CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The focus of the study reported in this thesis is restructuring in the Western Australian government school system since the publication in 1987 of the policy document *Better Schools in Western Australia: A Programme for Improvement* (Ministry of Education[1], 1987). The aim of the study was to develop an understanding of how school administration teams in selected government rural schools in the State of Western Australia, were managing their work within the context of the 'policy ensemble' (Ball, 1993: 14) or 'collections of related policies' promulgating restructuring since 1987. To gather a richness of data, qualitative research methods were employed, using the interpretivist approach that typically seeks to understand processes, relationships, group life and motivations in small-scale, everyday life.

Recent decades have witnessed significant changes in policy direction, curriculum priorities, organisational structures and management styles in the international education arena including Australia. Indeed, throughout the second half of the twentieth century, reform was the main preoccupation in the Australian education scene. In the latter decades much of the change in the nation's education systems

has been directed at a devolution/decentralisation of decision-making thus reflecting the restructuring initiatives being introduced in many organisations.

Efforts to restructure education systems have been made in many countries, with a declared aim of increasing the autonomy of schools. The rhetoric of restructuring in many schooling systems around the world, including those in Australia, has been decentralisation of responsibility, replacing centralisation and control (Beare and Boyd, 1993). According to Daun (1997), the term 'restructuring' was derived from the field of economics and can be assumed to be a response to the drive for globalisation and competitiveness. Daun is of the opinion that in education settings there is no commonly agreed definition of the term. He argues that this is because of the way in which the term 'restructuring' has been used in political discourse to serve different purposes and because of the variety of commentators advocating various forms of restructuring. Daun claims that political leaders, such as Margaret Thatcher in Britain, used the restructuring discourse as an instrument to bypass the administration and the government parties in an effort to reinforce their own position of power.

Dimmock (1999: 97) considers the term 'restructuring' as being complex and ill defined, but sees it as having been used to embrace numerous reforms, including devolution, decentralisation and school-based management. He notes that while restructuring affects the management and administration of schools, it has also commonly included reforms to the curriculum, teaching and learning.

'Reculturing' of schools rather than restructuring, was suggested by Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) to turn the focus onto improving the interactions and relationships within schools. Here they highlighted the importance of school culture in educational change.

In general, 'restructuring' is the term used to describe significant and wide-reaching organisational change to educational systems or schools, in order to enhance the management and implementation of teaching and learning programs. Many of the educational restructuring reforms are founded on a concept of school-based management and are driven by concerns for efficiency, effectiveness and higher educational standards, often encapsulated in the notion of 'quality'. There are many competing views of the nature of quality and definitions range through aspects of quality assurance, contract conformance and customer driven quality (Murgatroyd and Morgan, 1992). Quality implies a high standard of service, high expectations, close monitoring and regular evaluation. Chapman and Aspin (1997) concluded that in education and training, it is unrealistic to expect to have one single criterion to measure quality.

The school-based management movement promoted the idea that within education systems which previously may have been characterised by highly centralised bureaucracies, schools should be granted a significant level of autonomy in making decisions about such matters as curriculum, finances, other resources, staffing and school priorities, and that this would lead to enhanced student

outcomes. A consequence is that restructuring in education settings is being

introduced and accomplished in much of the world (Fullan and Watson, 2000).

Caldwell (1998: 445) summed up the situation as follows:

> A feature of school reform around the world has been the systematic
> decentralisation to the school level of authority, responsibility and
> accountability within a centrally-determined framework of curriculum,
> policy, priorities and standards. Indeed, it is now hard to find a nation
> where changes along these lines have not taken place or are planned or
> are proposed.

Australia is no exception in this trend, with a form of a deregulated, decentralised

system replacing centralised planning, control and supervision in all States and

Territories (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988; Thomas, 1992; Dimmock, 1993). Barcan

(1996) observes that there have also been reductions in the size of education

bureaucracies and attempts made to decentralise authority and responsibility.

