observations. This concept has been used to describe the continual refinement and definitive articulation of the phenomena being observed. It involves both the researcher and the participants in continuous dialogue to achieve a clear description of the actual situation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Schatzman & Strauss, 1973).

Miles and Huberman (1984) suggest that "coding is not something one does to get the data ready for analysis...but something that drives ongoing data collection" (p.62). They describe codes as symbols to encapsulate the theme in a group of words that enable the analyst to recognise the idea quickly and to cluster the ideas together. It is, in short, a form of continuing analysis (p.63). Such a description is applicable to the way the data generated by this study were analysed.

Validity and Reliability

To enhance the validity and reliability of this study, the researcher was involved in persistent observation as well as in depth interviews with the participants and their peers and supervisors. The procedures being used were made explicit to everyone involved in the study and as decisions were made they were always discussed as well. As the researcher drew conclusions on the basis of the data collected, these were shared with the participants in order to facilitate participants' responses. Any criticisms were discussed and appropriate adjustments made.

Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the use of multiple sources of evidence to support a conclusion. Again, the data gathered from interview with the
participant and his/her peers was cross checked through interview, observation and verification with participants regarding the authenticity of the data gathered.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter has described the research design and the case study method used to explore the research problem. It described the teachers who became the case study subjects were identified and, subsequently, how the data were collected, recorded and interpreted.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

This study examined the work of four teachers to determine if there was a congruence between the five dimensions of teacher quality designated by the OECD and the characteristics of people identified as 'quality teachers'.

This chapter describes the results of data gathered from the four case study sites. It facilitates a more focused understanding of the beliefs, understandings and pedagogical knowledge of the teachers involved, their modes of work and their commitment to the role of helping children to become successful learners. The results are presented in terms of the five dimensions of teacher quality determined by the OECD which are as follows:

- knowledge of curriculum areas and content;
- pedagogic skill
- reflection
- empathy
- managerial competence
RESULTS OF THE CASE STUDIES.

The results of this study are reported according to each of the five dimensions of a quality teacher and from two perspectives, namely: the teacher's perception of their own practice and the way their peers and supervisors perceived them as teachers. The analysis of the data generated a series of criteria within each of the five dimensions for the characteristics of a quality teacher.

Dimension One: Knowledge of Curriculum Areas and Content.

Data gathered for the area of Curriculum Knowledge and Content were derived from two sources:

- interviews with the participant; and,
- interviews with the participant's peers and supervisors

Analysis of the data gathered regarding Curriculum Knowledge and Content generated three criteria. These criteria were:

a) understanding curriculum structure and being able to explain it;

b) readiness to use new curriculum ideas; and,

c) professional updating of curriculum knowledge.

a) Understand Curriculum Structure

Data from teachers in this study showed that they understood curriculum structure and they were able to explain how curriculum applied in their teaching practice. The peers and supervisors of the teachers in the study perceived these teachers as understanding curriculum and how it applied in practice.
Data From Teachers: Understanding Curriculum Structure

From the interviews with each of the participants it became clear that all four teachers demonstrated a belief in and commitment to the curriculum and syllabus statements, forwarded to them by the NSW Board of Studies. They indicated a sense of ownership of what was being implemented and were able to explain learning theory and the rationale behind the syllabuses. They were up to date on the syllabuses being revised and demonstrated a confidence in working with the draft syllabuses as well as those already published.

A teacher's understanding of the English syllabus, for example, the development of reading skills, and the teacher's knowledge of the work that is to be implemented is an important component of classroom practice. The way that these teachers explained what they were doing and how they approached the work reflected their broader understandings of the curriculum.

Evidence of their understanding is reflected in comments made by the teachers as follows:

*In a system like ours, it's important to have syllabuses for each of the Key-learning Areas because of the fact that we are part of a system. You can't have individuals deciding what they think is important for students to learn and then going off on that. Some children change schools and they have to be able to continue on with similar stuff in terms of what the teacher is trying to teach them. I know the topics and units can change from teacher to teacher, but the general concepts and skills remain the same. The move to 'outcomes' in the syllabuses that are sent from the Board is proving to be a*
hassle for some, but I've tried to get to know this work in a simple way - I use the outcomes to enable me to plan lessons. The outcome I'm trying to get the children to achieve makes it easier to plan ways of introducing the work because I know what to look for. Also, I like the move to Stages in the syllabus. I think we were trying too hard before because everything was so lock-step. Now we are able to let kids move on more readily and if they take a bit more time it doesn't matter...when you work to an outcome, the assumption is that every child will attain it. Some quicker than others. (Rosalind).

I believe that children need a context for new learning, so I use themes when I'm planning new work. They're mostly embedded in literature, but I try to teach the different genres of the writing and I take most of my work in HSIE from the text we're studying. The HSIE draft syllabus shows a range of books that support the units that are set, so it's easy to make the context clear. Children cope much better when things are clearly contextualised to the main points of what is being taught...Also, I like the rationale of the new approaches to HSIE. They enable the children to learn a good deal of knowledge as part of the process of concept development. I think this encourages the children that their learning is real because they can explain some of the facts surrounding the work. I believe it's a much stronger balance than we've had in the past. (Merv).

The syllabus helps me know the sequence of learning that should occur. It provides me with ideas on how to introduce topics and ideas and also the outcomes that should be achieved. The support documents are just that...we can use them if we want to, but we can design our own units and topics and sometimes this makes the classroom more interesting. The change to outcomes is a significant part of this process. It gives us something to aim for. I'll be glad when the syllabus statements are presented in a similar format. At the moment we're all struggling, but when all the
syllabuses have outcomes written in an appropriate sequence, it will be much easier for everyone. (Simon).

I think the problem-solving approaches explained in the Science and Technology syllabus make it easier to implement this syllabus. I've tried using problem-solving tasks before, but with the clearly explained steps in this syllabus, I feel more confident and the kids seem to be learning more. It's important to know the document. I mean, it has been written to enable children across the state to achieve more equitable outcomes. Kids can move from school to school and be sure they will know what is being taught. (Janice).

In a primary school, the English syllabus is a dominant and pivotal aspect of classroom teaching. Teachers in NSW were working through a revision of the English syllabus which was not without difficulty. Teachers in this study have demonstrated the ability to adapt the changes in the syllabus into their own repertoires, acknowledging the difficulties they encountered. Comments made by the teachers in reference to their work with the English syllabus as it was being revised demonstrated their capacity to adapt its intent into their teaching repertoire:

When the English Syllabus was under review we kept hearing about the changes that were coming. We were worried by the mixed messages about functional grammar. I took myself to several courses to see if I could get the language and understanding of this aspect of English under control so when I had to teach it I would know the stuff. (Janice)

Reading is a very complex activity. I try to keep up with what others are doing to make sure my classroom strategies are leading to real learning. The support statements about the teaching of reading have been very confirming of my practice. I guess I've used the ideas of Independent, Modelled and
guided reading all my career. The stuff we're getting in support of the changing English syllabus tells me it's OK to keep doing much of what I'm already doing. (Merv)

The English Syllabus is shaping up to be more helpful to teachers. I believe a syllabus should give direction to what the classroom teacher needs to plan. I think bringing all of English under one document is a step in the right direction. Teachers are seeing the relationships between reading, writing, listening and talking more positively. Also, the idea of viewing is making an impact on our understandings of the wider needs of kids in the world as far as communication is concerned. I think teachers will need to learn a lot in this area as well. (Simon)

Data From Peers and Supervisors: Understanding Curriculum Structure.

Data derived from peers and supervisors regarding these teachers' ability to understand and explain curriculum structure demonstrated the high respect others held for their capabilities. They were able to explain their own use of the syllabus and the interpretation of its intent and content. Their peers and supervisors recognised that these teachers knew the relationship between content and concept development and were able to monitor the progress of students on each of these planes. The peers and supervisors of these teachers respected their opinions and explanations and usually tried out any new approaches that grew out of discussions with these people.

Merv seems to have a real skill in this area. I've noticed the staff talk a lot to him about what the curriculum sets out to achieve for kids and he seems to be able to explain his understandings in a way that encourages them to modify their views. He doesn't pretend to be an expert by any means.
and he does listen to other ideas, but the teachers here seem to value his point of view.
(Merv's supervisor)

I like the fact that she's so willing to help me with the syllabus work. I've always depended on the material that's printed in texts and other resources for my ideas, but we've really worked through the syllabus and it's helping me make sense of why the syllabus is important. She has great ideas for introducing new topics and now I see she actually gets them from the syllabus itself. (One of Rosalind's peers)

I've seen him contribute to meetings in such a way that others have gone away with a stronger understanding of the theory that underpins the syllabus. It was particularly noticeable with the science syllabus. People looked at the problem-solving intent of the syllabus and thought they could still keep the work facts based. He was able to explain ways of introducing new topics so the children were engaged from the start. Also, he taught us how to monitor the progress of children in this syllabus area. (Simon's Supervisor)

We asked him to introduce the revised syllabus to everyone else. The work he did certainly gave us more than a brief introduction to the material. His understanding of 'outcomes' was a great help to everyone. I know he went to several courses the Department was running, and he was able to bring the material back and run activities so we all understood where the whole thing was headed and how we could use the 'outcomes' to help us plan for and then monitor learning. (Janice's Supervisor)

Summary

The data gathered from interviews with the four teachers indicated that they understood curriculum structure and that their capacity to become
involved in the implementation of new syllabus statements was part of the work they did. They demonstrated they believed there was a need to understand what the syllabus was intending and then to find ways of making it active in their particular classrooms.

Their peers and supervisors perceived the teachers as being able to understand and explain curriculum structure and to explain their own use of the syllabus and the interpretation of its intent and content. Further, these data demonstrated that other teachers consulted the teachers involved in this study in the process of learning about the new syllabus for themselves. The four teachers' opinions and willingness to share influenced the implementation processes of others.

b) Readiness to Use New Curriculum Ideas

Data from teachers in this study showed that they were ready to use ideas as described in new curriculum documents. They kept themselves current throughout the revision of new syllabuses and tried out new strategies. The peers and supervisors of the teachers in the study perceived these teachers as being able to help them with the implementation of revised syllabus documents.

Data From Interviews with Teachers: Apply New Curriculum Ideas

All four participants indicated an awareness of, and a concern about the rate of change in primary syllabuses during the interviews that were conducted with them. They highlighted the long process that English went through before it was published, emphasising that they viewed the development process as political. They reported that they found this
particularly frustrating because they could see the development of other new documents crowding the agenda, and they thought there was too much happening at the same time. They believed that teachers did not have sufficient time to gather the complexities of the new syllabuses.

...the department should tell the Board of Studies that there’s too much happening. We haven’t got time to learn it all. The English was a farce - too many people involved with different points of view. They shouldn’t use us to force their ideas and theories on... (Rosalind)

Do we really understand what is happening in English? Really, I look at what they’re doing and then go about my business as a teacher. When the final thing is finished, then I’ll try to get it under my belt. I think I’m a good teacher of English and it seems this is all to do with academics who don’t like each other’s work. They should let us write the syllabuses (Merv).

You can’t change anything just with a new document...if you are a good teacher, the syllabus helps you plan and select good strategies. I wait for the document to arrive...I always seem to find it useful...then I try to imagine what the classroom should be like if the new syllabus is really happening (Simon).

I know we can’t do anything about it, but it’s very frustrating. Things need to slow down so teachers can get down to understanding the changes that are happening. It seems to me that not much is happening in classrooms because teachers just look at the new documents then find ways of using the strategies they always have (Janice).

Some examples of the way these teachers described their curriculum delivery were as follows:
...it's important that all children gain a good knowledge of phonemic awareness. I use lots of rhymes and sound games to help the kids in my class get lots of exposure to these elements of the reading syllabus. I teach it in the context of real books, not as a separate entity that has no relation to the actual print of the text being used (Rosalind).

Reading is very complex. I try to keep up with what others are doing to make sure my classroom strategies are helping the kids to learn. There's one boy in the class who is really hesitant with reading. When I work closely with him, he works well, and I can see that he knows the basic things; but, if I leave him to his own devices, he seems to get lost in the words and loses the meaning. I think he needs a lot of work before he approaches the individual task...much more than others seem to. I need to give him strong scaffolds so there is no chance of him missing the meaning when doing the tasks by himself. The other thing I need to do is to get him to explain what he has read to others in the group. Often the group situation is better for kids like this because they fire off one another (Merv).

The fact that there are different aspects of the reading process always makes it interesting for the kids. I mean, I try hard to keep a balance between the code-breaking stuff and the meaning based aspects of learning to read. Some of my kids tell me that they're not worrying about the meaning and just concentrating on getting the words sorted out. I think this is great, because they're actually starting to react to the work I've been emphasising (Simon)

Children learn to read by reading. I mean, even when you are teaching them the sounds of the language and the relationships of letters to sounds, they have to recognise it in the context of real reading. You don't learn to swim outside the water...and you shouldn't learn to read outside print and books. I've followed the debate about whole language fairly well, and I'm not convinced by much of what is said. I present a fairly eclectic reading program that presents a
balance of all the aspects of reading...and I believe we’re getting there (Janice).

Data from Observing the Teachers’ Classrooms in Operation: Apply New Curriculum Ideas

In one teacher’s classroom the introduction of new strategies in English was demonstrated by the fact that the draft syllabus was open on the teacher’s desk and she referred to it a number of times while teaching. The activity being used was ‘Dictagloss’, and it appeared that the teacher had not used this strategy previously:

Lesson Observation(Rosalind)

Teacher: Girls and boys we’re going to try something a bit different this morning. It’s something we haven’t done before, and we’re going to learn it together. I’ve placed a piece of paper on your desk and you’ll need your pencil. Now, I want you to write your name at the top of the paper so I’ll know which piece of work is yours when I collect them. I’m going to read out a short passage about wombats...I want you to note down some of the main points you hear while I’m reading...then I want you to work with your partner, see if you both have the same facts, and then, together, I want you to try and reconstruct the passage. We’re going to compare the version you do together with the one I read out to see how much you gott...sounds like fun? OK, take your pencil and paper and let’s see how we go...

Following the reading the children worked for about 20 minutes constructing their piece and then the teacher put her copy up using an overhead transparency. They discussed the similarities and differences between the works.
In the debriefing that followed this observation the teacher explained that she was experimenting with the strategies that were recorded in the syllabus draft, particularly those she had not heard of before. She had an arrangement with a colleague on the same grade who was also trialling them and they met together to discuss the merits of each one, trying to define what the strategy actually taught. She reported that they had tried similar approaches with other syllabus documents and that they found it to be a helpful way to get to know the intent and process of the new syllabus.

Another of the participants in the study, Simon, was working with the Human Society and Its Environment Syllabus that was in Draft form. He indicated that he believed it was important to contribute to the development of the syllabus by providing feedback to the writers. He was trialling a Unit on Bali that was written for students in Stage Three. At the same time he was introducing the students to a computer program called 'HyperCard', and one group was recording their learning by generating a HyperCard Stack using this interactive program.

Lesson Observation (Simon)

The teacher had given some strong explicit teaching about the nature of the climate in the tropics. He showed a short video clip that was followed by a discussion of the main points made. He had some pictures of Bali showing different weather and led a discussion of the main points. He then led the children to some child-centred activity...

Teacher: Our job for today is to show the things we've learned about the weather in Bali. I want each group to do that in a different way: Group One: You can work on the computers today...Does everyone know how to use HyperCard? (Some respond that they're not sure...) Ok, I'll come over to get you going. In the meantime you can start
with a storyboard of the information you want to put in. Group Two: I want you to work in the painting area to make some pictures of Bali in the different weather environments. We’re going to display them here (indicating a part of the wall) and we’ll make some captions later so everyone who reads them will understand the work we’ve been doing. Group Three: I want you to make a model of a small Balinese village during the rainy season. You’ll work outside where I’ve set up a variety of things you may need. Your activity may take longer than there is, but we might be able to do some more at lunchtime...we’ll see how you go. Group Four, I want you to do work out a way to represent the climatic changes we now know about Bali...You could make a travel brochure, or a radio interview to explain what people need to know about this area. Now, everyone move to their work areas...if you need something else, come and see me...do the planning first...there’s paper and pencil there for each group...you could use an ideas web to get going, but don’t spend too much time on that step...I’ll be over here with the computer Group. (Simon)

Simon was keen to understand the skills and knowledge that the syllabus set out for the children to learn. He referred regularly to the document and worked systematically through the ideas presented there. At the end of each lesson he wrote some comments that would enable him to carry out a more extensive evaluation and submit some focused comments to the syllabus development group. Simon was keen to be involved in providing feedback to the writers.

Summary

The data gathered from interviews with each of these four teachers demonstrated their commitment to a careful consideration of new syllabuses as they were developed. Each indicated that they believed
syllabus change was inevitable, but they also stressed that they wanted to make input to the revision of the syllabus. They tried out new strategies, sometimes discarding them if they believed the strategy did not provide something better than they already used. They also indicated that they sometimes modified the ideas expressed in an effort to build them more realistically into their mode of operation.

c) Professional Updating of Curriculum Knowledge.

Data from teachers in this study showed that they took time to keep their work current and dynamic. They attended courses in their own time and spent a good deal of time finding references that would further develop their knowledge of the curriculum as it developed. The peers and supervisors of the teachers in the study believed these teachers were good people to attend courses because they were always willing to share whatever they had learnt and were active in reporting the information back to the staff.

Data From Interviews with Teachers: Professional Updating of Curriculum Knowledge.

There was a dynamic interest in keeping their practice as relevant as possible. The interviews with these participants revealed a commitment to learning more about teaching and learning as well as the content of the curriculum they were presenting. All four teachers were committed to providing factual information in their lessons that was culturally appropriate and well focused for the needs of the learners. This aspect of their work became more obvious in learning areas where they believed
they were not as experienced with the prescribed content such as science, visual arts and music.

I always worry that I won’t do a good job in the Art area. I like it, and I like to see kids enjoying it, but I’m never sure I’m teaching the right stuff. I go to lots of courses and get good ideas that I bring back to the kids in my class...I don’t really think I do enough here though (Rosalind).

The one thing about Science that I’m concerned by is the fact that I was never very good at it at school myself. I’m glad our school uses a set program...then I know that the stuff is relevant. We don’t have as many inservice courses as we did when the syllabus was being revised. I went to a lot after school that really helped me understand what the syllabus was about and how to present it (Merv).

I wish there were more chances to go away and learn about the things we should ensure we teach well. I am a member of an interest group in the area of writing and I’ve learnt more there than anywhere. It’s so important to keep yourself up to date...especially now there’s less money for Inservice. The other thing I like is when consultants visit our school. They know their work so well and they’re always happy if you’ll try their ideas. I think I learn a lot from them (Simon).

Music is not one of my strong points...in fact, I think it would be better for the kids if there was a specialist in this area...but there’s not, so I try my best. I can’t give them the finer points, but I’ve learned enough to provide a basis. The region has run quite a bit in this area over the years and I always try to go if possible...especially the after school courses (Janice).
Data from Interviews with Peers and Supervisors: Professional Updating of Curriculum Knowledge.

In interviews with the peers and supervisors of these teachers it became clear that these were good people to send off to courses because they would invariably come back and share what they had learned with everybody else, making it possible for others to try out new ideas too.

...after he has been to a course he explains the ideas and concepts to everyone at a staff meeting and then if you want to know more, he's willing to work with you. Not everyone takes advantage of it, but I find it's great to be able to talk to someone else (Rosalind's Peer).

