The relationships between mandated change, professional development and school growth

Bridget Marion Barton
University of Wollongong
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.
THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MANDATED CHANGE, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL GROWTH

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

Bridget Marion Barton
M.Ed.(Hons.) (Wollongong), B.Ed. (Kuringai), Grad. Dip. (Mt. Gravatt)

Faculty of Education
2000
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of two great educators:

To Una Barton, my mother and a truly inspirational teacher

and

To Roy Williams, a principal extraordinaire
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis was supported by a Frameworks Scholarship. I am therefore indebted to Brian Cambourne and Jan Turbill for offering me this opportunity. Without this support the study would never have been started. Thankyou Brian and Jan for this opportunity.

There were many people who were just as much a part of this study as myself. I'm thinking here of all the participants, the principals and all the teachers of the four schools in which I worked. Working with these people was truly inspirational. Their commitment and enthusiasm was an indication of the special kinds of cultures they created in their schools, and, I believe, as this study shows, an inspiration to all other schools endeavouring to cope with the pace of change. To you all my heart felt thanks for offering friendship, sharing your knowledge and experience and for your commitment to the co-researching experience.

Huge thanks are also due to my supervisors, Brian Cambourne and Jan Turbill. Brian was the most sensitive, caring, encouraging mentor, offering advice and asking the 'hard questions'. His knowledge and level of expertise made this study a fantastic learning experience. Thankyou Brian. Jan had special qualities too. She managed to keep my feet firmly on the ground, was always practical, found clever solutions to complex problems and was always there for me. Thankyou Jan for being a special friend. Together Brian and Jan offered such a wide range of skills and expertise. They were always there when the going got tough and always goaded me onwards towards the finishing line. I made it thanks to you both.

When embarking on the PhD journey, everyone around you is affected. My friends here in Wagga were all most supportive and very long suffering. In particular Kate who tried to help me pace myself and was always there for a recovery drink or meal. Also my colleagues at work who have been supportive and patient beyond belief. Friends too in Wollongong like Lois, Kevin and Barbara were always there with support and understanding. My long standing friend Nea Stewart-Dore, who in fact, over a bottle of wine on the verandah at Downside, persuaded me to do this PhD (a real test of our friendship!), was also there at the other end of the phone offering advice and reassurance. We had many very long phone calls. Thankyou Nea for everything. Hey guys I'm about to start living again! Thankyou all.

Lastly I want to thank my family; Dad for being my editor, Richard for always being interested in my progress and being there if I needed him and Charles for being my chief proofreader extraordinaire. Tiny you! Thankyou all for your support.
ABSTRACT

This study set out to develop a grounded theory of the relationships between mandated change, professional development and school growth. A case study of a period of time between February 1994 and May 1995, was developed. It charting the experiences of the staff of four primary schools' journey through the implementation of a new State mandatory English K-6 Syllabus. Specifically, during this journey, I investigated how four principals and twenty-one members of staff, caught up in this context, went about organizing people, ideas and practices as part of the change process.

Located within a naturalistic paradigm, the study focussed on the 'multiple truths' presented by participants about their school settings and the connections they made between meanings and observable actions within their schools.

A number of questions evolved and were used as a means of directing and framing the study. These included an exploration of two different contexts. The first explored the political, social and educational environment and how these external factors impacted on the case study schools. The second context was concerned with the 'setting', that is, the internal school factors that described the workplaces.

The resulting grounded theory is presented in diagrammatic form, and shows the essential elements that the schools felt were integral to the change process. This is followed by a description of each element with particular reference to the relationships that existed in these contexts between mandated change, professional development and school growth. Implications are also made that may have value for major stakeholders in public education in New South Wales. Finally a number of challenges are offered for those engaged in the change process.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF APPENDICES</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context from which this study emerged</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General questions which framed the study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background to the study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part A: The context of change</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in the intellectual climate</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in the socio-economic-political climate</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications of socio-political change on education in Australia</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part B: Ideological and professional subjectivities I bought to the study</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for the study</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why another study of professional development and change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Orientation</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of the study</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sites</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The schools</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The participants</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary and Thesis Overview</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

**INTRODUCTION**
- The volume of professional development literature
- Shifting paradigms
- The fragmentation/episodic nature of professional development literature

**AN ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK**

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
- Some definitions
- Historical overview of professional development
- Changing purposes of professional development
- Reform/restructuring and professional development
- From Collaboration to Communities of Inquiry

**ADULT LEARNING**
- The nature of adult learning
  - Individual learning differences and learning styles
  - Critical reflection
- Workplace learning
  - The conditions necessary for workplace learning
- The kinds of learning skills that need to be developed to promote change and professional growth within schools.
  - Self directed learning
  - Formal, informal and incidental learning
  - Team learning
  - Single and double-loop learning
  - Self-reflective learning

**SCHOOLS AS ORGANIZATIONS**
- Chaos theory
- Social/general systems theory
- Systems thinking

**SCHOOLS AS LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS/COMMUNITIES**
- The learning organization
- The learning community
  - Individual versus collective development
- Learning organizations or learning communities: Is there a difference?