Education restructuring is defined by Lawton (1992: 139) as "a reorganisation that

replaces central planning, control and supervision with a deregulated,

decentralised system". He goes on to observe that, in practice, educational

restructuring of this type is associated with notions such as 'school-site

management', 'school-based management', 'school-based budgeting' and the

'local management of schools'. Louden and Browne (1993) view these

devolution moves as essentially being a strategy to decentralise decision-making

authority to the individual school site in order to facilitate the empowerment of

parents and the professionalism of teachers. The changed organisational

arrangements of schooling are promoted as enabling shared decision-making

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among the interested parties at the local level. Reshaping at the system level calls for changes in school decision-making practices in particular among administrators at the school level.

This introductory chapter presents an overview of the thesis. Firstly, it briefly explains the purpose of the study. Secondly, it describes the background of the restructuring movement in Western Australia. Thirdly, nine policy documents that form the policy context of restructuring in the Western Australian government school system, and which point to the evolutionary nature of the restructuring process, are identified. Fourthly, a justification for the study, focusing on the fact that very little is known about school administration teams in Western Australian schools, is provided. Fifthly, the central research question and the questions guiding the research are presented. The sixth section of the chapter describes the focus of the research and its interpretivist nature. This is followed by an outline of the research approach employed. Finally, an overview of the structure of this thesis is presented.

Background of Restructuring in Western Australia

During the last two decades, education systems in most countries, including all Australian States, have been engaged in various forms of restructuring. Although different terms are used to describe the process, such as "local management of schools" (Wallace, 1992), "devolution" (Committee of Inquiry into Education in

Western Australia, 1984) ('Beazley Report') and "decentralisation" (Caldwell, 1993; Fullan and Watson, 2000) to name a few, the process in all cases has shifted a variety of responsibilities and functions to the school level from the central authority.

While it is recognised that restructuring takes many forms when adopted by different education systems, Caldwell and Spinks (1988: 5) identified four common characteristics in the context of government school systems in England and Wales, Canada, the United States of America, and Victoria, Australia. Firstly, Caldwell and Spinks maintain there is a shift of power and responsibility in making certain kinds of decisions, from a central authority to individual schools. Secondly, each school continues to work within a framework of legislation, policies and priorities determined by the central authority, and so schools remain part of the system. Thirdly, the decision-making responsibility shifts to schools and includes the allocation of resources, particularly with respect to human, financial, material and curriculum resources. Fourthly, there is recognition that restructuring is a process evolving over time, rather than an event, which makes it difficult and misleading to claim at any given time that it has happened and that no further change will occur.

Many of the restructuring initiatives undertaken in the mid-to-late 1980s in numerous education systems, including those in Australia, had their beginnings in various reports of committees of inquiry. A major baseline document guiding the

thinking and planning concerning Australian education was the Karmel Report entitled, *Schools in Australia: Report* (Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973). Proposals for restructuring subsequently began to appear across the country as a series of key reports outlining the direction of future developments in schooling systems (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998), although arguably the underlying 'democratic empowerment' rationale of the Karmel report has transformed in varying degrees over time to more strongly reflect a rationale of economic efficiency.

In Western Australia two key policy documents were published and have been instrumental in implementing a significant restructuring of educational administration in this State (Soucek, 1992). These policy documents were *Managing Change in the Public Sector* (Western Australian Parliament, 1986a) and *Better Schools: A Programme for School Improvement* (Ministry of Education, 1987). The latter document, known commonly as the 'Better Schools Report', was a consequence of a functional review of the former Education Department of Western Australia. It, along with *Managing Change in the Public Sector,* was a response to an economic recession and foreshadowed reductions in public expenditure. Not only the public service, but also the public education system, was "expected to do more with less - to increase output with reduced input" (Soucek, 1992: 6). This reflected a similar attitude evident in other Australian States, and indeed, in other countries.