I often go with him to courses after school. The good thing is, we can talk about what we've learned and then we tend to work together to see if we believe it's working. We make modifications to the ideas and then refine them. It's wonderful to have someone like that you can work with (Simon's Supervisor).

When I'm not sure exactly what the intent of the activity is, I just have to ask and she's there explaining and helping me understand the work. I reckon she would be a good supervisor because she works hard to make sure her practice is in line with the curriculum and that the children's progress can be easily recognised (Janice's Peer).

The level of collegiality represented here helped to enhance the work of these people. The peers of these teachers spoke of a confidence in the knowledge and ability the teachers demonstrated that was important to their own teaching, especially when change was occurring.
Summary

The data gathered from each of the participants highlighted the importance they saw of keeping their knowledge current for the sake of the learners with whom they worked. They were committed to ensuring the work they implemented with their classes was focused and effective.

The peers of these teachers reported that they knew they could depend on these people to share their knowledge openly. They believed these teachers were good people to attend courses because they were always keen to report back to everyone the new things they had learned. Several of their peers suggested these teachers were the ones they approached to help them understand what was expected in new syllabus statements.

Dimension Two: Pedagogical Skill

Data gathered for this dimension described by the OECD, were derived from classroom observations and debriefing interviews with the participant in the school setting. Further, the peers and supervisors of each of the participants were interviewed and the data gathered in this way enhanced the researcher's understanding of Pedagogical Skill as one of the characteristics of quality teachers.

Analysis of the data collected about 'Pedagogical Skill' generated four criteria that provided a more focused exploration of the dimension. The criteria were:

a) Designing Curriculum Delivery
b) Uses a Variety of Strategies
c) Sets Clear Expectations
d) Motivates and Engages Children.

a) Designing Curriculum Delivery

Data from the teachers in this study showed that the skills of designing the way they would put the syllabus into action were distinguished by thoughtful planning and a clear understanding of what they wanted the learners to achieve. The peers of these teachers recognised the skills that were evident in these teachers' practice and indicated that they often tried some of the ideas they put forward for themselves.

Data from Interviews with Teachers: Designing Curriculum Delivery

The need to establish a readiness for learning was a feature emphasised by all four teachers in interviews about their classroom practice. They indicated that the processes used, established the tone of the class and helped to form the expectations of the students in such a way as to be ready to learn and be actively involved for the day.

The children in Rosalind's classrooms had been given explicit responsibilities at the start of each day. The role was shared around the class day by day, but the routine was constantly reinforced.

I think it's important for children to take responsibility for their own actions...they understand that the roll has to be marked every day and that they have to get themselves organised for the day's work. Early in the year I spent a lot of time getting these processes in place...now they're second nature. The child who has checked the attendance has to keep
The teaching day in Rosalind's classroom started in a routine manner. She spent the half-hour before classes commenced in her classroom preparing for the day's lessons, making worksheets or writing up notes about children's progress/workhabits. During this time the children and their parents were welcome in the room. A few children wandered into the classroom with some flowers, or a drawing they had prepared, to give to the teacher or a new toy they wanted to show her. In each case these interactions were greeted enthusiastically.

Notes from 'Debrief' with Rosalind

Researcher: How do you react to the continual interruptions of a morning?
Rosalind: Not really... You have to realise I see this as their classroom too and I learn such a lot from them during these informal chats. I wouldn't change this...but...there are times when I close the door...if I'm doing something I have to concentrate on and the children know I don't want to be interrupted unless it's for something very important. It works most of the time and if they get too pushy I just tell them not to come to my class ever!! (Joking mood to this comment) Not really, I think these are the times that help to develop the relationship that is crucial to successful teaching...

The day started in a similar manner in Simon's classroom. He always ensured he had everything ready for the lessons to be conducted in the first part of the day. The 'big book' was in its place on the stand near where he would work at the beginning and the sheets to be used were placed within easy reach. The children entered quietly together.
was no loud noise nor running. It was evident that the children had learned this routine, as they moved quietly to their places on the floor at the front of the room.

Notes from 'Debrief' with Simon

Researcher: The beginning of the day seemed to be very relaxed. Do you always allow that degree of freedom in your work?
Simon: You have to remember that I’ve had some of these children for two years. We understand each other, and, I suppose their presence in the classroom enables the new children to be 'built-in' to the culture of my room more easily. I like to keep this part of the day as informal as possible...more like a friendly chat. There are days when it doesn’t happen but I generally start in this way.
Researcher: Is there any purpose in mind when you do this?
Simon: There’s always a purpose. I don’t see any point in doing something without knowing why you’re doing it. At this time in the day I want the children to settle their minds, to leave outside the things that have been going on and to lead their focus to learning. It’s like debriefing, I guess, being ready to move on to something new.

Janice in the study reported how she adapted and adopted a variety of routines as her work developed.

I think it’s really important to keep up-to-date with everything that’s happening in teaching and learning. I mean, you take some things on board realising they don’t suit the way you want to work...or you adapt them to suit your mode...or you reject them altogether...but I still think it’s important to be aware of things others are doing and trying. At one time I thought it was mandatory to do reading and spelling and maths in the morning because that is when the children are more alert! I’ve tried different approaches in the last few years and I find that if you establish a routine, it can
start with any of the KL-As. The important thing is to engage the children in learning (Janice).

Data from Observing Teachers' Classrooms: Designing Curriculum Delivery

Merv had a strong belief in fair and quietly ordered classrooms. He reported that he had taken a lot of time to ensure that the children had a bright, happy start to their school day. He had established his expectations of the ways in which children would move around his classroom. The initial entry to the room was fairly structured and formal. The morning greetings were bright and cheery and the teacher reinforced his expectations of a good day at school each day, stating that they had to all work together, teacher and pupils, if these expectations were to be realised. The children responded to this pattern and moved to their desks and prepared for the day in a most orderly manner.

After marking the roll and collecting money/lunch orders, Merv told the class what he had planned for the day. This was a predictable part of the way this teacher began the class each day. However, Merv followed it up with a time of negotiation when he encouraged the children to suggest alternatives to what had been planned, at the same time, making it clear there were things during the day that were non-negotiable.

Opening Session

Merv: OK, now there are some things in the list for today that everyone must achieve. Everyone has to do the Maths lesson as explained, and everyone must complete the writing topic set. Does anyone have any suggestions that will make our day more productive?
Jack: I think we need some time to finish off the research from yesterday. I think some people were finished, but they could go on with the art lesson you said, and some of us could work on our research at the same time.

Merv: Yes, that's a fair suggestion...as long as everyone gets the art done too. It's important to have lessons in all areas and I don't want to see you swapping things you don't like for things you do.

Ellie: We were a bit slow with our research yesterday, and I'd like some time to get it going further. Is it possible for us to do that while you're working with the Echidnas (one of the reading groups) and then we'll all be ready to go on to the art together?

Merv: That's great. Any other ideas?

Jason: What will we do if we finish the maths stuff?

Merv: You know where the extra sheets are kept. I put some new ones in the tray this morning and I think you'll enjoy doing the brain-teasers!

Rosalind placed an emphasis upon working with individual students. This was supported in the contract sessions established each day. The children worked in a variety of modes but they always had to explain to the teacher what they had been doing, how they approached the task and what they believed they were learning from the work. The individual was the focus of the work and Rosalind regularly monitored each child's interest, involvement and progress. She made notes about various individual's reactions to the work and attempted to approach the learning strategies in a variety of ways so no child could 'slip-through-the-net'.

Notes on 'Debrief' with Rosalind

My job is to ensure each child learns...to take each individual from where they are to the next step. Children learn differently from each other and at different rates. You can introduce a new topic one day and have 75% of the group
understand it, but there's always that other 25% that you have to modify it for. It can be frustrating, but that doesn't matter...it's my job to ensure they all can do it eventually.

The learning readiness strategy used by Merv took up to 30 minutes each morning because he believed it was an important part of the day. He knew the administrative parts of the day had to occur and preferred to get them out of the way before moving the children to their learning tasks for the day.

The expectation that class rolls would be marked and money collected to be sent to the school office was an accepted policy by all classes in the school. At the end of these set tasks, Merv opened a book that he had brought to read while the children read their own books for about ten minutes. During this time one of the children who was rostered as the 'Class Helper' for that particular week, took the money across to the office. When the 'helper' had returned to the classroom, Merv initiated a short discussion of the book he was reading and this was followed by a couple of children explaining their particular stories as well. Each told the class what had happened in the story and where they were up to.

Notes on 'Debrief with Merv

Merv: Earlier in the year I was the only one to contribute to this part of the morning routine. I believe it provides a good model for the children and one they can accept. After a few weeks I continued with the model but provided some ideas as to how I decided what I would say. I guess this was a bit more of a demonstration because I explained what I was trying to do. Now we take it in turn. There's a roster over there that indicates whose turn it is and my name is just one of the people on the list. Next term I'll have to make some changes because we're not getting through as many as I would like to. I think I'll break the class into groups of four and each of
them can take a day. On the fifth day I’ll explain my book to everyone...that way I can keep the model going as well as get the kids more involved in this part of the lesson.

Data from Interviews with Peers: Designing Curriculum Delivery

The peers and supervisors of these teachers were also able to highlight the routines used by these people as being one of the strengths of their practice. It became clear that the classrooms where these people worked were well ordered and well organised. Their peers and supervisors commented about the good model they were for others.

...when we have practice teaching students come to the school I always suggest they go and watch the way she starts the day. Everything is so ordered, the children can do it themselves. A few times she has been held up after the morning assembly and the children just come in and start their day. It’s wonderful to watch. (Rosalind’s Peer)

I believe quality teachers establish routines in their classrooms to make the learning environment more supportive of kids. In this case, while the lesson order varies each day, the general start to the day is always smooth and efficient. When there is money to be collected, the roll to be marked, notes to collected and lunch-orders to be handed in, the teacher needs to be well organised. That’s the nature of this classroom. The kids know what is expected and they live up to it. (Merv’s Supervisor)

...she has developed a relationship of mutual trust and the children seem to know the parameters she has set. They work in an orderly way, concentrating on the tasks set...then, at the end of the time they know to return to the front to share with each other what they’ve been doing. It’s so well organised, there’s little need for discipline approaches. I like the way she uses rewards to reinforce the behaviours she’s looking for.
The kids all seem to respond. I know she keeps a list of who's had rewards...it's great. (Janice's Supervisor)

There's one boy in this class who can be a real challenge but he has it all under control. I know some teachers who didn't want to have the child in their class but here, it's no worry. There's such deep mutual respect between teacher and kids, the whole thing works so well. (Simon's Peer)

The peers of these teachers indicated that they often talked over the routines and approaches that were in place in these classrooms. They said they admired the working environment and the positive tone that was evident in their work.

...I'm amazed at the way that class settles. Last year they were a bit more restless, but he's been able to establish routines that just seem to suit the group. (Merv's Peer)

When I visit that room the children are so ordered. They seem to be working productively and they're so settled. (Simon's Peer)

If I could get my own class working in that way, I'd be tickled pink. She seems to know the kids so well and uses ideas that engage them so readily. I often try out the ideas myself. (Janice's Peer)

Summary

The teachers in this study described routines and approaches that were targeted at settling the class into engaging in learning strategies that made them keen and interested. They used opening routines that were predictable for the children and that made them ready to learn
These approaches were able to be recognised in observations in the classroom as well. In one case the researcher observed the children settle to the morning routine before the teacher had arrived from the morning assembly. The children knew the routine so well, they moved straight into the opening strategies for the day and the teacher was able to join in at an appropriate moment.

The peers of these people confirmed that they recognised the skill of these people in determining routines and strategies that prepared the children for engagement in the activities that were to come. They indicated that they sometimes tried strategies these teachers shared with them to see if they could refine their own approaches further.

b) Uses a Variety of Strategies

Data from Interviews with Teachers: Uses a Variety of Strategies

All four teachers in the study reported a commitment to the importance of relevance in learning in the way they described things to children. They made tasks as relevant as possible and they explained why the activity had to be completed.

In one classroom the children had complained about doing some aspect of the work, so the teacher, Merv, took the time to explain how it would help their learning for the future, how it would affect their lives and how it would help them understand other things. The children seemed to appreciate this aspect of the work, as they returned to set tasks more easily after the explanation had been given.
Much of the work Merv introduced was in 'contract' format and it demanded that children take risks. Many of the children clearly enjoyed this work and talked about what they were doing enthusiastically. However Merv pointed to a group of students whom he claimed were more reserved and tended not to enjoy some tasks until they were explained. He knew his learners very well and was able to predict which children would be in each category for the start of each day. To that end, he did not necessarily structure the groups who would meet with him for explanation at the start of the day or session. He made it an open invitation and children joined him for different purposes.

I believe children need to feel confident about being able to complete the task, so I always ask those who would like to, to meet with me in the 'Demo Area' for some introductory comments. I pretty well know who will take on new tasks confidently, but sometimes I'm surprised by the people who come out for the discussion. I guess they come for all sorts of reasons...perhaps even just to put off starting for a bit longer...but anyway, I'm always sure the children feel good about starting the task...the point is, if they make a mistake or get into strife, they can tell me the reasoning behind the things they've done and I get some sense of the processes being used. (Merv)

The view of primary classroom learning as being learning for life was a dynamic of Merv's classroom style. He believed that what he presented to children must be relevant and useful into the following years of their lives. He saw learning as a continuum and that the work he did with the children at this stage could and would have an effect on them as life-long learners.

Relevance to the learner was a trend in all the responses given by these teachers and it was evident in their practice. They made sense of the
topics they were teaching and the strategies being used made each child realise that the learning was required and the processes and activities worthwhile. Each of the teachers seemed to think this was accepted practice:

*I think the most important work we do is to keep everything relevant to the child. If we are explicit about the reasons for doing the tasks we set, the child can develop a sense 'why'. I noticed some work one of my colleagues was doing the other day in maths and one of the kids asked why they had to learn it. The response was fairly predictable and non-descript, in that there was no link to the life of the child nor the link to the future. It seems the child was learning just because he had to. It would have been better to context the activity in real life, I think...* (Janice)

Data from Observations in Classrooms: Uses a Variety of Strategies.

Each of the four teachers approached their work differently, but articulated similar beliefs about the conditions under which children learned best. Janice held a strong belief in a 'whole-language' approach to successful learning and this was manifest in the way she related the skills of learning to a content selection that made sense to the children. Her preparation was distinguished by a pattern that was designed to integrate the work from a range of subjects during the week and she claimed that she had adopted some strategies to provide for the range of learning styles in her classroom.

*I believe children learn best when they can see some relationships between the lessons each day. I prepare work in themes and I like to bring the class back together before each break to let them tell each other about the things they think they learned. Peter was an interesting case in these sessions. He didn't say very much initially...I don't think he liked*
being the centre of attention...but now, he loves to help and do things to tell everyone else everything he knows about whatever it is...it’s really interesting to watch them grow and change in learning. (Janice)

In one of the other classrooms, in the teaching of 'Reading', Rosalind, the teacher, reported a commitment to working closely with the learner. She took children aside constantly to help them with the work—she had established for them following a carefully constructed demonstration that commenced the lesson. The commitment to integrating themes was evident in the work presented.

In Rosalind's classroom the use of models and demonstrations occurred before the children proceeded to practise aspects of the work and then the lesson continued with writing and spelling. The lessons commenced with very oral-aural experiences and with a great deal of interaction between teacher and learner. However, when the children proceeded to practice, individually, the things they had been learning, Rosalind had pre-selected materials for them to use, that were cognisant with their particular abilities and interests. She indicated that this was not the only way she taught in this area, as she wanted to provide varieties of lessons that were dynamic enough to engage the students from the start.

Notes on 'Debrief' with Rosalind

Rosalind: I try to vary my approaches and vary the demonstrations I use so everyone will be interested but when I realise some kids are not tuned in, I use a different approach. Sometimes I might give most of the class something to do while I work with a few children in a group. Today, did you notice I took one of the boys aside so I could give him some time. He's a bit reluctant with reading and I
need to have him one-on-one occasionally just so I can check with what’s happening.

On other occasions I repeat a demonstration using a different book and watch for reaction from those I’m concerned about...also, I sometimes get one of the children to repeat the demonstration for me. I mean, kids seem to be able to understand each other better sometimes and the learning is better...but I always try to keep a constant focus in the learning as it occurs. I think the kids respond more easily if they’re in tune with the overall topic.

In Simon’s classroom, creating themes and contexts that support learning was also an aspect of the work demonstrated. He reported a belief that children benefit from a deeper investigation of a topic and stories so Research Topics were selected to enable total ‘immersion’ in an issue. For example, when the class was learning Aboriginal Studies, Simon used a strategy that enabled the children to simulate aspects of Aboriginal relationships that taught the children to understand how the various tribes and groups related to each other. This engagement in the topic enabled the children to gain an understanding more effectively than could have been taken from more expository lessons.

I’ve used this strategy quite a few times. I took it from the kit written by Margaret Simpson on ‘Aborigines of the Western Desert’ and I find it always gets the kids in. Some of them enjoy looking up the books to see if they can work out how it wouldn’t work...I think that’s good for them too and I try to get them to explain to the others what they’re doing. Makes for great lessons. I select aboriginal legends etc for reading, we knot string bags in craft and we explore the X-ray nature of aboriginal art. Again, I try to get the children to research these things and teach each other about them. (Simon)

Each of the teachers claimed to believe that the teacher must establish their position as 'teacher' as well as assuming other roles in the
classroom. Rosalind managed to demonstrate her position as 'the teacher' in situations that warranted it. She was a firm disciplinarian, holding high expectations and always making these expectations clear to the students. Rosalind made her feelings explicit too. The children knew when she was angry because she told the children exactly how she felt:

..... put that down! (raised voice sends a clear message to everyone that she is displeased) I feel really angry when you do that. I've told you several times not to touch it and you insist on baiting me....now put it down! Girls and boys, you must learn to do as you are told...I do not want anyone to touch the tape-recorder! We have to finish this writing before we go on to that, so please get on with your work (Rosalind).

While the voice was clearly raised in this exchange, Rosalind did not single out the individual in any way that would be damaging to his/her self-esteem. She made it clear that she had been disobeyed and that it made her feel angry, but she did not allow that anger to be vented at the individual, so the relationship was maintained and the lesson could move on. Her 'presence' in the room as a teacher was clearly emphasised. She held very strong beliefs that classroom learning needed to be distinguished by parameters to which the children could relate.

Notes on Debrief with Rosalind

Researcher: You seemed angry when that boy touched the tape-recorder.
Rosalind: I was! I'd told them what we were going to do, and he knew he was going to work the tape-recorder in the next lesson, but he insisted on fussing about it while we were trying to get finished. I believe children need to work inside the parameters set by the teacher...I think they like to know how far they can go...but that doesn't stop them from trying you out...particularly at this age. I wasn't really angry at the individual child...I mean, like all others he was excited about
what was to come...but I think they have to be clearly told that things they do can make you feel angry...so I told them. It's no big drama.

Researcher: Do you find this happens a lot?

Rosalind: No...every once in a while someone forgets how the classroom should be working and they have to be reminded. It mostly happens in more structured situations...I explain that whatever it is makes me feel disappointed but that they can help me by remembering how they should act in the classroom. I talk to them about appropriate ways of behaving and they know what I expect. It's a pity you saw one of the more frustrating examples...I'll probably pick it up again tomorrow and review the classroom rules in a more objective atmosphere..

In one of the classrooms the teacher articulated a strong belief that children need to learn through trying new things. Simon consistently modelled strategies and processes in his work and then expected his class to 'have-a-go'. This modelling was reflected in all types of lessons taught throughout the school day.