**SUMMARY**
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION FOR THIS STUDY

CONSTRUCTIVIST METHODOLOGY IN ACTION
  Entry Conditions
  Natural Settings
    School Sites (primary)
    Participants
    Other Sites (secondary)
  Human as Instrument
  Qualitative Methods
    Observations
    Interviews
    Concept mapping
    Surveys
    Documents
  Tacit Knowledge

Inquiry Process
  The hermeneutic dialectic circle: data analysis
  The hermeneutic dialectic process in action

DATA ANALYSIS USING THE CONSTANT COMPARATIVE METHOD AND NUDIST
  Description of conceptual categories
  Curriculum
  School organization
  School culture

THE FINAL CONSTRUCTION - THE CASE REPORT

CRITERIA FOR JUDGING THE ADEQUACY OF THE INQUIRY
  Fairness
  Ontological authenticity
  Educative authenticity
  Catalytic authenticity
  Tactical authenticity
CHAPTER 4: THE CONTEXT OF CHANGE  

INTRODUCTION  

PLAY ONE: THE NATIONAL AGENDAS FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM  
- The Hobart Declaration (1989)  
- The National Statements and Profiles  
- The National Professional Development Program (NPDP)  
- The Australian Literacy Federation (ALF)  
- Implications of this 'play' for the big picture  

PLAY TWO: THE STATE OF NEW SOUTH WALES: AGENDAS FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE  
- The Eltis Report  
- Implications of this 'play' for the big picture  

PLAY THREE: THE BOARD OF STUDIES (NSW)  
- Implications of this 'play' for the big picture  

PLAY FOUR: THE NSW DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION  
- An introduction to profiles  
- The English K-6 Basic Course: An introduction  
- The English K-6 Major Course  
- The Facilitators Training Program  
- Implications of this 'play' for the big picture  

PLAY FIVE: THE SOUTH COAST REGION (NSW) OF EDUCATION  

CONCLUSION  

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS OF THE STUDY  

INTRODUCTION  

THEME ONE: SCHOOLS' RESPONSES TO THE ENGLISH K-6 SYLLABUS AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION  
- Category 1: Schools' responses to outcomes-based Education (OBE) and their perceptions of the relationship between OBE and the English K-6 Syllabus  
- Category 2: Schools' responses to the English K-6 Syllabus  
- Schools' responses to the implementation process  
- Schools' responses to programming for the learning outcomes
Category 3: Schools' responses to the Training and Development Program and other curriculum support material

Courses:  An introduction to profiles
          The English K-6 Basic Course
          The Facilitators' Training Course
          About the structure of the course
          About the model of adult learning
          About the outcomes of the Facilitators' Training course on individuals:
          The English K-6 Major Course
          Other short courses

Curriculum support materials for the English K-6 Syllabus

Category 4: Schools' responses to the new mandatory approaches to assessment and reporting on students' literacy and language learning

School A  228
School B  237
School C  239
School D  247

SUMMARY OF THEME ONE  248

THEME TWO: SCHOOL ORGANIZATION  251

Category 1: General characteristics of the four case study schools as organizations

Adaptability  254
Flexibility  255
Problem solving  255
Commitment  255
Continuous learning  256
Opportunism  256
Collaboration  257
Empowerment  257

Category 2: Organizational structures and activities  258

The school management plan  261
The school council  261
School committees  261
The school executive  266
Staff meetings  269
Supervisory meetings  269
Peer debriefing sessions  270
Student Representative Council/Kid's Council  270
Grade meetings  270
Category 3: Leadership and principles of management and leadership roles and responsibilities
Use of Power
the big picture and understanding of the big picture
Positive leadership
Good management
Strong relationships and trust
A concern for the development of individual members of staff
Principles of management and administration
Open management and shared decision making
The value and development of shared purpose and vision
Negotiation
Ensuring ownership and membership