To advance the Western Australian government's objectives, the public provision of education was to be restructured to replace the old bureaucratic structures with new corporate management structures. These new structures were considered to be more suited to the policy production and implementation that would be required to control the activities of the government education system by output and objectives, rather than by inputs and rules. It was argued that such an approach was economical, efficient, effective, responsive and accountable (Soucek, 1992). Associated strategies emphasised a management style that would be flexible and responsive to people's needs, with performance monitoring through performance indicators.

In the document, *Better Schools in Western Australia: A Programme for Improvement* (1987) (herein after referred to as the 'Better Schools Report') school administration was seen as assuming the responsibility for producing educational outcomes while being constrained by budgetary allocations and new central structures (Soucek, 1992). The rationale for change included the belief in the value of self-determining schools, with responsibilities being devolved to the school level. With the acceptance of these responsibilities, there was seen to be a need for school accountability to the local community (outwards) and the government (upwards). To demonstrate accountability upwards, new systems were required to monitor school performance and to ensure accountability outwards in the community. There was to be greater community participation in the management of schools through school decision-making groups. School

administration was to be flexible and responsive to change, but at the same time, equity was to be maintained in the public education system across the State. With the provision to schools of the flexibility and authority to design and deliver quality educational programs suited to their student groups, there was expected to be an enhancement of the professionalism of teachers.

Dimmock and O'Donoghue (1997) have referred to the shift in the Western Australian government school system from centralised governance to decentralised, school-based management, as 'macro-reform'. However, they have also pointed to initiatives at the 'micro' level of school restructuring, that is, reforms in teaching and learning. The intention at the micro level has been to introduce flexible, responsive and student-oriented approaches by focusing on changing school organisation, pedagogical practices and learning processes.

These 'macro' and 'micro' level reforms posed new challenges for principals in Western Australian government schools as they sought to understand the concepts of self-determination and self-management, and to develop an ability to engage in collaboration that included stakeholders in their decision-making processes and structures. A challenge for principals arising from the 'Better Schools Report', related to the call to establish school decision-making groups and the report outlined the responsibility of principals and other school administrators in this process. The once autocratic model of school principal underwent some modification and principals were encouraged to share power with other leaders in

the school, most notably their deputy principals. This initiative led to the formation of school administration teams, the main focus of concern in this thesis.

The Policy Context

The word "policy" is defined by Crump (1993: 12) as meaning "a plan of action". The process by which policy is formulated is considered to be cyclical and political in nature, and is a necessary part of education change and reform (Crump, 1993). However defined, policies should provide a framework for decisions, state the purposes to be achieved and offer guidelines by which those purposes can be achieved (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988: 73). The 'Better Schools Report' of 1987 was the baseline policy document in Western Australia for restructuring the State school system. It focused on devolving authority and decentralising responsibilities to a future system of self-determining schools with community participation (Dimmock and Hattie, 1994: 38). Over the next few years, a collection of policy documents was published to provide guidelines to implement the 'Better Schools Report' program for improvement. This 'policy ensemble' includes nine documents published between 1987 and 2002. They are as follows:

- *Better Schools in Western Australia: A Programme for Improvement.* (1987) Perth: Ministry of Education WA ('Better Schools Report')

- *School Development Plans: Policy and Guidelines.* (1989) Perth: Ministry of Education WA

- *School Decision Making: Policy and Guidelines.* (1990) Perth: Ministry of Education WA

- *School Accountability: Policy and Guidelines.* (1991) Perth: Ministry of Education WA

- *School Financial Planning and Management: Policy and Guidelines.* (1991) Perth: Ministry of Education WA

- *Improving and Reporting Schools' Performance: Draft.* (1996) Perth: Education Department of WA

- *Plan for Government Schools Education 1998-2000.* (1997) Perth: Education Department of WA

- *School Performance: A Framework for Improving and Reporting.* (1997) Perth: Education Department of WA

- *The School Accountability Framework.* (2002) Perth: Department of Education WA (Numerous draft versions published since 1999)

This list of documents points to the evolutionary nature of restructuring in the Western Australian government school system. It is now timely to inquire into the extent to which the restructuring policy intentions outlined in these documents, have been translated into practices in the Western Australian State school system and in schools. The study reported later in this thesis is one response to this challenge.