Classroom Observation: Art Lesson

The children are seated on the floor in front of the teacher. He has selected an art print that he has on the easel beside him, but it is turned away so the children can't see it to start with.

Simon: I wonder if anyone has heard of a man called Vincent van Gogh?

Jane: I think he might make pictures. We have a picture at home of some sunflowers that he did.

Simon: Terrific, Jane, that's exactly right. (Turning the print around)...Is this the picture?

Jane nods and smiles.

Simon: I think this is a beautiful picture. What colour are the flowers?

Scott: They're yellow.
Simon: Yes, they are, but I want you to look very closely at the petals. Can you see any different colour yellows? ... or is it all the same?

Jane: It's sort of mixed up...some light yellow and some dark?

Simon: Yes, Van Gogh has tried to make the petals on these sunflowers look as if they're real... see how he makes rough brush strokes here (points to the picture) and here? I wonder if you can make a picture like this one? Let's look at how big the flowers are and where they come on the page. Look at the shape of the vase. How big is it?

Scott: It's half-way up the flowers.

Simon: OK, do you think it's half-way or a bit more than that? Look how far the stems come up above the top of the vase. Do you think they go right to the bottom as well?

Jane: I think they do because if they didn't they would bend.

Simon: Now, I've put some different colours out for you and I want to see you mix some of them together to see if you can get a yellow that's the same. We're just going to paint flowers... they don't have to be exactly like the ones in the picture in shape, but I want to see if you can get the colours the same. Just watch while I show you...

The teacher starts to mix some red into the yellow and then tries with some blue. He keeps trying the newly mixed colour on a piece of paper and holds it close to where the print is on the easel.

Simon: Who can tell me how I mixed the paint?

Jane: You only added a little bit at a time... you didn't really add lots of the colours to the yellow.

Simon: Good girl. It's only a little bit at a time... then you can control the change in colour ... continuing to work with colour mixing ... Otherwise you'll make it too dark, or too orange. Just a little at a time...

The success of the painting lesson appeared to be due to the careful demonstration that preceded the children's interaction with the paint and paper. However it was a useful strategy because, while many of their
attempts were not as good as others, they achieved the colour mixing that
the teacher had modelled so carefully.

A belief in the principles of 'active' teaching was further articulated by
this teacher in the debriefing session:

Notes on Debrief with Simon

Researcher: You spent a long time before the children started
painting. Do you think that helped the children?

Simon: I don't think teachers spend enough time helping the
children get clear in their heads what it is they have to do. If
you just give them the paint and paper and brushes without
showing them exactly how they're supposed to move to the
work, you can hardly expect them to learn the steps and the
processes needed to get a good result. I think this is
particularly so in Art lessons. I know lots of teachers who
give out the materials efficiently and the tell the children the
topic they have to create without really teaching them
anything.

Researcher: Are you saying that teachers don't teach art
lessons but rather give the children experiences with art
materials, or something like that?

Simon: This is a really hard aspect of the school curriculum
to teach. I'm not arty at all, but I know the basic things that
kids need to know, so I try to teach them some things. I don't
think it's good enough to hide behind the concept of 'it's
their creativity that counts'. I mean, we're supposed to give
them the basics. Some of them may develop their art further
but they can't if we don't teach them the steps. In this lesson
the kids came up with paintings that were different...but I
think I taught them something about colour and how to use
it, don't you?
Data from Interviews with Peers and Supervisors: Uses a Variety of Strategies.

In interviews with the peers and supervisors of these teachers the variety of teaching strategies was highlighted as an aspect of their work that needed to be shared. Three people on Merv's staff commented that Merv should be asked to take a five-minute time-slot at each staff meeting where the staff were asked to explain the different strategies they used. There was a belief that Merv's skills and understandings could benefit the staff as a whole:

*He uses such a wide selection of ideas. I'd love to be able to watch him for a session and write down the different ways he introduces the work.* (Peer 1)

*Sometimes I just ask him for a suggestion and then I go off and try it. He's always so open...he's happy to discuss the outcome of my trying the idea and then helps me to modify it so it's more like me.* (Peer 2)

*The boss should get him to tell us all at a staff meeting. We all like new ideas and it would help us be more supportive of each other...I think each of us could take turns, actually.* (Peer 3)

**Summary**

The four teachers in this study reported a variety of approaches that they believed enhanced their teaching. They indicated that they believed what they were teaching should be relevant to the learner, and that they took time to explain the relevance of what they were doing in any lesson. They were committed to the fact that the children needed a context for the strategies that were being introduced and that the context should enable
the lesson to be seen as related to other things they were doing. They were convincing in their beliefs that teaching should be explicit.

These points were recognisable in visits to the teachers' classrooms. They demonstrated a use of language that enabled the children to understand what they were doing and why they were doing it.

The peers of these people attested to the fact that these teachers promoted explicit teaching and that they were willing to share their ideas with them. They indicated that they used ideas gained from these teachers and that when they had trialled something suggested by the teacher, the ensuing discussion enabled them to refine the strategy as one of their own.

c) Setting Clear Expectations

Data from the teachers who were the subjects in this study emphasised that they believed they needed to make their expectations clear to the children. They confirmed a need to hold high expectations and to lead the children to successful learning outcomes in a context of positive reinforcement. This aspect of their work was also evident in classroom observations. The peers of these teachers had noticed the language used by these teachers and that it always described what they expected to occur.

Data from Interviews with Teachers: Setting Clear Expectations

Merv believed that the children had to recognise him as 'teacher' so he could develop relationships and roles between himself and the children that would enhance the children's learning.
It's always hard to be successful if the kids don't see you as their teacher...you know, the person in charge. If they see you as a friend, or mate, it's harder to be the teacher when it's necessary. I mean, a friend wouldn't use the discipline that a teacher does...if you can be accepted as the teacher first, it's much easier to be the friend...it's on a different level of relationship. I follow that first rule we learnt from college. Be firm at the beginning and establish the rules and expectations...then it's easier to soften up (Merv).

One aspect of the work in Simon's classroom was the way the children interacted with the teacher. When there was a request for everyone's attention, the children knew they had one minute to finish what they were doing and to go out and sit on the floor at the front. Simon had established this expectation and the children responded and complied. If the children were slow to comply then Simon reinforced the expectation. However it had taken some time to get in place:

We started out with everyone straggling to the front and I was conscious that I was losing a lot of valuable time. So, I started using an egg-timer. I started with two minutes and then gradually reduced it to one minute. The kids are great now, they enjoy the timer and I give rewards to those who carry out the expectation most efficiently, always telling them why the reward is being given. I think children are too bright to try and kid along. I mean, if you try to pull the wool over their eyes, they just get cynical and the whole thing never works. Anyway, when they come back to the floor I give out the rewards and then we have a sharing time to tell everyone what they've done so far. I find this very useful. It enables me to know where they're at and then I can provide more individual attention where it's needed. (Simon)
Janice had established a democratic approach that reflected the roles and relationships she wanted to develop with the students in her care. She set about leading the children to a set of rules and behaviour expectations that were not imposed, but, rather, involved the children in ownership of the classroom environment. Janice's learning program was based on trust and mutual support for both teacher and students. There were times each day when she needed to intervene in differences between students. She did this sensitively and with good models of ways in which the children could respect each other in spite of their differences.

Lesson Observation: Maths Lesson

Rosie: Get out!
Annie: Can't do it can you?
Rosie: Yes I can...it's easy.
Annie: You can't do it...you're too dumb.
Rosie: Ms ..., Annie is teasing me...
Janice: Now hang on...You people know about how to get on well with each other. It's not fair to make someone else feel bad...what should we do?
Annie: Help each other?
Janice: What do I do when someone can't do something?
Rosie: You show them how...
Janice: ...and...?
Annie: Tell them they can learn how to do it and then show them how?
Janice: OK, now let's work together so everyone can work happily.

Teachers' expectations should be made clear to the children with whom they work. When the the teacher has made his/her expectations clear, the
children understand the parameters within they work and they usually respond more positively.

Data from Interview with Teachers' Peers: Setting Clear Expectations.

At the schools where these teachers worked, their peers and supervisors mentioned this aspect of their work as being consistent and explicit. They indicated that the teachers generally modelled this aspect of their work both in the classroom as well as in staff activities.

The kids know exactly where they stand with him. He shows exactly what he wants and states clearly that it is all he will take. He has high standards and he sticks to them. (Merv's Peer)

You always know where you stand with her. She is consistent with adults as well as kids and everyone gives their best when working with her. (Rosalind's Peer)

I know some of the kids in his class could be a trial, but his expectations are so clear, these kids seem to relish in it. It’s as if they’ve changed...it will be interesting to see what happens next year. (Simon's Supervisor)

I respect the positive nature of the classroom. I tend to be less consistent and I can lose my cool if the kids don’t do as I ask...but in there, they know how to behave and how to react, it’s amazing. (Janice’s Peer)

The peers of these teachers recognised the emphasis these teachers placed on communicating their expectations to the students in the class. They suggested that they tried to emulate the attitude in their own work.
Summary

The data gathered in interviews and from observations in these teachers' classrooms demonstrated the impact that making their expectations clear had on teaching and learning. They were confident about the way their students approached their work and the improvements made over time.

The peers and supervisors of these people confirmed they could recognise this as a strong aspect of the teacher's classroom approach. They indicated that they saw this aspect of the teacher's work added to their view of them as a quality teacher.

d) Motivates and Engages Children

Data collected in this study by both interviewing the teacher and by observing in their classroom generated this criterion that helped determine the importance of pedagogical skill in confirming the quality of a teacher.

Data from Interviews with Teachers: Motivates and Engages Children

All four participants referred to the importance of engaging children in learning. They believed that an important part of the teacher's role was to motivate the children and engage them in the topics chosen.

*If you don't get them in, all your planning can be wasted. Kids don't learn just because you say you're going to do something. The teacher has to ensure they are focused on the topic and then he or she has to make the work interesting.*

(Merv)
I like to introduce lessons with a sort of gimmick...something that will get the kids in. The other day I showed them a two or three minute clip from 'The Simpsons'. They thought it was great and the transition into the science lesson went so well.

(Janice)

One of the teachers expressed a strong commitment to telling the children that they were good learners. The lesson on 'long division' has been fairly arduous for some of the children, but Rosalind had retained a positive atmosphere, constantly reassuring the class that they were getting better all the time. Further, they used material rewards to encourage the children's involvement in learning.

Notes on Debrief with Rosalind

Researcher: You were very patient with that small group towards the end of the maths lesson.
Rosalind: That particular group lack so much confidence in their maths ability. I have to keep telling them they're making the right decisions and their work is going well. I actually think they've had someone who tried to teach them by telling them what they couldn't do and they can't get out of the mould. In all my experience, it's maths that worries kids. They're frightened of making a mistake, and I think you have to lead them through it, encouraging them at every opportunity.
Researcher: ...but what do you do about the things they can't do?
Teacher: I'm convinced that maths comes with confidence, so I try to get them interested with some motivation...sometimes it's an extrinsic reward, like a lolly, but that works well...as long as it's not all the time. When I can see they're getting into difficulties, I generally change the activity and come at it in a different way later on. There's nothing more
The use of rewards was a dynamic in each of these classrooms. The teachers all commented that they tried to be fair, distributing extrinsic rewards fairly for a range of responses. They used lollies, stickers and team points that led to bigger rewards for the class such as a sausage sizzle or a small local excursion. Each was strong in their belief that if teachers used rewards of this nature the distribution of them had to be monitored by the teacher. They expressed a strong commitment to reward systems that led to the whole class gaining a reward. They used this mainly for whole class management purposes, and it seemed that the children responded most positively.

I use the idea of marbles in a jar for whole class purposes. These kids are really good, and they took to the idea very comfortably. When someone is doing the right thing I get them to put a marble in the jar on my desk...sometimes two. When the jar is full, we go for a walk to the park for a game of Danish Rounders. Everyone benefits and everyone seems easily engaged in this process. (Simon)

...the kids love the lolly jar on my desk. I keep it topped up and when I want to highlight a good behaviour, I let the child take a lolly from the jar. It’s important to make sure the whole range of kids get a chance though. It wouldn’t work if the same kids got the lollies all the time. I give them out for a variety of reasons. I had to give out more at the start so the kids would see I was fair-dinkum...as time goes on I find I don’t have to use as many. (Janice)

These teachers relied on humour a good deal in their lessons. They believed that when they joked with the students, it helped to develop a stronger, more trusting relationship and the children responded better to
their teaching. The children joined in the jokes and often made
humorous comments back to the teacher. This open sharing motivated
the children to become involved in the learning.

I joke with the kids all the time. They never take advantage
of it, usually enjoying the exchanges. I think some of my
colleagues believe it creates too relaxed a learning environmamt. I find it enables the kids to feel relaxed and
therefore they tend to settle to work more readily. I think the
important thing is to make sure the kids know the
parameters...the times to enjoy the joke and the time to settle.
I think the teacher has to teach this with models and
demonstrations and also with explicit strategies (Janice).

Data from Observing in the Teachers' Classrooms: Motivates and
Engages Children.

The element of humour was claimed by all four teachers to be an
important aspect of their classroom environment. They described the
influence it had on building positive relationships with the child and
also that it enabled them to build a stronger team atmosphere in the
learning situation. Often they joked about themselves claiming this
showed the children that they were human and capable of making
mistakes without fear of ridicule.

Lesson Observation

Janice: Y, I think you're having me on!!
Y: No, I was just telling you the story...
Janice: You were making the story up so I would think I'd
made a mistake. (Clear sense of fun in the tone of voice)
Y: No...
Janice: You think I'm a bit funny don't you?
Y: No...(starts to laugh)
Janice: Just because I can't get the machine to work you think I can't do it.
Y: You might have to send for Mr X!!
Janice: There's no way....then you'll all think I can't do it!
Class generally start to laugh...
Janice: Alright we'll send for Mr X as long as you keep it a secret that I didn't know what to do....I'm so silly!!
Class agree that they'll support the 'secret' about the machine. They sit with beaming smiles as they await Mr X's visit.

This ability to join in with the children, using relaxed interactions seemed to help to determine the relationship between teacher and group. The children demonstrated a sense of trust and togetherness with their teacher and they all cooperated in enjoying the events of the classroom, even when it went wrong.

Notes on 'Debrief' with Janice

You know, I found this really hard when I was at school too....but I learned how to do it, so I know we can all do it if we help each other. We don't laugh about the fact that someone's having difficulties...do we?...but we can laugh when the person shows us it's OK by starting the joke...you know, the way I did when I talked about using the machines...but don't tell anyone about that will you??
...Everyone grins at each other

Notes on 'Debrief' with Rosalind

I want the kids in my class to enjoy learning. I make it clear that I don't know everything and that I will find out things for them if they ask. We enjoy joking together and I take my share of the fun. I try to vary my approaches and vary the demonstrations I use so everyone will be interested but when I realise some kids are not tuned in, I use a different approach.
Data from Interviews with Peers of these Teachers: Motivates and Engages Children.

The peers and supervisors of each of these teachers were enthusiastic about the way the teachers developed the positive atmosphere in their classrooms. They highlighted the skills in engaging and motivating children to be involved in learning. One of Rosalind's supervisors commented that Rosalind didn't persevere for too long when it became clear the students were not engaged. He said she used her common sense and went on to something else with the intention of returning to the activity at some other time. This characteristic is crucial to maintaining a motivated and engaged group.

*She is great in the classroom...when the kids lose interest in the work, she moves on to something else. I noticed she had planned to do an art lesson the other day, but the kids weren't settled, so she took them out for a game first. When they went back in, the lesson went smoothly.* (Rosalind's Supervisor)

*I really believe flexibility is the secret to success...it helps to keep the kids engaged, and that's what I see in his classroom all the time. There are routines, but flexibility is the key. If the kids aren't motivated he takes extra time in stimulating their curiosity and their interest in the topics. He uses literature so well...it all just seems to flow, and the kids move along with him.* (Janice's Peer)

Summary

Data from these teachers emphasised the importance of ensuring the children were motivated to become interested in the work being
presented. Further, they took time to find interesting ways of ensuring the students were engaged in the lesson as much as possible. They monitored this, occasionally changing their plan of attack to make sure everyone was 'tuned-in'.

The peers of these people agreed this capacity of stimulating and engaging the students was something that led them to respect the teaching of these people. They emphasised the flexibility of these people in their classroom work, always keeping their focus on the learners and not on the work.

Dimension Three: Reflection

Data gathered for this dimension described by the OECD was derived from an individual interview with each participant as well as some debriefing discussions following classroom observations by the researcher. The peers and supervisors of each of the teachers added to the view of the teacher's practice in interviews as well.

From the data derived in this way there emerged three criteria that illuminated the view of the teachers as reflective practitioners:

a) Peer Review and Consultation

b) Adaptability to Change as a Result of Reflecting on Practice

c) Personal, Professional Research Activities.
a) Peer Review and Consultation

Data from Interviews with Teachers: Peer Review and Consultation

The element of reflection was of supreme importance to the work of all four teachers. They reported that they often debriefed with their supervisors and/or peers, speaking about the ways in which they worked with the children in their respective classes and how the children responded to the lessons. They suggested that these sessions were significant to their practice, sometimes leading to new ideas and the eventual adoption of a new practice.

It's more than consistent effort. I mean...it's important for a teacher to reflect on each child as an individual and to recall the rewards or positive comments made to them in the past few days. If they can't remember complimenting a child or providing a reward, they should remedy that at the earliest opportunity. I've been talking to some of the others on the staff here about our School Welfare Policy. I think it's too negative, and some of the others agree with me. We are going to get it on the agenda at the next staff meeting (Janice).

We get on well and we try to encourage each other to try new things. If it doesn't seem to be working, we talk about it and make changes, always being open, honest and forthright with each other... These sessions help us to think about our work and that sometimes leads to real change. I love to sit and think about the work I do and how I could change it to make it better for children, so I think it's just as important to get them to question the ways they do things and find alternatives...it helps them become reflective and that's very important in everyone (Rosalind).
I write down when I think a lesson hasn’t worked and what I think went wrong. Then I try to think of other ways to bring that lesson to life so the children gain the best from the lesson...sometimes it’s how to do something and sometimes it’s some information they should be interested in. I asked the others on my grade what they thought I should do about the fact that the kids in my class don’t seem to be interested in science very much. We came up with some ideas for me to try...I’ll get back to them and I’m confident they’ll help me work it out (Merv).

One constant issue reported by these four teachers was the fact that they had each been involved in a team-teaching situation with other colleagues. They claimed the experience had influenced their teaching significantly because of the opportunities that were available for collaboration and discussion. Further, they highlighted the positive effects these team-teaching experiences had had on the classes with which they worked.

...my work changed because I was able to see another person whom I respected doing things differently. Also, we were able to explain the reasons behind what we were doing and that helped us understand teaching all the more (Rosalind).

...when we worked together, everyone benefited: the kids because we were so well planned and focused, the school because we were enjoying finding new ways of approaching things and each other because we could try new things in a no-fear environment (Merv).

I remember when I was team-teaching we had to work so much together and we asked each other such demanding questions, our reflections on practice were more dynamic than ever. We weren’t really justifying ourselves to each other...more explaining the reasoning behind our thinking. It
was great, because we were able to help each other so much (Simon).

I loved team-teaching because I learnt such a lot. My partner-in-crime kept asking why I was doing things in a particular way and I had to keep explaining. In the process I refined many of the strategies I used. We worked so closely together, but we were different operators altogether... (Janice).