Category 4: Alignment of collective beliefs with administrative

SUMMARY OF THEME TWO

THEME THREE: SCHOOL CULTURE

Category 1: Characteristics: Understandings of what was meant by culture

Category 2: People and Relationships

Category 3: Change and School Growth
General perceptions
Pace of change
Resistance to change

Category 4: Professional learning
Definitions and understandings
Purposes of professional learning
Processes of professional learning

Category 5: Traditions and rituals

SUMMARY OF THEME THREE

THEME FOUR: BENCHMARKS OF CHANGE

The process questions
The development of the diagrams
School A
School B
School C
School D

SUMMARY OF BENCHMARKS
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Dimensions of change
Figure 2: An interactive and integrative model of teacher learning
Figure 3: Concept tree of the literature
Figure 4: A theoretical framework
Figure 5: Connections between theories and themes
Figure 6: Connections between theories and professional development
Figure 7: Models of professional development
Figure 8: A model of the process of teacher change
Figure 9: Refining and extending models of professional development
Figure 10: Changing purposes of professional development
Figure 11: Connections between theories and adult learning
Figure 12: Connections between theories and workplace learning
Figure 13: A contextual model of teachers' workplace learning
Figure 14: Connections between theories and schools as organizations
Figure 15: Chaos theory and its sub-systems
Figure 16: Chaos theory
Figure 17: Overview of general systems theory
Figure 18: Sub-systems and levels of interaction within systems
Figure 19: Organizational sub-systems of schools
Figure 20: Connections between theories and schools as learning organizations/communities
Figure 21: A summary of the differences between organizations (Gesellschaft) and communities (Gemeinschaft)
Figure 22: Pairs of variables showing different ties for connecting people to each other
Figure 23: A diagrammatic representation of the methodology of constructivist inquiry
Figure 24: General details of the four schools participating in this study
Figure 25: Comparisons between the coded data and the final analysis for the case study
Figure 26: Sequences of phases in the research inquiry
Figure 27: Historical overview of the National agendas for educational reform
Figure 28: History of educational reform in New South Wales schools
Figure 29: School support structures
Figure 30: History of the Board of Studies development of English K-6 Syllabus
Figure 31: The Department of School Education planning documents
Figure 32: Allocation of funds for staff training and development
Figure 33: An historical overview of the DSE's role in the support and implementation of the English K-6 Syllabus
Figure 34: Support for the implementation of the English K-6 Syllabus
Figure 35: Key events that preceded the publication and distribution of the English K-6 Syllabus in the South Coast Region schools
Figure 36: Overview of the context of this study
Figure 37: Organization of results
Figure 38: Dramatis personae
Figure 39: Organization of results - Theme 1
Figure 40: Structured overview of theme 1
Figure 41: The basics of quality performance
Figure 42: School A's model of evaluation
Figure 43: School C's concept map of the journey of the assessment and reportii process
Figure 44: Organization of results - Theme 2
Figure 45: Advance organizer for theme two
Figure 46: School committees
Figure 47: The function of the executive committee
Figure 48: Grade co-ordinating support structure
Figure 49: The importance of alignment
Figure 50: Organization of results - Theme 3
Figure 51: Five categories of school culture
Figure 52: A principal's considerations for change
Figure 53: Understanding the connecting features of school culture
Figure 54: Developing an understanding of the relationship between professional learning and school culture within the broader context of a global culture
Figure 55: Features of a staff development program in School A
Figure 56: An interactive model of staff development
Figure 57: Organization of results - Part four
Figure 58: School A: The benchmarks of a learning and developing school
Figure 59: Key factors in the development of students' literacy and language learning', Part 1.
Figure 60: Key benchmarks in the development of learning for students and teachers
Figure 61: Elements that support both teacher learning and student literacy and language learning
Figure 62: School B: Benchmarks of the school learning environment
Figure 63: School C: Benchmarks for the successful implementation of the English K-6 Syllabus
Figure 64: School C: The benchmarks of a learning and developing school
Figure 65: School D: Benchmarks of school growth
Figure 66: A grounded theory of the relationships between mandated change, professional learning and school growth
Figure 67: Three school cultures
Figure 68: An agenda for action
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Fieldnotes
2: Transcript of Interview
3: Summary of interview
4: Questions on the benchmarks of change
5: Unitised transcript
6: Final categories
7: Sort and retrieve text of the same category
8: Conceptual and base data categories
9: 'Curriculum' categories
10: 'English K-6 Syllabus' categories
11: 'School organization' categories
12: 'School culture' categories
13: All conceptual and base categories/subcategories