Significance of the Research

Following the publication of policies related to restructuring, it is an appropriate point in time to investigate current management practices in schools in Western Australia. While the policy intent was to change how government schools are

managed, there has been little acknowledgment of the appropriateness of various proposals for local conditions. In other words, there does not seem to have been much allowance for different approaches to match the circumstances and needs of particular districts in a State as large and as geographically and culturally diverse as Western Australia. In this regard, it is worthy of note that researchers in the field of educational change (Fullan, 1982; Fullan and Stiegelbaur, 1991) in identifying reasons for the failure of many change initiatives, argue that insufficient attention is paid to variations in participants' perspectives and in operating contexts.

At the individual school level, the response to substantial and complex change initiatives may range across a continuum from enthusiastic adoption, through reluctance, to resistance to the restructuring program. In relation to the restructuring policy initiatives introduced by the Department of Education across the government system of schools in Western Australia, very little is known about the impact of these policies on the management of schools and about how school administration teams have managed their work. In particular, very little is known about the manner in which school administration teams have interpreted and reinterpreted the meaning of the restructuring policy, how they adapted to new roles and modes of operation, and the organisational structures they formulated.

The research project reported in this thesis sought to analyse how the school administration teams in selected schools located in three adjacent rural education

districts of the Western Australian Department of Education, have managed their work in the context of restructuring. The setting of two of these districts is distinctly rural and remote, while the other district is situated in the wheatbelt of Western Australia and is somewhat less remote. Many schools in these districts are characterised by youthful teachers, relatively inexperienced school administrators and high turnover in both groups. By investigating the impact of the restructuring policy on school management in a particular region, and focussing on how school administration teams are managing their work, this research should assist in an understanding of how school administration teams are translating restructuring policy into practice and could serve as a framework by which to examine other contexts.

Central Research Question

As has already been stated, the study reported in this thesis aimed to develop an understanding of how school administration teams in selected government rural schools in Western Australia were managing their work in the context of education system restructuring. The purpose of the study was to address the following central question:

How are school administration teams managing their work in an education system undergoing restructuring?

In pursuit of the central research question, a set of guiding questions was developed to generate the richness of data to inform the central research question. The data gathering process was thus guided by the following questions:

1. How is the concept of a school administration team being interpreted (and re-interpreted) in 2001 in the selected schools and what are the associated structures?

2. What are the school administration teams' perspectives on what the restructuring policy ensemble means for them in regard to their work in 2001?

3. What processes do they engage in to implement the restructuring policy ensemble and how do they manage their work accordingly in 2001?

4. For selected respondents with institutional memory, how have school administration teams managed the various restructuring developments since 1987, as they emerged with the evolving restructuring policy?

Research Focus

The study is concerned with how school administration teams in a particular region were managing their work in the year 2001 in the context of the Western Australian Department of Education restructuring policy ensemble published

since 1987. School administration teams comprising the Principal and Deputy Principals were formed in response to the need for shared school decision-making as part of this restructuring movement. The concept of teams for school management emerged as the ideas of the 'school improvement' and the 'school effectiveness' movements became popular. Included in these new ideas were collegiality, high expectations and the promotion of shared values and beliefs (Morgan, 2001). These cooperative, inter-dependent teams assumed responsibility for the administration and management of schools to effect improvement in school performance.

The emphasis on 'managing' at the school site reflects the interpretivist nature of the research. This, in turn, implies an emphasis on the manner in which school administration teams have interpreted the meaning of the Department of Education's restructuring policy and how they have adapted to new roles, modes of operation and the organisational structures formulated. The aim of the research implies a need to develop concepts and propositions to capture the totality of the processes adopted and constitute what is meant when it is asked how the school administration teams were 'managing' their work in the year 2001, in the context of the Department of Education's restructuring policy.