The four teachers claimed that they needed to reflect on their practice to ensure they were giving the best they could. This penchant for improvement was the motivation to reflect on practice and make change.

You know, I try to use half-an-hour or so each day to think over what happened during my teaching. I remember when the approaches to the teaching of Writing were being debated, I actually changed a lot of my practice. I knew I needed to get kids to write more than just narratives and with the courses I attended and my discussions with others, I actually made lots of changes. (Rosalind)

If teachers don't take time to reflect, how will they ever keep up with the changes in syllabuses? I have to think through what I'm doing to make sure I give kids the best I can...because they have to work with me throughout their school lives, I can't afford to let them down. (Merv)

Sometimes I review the day and can become very discouraged...particularly when I realise it was my own fault! I try to make sure I don't make the same mistakes...my friends often talk with me about the lessons I plan and they give me good ideas that I try out. I'm building a large set of different strategies now. (Simon)

It's more than beneficial...it's essential...especially for me. I love to talk with others about particular kids and what they're like and how they learn. I've introduced an 'Activities Week' at the end of each term with my class. We
went to a course about 'Gifted and Talented Students' where they were on about 'multiple intelligences'. I spent a while thinking through how I could introduce all children to activities that stimulate the seven intelligences in the Gardner Theory. On reflection, I thought the best thing to do was to concentrate my teaching style in that mode in a short burst each term...it seems to work out OK. (Janice)

Data from Interviews with Peers: Peer Review and Consultation

The peers of these teachers reported the open way that these teachers shared their teaching, indicating that they believed it was an important mode of work for the quality teacher. They said they believed the teacher used them as sounding boards, always being willing to describe the failures as well as the successes of their work. The peers suggested that they had learned a lot in discussions with the teachers, and that usually the sessions were not something they had planned, but just seemed to grow out of general friendly communication in the staffroom.

This is such a small school, we usually share with each other at the end of each session. It's one thing about being in a school like this, you have to be open and honest with each other...but I find it really helpful. Often she will ask for better ideas and we all share together. I always find there's something to learn when she makes a point. (Rosalind's Peer)

He was saying yesterday that the Maths lesson had not gone as well as expected. We talked about the strategies he was using and I made a few suggestions. We seem to digress to these discussions often...sometimes about my class and sometimes about his...I think it's the way he thinks back over what happened in the lesson. (Merv's Peer)
After schools the other day we were just sitting having a cup of coffee, talking about the day we'd each had. She always shares so openly...the good things and the bad. I might suggest we make a definite time to debrief together like this...I find it so helpful. (Janice's Peer)

Summary

The need to think back over the work being done was a dynamic of these teachers' practice. They used their peers as sounding boards, thinking out loud and taking ideas from others. They emphasised it as one of the important things in refining their practice.

The peers of these people confirmed the fact that they were engaged in reviewing their work along with the work of the teacher involved in the study. They appreciated the input the person made to them and the fact that they were open and honest in these reflection times together.

b) Adaptability to Change

Data from Interviews with the Teachers: Adaptability to Change

A commitment to risk-taking and innovation was an outcome of these teachers' reflective practices. They indicated that they wanted to make their classrooms dynamic and engaging for students, so they were keen to consider and try new ideas. They highlighted the influence of technology on teaching practice, in that students were now being engaged by other more dynamic information forms...'the classroom teacher has to be so conscious of how technology has made information and learning so colourful and engaging' (Rosalind).
...teachers go to courses or even in staff meetings. People bring up different things about how to teach and you think: 'Oh, that sounds worthwhile...I might give it a go'. I usually write these ideas down, try them out and then reshape them to suit me. I really believe it's important to be a dynamic teacher...otherwise the kids can get bored. (Rosalind)

I'm not sure that everybody does take the time to think about it. I know lots of teachers who do the same things over and over...never really interested in what could be or should be happening in the classroom.

I think everyone will have to rethink now that we're getting computers in our rooms. We won't be able to keep on the same ways as before. I know it's only another classroom resource, but I think it will mean change to the ways in which classrooms will have to operate. We're lucky here...we get on well together and we plan ways of working with the technology and then one of us tries it and we all take an interest in what happens. Then, as we introduce it further, we change the things we don't like. Eventually we've developed a practice that helps the kids, because we've all been part of the process and what happens in each of our rooms is similar. I think that's so important in a school, but everyone has to work together. (Merv)

I really think teachers try hard to make their work meaningful. To make sure it is, they have to think about what they're doing. People try something new, not because they know it will work, but to find out if it will work for them. Then, as they think about what happened, they start to adapt the idea to suit their own way of working. (Simon).

...when we try new things, you can't know until afterwards just how they are or are not going to work. But we have to try or you'd go crazy. I'd hate to think I had all the answers and could make my teaching static and predictable...I think it would be boring for the kids and therefore harder to get them involved (Janice).
Two of the teachers reported that their self-confidence had grown as a result of their reflections. They claimed to be more open in discussions with supervisors and principal and more ready to explain their strategies. They referred to the fact that they could see a real growth in knowledge about their respective classes and the learners with whom they worked. Further, they said they believed their reasoning for doing things was enhanced.

...now, when I talk with others about my work I'm able to be more objective and much less defensive. I think the fact that I take time to think about what I'm really on about has made the difference. (Rosalind)

Working with children seems to put you on the defensive. However, as I work up new strategies, I'm becoming more confident in my professionalism. I used to be very quiet in meetings, but I tend to speak up more now, explaining the things I'm doing and the reasons why. I have much more useful discussions with my supervisor now, too. (Simon)

Summary

Data from interviewing these teachers revealed the fact that they were committed to trying new things and to try and find new ways of engaging learners in their lessons. They believed that since they had started sharing openly with others, their teaching practice had become more open and that the children seemed to be more excited about the things they introduced. They agreed it was hard to tell whether this was because they were trying new things or because they were more confident in what they were doing.
c) Personal, Professional Research Activities

Data from Interviews with Teachers: Personal, Professional Research Activities.

Two of the four people explicitly referred to their interest in educational literature as a support to their respective reflective practices. They commented that there is so much available these days that it is hard to keep up with everything, but that they liked some of the resources sent to them by their professional associations, in particular the Primary English Teachers Association (PETA).

One thing that helps me reflect are the Newsletters from PETA. Since I joined, I've read a lot more and I feel much more confident about my teaching of English. They often have good ideas to try out in their Newsletter, and I like to try them. If I think they work for me, I include them in the various lessons I plan each week. (Simon)

I'm an avid reader and I enjoy reading about the ways others have tried to teach different things. I get the PETA Newsletter regularly and I subscribe to the 'Classroom Magazine'. Both these things give me good ideas to try. Also, PETA sends me a journal each year, often on a particular topic, and I really think they make me reflect on what I'm doing. When I read the one by Brian Cambourne called 'The Whole Story' it made such sense, I started to work out ways of changing my own teaching so it would make sense. (Janice)

Summary

The process of reflection appears to have a deep meaning for each of these teachers. They support it as a crucial aspect of the teacher's art, and each indicated the fact that as the reflective practice developed further, they valued it more.
Dimension Four: Empathy

Data gathered for this dimension described by the OECD were derived from an individual interview with each participant as well as some debriefing discussions following classroom observations by the researcher. The peers and supervisors of each of the teachers added to the view of the teacher's practice in interviews as well.

From the data derived in this way there emerged two criteria that explained the empathetic attitudes of the teacher. The criteria are:

a) Responsiveness to the Needs of Children
b) Genuineness and Warmth of relationship

Empathy is defined as the ability to be sensitive to the current feelings and beliefs of another person and to be able to communicate that understanding in a language that is able to be accepted by that other person. Truax (1974) defines empathy in five stages ranging from being unaware of another's feelings to the stage where a person can be effective when displaying empathy.

Data gathered for this dimension were derived from an individual interview with each participant, as well as some debriefing discussions following classroom observations by the researcher. While the participants did not demonstrate empathy overtly in individual strategies, they demonstrated their potential to show empathy in their language and their explanations of the expectations they held for students. Two criteria emerged from the data: Responsive to the Needs of Students, and, Genuineness.
The peers and supervisors of these people did not make any explicit reference to empathy. In the interviews with the peers and supervisors they did make reference to the way these teachers were able to respond to the needs of the students in their classes and to the fact that they took time to listen to students.

a) Responsive to the Needs of Students

Data from Interviews with Teachers: Responsive to the Needs of Students

One characteristic that these teachers believed needed to be carefully established was the way the teacher spoke to individual children in the classroom. ‘Teachers need to be aware of the language they use and the tone of their voice’ (Janice). Further, they suggested that a teacher's ability to empathise with children is conveyed by the words that they use, the tone of their voice and their body-language which conveys to the child their understanding of how the child feels and their acceptance of that feeling. This aspect of classroom interaction was clearly demonstrated by these teachers. Much of the classroom interaction indicated phrases such as:

When you work with me I expect you to...and you can expect me to... (Rosalind)

Our classroom needs to be... (Merv)

We're a team and we have to show... (Merv)

When you work together it's important that you each... (Simon)

I want you to enjoy... (Simon)

I really like it when you... (Janice)

You are really impressive when you... (Janice)
Three of the teachers reported the feelings they had about wanting to make a difference in children and the importance for teachers to have a strong positive relationship with each child. They emphasised the fact that teachers have to rise above the feelings of frustration and anger, especially when children seem to be un-cooperative and disinterested. They claimed it was the teacher's skill in providing a well-organised and stimulating learning environment that would lead to prolonged engagement in a set task.

*The classroom has to be a dynamic place, but one that is organised. Children have to know what you expect in terms of their work, their behaviour and their self control. I take a lot of care to constantly model what I expect...then I make sure I spell it out verbally so children can make the connections. I guess my classroom shows an organised environment...I mean there are days when I think the children don't need me...I came in the other morning and they were all sitting together out the front singing songs!! I never cease to be amazed at what they do. (Janice)*

*I really am committed to making the classroom a dynamic learning situation. We really are going to place a tap in the bottom playground eventually, but I thought it was a good way to engage the children in something practical and that would keep them thinking. I find you have to stimulate the urge to solve problems with children, and I pose a lot of my lessons in this way. (Rosalind)*

*I think about the kids in my class a lot. It seems when I'm in bookshops I always find some books that would interest someone in my class. Sometimes I buy the book/s and sometimes I just tell the kid that came to mind when I was looking through the shop about seeing it there. It's amazing, isn't it? It's just that if I can find ways to stimulate their interest, I try to grab onto them. I don't think I've ever had a class I didn't enjoy. Sometimes I think there will never be another class like this one...but year by year there always
seems to be another group with its own special ways, and I love teaching them just as much. (Simon)

Two of the teachers described their own frustrations as learners at school, indicating that they had to work hard to become successful in the exams at the end of high school and their teacher training. They claimed that they were able to recognise themselves in some of the attitudes and efforts of the children in their classes.

I wasn't a real good student. Everything went OK in primary school...I wasn't 'top-of-the-class' or anything, but I managed to do well...but in high school...look, I just didn't want to be there. I felt the teachers didn't like me...I thought they probably talked about me to each other. It's amazing, when I think of some of the kids I've taught, I know exactly what they're going through. (Rosalind)

...sometimes I can feel exactly what the kid must be feeling. I saw a kid being yelled at in the playground the other day and I thought: 'Things haven't changed....poor J., he'll take a while to get over that...just like I used to (Simon)

Data from Observing in Teachers' Classrooms: Responsive to the Needs of Students.

During one of the debriefing sessions following a classroom observation, Janice described an incident with one of the children from her class in the previous year. The level of empathy she felt for the child was described in terms of the way she tried to work on the modification of his behaviour.

Notes on 'Debrief' with Janice

I strongly believe kids have the right to feel valued. I remember one child in the first class I had at this school. He didn't even think he was bright enough to say anything in
class. He was always in strife...in the classroom, in the playground, everywhere.

Other teachers used to tell me how difficult he was. One day I decided that the problem may be that he was behaving the way he thought we expected him to behave...so I started in class! I would start every conversation I had with him with something like: 'X, I know what great work you can do, so here's another chance to show it to me'...or, if he was being a trial, I'd say:'X, You know we all believe you can show us your best, but I don't think I can see it at present...come on, let's start again with the best out on show...'

I know that seems fairly straightforward, but I thought this kid had never been spoken to in this positive way. Anyway, after a couple of months he was really going well in class, so I thought it was time I started working a bit wider...I started on the playground behaviours (that people were still complaining about, I might add!!) I went to a Staff Meeting and asked if everyone would give me some support, as I was trying something different with this kid. I went through the story of the classroom and just asked if everyone would try not to chastise him in front of others, but to adopt a positive and assertive position, reinforcing that he DID KNOW the acceptable behaviours and that everyone believed he could do it.

It didn't last long...by the lunchtime one of the staff had 'lined him up' and was really letting him have it! I was so disappointed...I realised I had to use a different strategy so I worked on classroom rewards and he's a different kid!! I mean he can still break out but it's very rarely and not nearly as bad as it used to be.

I often wonder whether anyone notices!

In the discussion of the example included above, Janice suggested that empathy was the issue here. She demonstrated a level of empathy through the ability to relate to the needs of a child, to analyse the behaviours, infer the pattern of past experience and to take steps in an
organised strategy. The teacher acted proactively to make a difference, demonstrating the hallmark of professionalism that is indicative of the work of teachers of quality.

Summary

Each of these teachers demonstrated a commitment to meeting the needs of the students in their care. They emphasised the need to ensure that they did not allow their frustration or anxiety to show in dealing with children having difficulty, but that they should maintain a highly professional and positive atmosphere. They spoke of their belief that it is the teacher's role to work with the individual and to recognise the specific needs in learning, behaviour and in relationship with others. To achieve the latter, the issue of empathy would be a real factor. However, the constraints of the teaching context may influence the depth to which empathy can be achieved by teachers.

b) Genuineness and Warmth of Relationships

Data from Interviews with Teachers: Genuineness and Warmth of Relationships

Each of these teachers reported that, in their opinion, the nature of classrooms appears to be becoming more complex and that teachers are now coping with one parent families and dysfunctional families as never before. They consider this has developed a different regime in classroom interactions and in the choice of topics that teachers include in their programs. The teachers reported that they believed they needed to be more skilled with behaviour modification skills and develop a stronger
understanding of the wider social issues that were prevalent in society in the nineties.

It was suggested that it is important for a teacher to be able to recognize the needs of students and then respond appropriately. For the teacher to imagine themselves in similar situations is a great help to the relationship they have with children. However, to raise these issues to the level of empathic understanding, they need to be able to convey their understanding of the feelings of the child in response to the way the child has indicated their feelings.

I think I'm a better teacher when I try to feel the things I think the kids are going through. You know, it's a tough world for some kids. They've had experiences I've never had in my life and some of them are only nine or ten! If I can get alongside them when I'm teaching and build their self-esteem, I'm sure it makes a difference. (Merv)

These kids come from difficult backgrounds...I just try to imagine how they're feeling and what they need to get them through the situation. We didn't seem to have to worry about this sort of thing as much a few years ago...but, times are changing (Janice).

The four teachers indicated that they believed it was important to value the diversity of cultures and beliefs in the school. They tried to facilitate discussions about minority groups and other cultures to enable their students to develop a more caring attitude to these groups. This was modelled in classroom interaction and in the programs that the teachers planned for their students in that the teachers would deliberately initiate discussions about the needs of these groups in different areas of the curriculum. They implemented programs aimed at attitudes and values
to be more proactive in these areas. These actions in their classrooms were typical of their interactions with children which appeared to reflect a sensitivity toward children, regardless of their ethnic origin or social situation. They wanted to make these students feel comfortable and productive in the classroom setting.

Notes on 'Debrief' with Merv

...sometimes these kids feel different just because their appearance is different from others in the class. I believe they need a caring adult to support them and provide a model for the other students on how to react with them.

I try to implement an Aboriginal unit in my work each year. I don't have any aboriginal students in this class, but I know how they can be treated. I try to make a difference by making sure this new generation understands what the whole picture is...we have to build moral behaviour as a benchmark for the future.

Summary

The teachers in this study all believed in the importance of developing socially and morally responsible young people. They worked in positive environments that were not always matched as effectively by other classrooms in their schools, but their peers attested to the fact that there was a quality in these classrooms that was a reflection of the work of these people.

In their reports on their approach to students, the teachers expressed a desire to understand their students. Nevertheless, the constraints under which they worked did not enable them to express empathy to the depth that they would want. The teachers developed genuine relationships
with their students, but they seemed to be of a superficial nature that became 'expected' as the year progressed.

Dimension Five: Managerial Competence.

Data gathered for this dimension were derived from an individual interview with each participant together with classroom observations by the researcher and the associated debriefing discussions.

Interviews with peers and supervisors also enabled data to be collected that added to the understanding of the characteristics of these people. Five criteria emerged from the data:

a) Accommodates Individuals
b) Flexible
c) Wide Repertoire of Strategies
d) Routines Established to Assist Learners
e) Resources Pertinent and Available

a) Accommodates Individuals

Data collected in this study showed that these teachers were committed to the needs of individuals and always tried to accommodate these needs in their daily teaching. They indicated a strong sense that the teacher should realise that each learner was unique and would respond in different ways. This was an important element in their planning.

Observations in their classrooms confirmed their attempts to meet the needs of individuals. They used groups as the basis for their teaching and varied the structure of the groups to facilitate the learners' involvement. Interviews with their peers reinforced this aspect of the teachers' work.
Moving from one situation to another in the teaching mode was something these teachers demonstrated. They used a variety of modes in their teaching that ranged through whole class, small group and individual instruction elements of the learning day, directing their teaching to the needs of specific students without singling that individual out as being 'different' from others in the class. The way this was achieved was demonstrated in the fact that there were times when each member of the class came to work individually with the teacher for different things.

I try to get around everybody at least once each week. Sometimes I need to work with the children who find making the connections a bit slower than others, and at other times I need to work with the children who are making progress to higher level outcomes. All kids need to work directly with their teacher from time to time. (Merv)

Notes on 'Debrief' with Rosalind

Researcher: During that reading lesson I noticed you worked individually with a variety of kids. What were you doing?

Rosalind: After I'd finished the demonstration at the front, I needed to lead certain kids to approach the set task in slightly different ways. I move freely around the room engaging with individuals so no-one can be singled out as being 'different'...except we all know they are different! The first boy I worked with is making great progress in reading...well beyond others in his grade. I talked with him about being more evaluative in his responses to the worksheet...you know, in terms of Bloom's Taxonomy. On the other hand, the smallish girl at the front of the room finds reading a chore. I don't think she likes it, so I was helping her find the facts that would lead to a correct response. I believe teachers have to be flexible in their work, know their kids and be able
to manipulate them into appropriate situations where they will feel success.

Movement around the classroom can be a disruption to the learning atmosphere of the classroom during any learning session. The change from having a demonstration in one area of the classroom to working in groups in a variety of spaces means the children have to move, and the teacher wants to maintain their engagement in the task demonstrated so the progress to carrying out the set task by the students needs to be managed with skill. These four teachers led the students through this part of the lesson with sensitivity and focus.

Lesson Observation in Merv's Classroom

Merv: ...now, stand up those people who know they're ready to write a poem. Remembering it has to rhyme on alternate lines.

Several children stand.

Merv: At the end of the front desk you will find some paper on which you can draft your piece. I'll check it over for you before you publish the finished poem. You can write two or three verses, but don't forget to brainstorm your rhyming words first. OK, move quietly back to your place...start work...if you get stuck, just put up your hand.

