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**THE ROLE
OF GOAL CONSENSUS AND TEACHER ENDORSEMENT
IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

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

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

Kerrie M. Eyding
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Faculty of Education
2001

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY	iii
GLOSSARY	v
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE	
1.1 Introduction	10
1.2 Policy goals, implementation and school goals	14
1.3 Defining policy implementation success	17
1.4 Perceiving policy implementation success.	34
1.5 Defining indicators of success	39
1.6 Subjectivity	40
CHAPTER TWO	
2.1 Introduction	48
2.2 The sample	48
2.3 Research design and methodology: Concepts and issues	50
2.4 Development of the research instruments	61
2.5 The methodologies used in the analysis	78
2.6 The pilot study	82
2.7 The research process	83
CHAPTER THREE	
3.1 Introduction	85
3.2 Success and the policy/school goals match	90
3.3 Success and teacher endorsement	106
3.4 Success and goal ambiguity	113
3.5 'Define-It-Yourself' indicators of success	143

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1	Introduction	157
4.2	Research literature: a comparison	158
4.3	Official reviews of the Equity Element policy: contextualizing research findings	168
4.4	The difficulties in evaluating implementation	180
4.5	Implications and recommendations	189

REFERENCES	201
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research instruments	216
Teacher questionnaire	217
Principal interview protocol	221
Equity officer interview protocol	223
Grid of dimensions for school reports	224
Appendix B	225
Glossary for the statistical analysis	226
Methodology for the statistical analysis	229
Regression summaries	231
Appendix C	259
Predictor variables: A chart	260
Appendix D	261
Rosenholtz questionnaire extract	262
Appendix E	263
Official objectives & guidelines	264
Appendix F	267
Teaching staff: State/study comparison	268
Appendix G	269
Glossary for t-test summaries	270
Methodology for t-test summaries	271
T-test tables	272

SUMMARY

This study begins as an investigation into the role of goal consensus and teacher endorsement in the implementation of education policy. The policy chosen as the focus of the study is a popular, firmly established, Commonwealth policy, administered by a State bureaucracy, which provides broad, ambiguous goals - The Equity Element of the National Equity Program for Schools.

The study was conducted within one discrete administrative education region. With input from teachers (by a questionnaire), principals and the government officers who oversee the implementation of the policy (by interview), information regarding school and workplace demographics, school climate and goal related variables is obtained. Information provided by official government records contributes to the investigation.

The resulting analysis presents an insight into the implementation of education policy at the point of delivery. In particular, the study reveals a complex process of personal perceptions at work, on the part of the implementors. In contrast to established models of policy implementation at delivery point, this study establishes the critical role played by subjectivity on the part of teachers, principals and others acting within this policy space. The study also reveals a number of intervening variables, some rigid, some malleable, which appear to either facilitate or impede the successful implementation of this policy.

The lack of a highly significant correlation of the variables related to school climate with the goal related variables of the policy was unexpected and raises questions regarding the generalisability of some aspects of the accepted literature. In contrast, the study supports the literature in regard to the importance of the principal's role in policy implementation within schools. It sheds light on the impact of official reviews on a policy such as this and focuses attention on the need to evaluate the achievement of the policy goals in relation to the students specifically targetted.

As an independent review of a policy with a previously rarely questioned record of 'success', this study makes an original contribution to education policy research by identifying the reasons and factors that have allowed a twenty year old and popular education policy to survive in the absence of a clear understanding of its goals by implementors, unaided in their actions by indicators of success, which the makers of this policy failed to both define and provide.

GLOSSARY

BST	Basic Skills Test
CAGC	Country Areas General Component
CAP	Country Areas Program
DSC	Disadvantaged Schools Component
DSE	Department of School Education
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
EE	Equity Element
EP	Equity Program(s)
HSC	Higher School Certificate
N.A.	Not Applicable
NEPS	National Equity Program for Schools
NSW	New South Wales
P & C	Parents and Citizens Association
QA	Quality Assurance
SC	School Certificate
SD	Standard Deviation
TER	Tertiary Entrance Rank