The interpretivist paradigm was particularly suited to the task. Interpretivism typically seeks to understand processes, relationships, group life and motivations in small-scale, everyday life. Of prime importance are the social meanings that

people attach to the world around them. Blumer (1969) presents us with the following three basic principles of interpretivism: people act towards things, including other people, on the basis of the meanings these things have for them; meanings are social products that arise during interaction; a person attaches meaning to situations being experienced, to others, to things and to themselves through a dynamic process of interpretation.

How something is interpreted depends on the meanings available and the particular sense the interpreter chooses to make of these meanings at that time. On this, Taylor and Bogdan (1984: 10) state that while "people may act within the framework of an organisation, culture or group, it is their interpretations and definitions of the situation that determine action, and not norms, values, roles or goals." Thus, people's perspectives and interpretations of their world have significant meanings to them. It is important, therefore, for the researcher to explore the manner in which participants arrive at an understanding about the phenomenon of interest and act towards it in relation to their own interpretations.

While restructuring of education systems has been introduced in many countries, there has been very little research regarding the implementation of restructuring policies across such a great landmass as Western Australia. This huge geographical area provides unique conditions for observing and conducting education system restructuring. For that reason, the research reported here examines the unique configuration of localised contexts and the work of school

administration teams as they 'managed' the Department of Education's policy of restructuring.

The State of Western Australia is geographically very large and diverse and the Department of Education is responsible for the provision of public education over this vast landmass. In doing so it maintains 510 primary schools, 87 high and senior high schools, 60 district high schools, 28 remote community schools and two senior campuses, (Education Department of Western Australia, Annual Report 1998-1999: 5) of which approximately 30% are situated in rural or remote locations. The remoteness of some of these schools is such that to travel to them from the State capital city of Perth on the west coast of Western Australia, could require more than two days travel. The people in the communities that make up the population of the region selected for this study are engaged mainly in mining, pastoralism, or sheep/cereal farming, as well as in business or services. Overall, however, the area is regularly referred to as being preoccupied with mining and mining communities which characteristically feature relatively youthful and transitory populations.

The region contains the full range of primary and secondary schools. Demographic profiles of the staffs of these schools indicate the youthfulness not only of the teachers, but also of the school administrators. These people are often in the early years of appointment to the school or to a particular promotional position, although there are some exceptions to this rule. It could reasonably be

expected that this factor of inexperience would affect their level of preparedness and capacity to implement change and adopt a more participatory approach to the management of the school through the formation of a school administration team.

The research reported in this thesis adopted a case study approach in an attempt to sample for as much diversity within rural Western Australia rather than for similarity, while at the same time recognising that only a limited number of in-depth case studies could be conducted. Accordingly, four schools were selected for the study, representing variation in terms of size, structure and the different mixes of socio-economic factors, as well as degrees of remoteness of their catchment areas. This sample provided a variety of perspectives for investigation even though the selected schools represented only a small proportion of schools in the region. In keeping with the goal of probing a variety of school contexts within the district, the selected schools included one senior high school, one district high school and two primary schools.

For the purpose of this study, school administration teams, as has already been pointed out, were viewed as being comprised of principals and deputy principals. The selected schools had a Principal and at least two Deputy Principals. Smaller schools with only a teaching Principal and no Deputy Principal were excluded from the research, because the focus was intended to be on 'teams'. The number of people in a school's administration team varied in size according to the magnitude and complexity of the particular school. In the senior high school, the

heads of department, together with the Principal and Deputy Principal, who formed the 'senior staff' of the school, was also excluded from the group studied. Although a gender balance was sought, the reality was a predominance of male administrators in the schools of the region.