Children move silently to their places, gathering paper as they pass the front desk.

Merv: Would any of you people like me to go over this again?

Several hands go up.

Merv: Let’s start back looking at the example I started with...read the poem with me (the group on the floor reads the poem in unison)...what do you notice about the last words on each line.....the demonstration continues until these children feel more confident about their task. The
teacher asks them to move in a similar manner to the first group, maintaining an orderly and quiet change to individual activity.

In the following observation, Janice demonstrated the ability to accommodate the needs of individuals through her interactions with small groups and individuals within those groups while they were working on set tasks.

Lesson Observation with Janice: P.E.

The class had been involved in singing and drama prior to the commencement of the P.E lesson.

Janice: I want you to pretend you're creepy vines and we're going to silently grow out through the corridor to the lines outside. Ready?...Hold hands, remember, creepy vines finding their way, silently along the corridor, joined together moving quietly...following the steps...(the teacher leads the children out through the building to the assembly area)...beautiful...what clever people you are...I couldn't hear the vines moving, and I think the people in our next-door class don't even know we're not there!!! Well done.

Jess: What are we going to do now?

Janice: Today we're going to practice throwing and catching. First of all, I want the vine to break into bits that are four people long and then I want the vine to join up in a circle. Ready, break.

The children move to groups of four and join hands.

Janice: Great, do you know I didn't hear one sound! Now I'm going to touch one person in the group on the head. (The teacher moved from group to group, touching one member of the group)...now I want the person I just touched to go over to the sports-shed and get a red ball each. Let's see how quickly and how quietly you can do it...(children hurry off to the shed and return with a red ball each)...Can anyone hear a sound? No? You people are so good.

The lesson on catching and throwing continues...
Data from Interviews with Peers: Accommodates Individuals

The peers of these teachers reported this aspect of these teachers' work as an important aspect of their success as teachers. They claimed that these people varied the learning situations according to the needs of the individuals in the class and in relation to the work being attempted. They said they were conscious of the different groupings the teachers used and that in discussions with the teacher had learned it was to facilitate optimum learning conditions for all students.

*I've noticed that she changes the desks around quite a bit. This seems to enable her to work with different groups in different ways. It seems to work, because the children seem to be doing so well.* (Rosalind's Peer)

*I saw the different activities he was copying for the different groups in the class. He claimed it was to ensure that each child was able to engage in the set task and achieve a successful outcome.* (Merv's Peer)

*When you see the recording of the children's progress, you realise what an importance she places on individual success...I mean, I use groups, but not quite as much as she does.* (Janice's Peer)

**Summary**

A commitment to meeting the needs of individuals in everything they did was an automatic part of each teacher's organisation. If necessary they rearrange the classroom to ensure each child has the best chance of engaging in the lesson and achieving success. Observations in the classroom support this aspect of these peoples' work. The classrooms are dynamic rather than static and the teachers use their rooms as a significant part of the learning environment.
The peers of these people describe the practice in these rooms as focused on the needs of learners. They attest to the fact that if the teacher is concerned that a lesson is not going well they will change the focus and come back at a later stage.

b) Flexible Practitioners

Data gathered from interviews with the teachers and observations in their classrooms showed they were highly flexible practitioners. They were committed to the fact that they wanted their classrooms to be interesting and active learning environments.

Data from Interviews with Teachers: Flexible Practitioners

Each of the four teachers claimed that the most important aspect of their classroom organisations was the fact that they needed to be flexible. They indicated that this flexibility enabled them to structure lessons to meet the needs of learners more effectively. Each of them said they liked the children to be close to them when they were demonstrating to the whole class, so they brought the whole class out to sit on the floor. They said this position developed a more personal relationship between teacher and learner and that it was easier to monitor if and when students were engaged with the teaching.

There were differences in the organisation of furniture of each classroom. In one room the desks were in rows so the students would be facing towards the chalkboard when they were at their desks. In two other classrooms the desks were arranged in groups of three. As a result, the children were facing in to each other when they were working at their desks. In the fourth classroom the desks were in a combination of both
these arrangements. Some were in groups of three, some were in rows and some were against the wall so that the children working at these places were actually facing the wall when they were at their desks.

*I like the children to all be able to see the board, particularly for those times when I need to show them something additional after they've started work.* (Janice)

There's a lot of group work and problem solving in my lessons, so it's important they can talk to each other without too much distraction across the whole class. When they're all watching something I'm doing, I generally get them out on the floor, close to me. (Merv)

*I've tried having my classrooms in a few different arrangements, but this one works best for me. I've taught the children how to conduct themselves when they're facing each other like this, and they're pretty good. They know the rules and consequences, so I only have to keep the reminders going now...there's never any hassle.* (Simon)

*I don't have a static room arrangement. Actually, we rearrange it fairly often for different lessons. I've taught these kids that the desks are not "theirs", but they provide a space to work. They each choose where they'll sit to do their work and it works really well. I asked for desks with no shelves underneath so we could work this way...the kids keep their materials in the tubs at the end of the room.* (Rosalind)

Data from Classroom Observations: Flexible Practitioners

High level skills in motivating students' involvement in the lessons as a group, and then being able to move them to more individual tasks was part of the skill of these four teachers. In lessons that started with the group seated on the floor near the teacher and then moving the focus to a more individual task at a desk, they demonstrated management processes
that ensured the continued engagement of the individual in spite of the change of task.

Lesson Observation - Rosalind

Following the demonstration of a science activity, the children will be working in cooperative groups of three...

Rosalind: Now, we’re going to make the plane fly, just as I’ve shown you, back in our science groups. Does everyone remember the job they have to do for the group? (Teacher looks quizzically at the children) Gavin, what will you be doing?

Gavin: I have to be the reporter.

Rosalind: ...and what will you do?

Gavin: I write what we do and what happens and we all help to draw a picture of our experiment, then I have to report back to everyone about it.

Rosalind: Great...hand up if you are the 'manager' in your group. Does that mean you’re the boss?

Instant response from several children: No

Rosalind: Hand up if you’re the resource person (hands are raised)...you have a very important job, so I’m going to get you to move first. You know where your group is working, the straws, balloons, paper, tape and pieces of string are set out over here. When I say to move, each of the Resource people can start gathering the materials for their group and take them to your laboratory area...because you’re going to do a science experiment. Don’t forget to get a large sheet of paper and some crayons so your group can get the report ready.

Now, everyone else stay still, Resource people may start work...off you go as quietly as possible.

Managers, just stand up where you are...good, show me how well you can move to your places. Excellent, Lucy, you always show me what a sensible girl you are.

Now everyone sitting here with me is a reporter. (Children smile at Rosalind.) Gavin, just take turns getting that paper there’s plenty for everyone...and show me your best manners. Quietly stand, reporters and move to your groups as well as
the managers did. (Waits until children are all in their work areas.) OK...what are the rules about working in these groups...(Rosalind reviews her expectations of how the work is to be done and the children move into group investigation).

Summary

The need for the teacher to be flexible in the teaching situation is demonstrated in a variety of ways. These teachers use a variety of organisations and strategies to meet the needs of the students in the class. They monitor them systematically and make changes as appropriate.

c) Wide Repertoire of Strategies

Data gathered from interviews with the teachers and observations in their classrooms demonstrated that they had a wide repertoire of teaching strategies that they used to meet the needs of the children in their class. The peers of these teachers supported this view by describing the many different strategies they had learned from these teachers.

Data from Interviews with Teachers: Wide Repertoire of Strategies

One important similarity between these four individuals is their capacity to think about their practice and make changes in terms of the needs of their students. They command a wide number of strategies that they use and vary according to the needs of their students and they demonstrate high level management skills that enables them to maintain learner engagement as effectively as possible. There was not a time when there appeared to be any lapse in planning for the day's learning and the
strategies implemented demonstrated understanding of both teaching and learning.

Merv described his belief that the teacher must always be able to switch strategy in mid-stream for the sake of the learner. He suggested that because children learn differently, the managerial competence of the teacher is reflected in this capacity to have a variety of strategies that can be activated when needed.

*I know some of the kids in this class learn more effectively in the visual mode, so I have to be able to vary my approach for their sake. It doesn't occur in every lesson, but I have to watch that they're engaged, and, if not, introduce a different strategy to ensure they understand what I'm talking about.*

(Merv)

Data from Observing the Teachers' Classrooms: Wide Repertoire of Strategies.

Simon demonstrated the way he called on different strategies during teaching when teaching a science lesson. The children were working in groups and it became clear that one group was unsure of what to do. Simon intervened directly and talked through the concepts the class has been addressing and it became clear the students did not really understand the ideas. He moved them back to work with him directly and asked them to tell what they already knew about 'magnets' (the topic being studied). He started to generate a word-web of the information and gradually the students responded more positively to the work and were happy to return to the task that had been set previously.

Notes on Debrief with Simon

Teacher: *I was watching that group and it became clear they were confused by the task. My demonstration at the*
beginning of the lesson had obviously not helped their understanding, so I had to do something to get them going. I thought the best thing to do was to get them to start talking about the things they already knew...then I thought I could do the demonstration again for them, but I didn't need to do that. They went back to the task and I was able to move to the next group. It's so important to be able to know what works with different groups and change things to make sure they're all getting there.

Each of the four teachers demonstrated strategies they had selected to try and ensure everyone in the class was engaged in the learning. They moved through whole-class, small group and individual activities with care and concern that the students were engaged in the various lesson, keeping focus on what was being demonstrated and instructed.

Lesson Observation - Janice

Janice: That was great, girls and boys...you were all so helpful and your stories are really interesting. Now, everyone come out and sit by me on the floor. (Teacher sits on chair at front, picking up guitar and the children move towards her). Come on Jack, you know what to do...er,...Lauren, good girl, you're ready to start.

Now, I thought we might sing a song before we start something new. Who can clap the rhythm of one of our songs to see if everyone can guess which one...Roseanna? (Child claps rhythm)

Can anyone guess which one?...I think I know...Aaron?

Aaron: "Little Cottage in the Wood"?

Janice: I think you're right(starts to play) Is he right, Roseanna? Child nods enthusiastically...the children sing through the song. Now, everyone lets have a look at the writing I have on the stand (refers to a chart with a poem written in large print). I want you to try and read it through in your mind and then we're going to help each other work it out exactly. (Children look quietly at the writing)...Now, I'm going to clap a pattern, just like Roseanna did before we sang
the song...listen carefully...(claps pattern of the poem's metre)...Everyone clap that with me...(Children clap)...good, now, Simon, you clap it...(boy claps)... Eleanor, you clap for me...(girl claps)...Now, everyone clap once again. (class clap pattern...one or two seem to make the connection with the text...a hand goes up).

Peter: I think we're clapping the writing on the chart.
Janice: Why do you think we're doing that?
Peter: I was reading it when everyone was clapping and it fitted.
Janice: You're too clever...you can have a stamp later on...Ok everyone, while I clap, I want you to read the writing on my chart.

This process was used for a variety of reasons. Janice started by focusing the children on the clapping of patterns, using something that was familiar to them. This step also involved a lesson break between the two different English lessons she had planned. The use of the clapping pattern at the introduction of the poem served to establish a pattern for the metre of what they were about to read and learn. It catered for the needs of the learners in the group who engaged more readily with kinaesthetic strategies and also those who preferred auditory strategies. While the teacher had not mentioned the connection between the clapping pattern and the text, it was clear that some children made the connection themselves and the lesson was able to continue.

This introduction of a varied set of simple approaches helped to ensure the children were engaged in the lesson and the majority found the reading of the poem easier. the teacher explained:

Notes on Debrief with Janice

Janice: I think it's just so important to try and engage everyone in the lesson. When you know the children you're
working with, you know what strategies appeal to them, so I try and use tricks and puzzles to "get them in". The poetry lesson went so well...I think it was because the children made the connection...I was going to read the poem to them to see if they recognised the metre, but I didn't have to do that...they found it for themselves and we were able to move smoothly through. I think they'll be able to use the clapping thing again for poetry too.

Data from Interviews with Peers: Wide Repertoire of Strategies.

The peers of these teachers commended the variety of ideas these people had for teaching. They reported that the teachers shared their ideas openly, often teasing out an idea in discussion before they had tried it in their own classroom. The peers attested to the fact that these teachers knew their role so well that they were able to explain clearly why and how they used a specific strategy and the context when it was most effective.

...we were sitting in the staffroom the other day and I was saying that I was trying to think of a way to get one of my kids more excited about his work. Simon just started suggesting things he did...when I said I thought I could try one of them, he took the idea and started extending it as I noted down a few things. When I asked if he had tried it, He said, "Not exactly, but I'd be keen to know how it goes". He amazes me...there's nothing he wouldn't do to help. (Simon's Peer)

I know she'll help me plan new strategies. She has really good ideas, and she knows what kids need to get them going. I often talk to her about the lessons I'm teaching and she usually has a good idea to try out. (Janice's Peer)

Summary

One important similarity between these four individuals is their capacity to think about their practice and make changes in terms of the needs of
their students. They command a wide number of strategies that they use and vary according to the needs of their students and they demonstrate high level management skills that enables them to maintain learner engagement as effectively as possible. There was not a time when there appeared to be any lapse in planning for the day’s learning and the strategies implemented demonstrated understanding of both teaching and learning.

Innovative thinking in the use of strategies is clear in each of these people’s work. They make their strategies effective by thinking through the relationships between lessons and the needs of the learners. They have many ideas for activities and they ensure the strategies they choose will engage the students in real learning.

Observations in their classrooms enabled the researcher to see the flexible ways they used their bank of strategies. They varied their work within a particular lesson with a view to ensuring the learners were engaged on the task at hand. This capacity to think ahead and make changes to their strategies was helpful in ensuring the students progressed. The teachers explained that they always thought about the outcomes of their strategies and how they could be tied to ensuing lessons.

The peers of these people described how helpful the teachers could be for their own practice. They commented that the teachers were willing to think through different ways of introducing lessons, often just thinking spontaneously and providing ideas that could be used.

d) Routines Established to Assist Learners

Data collected by interviews with these teachers and by observations in their classrooms demonstrated the way they used routines to provide students with a secure environment that was generally predictable. They
indicated that they believed students needed an environment that they found supportive and which helped them build on their prior knowledge.

Interviews with their peers revealed that these people were highly respected for the way they developed their classroom approaches. They were able to identify the use of a timetable that assisted in ensuring the wider curriculum was covered effectively. Further, they believed that the classrooms were conducted most effectively because of the routines, recognising that the routines were seen as a guide and were brought into play in flexible ways.

Data from Interviews with Teachers: Routines Established to Assist Learners

The issue of routines was reported by all four teachers as being the main contributing factor to the quality of their daily work. They claimed that they spend a lot of time ensuring that their day to day work was well planned and that the resources they needed were in place ahead of time. Simon described the work he did in 'out-of-school time' as the thing that enabled him to be organised for teaching.

Some of my friends tell me I spend too much time on school work, but I like to be sure I'm ready for each day. I'm convinced that teachers who try to 'wing it' can't be sure they will reach the outcomes they've planned. I guess I'd stay at school most afternoons for at least an hour after classes are finished...and sometimes I get things ready after tea when we're watching TV or whatever. (Simon)

Janice spoke of the value of having times when the students were involved in individual set tasks which gave her some times when she could be making brief notes about the ensuing day's lessons.
I usually get my program done in my 'Relief-From-Face-to-Face' time. I spend about an hour a day after school working towards my lessons as well, but I find I can get some time during the lessons when the students are involved in individual tasks. When I set them to work, I'm able to keep one eye on them while I do preparation for the next day. I'm available to them if they need me, but I find with the older kids, they need time to get involved in some of the tasks that have to be done. It's not every day, but I find this time a couple of days during the week. (Janice)

Data from Classroom Observations: Routines Established to Assist Learners

Each of these classrooms was clearly ordered and organised. The children knew where to get materials and the appropriate times to get them for themselves. If children needed to leave their places for any reason, the teachers had established routines that avoided interruption to learning. For example in each case if a child wanted to leave the room to go to the toilet, he or she left without a fuss, recognising that only one person could be out of the room at any one time.

The teachers had established simple ways of monitoring this. In one case the child simply wrote initials on the whiteboard when leaving and rubbed them out on return. This was an effective monitoring device that enabled the teacher to know at any time where everyone was in the lesson. Another teacher had established a routine of getting the student to lean their chair on the table when they were out of the room. This too was an effective device that enabled the learning environment to be quietly productive.
Data from Interviews with Peers: Routines Established to Assist Learners.

The peers of these people recognised the capacity to have established routines as part of the managerial skill of these teachers. They attested to the fact that the classrooms were productive learning environments where the students were always gainfully employed and seemingly happy in the tasks that were structures for them.

*I've seen the timetable she uses but it's very much a guide. I don't think it has become so rigid that it controls the situation. I think it has helped the students understand the way the classroom operates, though.* (Rosalind's Peer)

*...the kids in his class seem so ordered. They leave the room from time to time, but I don't see them abusing the privilege...I think the routines are established to help the kids settle to learning and he talks up the responsibility he places on the kids, so they respond positively.* (Simon's Supervisor)

Summary

The use of routines to enable the learning environments of their classrooms to be settled and task oriented is demonstrated by these teachers. The way students respond to the expectations established by the teacher builds a strong work ethic and this is reflected in the way the learning interactions occur.

The peers of these people describe the classrooms as places where the children know what to do and how to do it. They support the teachers' ideas of using simple management routines to enable the students to have some control over their work and the way it is done.
e) Resources Pertinent and Available

Data collected from interviews with these teachers and observations in their classrooms revealed that these people take time and care to ensure that the resources and materials they need for successful teaching are well organised and in the room ready for use. This aspect of their preparation seems to be important to them and they reported that they see it as one of the aspects of successful lessons.

The peers of these people spoke positively about the way these teachers planned for their work. They were impressed by the time they took to get ready for teaching and the organisation of the resources they needed for their teaching.

Data from Interviews with Teachers: Resources Pertinent and Available

The most important thing these teachers did in preparing for teaching was to ensure that they had everything they needed in plenty of time for the lesson. They described how they ensured the various books, copies of papers and materials that would enhance the children's learning were collected either at the beginning of the day or during the break before the lesson was scheduled. They all attested to the fact that this made their teaching day run smoothly.

"I know if I haven't got something, the lesson will be hopeless. The other day I got to an art lesson and realised that I'd left one of the materials that everyone needed on the staffroom table...that small 'hiccup' meant an interruption to the flow of the lesson and I was really angry with myself." (Rosalind)

"Look, I try to keep my room well stocked with the things I use a lot. There's always lots of crayons and paper and paint in places where the kids know they can get them when we need them. I think it's the secret to good teaching. I see people
racing over to the photocopier during lesson time and I wonder what the kids are doing while the teacher gets themself organised (Merv)

We should always make sure we have organised everything we need for the day. I spend the morning before school planning what I’ll need for the lessons during the day. I go down to the library and get the books I need and I do my photocopying and then I come back and set up the room for everything that will happen in the first teaching session. (Simon)

My days would be useless if I didn’t get organised early I think it’s the basis of good teaching. When you can progress through the day and everything is there for you the kids have such a good day. (Janice)

The influence of technology as a learning tool is evident in these classrooms. Each room had one computer situated towards the edge of the learning space and two of the classrooms had two computers each. On each occasion that the researcher visited these classrooms the computers were turned on and there were one or two children interacting with the computer constantly. The machines had been incorporated into the managerial systems of each of these teachers.