Research Approach

Although a detailed outline of the research approach adopted is provided in Chapter Four of this thesis, an overview is provided here by way of introduction. As outlined already, the interpretivist approach was adopted for this research project. This approach, in turn, necessitated the use of qualitative methods. Data gathering was initiated using the three major approaches used by qualitative researchers, namely, interviewing, observation and document study (Punch, 1998). The primary source of data gathering was through semi-structured in-depth interviews. The interview is a very useful method of "accessing people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality" (Punch, 1998: 174). The interviews permitted the researcher to probe the participant's subjective experiences of the phenomenon in question. The six-hour duration of the first round of visits to each school for interviews allowed the researcher ample time to observe the school administrators going about their work. Relevant school documents were also collected during these visits.

In order to prepare effectively for the collection of relevant data, a pilot study was conducted. On this, Yin (1984: 80) observes: "The pilot case study helps investigators to refine their data collection plans with respect to both the content of the data and the procedures to be followed." From the outset, an 'aide memoire' was developed for use in the interviews during the study, with further probing questions being asked as required. The interviews took place at each school so as to cause minimal disruption to the participants and at least two sets of interviews were conducted. Each follow-up interview at each site was aimed at probing for depth and arriving at a greater understanding of the complexity of the participant's perspectives. The follow-up questions in each case were based upon the analysis undertaken of the previous interviews at that site. Transcripts of interviews were provided to the participants so as to verify the data collected and alterations were made where requested or where inaccuracies had been recorded. To provide a form of triangulation of viewpoints (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993), members of school administration teams were interviewed separately.

The interview data were analysed using grounded theory procedures of coding (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The data were first analysed according to a process known as open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) by which, initial categories were developed. Relationships which emerged between the categories of data were then established in order to yield a set of theoretical propositions in each case study.

In addition to the system-level policy ensemble referred to above, relevant policy documents formulated within each of the schools studied were analysed. Documents included School Improvement Plans indicating program objectives and strategies, descriptions of decision-making processes, School Annual Reports and School Review Reports of District Directors. These documents provided a broader context and were analysed to enrich the data revealed through the interviews.

Structure of the Thesis

This introductory chapter has provided an overview of the thesis. In the first section a definition of school restructuring was provided and the purpose of the study was briefly outlined including a definition of a 'policy ensemble'. An introductory description of the historical background to restructuring in Western Australia was then presented. It indicated the significance of the 'Better Schools Report' to the development of the policy ensemble promulgating restructuring in the Western Australian government school system. Following this was a discussion of the policy context of the study and an outline of nine documents that comprised the policy ensemble relevant to school restructuring in the State of Western Australia were identified. An explanation of the need for research into the way in which the restructuring policy has been interpreted by school administration teams and into how they have adapted to new roles and modes of operation was presented. The central research question and accompanying

guiding questions were then presented. Finally, a brief discussion of the research approach used in the study was provided.

The thesis is comprised of ten chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two describes the historical context within which the central research question has arisen. Chapter Three reviews the relevant bodies of literature underpinning the study. Chapter Four is concerned with the research design and methods of the research. Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight report the findings of the case studies, while Chapter Nine presents a cross-case analysis of the findings. Chapter Ten concludes the thesis and discusses some implications for theory and future research as well as presenting some ideas arising from the findings that may inform practice.

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[1] During the period 1987-2001 the Ministry of Education of Western Australia changed its title to Education Department of Western Australia and then Department of Education of Western Australia and in 2003 to Department of Education and Training of Western Australia. In this thesis the title in use at the time is used.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND OF EDUCATIONAL RESTRUCTURING

Introduction

This chapter provides a context against which the central research question of the study reported in this thesis is investigated. The chapter describes the background of the educational restructuring movement in three parts. First, an outline of the general nature of restructuring in education in the international arena is presented. This is followed by a description of the Australian context of education restructuring. The final part provides an account of the initiatives undertaken in Western Australia to restructure the State schooling system.