The teachers encouraged the children to use the computer to publish their written work and their research and each had a variety of drill and practice programs loaded onto the computers that they allowed the children to spend time at as a reward for completing tasks in a way that was expected by the teacher. In working with this new learning tool, the teachers reported that they thought it was important that they ensure each child had the chance to work in this way. The management strategies implemented to achieve equitable access to the computers was described by the teachers
I try to keep an eye on the ways that each child has been doing their work, using pen and paper or using the computer. I mean, you can't just let the fast finishers work at the computer...everyone needs to have the chance, so I set different criteria each day to select the children...and even then I have to monitor what happens. Sometimes I say that if they've had a turn on two consecutive days, they have to miss a day and work with paper and pen instead. You don't really want them to lose that skill anyway... (Merv)

I have a range of kids with experience with computers. Some kids have a computer at home and go to the technology easily and at the other end I have some kids who only ever get to see one when they are at school. Needless to say, each child has different needs in this area the same as for everything else. I make sure everyone is able to use the technology for a variety of tasks. (Simon)

Data from Observations of Classrooms: Resources Pertinent and Available

These classrooms were all distinguished by the ways in which the teachers had organised the desks and shelves so children could obtain resources during their work. The distribution of common materials was conducted by orderly procedures that involved the students. However when the children needed to get something specific to their own work, they knew where to go in the classroom to get it. The teacher had established ways in which this could be achieved as simply and as efficiently as possible and it was clear that the children knew the parameters within which they could work.
Data from Interviews with Peers: Resources Pertinent and Available

The peers of these people reported that they were impressed with the time these teachers took to ensure they were ready for the teaching day. They indicated that they saw them gathering materials and resources for specific lessons before school and during breaks and that the materials in their rooms were well ordered and accessible to everyone.

*She doesn’t seem to be in the staffroom very often. I think she’s usually getting something organised for the next session, or she’s packing away from the previous session.* (Rosalind’s Peer)

*I tried to get here early the other day so I could photocopy something and he was already here. He’d grabbed a couple of books from the library and was copying some sheets for a lesson later in the day. I reckon that’s the secret of his success...he’s always organised ahead of time.* (Simon’s Peer)

*I don’t know how she does everything. We don’t see her much except at staff meetings, and even then she’s writing reminders to herself about the things she has to collect.* (Janice’s Peer)

Summary

There is a commitment to preparation that is exemplary demonstrated in the work of these teachers. They gather their resources in plenty of time for lessons and keep them in an ordered manner in their classrooms. Their peers support the fact that this is an important aspect of the quality of their teaching. They report the fact that these teachers take time to ensure they are ready to teach children and that they have resources to facilitate learning.
SUMMARY OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter has reported the data collected in terms of the research question. It has described the nature of the classrooms and the practices of the teachers involved in the study. Each of the participants expressed the belief that their teaching was similar to that in other classrooms. They claimed that their practice was what teaching was all about and that other people demonstrated similar approaches. They were convinced that the strategies they used were the best ones and that others used them as well.

The data has described teachers who have a commitment to high level outcomes for their students, a commitment to the needs of individual students and a practice that encourages children to take responsibility for their own action and their own learning. While each of these teachers is very different in their practice, they report similar beliefs about the nature of classrooms, a commitment to sharing their ideas with others and a willingness to listen to how others approach their work.

Teachers who demonstrate a quality practice, according to the data collected and analysed in this study could be conceptualised in the following way:
Fig. 4.1: Characteristics of a Quality Teacher

**MANAGERIAL**
- Reflect on Practice
  - *Uses peers to review own work and consults them for new ideas.*
  - *Is able to adapt to change positively for the benefit of students.*
  - *Involved in ongoing personal professional research activities.*

**COMPETENCE**
- *Accommodates the needs of individual students.*
- *Creates stimulating environments.*
- *Is flexible - both in strategies used and in classroom organisation.*
- *Is constantly positive in their dealings with students.*
- *Uses routines to help students to settle to work.*
- *Keeps resources pertinent and available.*

**PEDAGOGICAL SKILL**
- *Designs curriculum delivery to enhance learning.*
- *Uses a wide variety of strategies for specific purposes.*
- *Sets clear expectations of learners.*
- *Motivates and engages children in learning activities.*

**EMPATHY WITH NEEDS OF STUDENTS**
- *Responds to student's emotional needs.*
- *Develops genuine and warm relationships.*

**CURRICULUM AND CONTENT KNOWLEDGE**
- *Understands and can explain curriculum structure.*
- *Applies new curriculum ideas in classroom work.*
- *Constant professional updating of knowledge and methods.*

**QUALITY TEACHER**
In the next chapter the issue of congruence in terms of the five characteristics determined by the OECD (1994) will be explored in terms of the data described here. The consonance of the characteristics from the OECD study and the present study will be described, conclusions drawn and recommendations made in terms of further research.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to determine the congruence between the characteristics of teachers of quality defined by the OECD (1994) and the professional practice of teachers in classrooms. Further, the study sought to determine how peers and supervisors perceived the characteristics of the teachers in these classrooms. This chapter provides a discussion of the results of the study and conclusions and recommendations for further study.

This study sought evidence from data gathered from four teachers employed in primary schools in New South Wales. The data collected was analysed to find out if the five dimensions of 'teacher quality' developed from OECD research could be identified by peers and supervisors in the professional practice of selected classroom practitioners. The five dimensions of teacher quality were as follows:

- knowledge of curriculum areas and content;
- pedagogical skill;
- reflection;
- empathy; and,
- managerial competence.
The analysis of the case studies showed that the characteristics of quality teachers identified by the OECD (1994) were present in the professional practice of classroom teachers. Managerial skill was the most prominent characteristic in the practice of the four teachers in these case studies. Slightly less prominent, but still well established in their practice were the characteristics of pedagogical skill and knowledge of curriculum and content. There were elements of the final two characteristics, reflection and empathy, established in the work of these four teachers. However, their prominence in the professional practice of these people was to a far lesser extent.

The discussion of the findings is organised according to the prominence in the teachers' practice of the five dimensions:

Managerial Competence

The findings showed that this characteristic of a quality teacher's work was established in the work of all four teachers in this study. The teachers were able to explain their management practices in relation to the learning they wanted to occur. In observations of their classrooms, the ways in which they demonstrated their practice showed the skills they employed as managers, and, their peers and supervisors attested to this characteristic as one of the things about these people that they admired.

Kounin's (1970) research emphasised this aspect of a teacher's work. He described effective teachers as those who could anticipate changes in mood in a classroom and to be flexible enough to maintain the pace of lessons, using strategies that would maintain students' interest and
engagement. As part of their managerial skill, the teachers in this study demonstrated they could use different strategies, introducing them as they recognised more effective ways of engaging the students.

The teachers demonstrated the capacity to manage the classroom to ensure they were able to accommodate the needs of the individuals in their classes, establishing practices that facilitated students working individually with the teacher, in small groups and as a whole class. It could be said that this practice could be seen in many classrooms. However, the teachers in these classrooms demonstrated that they recognised the strong link between pedagogy and management and tied them together to ensure the learning environment was suited to each task.

The capacity to describe the decisions made in terms of the learning environment they were trying to create was a strong characteristic of these teachers' work. They could explain the management issues they needed to consider in implementing strategies to create impact on students' learning. These results support the findings of research by Doyle (1985) who described classroom management as an intellectual skill which demands sound decision-making strategies.

The findings in all four case studies emphasised that teachers need to be flexible in the learning situation: flexible in terms of strategies and in terms of the discipline approaches that supported the learning environment. The essence of flexibility is the capacity to manage, or change, with as little disruption to the learning situation as possible.
Positive approaches to classroom discipline was an aspect of the work in these classrooms. The four teachers were able to explain the reasoning behind the processes they had established. They each claimed they only used positive discipline management strategies and they were able to defend the management strategies they had implemented. Classroom observations confirmed this aspect of these teachers' work and the peers and supervisors supported the findings, even claiming their willingness to seek the counsel of these teachers in dealing with their own classes.

Research by Swanson, O'Connor and Cooney (1990) suggested that expert teachers were keen to understand the areas of difficulty that caused the behaviours as opposed to just finding quick solutions that would enable the lesson to continue immediately. These principles were also defined by Lickona (1997) and Corrie (1997). The findings of this present study supported these views in terms of the management of the classroom and its learners.

The capacity to establish routines that enabled students to be actively engaged in their learning was reported by the teachers in this study. The findings demonstrate the importance these people place on ensuring the students are engaged in the tasks that are set. They implemented explicit routines that led the students into the tasks that were established. Classroom observations confirmed that the students in these classes felt secure in the routines used. The peers and supervisors of these people also confirmed that the routines in these classroom emphasised the skill of the teachers who worked there.

Classroom observations also showed that these teachers used a variety of strategies to enhance the learning situation for their students. While
there were clear routines and approaches the strategies for teaching were varied to make tasks more explicit. The peers and supervisors of these people also reported an understanding of this aspect of these peoples' work.

The importance of established routines and expectations was reported in studies by Sanford (1984). Their work also confirmed the importance of approaches that cover a range of routines: student talk; movement around the classroom; student interaction; and, what students should do when tasks are complete. The teachers in this study had identified these as potential distractions in the learning environment and had established rules and routines to maintain student engagement in the classroom situation. Again, the peers and supervisors of these people attested to the fact that they understood the routines established in these classrooms and that they appreciated the open way these teachers shared their ideas.

**Pedagogical Skill**

An understanding of the concept of pedagogical skill is a complex undertaking because so many facets of the dimension could be identified. In Chapter One of this study the following definition of Pedagogical Skill was stated as: "the ability to plan approaches to meet the needs of students, including a wide selection of teaching strategies that are introduced flexibly to achieve desired outcomes; the implementation of appropriate management systems that enhance a productive learning environment, and, the use of effective monitoring and evaluation techniques that empower change and refinement of practice."
It was recognised that there was a degree of overlap between aspects of pedagogical skill and that of managerial competence. However, characteristics of this dimension were also prominent in the work of these teachers. The data provided a clear identification of aspects of the work that can be described as demonstrating pedagogical skill both in the way these teachers explained their work and in classroom observations. The peers and supervisors of these people also recognised the characteristics and attested to their prevalence in the quality of work they claimed these people did.

The findings showed that these teachers designed a curriculum that was focused on the needs of the students and which was presented using a variety of techniques. They established clear expectations of the outcomes required with their students and motivated the students in such a way that the students showed an enthusiasm for their learning and a pride in the products that were generated from the set tasks.


The data generated highlighted the skill with which these teachers could use a variety of approaches to achieve the outcomes they wanted. They used a variety of groupings in the classroom for different purposes and were able to describe the pedagogical reasoning behind their decision.
making. This was a vital aspect of the work of these teachers. In each of the classrooms the explanations of pedagogy demonstrated an understanding that was embedded in the practice of these people.

Knowledge of Curriculum and Content

Results indicated that the dimension of Curriculum and Content Knowledge was readily identified in the professional practice of the four teachers in the study. They exhibited a professional understanding of the curriculum, how it works and how it affected student learning together with an understanding of the content relevant to each of the Key-learning Areas. These teachers took the time to keep themselves up to date with the content they were expected to provide in children's learning.

Shulman (1987) posited that, for teachers to be providing a quality practice, they had to have a clearly defined understanding of the curriculum they were implementing. He followed this with statements about the essential content knowledge to enable them to achieve the curriculum goals. In the case of each of these four people there appears to be a congruence between their practice and the intent of Shulman's reference to curriculum and content knowledge. This congruence is seen both in their classroom practice and in their articulation of what they teach and why they teach it. They claim to believe in the actions they implement because they appear to produce successful learning in that knowledge area for the variety of students in their respective classes.
The results concerning knowledge of curriculum and content support the findings of previous research studies regarding Curriculum Knowledge by Shulman (1987), Berliner (1988) and Leinhardt (1990). In the case of Berliner there was evidence that the teacher seemed to take large amounts of time to fully understand the topic themselves and to plan, step-by-step, activities to help their students understand the topic. The teachers in this study were even more clearly perceived to have a dynamic interest in keeping their practice as relevant as possible. They were committed to providing factual information in their lessons that was culturally appropriate and well focused for the needs of the learners.

Each of the teachers involved in this study claimed to be conscious of the importance of keeping their knowledge current for the sake of the learners with whom they worked. They were committed to ensuring the work they implemented with their classes was focused and effective. These results supported the findings of another study by Berliner (1992) which examined the differences in teachers on a scale identified by the terms: novice, advanced beginner and expert. The comparison can be drawn between 'expert' in the Berliner study and 'quality' in this study because they both set out to define and describe the characteristics of teachers who appear to be more effective than their cohort.

Reflection

This dimension was less prominent in the work of these teachers. The four teachers proposed at some time during the study the fact that they were often dissatisfied with the way their teaching was developing. They claimed to think about their work in a variety of circumstances: with
others, in planning the work they were going to present and in their personal professional research activities. However there was no reference to any formal monitoring of the work they were doing. They claimed to use their peers as sounding boards for various aspects of their work. However this did not appear to be documented in any way even though claims of their peers influencing practice were made.

Earlier research by Schon (1983), Lampert (1984), Pollard and Tann (1987) and Morine-Dersheimer (1989) described reflection that was more formal than was evident in the discourse of these teachers. It would appear the presence of some formal aspect of reflection would enable the teacher to become a more effective evaluator of their own work in that they would have recorded aspects of their work over time and could more effectively draw comparisons and make appropriate changes.

The data in this study refers mainly to informal reactions to situations that are highlighted in staffroom conversations and which claim to be followed up by the teachers concerned.

Empathy

The results of this study did not show the dimension of 'empathy' in these people's work to the extent that was expected. The four participants demonstrated that they loved children and their classrooms were safe, secure places where the children could enjoy learning each day. Further, there could be no doubt that the children in these classes enjoyed working with their teachers. The classrooms were places of humour and fun, with established routines and processes that the children understood and followed. The children demonstrated an affinity with their respective
According to the work of Truax (1974), the existence of empathy in a teacher goes beyond the feelings of affection, affinity and positive reinforcement. He suggests that "accurate empathy involves both the teacher's sensitivity to the student's current feelings and the verbal facility to communicate this understanding in a language attuned to the student's current feelings" (p.42). It is the ability to communicate empathy to another that is important, particularly in teacher-student interactions.

While the teachers in the study were able to comment on the need for a deep understanding of their students, they did not articulate the same level of empathy to which Truax alludes. It is not possible from the current data to determine whether it is the depth that is absent from the teachers' work or whether the nature of the interviewing process did not allow this to be fully articulated.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has investigated the work of four teachers to determine if these people, who were identified as teachers of quality, demonstrated the dimensions that were defined in research by the OECD (1994). Further, the study sought to determine if the peers of these people recognised and were able to explain the dimensions in the work of these people with whom they worked. The teachers and their peers were able to point to a number of characteristics that explained the five dimensions. The more prominent ones were Managerial Competence, Pedagogical Skill and a
Knowledge of the Curriculum and its Content. However, the remaining two dimensions, Reflection and Empathy were not as prominent in the work of these people as was expected.

At the time they were selected the four case study teachers had attended an inservice course entitled 'Quality Teaching'. It was taken that this identified them as people who were keen to further develop and understand their own practice more fully. In the interviews it became apparent that they wanted to provide the absolute best practice they could for the needs of their students. Each of them expressed the intention that they would continue to provide strategies that were consistent with the curriculum and which best met the needs of their students. This aspect of the teachers work was confirmed by the interviews with the peers and supervisors of these people.

An interesting outcome of the study was that the peers and supervisors knew the work of these teachers so well. It became clear that they were significant members of their respective staffs in that they were valued by others with whom they worked. They were seen as providing high quality practice and as people who were willing to share with others openly. The data suggests that the peers and supervisors wanted to increase the opportunities for these people to share their ideas. The peers claimed that these teachers had influenced their own practice in many ways.

Throughout the three years during which the data was collected and analysed schools in New South Wales were faced with degrees of change in syllabus approaches. There was a move toward outcomes-based syllabi that demanded stronger understandings on the behalf of teachers and
their supervisors. Further, a restructuring of the state Department of Education and Training decreased the access to support services from outside the school. The implementation of change was more centred on the individual school. It is surmised that this may have led to deeper involvement by some teachers in change at the school level. The data suggests that the identified teachers may have taken this role in their respective schools. It is suggested that there may be teachers in all schools who are more closely involved in this way.

It appears that these teachers carry out the role with little or no training. If the quality of their work is going to influence the wider number of teachers with whom they work, it seems logical to suggest that they could be more formally identified and provided with input by the system to increase their skills and enhance their impact.

Generally, the classroom work of these people was self generated, though consistent with the expectations of the school communities in which they were placed and the state department for whom they worked. These teachers' practice was intentionally directed at leading the students in their care on to achieving progress and success in learning. It was not the intention of this study to examine the impact of the teaching on student outcomes. However the way in which the students responded to the work these teachers were doing seemed to suggest engagement in lessons that would lead to successful learning outcomes.

In all aspects of this study it appears that the dimensions of quality defined by the OECD (1994) need to be fostered in the development of teachers' understanding of what it is to be a teacher.
Institutions with the responsibility of developing teachers of high quality need to examine and re-examine the structure of their courses to ensure they are providing potential teachers with understandings of the requirements of quality in this profession.

The need for teachers to develop empathic understandings of students is one aspect of the role that appears to be increasing. Societal change and the emergence of more complex family relationships seems to be placing greater demands on teacher work than ever before. Students and their parents/carers appear to be more demanding than ever before in varieties of ways. The teacher needs to be able to empathise with students from complex cultural backgrounds as well as from home backgrounds that are often difficult, sometimes aggressive. Students appear to be spending more time without the supervision of adults/parents in many areas. There is a perception that students from a very young age have access to a good deal of electronic entertainment, much of which is not screened by adults to ensure its suitability.

Teachers of quality are able to understand the complexities of societal change. They need the capacity to move their craft further, in that they provide moral and ethical considerations for students without devaluing the students' backgrounds in the public forum of their classroom. They require increased counselling skills and skills of personal interaction to facilitate ways of communicating and dealing with both the students and their parents/carers. Sometimes the conflicting agendas raised by different parents within a class of students requires sensitivity and care as well. The teacher of quality is able to evaluate situations and react professionally almost 'on the spot' to the enhancement of the student's progress.
The teachers in this study appeared to demonstrate the flexibility to be able to deal with changing agendas, both in terms of what they teach as well as the environment within which they were teaching. They seemed able to deal with the employer demands alongside the community demands and create a balance that appeared to enable them to trial new ideas and retain the sense of quality that was expected. They were able to explain their decisions and this seemed to be crucial to the perceptions of others with whom they worked. Again, these are skills that all teachers need to develop to a high degree and considerations need to be made at the preservice level as to how best develop the skills and understandings in the courses that are presented.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

This study was structured to gauge the congruence between the quality work done by teachers who had an understanding of the concept of quality teaching and the characteristics defined by the OECD (1994) as 'quality teaching'. The study has amplified the practice of these four people and confirmed the characteristics as being present in their teaching. However it has also identified some issues which could be more thoroughly investigated with a view to developing more effective teacher education courses at university level and professional development activities for those already in the service. The development of comprehensive teaching courses that will impact on children's learning is a complex undertaking. However the data in this study imply that consideration be given to:

a) develop further ways to identify quality practice, and  
b) communicate and develop characteristics of quality practice through school systems.
It is recommended that school systems examine ways of determining the characteristics of quality they believe will enhance the role of teacher. Opportunities should be created to inform those in the role of the characteristics so they can grow to be more self-critical. This would provide a forum for increasing the quality of classroom practice and the eventual professionalism of all people in the role. The various school systems are characterised by an ageing workforce, many of whom have not had the chance to have the quality of their practice assessed. Processes need to be put in place to celebrate the work of those who provide a professional and quality practice. At the same time, those who need to refine their practice deserve the right to more fully understand the aspects of quality required in a profession as complex as being a teacher.

Further, it is recommended that school systems be proactive in educating principals and executive members of school staffs about the characteristics of 'quality' in a consistent and comprehensive way. These people have the responsibility of increasing the standards of teaching that occur in schools and it is important that they hold a clear and unambiguous view of how to identify quality and, subsequently how to help others to refine their practice so its quality is enhanced.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Establishing Paradigms that will Demonstrate Teacher Quality.

These four teachers articulated many of the principles that are accepted in the rhetoric about teaching and learning. More importantly, they demonstrated ways of implementing their work so people were confident in their skills, their knowledge and their counsel. What is it about these
people, their practice, and others who undoubtedly work in other schools who are like them, that sets their work apart as providing more quality than other teachers? A more comprehensive study of classroom work in randomly selected classrooms may provide an even greater insight into this phenomenon and help to define both exemplary models and deficit models of teaching that could be used to inform teacher education, both pre-service and inservice.

Examining the Relationship between Teacher Quality and Student Outcomes.

This has been, quite intentionally, an exploratory study on the characteristics exhibited by four teachers in terms of the quality of their professional practice. Although it has demonstrated that these characteristics are definable and can be recognised by others, this study did not seek to determine the impact of these people's practice on the learning outcomes of the students in these classes. Further research needs to be undertaken to determine if those people who demonstrate quality understandings and professional practice enable the learners in their classrooms to achieve higher-level learning outcomes.

Empathy Training

The empathy required by a classroom teacher is endemic to the role of teaching. In recent times classroom teachers are being asked to take a stronger welfare role in all aspects of their work. The rising incidence of single parent families, the breakdown in communication in many homes and the rise in families living near or on the poverty line is changing the nature of classrooms and the teacher-student relationship. Teachers need to become better versed in communication skills so they can establish
appropriately strong relationships between them and their students so learning in the areas of values and attitudes can be strengthened.

Research needs to be implemented to further examine the aspects of the teacher-student relationship that is fundamental to high-level outcomes in learning in both primary and secondary schools. The outcome of this research will enable successful strategies to be identified and implemented and therefore increase the quality of teaching in a wide range of classrooms.
REFERENCES


BALL, S. (1983) "The Verification and Application of Participant Observation Case Study" in Perspectives on case study 4: Ethnography Deakin University, Geelong.


BUBER, M., (1953) "Distance and Relation", *Psychiatry*, 16, 104


DENZIN, N.K. (1983) "The Logic of Naturalistic Enquiry" in Perspectives on Case Study 4: Ethnography Deakin University, Geelong


DeNOVELLIS, R., and LAWRENCE, G. (1983) 'Correlates of Teacher Personality variables (Myers-Briggs) and Classroom Observation data'. Research in Psychological Type, 6, pp.37-46.


FILSTED, W.J. (Ed.) (1970) Qualitative Methodology: First Hand Involvement with the Social World Rand McNally, Chicago


FULLAN, M. (1985) "Change processes and strategies at the local level." The Elementary School Journal, 3


GARMAN, N. (1986) "Reflection, the Heart of Clinical Supervision: A Modern Rationale for Professional Practice." Journal for Curriculum and Supervision Fall, 2, 1 pp.1-24


Cassell, London.

Scottish Council for Research in Education, Edinburgh

HERRMANN, N., (1987) Creativity, Learning and the Specialised Brain in
the Context of Education for Gifted and Talented Children, An
Address to the Seventh World Conference on Gifted and Talented
Children, Salt Lake City, Utah, August 4, 1987.

York

Herrmann Group, Sydney

HERRMANN GROUP - ASIA PACIFIC (1995) Herrmann Brain Dominance
Profile Interpretation Notes published for Training Course, Sydney

a Complex Human Art" Reflections, Centre for Advanced
Teaching Studies, Hobart.

IRONSON D.S., (1984) "Your Brain - Using Both Halves for Enhanced
Communications" International Television July, 1984 - The

ISAAC, S., and MICHAEL, W.B. (1983) Handbook on Research and
Evaluation EdIts, San Diego

Cooperative, Competitive and Individualistic Learning (2nd


LEINHARDT, G. (1990) "The Development of an Expert Explanation: An analysis of a sequence of Subtraction Lessons" in Cognition and Instruction 78(2), 75-95


LICKONA, T., (1997) "The Teacher's Role in Character Education" Journal of Education. v179 n2, pp63 - 80


MYERS, Isabel Briggs (1990) Introduction to Type. Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, CA


Oliva, P. and Henson K. (1980), "What are the Essential Generic Teaching Competencies?" Theory into Practice 19, pp.117-121


SIMON, A. and BRYAM, C. (1977) You've Got To Reach 'Em To Teach 'Em. T. A. Press, Dallas

SMITH, L.M. (1978) "An evolving Logic of Participant Observation, Educational ethnography and Other case studies" Review of Research in Education, 6, pp.316-376


STAKE, R.E., (1978) The Case Study Method in Social Enquiry, Educational Researcher, 7(Feb.), pp.5-8


WHITE, J. and ROESCH, M., (1993) Listening to the Voices of Teachers: Examining Connections between Student Performance, Quality of Teaching and Educational Policies in Seven Fairfax County (Va) Elementary and Middle Public Schools, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Fairfax Public Schools, United States


APPENDICES
Appendix A

Interview Schedule - Participants

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

RESEARCHER: STAN WARREN

TOPIC: IDENTIFYING QUALITY TEACHERS

******

Using these questions, the participant will have an opportunity to reflect on his/her thoughts about 'quality teaching' and the characteristics identified by the OECD.

******

What do you believe a 'quality teacher' is?

In what ways can 'quality teaching' be recognised in an individual's work?

Describe a classroom where 'quality'-would be seen in action.

What do you believe is the relevance of curriculum, syllabus or policy documents for a classroom teacher.

Would you describe how you think a particular Key Learning-area explains how children learn.

What changes would you make to the primary syllabus if you had the power?
Explain the skills you believe are essential to successful teaching and learning.

What skills do you believe form the strongest aspect of your own teaching?

Think of a person whose teaching you know is lacking in some way. Describe what the lack is and suggest ways in which that person could be helped to improve.

Teaching a class of students is a highly complex undertaking. How do you believe teachers take the time to think about what they are achieving with their students?

Outline the reasons that you believe this time for reflection is beneficial.

Describe the ways in which you believe your approaches to reflection have been enhanced.

Describe the relationship you believe you have with the students in your class.

Think of the children who need more time to achieve a particular outcome. How do you feel about them?

What needs of the learners in your class do you most comfortably empathise with? How does that empathy effect your teaching?

What importance do you give to routines and organisation in your daily work?
Describe how you organise your class to meet the needs of different learners in your class.

Considering your successful teaching practice, describe what your classroom looks like in operation, day by day.

We've discussed five different concepts related to your teaching along with your ideas about 'quality'. Please elaborate on anything you believe needs further emphasis from our discussion.

Are there any other issues you would like to raise?
Appendix B

Interview Schedule - Peers and Supervisors

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

RESEARCHER: STAN WARREN

TOPIC: IDENTIFYING QUALITY TEACHERS

*******

Using these questions, the respondents will have an opportunity to explore their understandings of the characteristics of a 'Quality Teacher'.

*******

What do you believe a 'quality teacher' is?

In what ways can 'quality teaching' be recognised in an individual's work?

Does the subject recognise the relevance of curriculum, syllabus or policy documents? How do you know?

Would you describe how you think the subject implements a particular Key Learning-area and his/her beliefs about how children learn.

Explain the skills you believe are essential to successful teaching and learning.

What skills do you believe form the strongest aspect of the subject's teaching?

How do you believe the subject would react in a situation where s/he had to mentor a colleague who was experiencing difficulty with some area?

Teaching a class of students is a highly complex undertaking. How does the subject take the time to think about what s/he is achieving with his/her students?
Outline the reasons you believe the subject takes this time for reflection.

Describe the ways in which you believe the subject's approaches to reflection have been enhanced.

Describe the relationship you believe the subject has with the students in his/her class.

What importance does the subject give to routines and organisation in his/her daily work?

Describe how the subject organises his/her class to meet the needs of different learners.

Considering his successful teaching practice, describe what the subject's classroom looks like in operation, day by day.

We've discussed some different concepts related to teaching along with your ideas about 'quality'. Please elaborate on anything you believe needs further emphasis from our discussion.

Are there any other issues you would like to raise?
Appendix C

Classroom Observation - Emergent Criteria

The following criteria emerged from the data collected in classroom observations.

Curriculum and Content Knowledge

• Understands and can explain curriculum structure.

• Applies new curriculum ideas in classroom work.

• Constant professional updating of knowledge and methods.

Pedagogical Skill

• Designs curriculum delivery to enhance learning.

• Uses a wide variety of strategies for specific purposes.

• Sets clear expectations of learners - uses stories and analogies that support the concept being explained.

• Motivates and engages children in learning activities - demonstrations and models that enable students to engage with the topic.

Reflection on Practice

• Uses peers to review own work and consults them for new ideas.

• Is able to adapt to change positively for the benefit of students.

• Involved in on-going personal professional research activities.
Empathy with Students

• Responds to students' emotional needs.

• Develops genuine and warm relationships.

Managerial Competence

• Accommodates the needs of individual students.

• Creates stimulating environments by altering the furniture arrangements or positioning of children for specific lessons.

• Is flexible - both in strategies used and classroom organisation.

• Is constantly positive in dealing with children.

• Uses routines to help students settle to work.

• Keeps resources pertinent and available.
Appendix D

Field Notes Recording Sheet

CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITY TEACHERS

FIELD NOTES

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

RESEARCHER: Stan Warren

DATE:  
TIME:
Dimension: Curriculum/Content  
Dimension: Pedagogical Skill

Dimension: Empathy with Student  
Dimension: Managerial Skill
What do you believe a 'quality teacher' is?

A teacher who does a good job!! I don't think all teachers are the same, but I do think they try to do the best job they can. I think the word 'quality' brings an edge to the situation that is a bit elitist...or "better than the next person" or something like that. A quality teacher gets kids to learn and enjoys their work. You don't usually hear them complaining about their career. Some people, when they go to the staffroom are full of whinges about the kids they've had that day...I think 'quality' people don't do that. They're positive about what they do and how they do it.

I also think it would be hard to define someone as a 'quality' teacher...I mean we all make mistakes, and we all get a bit tired and the kids 'get to us' from time-to-time. Do you think 'quality' people respond like that too?

I guess we're all human, but you hear people who prefer one teacher over another for their kids. In what ways can 'quality teaching' be recognised in an individual's work?

I reckon most of these ideas come from the fact that their kid was happy in the teacher's room. I mean I could show the parents who like me and those who don't and some of that comes from the fact that I make some kids do things they don't want to do...tough!! My job is to teach the child and help him to learn and I try to do my best in that. I try to develop interesting lessons the children will enjoy, and I give activities that will make them think...the kids in my class are great, they think deeply about things and give sensible answers. Actually, I try to stimulate different aspects of their thinking. I use De Bono's six thinking hats as a strategy and the kids really like it.

Actually, I guess that's one of the secrets of 'quality' work - trying different approaches to get all kids to engage in the lesson. You can't learn without thinking and I think we have to teach them how to do that. Another aspect is the organisation of the learning. Teachers have to be extremely well organised, both in the program of work they design and in the classroom
where they work. I think the most impressive classrooms are those where kids know what they're doing and how to get the resources they need from the classroom by themselves. Again, it's the way the teacher teaches them to do that, how the resources are kept in the room and the sense of trust the teacher engenders. It makes the classroom a more productive work place.

Describe a classroom where 'quality' would be seen in action.
It would have very focused students going about their work in a somewhat independent manner...the teacher would lead the class through a variety of activities designed to teach the children new work and then the children would pursue a range of exercises that would let them practise the new things they were learning. It wouldn't necessarily be a particularly quiet place, but the children would be referring to each other and helping each other as they went along. The teacher would be actively involved in what was going on, giving ideas, asking questions to ensure the children were making progress. I think this is the dream classroom that everyone tries to develop...some do better than others at it.

What do you believe is the relevance of curriculum, syllabus or policy documents for a classroom teacher.
I use the syllabus quite a bit because I believe it enables me to focus on the skills and abilities the kids should be achieving. The syllabus helps us understand what kids in a particular stage should be able to do...some kids get there quicker than others, and some take a while to get there, but the syllabus enables me to design programs that are interesting and engaging for kids.

What do you like about the syllabus?
The HSIE syllabus enables me to explore a range of interesting topics, and, as I believe that children need a context for new learning, so I use themes when I'm planning new work. They're mostly embedded in literature, but I try to teach the different genres of the writing and I take most of my work in HSIE from the text we're studying. The HSIE draft syllabus shows a range of books that support the units that are set, so it's easy to make the context clear. Children cope much better when things are clearly contexted to the main point of what is being taught.

Also, I like the rationale of the new approaches to HSIE. they enable the children to learn a good deal of knowledge as part of the process of concept
development. I think this encourages the children that their learning is real because they can explain some of the facts surrounding the work. I believe it's a much stronger balance than we've had in the past.

Do you refer to each of the syllabus documents or only some of them?
No, I use them all...especially those areas I don't feel confident about. The music syllabus is my favourite. I'm no musician, but the activities are set out so well, I just follow what the document says. The concepts are becoming clear to me as well as I try the activities. I use the syllabus to plan my lessons and also, the sets of activities relating to the concepts give me a great set of activities when the kids need a break during the day...we just pause in whatever lesson is on and play with some of the music activities.

Would you describe how you think a particular Key Learning-area explains how children learn.
The English syllabus says that children learn to read by reading, and I agree with that position...but, I really believe that all kids need to have reading explained to them and discussed with them...I mean it's more than just getting the sounds together with the letters on the page. I believe all aspects of reading have to be explored with everyone and that it's important for the learner to explain what they're doing and why when they are reading. There's too much emphasis from some people that suggests the methods used are wrong.

Reading is a very complex activity. I try to keep up with what others are doing to make sure my classroom strategies are leading to real learning. The support statements about the teaching of reading have been very confirming of my practice. I guess I've used the ideas of Independent, Modelled and guided reading all my career. The stuff we're getting in support of the changing english syllabus tells me it's OK to keep doing what I'm already doing.

There's one boy in the class who is really hesitant with reading. When I work closely with him, he works well, and I can see that he knows the basic things; but, if I leave him to his own devices, he seems to get lost in the words and loses the meaning. I think he needs a lot of work before he approaches the individual task...much more than others seem to. I need to give him strong scaffolds so there is no chance of him missing the meaning when doing the tasks by himself. The other thing I need to do is to get him...
to explain what he has read to others in the group. Often the group situation is better for kids like this because they fire off one another.

**What changes would you make to the primary syllabus if you had the power?**

I'd slow down all the change...it seems everytime some-one gets a new theory or idea we start revising the syllabus, and everyone's strategies go under the microscope!

Will we ever really understand what is happening in English? Really, I look at what they're doing and then go about my business as a teacher. When the final thing is finished, then I'll try to get it under my belt. I think I'm a good teacher of English and it seems this is all to do with academics who don't like each other's work. They should let us write the syllabuses.

Teachers are trained to do their job and I think they can design programs and approaches fairly confidently...I mean, they know the kids and what they need to do. When they prepare new work they don't just put it together in a random fashion, they try to help kids develop the skills and understandings that are needed in the situation...and they try different strategies when it appears the child hasn't cottoned-on. I really believe the policy makers need to talk more to classroom people and avoid the academics as I said before.

**Explain the skills you believe are essential to successful teaching and learning.**

Teachers have to be good at communicating...if you can't explain something, how can you be expected to reach the kids in learning. Actually, I'm sure teaching is more an oral skill than anything else...it's knowing when to say something and when to keep quiet!!

I want the kids in my class to enjoy learning. I make it clear that I don't know everything and that I will find out things for them if they ask. I try to vary my approaches and vary the demonstrations I use so everyone will be interested but when I realise some kids are not tuned in, I use a different approach. Sometimes I might give most of the class something to do while I work with a few children in a group. Today, did you notice I took one of the boys aside so I could give him some time. He's a bit reluctant with reading
and I need to have him one-on-one occasionally just so I can check with what's happening.

On other occasions I repeat a demonstration using a different book and watch for reaction from those I'm concerned about...also, I sometimes get one of the children to repeat the demonstration for me. I mean, kids seem to be able to understand each other better sometimes and the learning is better...but I always try to keep a constant focus in the learning as it occurs. I think the kids respond more easily if they’re in tune with the overall topic.

I think the real skill of a teacher is in recognising what a child needs to learn next. When I was at school it was the information that was the most important consideration...but these days it's different. We're trying to teach kids how to become learners for themselves and to lead them into seeing learning as a dynamic activity. The teacher has to prepare pograms that will engage kids easily...the TV, video and computer are having a huge effect on what kids learn...the teacher needs to be aware of this and create learning situations that are just as interesting and engaging. I'm always amazed that kids know so much more these days.

What skills do you believe form the strongest aspect of your own teaching? I guess it's my enthusiasm for learning that I try to inculcate in the kids I teach. I want them to be enthusiastic about what they learn and to be proud of their efforts. I'm a very positive person most of the time...I enjoy joking with the kids and laughing with them. I think this develops a relationship that is real to them and to me. That makes it possible for me to know them well and to put programs in place that will stimulate their curiosity.

I listened to one of my colleagues the other day start the day with "Take out your Maths Textbook and get started on page 37"...I thought, how will those kids ever get excited about maths if that's what they do? I try to do some provocative activity to get my kids going in maths before they move to practise. I'm sure they settle more eagerly to work and remain focused for the maths time as a result.

Think of a person whose teaching you know is lacking in some way. Describe what the lack is and suggest ways in which that person could be helped to improve.
I don't think I'll ever make a good supervisor...I get so frustrated on behalf of kids who I think are bored. We have some kids here who really need some intense work on the basics of Maths, yet some teachers just push them into the selected Textbook, as I said...when does the teacher actually teach the kids how to do it. I mean, if the kid is struggling with a concept the textbook just compounds the problem for the child.

I think you have to get people to question why they do what they do. If the only reason is because that's the way they've always done it, I think we can start from there and help them examine the effects of the teaching situation they've developed. If they won't think about it, there's little that can be done, short of calling their skill into question and that's not my job.

Teaching a class of students is a highly complex undertaking. How do you believe teachers take the time to think about what they are achieving with their students?

I'm not sure that everybody does take the time to think about it. I know lots of teachers who do the same things over and over...never really interested in what could be or should be happening in the classroom. Classrooms have changed over the last ten years or so.

I think everyone will have to rethink now that we're getting computers in our rooms. We won't be able to keep on the same ways as before. I know it's only another classroom resource, but I think it will mean change to the ways in which classrooms will have to operate. We're lucky here...we get on well together and we plan ways of working with the technology and then one of us tries it and we all take an interest in what happens. Then, as we introduce it further, we change the things we don't like. Eventually we've developed a practice that helps the kids, because we've all been part of the process and what happens in each of our rooms is similar. I think that's so important in a school, but everyone has to work together.

We share openly here, and it makes a big difference. We get on well and we try to encourage each other to try new things. If it doesn't seem to be working, we talk about it and make changes, always being open, honest and forthright with each other... These sessions help us to think about our work and that sometimes leads to real change. I love to sit and think about the work I do and how I could change it to make it better for children, so I think it's just as important to get them to question the ways they do things and
find alternatives...it helps them become reflective and that's very important in everyone.

Outline the reasons you believe this time for reflection is beneficial.
If teachers don't take time to reflect, how will they ever keep up with the changes in syllabuses? I have to think through what I'm doing to make sure I give kids the best I can...because they have to work with me throughout their school lives, I can't afford to let them down.

In this fairly small school, we work very closely together and we use each other as sounding-boards for what we're doing. We don't make a chore of it, but we do reflect openly and listen to each other. One of my responsibilities has been the computers in the school. I think we've developed a system that suits us and our kids, but it has taken a lot of talking and being honest with each other to get to where we are now.

Every classroom teacher has to be so conscious of how technology has made information and learning so colourful and engaging. I think teachers have to work out ways of making the lessons they present just as colourful and just as engaging. If you don't 'get kids in', there's a chance they won't learn some of the important stuff. It's not so bad with english and maths...but with science and HSIE, I think we have a real challenge.

I used to be protective of what I did in my classroom. I wasn't good at sharing because I thought others should think of their own ideas...but now, when I talk with others about my work I'm able to be more objective and much less defensive. I think the fact that I take time to think about what I'm really on about has made the difference.

We sometimes have an informal discussion of our work. One of us will raise an issue they're facing and we discuss it openly, making suggestions for change. I really like these times...especially when it's my issue that's being talked through. I listen to the others ideas and then try them out. When we're able to get together again we tell of the successes and modifications we made...it makes for real change.

Describe the ways in which you believe your approaches to reflection have been enhanced.
My colleagues...my colleagues...my colleagues! Look, I use them all the time and as a result my evaluations of my own work are far more dynamic and make greater impact on my work. I've made changes to the way I approach the teaching of reading in terms of being more explicit with kids. I hardly use a comprehension sheet anymore. I think I've been able to cope with this change because of the support of the others I work with. They are encouraging and excited when things happen. They celebrate with me...we get on really well, but it's them that made the difference.

Describe the relationship you believe you have with the students in your class.
I think we get on pretty well. I can honestly say there's not one kid in the class that I don't like as a person. I appreciate their differences and relate to the as fairly as I possibly can.

I want the kids in my class to enjoy learning. I make it clear that I don't know everything and that I will find out things for them if they ask. We enjoy joking together and I take my share of the fun. I try to vary my approaches and vary the demonstrations I use so everyone will be interested but when I realise some kids are not tuned in, I use a different approach. Sometimes I might give most of the class something to do while I work with a few children in a group. Today, did you notice I took one of the boys aside so I could give him some time. He's a bit reluctant with reading and I need to have him one-on-one occasionally just so I can check with what's happening.

Think of the children who need more time to achieve a particular outcome. How do you feel about them?
I think I spend more time planning for their needs than for anyone else. It's that part of me that wants to see them as successful as everyone else in the class. I know they can never be the same as each other, and that some will always take more time, but I try to plan lessons that will communicate clearly to them. I get frustrated when the others show signs of impatience, and I usually make it clear to them that we have to respect each other and work together, but these kids are the ones for whom I need to be successful.

Actually, at the other end of the scale there are those who do so well and who work so quickly that I worry I haven't got enough to keep them engaged. That's a real dilemma in a school like this, too.
What needs of the learners in your class do you most comfortably empathise with? How does that empathy effect your teaching?

I think they need to see that learning is a useful and practical thing. I really am committed to making the classroom a dynamic learning situation. We really are going to place a tap in the bottom playground eventually, but I thought it was a good way to engage the children in something practical and that would keep them thinking. I find you have to stimulate the urge to solve problems with children, and I pose a lot of my lessons in this way.

I wasn't a real good student. Everything went OK in primary school...I wasn't 'top-of-the-class' or anything, but I managed to do well...but in high school...look, I just didn't want to be there. I felt the teachers didn't like me...I thought they probably talked about me to each other. It's amazing, when I think of some of the kids I've taught, I know exactly what they're going through.

The other thing is that they have to feel valued as people. Teachers over the years have sometimes adopted a stance that gives students the impression they don't know anything and are dependent on the teacher. I like my students to feel that I value their points-of-view and their friendship...that they respect me, not because I expect them to, but because I relate to them in such a way as to earn their respect...you know what I mean?

What importance do you give to routines and organisation in your daily work?

I suppose I use routines fairly loosely in my classroom...or it could be misinterpreted that I'm not organised...but I really am. I plan my days carefully, trying to make the most out of the learning time we have. I believe it has to be fun for the kids and I vary the timing and length of lessons in the various KL-As. At the beginning of the day I always start with the kids sitting on the floor near me...I sit on a small chair because I'm getting to old to be up-and-down too easily!! (Laugh) Even though the day starts in this routine, the kids are never sure what lesson we might start out with.
One morning I started by showing them a short snippet of a video of the soccer from the night before. We had a discussion of the rules together and then went out for a quick game. I then used that as the stimulus for the report writing I was teaching them...so, I'm organised, but not really!!

Describe how you organise to meet the needs of different learners in your class.

I use groups as the organiser. I vary the groups week to week, and I ensure the kids get to work with everyone in the class - regardless of grade level - but I think it's the only way to get the kids to be interacting at their own level. The new english syllabus talks about systematic teaching of reading...and I think the use of levels in the texts given to children makes a big difference. We use a home-reading scheme here and that has made a difference too...it works when the child is working both at home and at school to achieve the same goal.

I think parents make it harder when they expect all the kids in the class to be the same. I never understand why they can't realise that children are all different. I try really hard not to identify the way groups are structured so the kids won't get the impression they're in the 'dumb group'. That's why I use a variety of grouping techniques for different purposes.

Considering your successful teaching practice, tell me what your classroom looks like in operation, day by day.

It's a quiet space most of the time. I tell the kids I like the times when they are able to concentrate well and not intrude each other, and I think that has had a great impact. The kids in this class know when it's OK to speak out and when it's best to be quiet...we've talked about the differences, and they live it most of the time. I think it's really important to be open and honest with kids...if they understand the reasoning, they usually live up to your expectations.

I've tried having my classrooms in a few different arrangements, but this one works best for me. I've taught the children how to conduct themselves when they're facing each other like this, and they're pretty good. They know the rules and consequences, so I only have to keep the reminders going now...there's never any hassle.
We've discussed five different concepts related to your teaching along with your ideas about 'quality'. Please elaborate on anything you believe needs further emphasis from our discussion.

I think the most important thing in all this is for the teacher to love their work. It's a hard job, and there are a lot of pressures, but it all becomes worthwhile when you see kids enjoying learning. I love it

Are there any other issues you would like to raise?
Not really...I've enjoyed talking this stuff through, though...makes me think!!
What do you believe a 'quality teacher' is?

A teacher who leads children into learning and achieves demonstrable outcomes. (Supervisor)

Someone who takes the job further than what is generally acceptable...in terms of classrooms, relationships and extra-curricular activities. (Peer)

Quality implies a demonstrated level of practice that goes beyond effectiveness. I don't really like the term, but I believe it implies a client-centred practice that leads to high levels of success and satisfaction. (Principal)

The teacher who consults others and whose counsel is respected and used by colleagues to improve their own practice. (Supervisor)

In what ways can 'quality teaching' be recognised in an individual's work?

It's in their organisation and planning mainly. You see teachers go about their business in different ways, but quality people seem to introduce a variety of ways of approaching even the most mundane of lessons. (Peer)

Yes, I think they have strong relationships with their kids, but without being the mother-hen. They forge strong professional relationships too and work easily in teams. (Supervisor)

I believe they bring an enthusiasm to their work that is easily identified by everyone. They share their ideas and use others' ideas to enrich their approaches. (Principal)
Does Merv recognise the relevance of curriculum, syllabus or policy documents? How do you know?

Merv seems to have a real skill in this area. I've noticed the staff talk a lot to him about what the curriculum sets out to achieve for kids and he seems to be able to explain his understandings in a way that encourages them to modify their views. He doesn't pretend to be an expert by any means, and he does listen to other ideas, but the teachers here seem to value his point of view. (Supervisor)

I always feel confident that our curriculum sessions will achieve something when Merv is in charge. He presents thought-provoking ideas himself, can evaluate the ideas of others and always demonstrates that he is open to better ideas. (Principal)

I learn a lot from Merv. He is keen to share and we get along really well. I've taken many of his ideas for classroom management and built them into my own set of skills. (Peer)

Would you describe how you think Merv implements a particular Key Learning-area and his/her beliefs about how children learn.

Merv's implementation of the science syllabus is great. He knows a lot about enquiry learning and and achieves great results with kids. You only have to listen to the way the kids in his class can explain what they've learned in science. (Peer)

I like the way he works in literacy too. He understands modelled, guided and independent reading and uses them appropriately in his classroom. It's very clear that he knows how children learn to read. (Supervisor)

I'm impressed with the fact that he uses concrete materials in so many of his maths lessons. It's nothing to see him do a demonstration with the whole class and then be involved in several more explanations with concrete materials for the needs of specific kids...I'm not sure that he found maths that easy as a student...and it shows in the ways he relates to kids in maths lessons. (Principal)
What changes would Merv make to the primary syllabus if he had the power?

I'm not sure if that has ever crossed his mind...he seems too busy working with kids and their learning to even think that he could make a difference at that level. He goes about his work as skilfully as possible, using the syllabus for guidance and thinking about his work with a view to improving it. (Supervisor)

Explain the skills you believe are essential to successful teaching and learning.

I believe quality teachers establish routines in their classrooms to make the learning environment more supportive of kids. In this case, while the lesson order varies each day, the general start to the day is always smooth and efficient. When there is money to be collected, the roll to be marked, notes to collected and lunch-orders to be handed in, the teacher needs to be well organised. That's the nature of this classroom. The kids know what is expected and they live up to it. (Supervisor)

What skills do you believe form the strongest aspect of Merv's teaching?

...I'm amazed at the way that class settles. Last year they were a bit more restless, but he's been able to establish routines that just seem to suit the group. (Peer)

How do you believe Merv would react in a situation where he had to mentor a colleague who was experiencing difficulty with some area?

I use his ideas all the time...he's helpful and is willing to share all aspects of his work. He even invited me to go in with him during my relief time...I think he will be a great supervisor. (Peer)

This young man is so energetic, I think he would be great to have as a mentor. He really understands collaboration and demonstrates it at every opportunity.
Teaching a class of students is a highly complex undertaking. How does Merv take the time to think about what he is achieving with his students?

He uses such a wide selection of ideas. I'd love to be able to watch him for a session and write down the different ways he introduces the work. (Peer)

Sometimes I just ask him for a suggestion and then I go off and try it. He's always so open...he's happy to discuss the outcome of my trying the idea and then helps me to modify it so it's more like me. (Peer)

The boss should get him to tell us all at a staff meeting. We all like new ideas and it would help us be more supportive of each other...I think each of us could take turns, actually. (Peer)

Outline the reasons you believe Merv takes this time for reflection.

He was saying yesterday that the Maths lesson had not gone as well as expected. We talked about the strategies he was using and I made a few suggestions. We seem to digress to these discussions often...sometimes about my class and sometimes about his...I think it's the way he thinks back over what happened in the lesson. (Peer)

Describe the ways in which you believe Merv's approaches to reflection have been enhanced.

I'm not sure what you mean...I know he uses reflection as a tool to refine his practice...actually it's a word he uses quite a bit. He talks to others quite a bit about his teaching and, while I think it makes a difference to his own work, I know it has a great impact on others. (Principal)

He often talks about team-teaching being a time when he learned a lot...he says it was a great chance to see what things someone else used first hand. (Peer)

He often comes to talk to me of an afternoon...we sit and have coffee together and the conversation invariably turns to the different things he's been trying out or the needs of some particular kid. I think he likes these times...he uses it as a think-tank for his own self-evaluations. (Supervisor)
Describe the relationship you believe Merv has with the students in his class.

The kids know exactly where they stand with him. He shows exactly what he wants and states clearly that it is all he will take. He has high standards and he sticks to them. (Peer)

I'd have to comment on the way he uses positives with kids. Do you know I've only ever heard him shout about three times in the years I've worked with him. He runs his class on models and reinforcement of appropriate behaviours...you can always hear him telling some kid what a great job they'd done...or explaining to the group how so-and-so did the right thing. He makes his expectations clear to the kids right from the outset and they respond to them enthusiastically. (Supervisor)

What importance does Merv give to routines and organisation in his daily work?

I believe he uses more routines than he'd like to admit...he's always talking about being flexible, and I guess he is, in a way, but the flexibility is within the way he works...the most obvious routine in his room is, that at the of a break when the kids come back into class, he gets them to read for ten minutes...and he reads at the same time...this routine certainly settles them down...I'm trying it as well, and I find the session flows more smoothly. (Peer)

I'd have to agree...even the morning opening to the day is a routine for Merv...not in the sense that he teaches the same lesson at the same time, but that he settles the class into the lessons in such a way that it is routine, regardless of the subject area. After the kids have unpacked cases etc they sit out the front while he collects notes, money and marks the roll...then he has the knack of tying what he's about to do back to something from yesterday. He gets the kids engaged by asking questions and the situation is established for learning to begin...it's a real skill. (Supervisor)
Describe how Merv organises his class to meet the needs of different learners.

I saw the different activities he was copying for the different groups in the class. He claimed it was to ensure that each child was able to engage in the set task and achieve a successful outcome. (Peer)

Merv uses all sorts of different groupings for different lessons...and he uses different ways of deciding which groups the kids will work in...pairs, trios...half a class. I know he tries to keep the kids' self-esteem up, and this is foremost in his mind if he's getting them to work in groups...and he aims for success. I like the way he uses the co-operative group processes too. The kids always know exactly what part they have to play in group lessons...and he always brings the class back together to get them to share what they have learned. (Supervisor)

Considering his successful teaching practice, describe what Merv's classroom looks like in operation, day by day.

It's a work-oriented environment without being boring...the kids in Merv's class love being there and they know what he expects. He sends them over to my office to show me their work quite a bit...I love it, because they can always talk to me about what they've been doing and they seem to know the reason why. (Principal)

From my classroom I can see that the kids love being in school. Merv runs lessons that are engaging and there's rarely a time when kids are not engaged...I mean there are times when they have a chat, but that doesn't phase Merv...he uses it to advantage, encouraging them to work together on tasks that other teachers would insist they work on alone...like maths, for example. (Peer)

We've discussed five different concepts related to teaching along with your ideas about 'quality'. Please elaborate on anything you believe needs further emphasis from our discussion.

From my point of view, I'd have to say Merv is a great member of the staff. He doesn't rush in for every job that's going...though he does take on a couple of whole-school activities. I think he has a clear view of what he can achieve, and, as he wants it to be the best he can do, he approaches every task with the same high expectations. (Principal)
Lesson Observation

Rosalind: Good morning everyone.

Class Respond: Good Morning, Mrs ....

Rosalind: Well, what a great day we’re going to have today. I’ve got some great things planned and we’re all going to learn some new things (Looks to the door) Hello John, how can we help you this morning?

John: Excuse me, Mrs ... but I have to take all the class rolls to the office this morning.

Rosalind: Oh, I’m not ready to send mine just yet, can you come back for mine in ten minutes? Thanks (John moves on to the next class) Now, did everyone bring their best manners with them this morning? Let’s mark the roll ...Jenny, are you reading the roll out for me this morning? Child takes the roll while the teacher moves toward her own desk. Now, I want to hear how polite you can all be...big voice Jenny...

James (front row): It’s not her turn to do the roll...she had a turn last week...I think Paul should be doing it!

Rosalind: Did you have a turn, Jenny? (Child nods) Well, let Paul have his turn this morning...sit down quietly. Thank you for being so nice about it...it’s good to share our jobs, isn’t it? (Jenny sits down while Paul comes to the front) Now, Paul, let’s get this done fairly quickly...we have to send our roll over to the office...everyone listening?

'Debrief' Notes

Researcher: How do you react to the continual interruptions of a morning?

Rosalind: Not really... You have to realise I see this as their classroom too and I learn such a lot from them during these informal chats. I wouldn’t change this...but...there are times when I close the door...if I’m doing something I have to concentrate on and the children know I don’t want to be interrupted unless it’s for something very important. It works most of the time and if they get too pushy I just tell them not to come to my class ever!! (Joking mood to this comment)

Not really, I think these are the times that help to develop the relationship that is crucial to successful teaching...I get on really well with them...they know I care about all the things they are facing because I try to demonstrate that nothing is so small that it doesn’t require attention. I think relationship with kids is just as important as relationships with adults...but with children the adult has to provide the best model possible because at this age we can’t expect the children to make inferences about our intention.

Researcher: ...but kids could carry these sorts of interruptions on for ages...how do you bring the focus back to what you want them to be involved in?

Rosalind: It’s hard to say, I guess it has become part of the way I interact with my kids...I guess I’ve never analysed it...sometimes I’ll call an individual aside and speak to them...sometimes I just insist that we save the questions for later
Martin: Mrs ... I think something has bitten me...my arm’s really itchy.

Rosalind: OK, Martin, come out and let me see your arm...come on Paul get those names going.

Paul: Good morning, Jason (Pause for reply...as each name is called the children respond with a ‘Good Morning’ to the child calling the roll as well as to the whole class...everyone responds with a good morning to the individual).

Rosalind (after the roll call): Well, I hope everyone has their thinking caps on now...I want you to think back to yesterday...what did we say about dolphins (Pause for response...none initially) Remember we looked at our book about sea creatures (holds up book) and we talked about dolphins and how clever they can be. Jason told us he had seen some dolphins swimming at the beach in Western Australia...and Natasha said she saw some at Sea World...do you remember? What did we decide about dolphins?

Jade: We thought they were clever.

Rosalind: Great, Jack we decided they must be very clever because they were able to do tricks. We talked about how they learned the tricks...and what did we think helped them to learn?

Peter: On the video we saw the man giving them something to eat when they did the trick.

Rosalind: ...and what did we call that?

Jack: A reward?

Rosalind: Good boy, Jack, we decided that the dolphin learns things because the trainer gives a reward. Can anyone tell me other people who use rewards like that?

Researcher: I noticed you let the children call the roll...what is your reason for this?

Rosalind: I try to give all sorts of responsibilities to the kids in my class. While the children are going through this step I usually check whatever money or notes that have been brought in...it saves some time and enables the children to open the day with some positive interactions. I like the to say good morning to each other as well as the group good morning to me. I believe it sets a friendly tone for the start of the day. When I start the first lesson I generally refer back to the happy start to the day and tell them how good it is to be starting learning together...and I always try to tie back to yesterday’s learning.

Researcher: Why do you use this strategy?

Rosalind: Well, I believe children need to make connections in their learning and we have so much packed into each day, I try to provide a scaffold for the next piece of learning. It’s a bit like reminding children at the end of the day of all the things they’ve learnt during the day...kids forget so much and it’s the teacher’s job to keep their minds focused and engaged with what they are learning.

Researcher: Do you think this is so for everyone?

Rosalind: Look, all learners are different and they come to learning in different ways...it’s my job to make sure they move on in their learning. I have some kids in this class who find learning pretty straightforward...and they usually have the answers to the questions I pose...but I see
Jenny: I think people in the circus do because the animals all do tricks and the trainer gives them something to eat.

Rosalind: Good girl, Jenny, you've been listening well...we talked about that a good while ago...and I think we talked about rewards at school too.