Educational Restructuring Internationally

The notion of education restructuring is widespread in the research literature on education change and reform (Hargreaves, 1994; Lee and Smith, 1994; Louden and Browne, 1993; Dimmock, 1999). Beare (1995: 132) claims that during the 1980s and 1990s 'wholesale restructuring' was a feature of both government and non-government schooling systems around the world. These restructuring initiatives were designed to address the widespread concern regarding the efficiency and effectiveness particularly of government schooling systems in light of evidence that education systems were not working (David, 1989). In

presenting the background to education restructuring, it is important at this point to explore the concept itself so as to develop an understanding of what it means to different people. It is also necessary to gain an understanding of the economic, social and political forces that have influenced the various initiatives encompassed by the term 'education restructuring'.

'Education restructuring' is the preferred term in this research project to describe the changes from central control to devolution of responsibility to the school level. During recent decades there has been a growing trend toward such restructuring internationally, with improved quality of education as its aim (Beare and Boyd, 1993). As devolution dismantles the central administration structures, the school, so the argument goes, assumes more autonomy as it moves towards being the primary unit of decision-making. However, in recounting the international trends in school restructuring, a difficulty arises because efforts to increase the autonomy of schools differ in their configuration and nomenclature in different schooling systems. In addition, the uses of the term in the literature are "various, conflicting and often ill defined" (Hargreaves, 1994: 241). On this, Dimmock (1999) claims the meanings of the term are complex and ill defined, and has found that it is a term used to embrace many reforms including devolution, decentralisation and school-based management. David (1989: 45) asserts that school-based management is the centrepiece of restructuring and concedes that it assumes a "chameleon-like appearance". Whitty, Power and

Halpin (1998: 9) also record that the literature includes a "proliferation of terms associated with devolving responsibility to schools".

It is asserted by Daun (1997) that in education settings there is no commonly agreed definition of the term 'restructuring' because of the way in which the term has been used in political discourse to serve different purposes and because of the range of commentators advocating various forms of restructuring. He considers that, in general terms, restructuring refers to the reorganisation or reconfiguration of existing structures to produce improved outcomes. He refers to three principal types of change in the education debate - decentralisation, privatisation and choice - each varying substantially in their detail. Nevertheless, Daun identifies a common denominator in all three forms as "an essential change in strategic educational variables such as governance, decision-making, resource generation or resource allocation and value orientation" (Daun, 1997: 20). To describe the far-reaching changes evident in the education arena, Caldwell (1996: 2) employs the term 're-engineering', which he defines as "the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of processes in school education to achieve dramatic improvements in critical, contemporary measures of performance." Also emphasising processes and the importance of improving internal interactions and relationships within schools, Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) refer to 'reculturing' of schools, rather than the restructuring of them. They emphasise the importance of improving internal interactions and relationships within each school in response to global movements to externally impose education restructuring on schools.

In commenting that restructuring takes many forms, Fullan (1992: 114) noted that, in part, it "usually involves school-based management [and] enhanced roles for teachers in instruction and decision making." Harman (1991: 3) claims that it is possible to identify broad directions in which the restructuring efforts were headed:

> Restructuring efforts appear to be part of an attempt to make the management of education more efficient, more accountable and more responsive to government policies, to introduce corporate management approaches from the business sector, to devolve responsibility to regions and schools and to place much greater emphasis on educational outputs.

In England and Wales, the focus of decentralisation initially was on financial management and the allocation of financial resources. 'Local management of schools' (LMS) became the preferred expression there (Wallace, 1992). Likewise, in Canada, the school budget was the vehicle for change, with practices being described as 'school-based budgeting'. With the focus of attention shifting subsequently to school-by-school evaluation of teacher effectiveness and learning programs, the preferred descriptor became 'school-site decision-making'. In the late 1980s the New Zealand school system underwent radical restructuring involving a decentralisation of certain decision-making functions combined with increased school-level self-management (Codd, 1993). In some districts in the United States of America where restructuring initiatives were introduced, the financial focus was known as 'school-site' or 'school-based budgeting', to describe the involvement of teachers and communities in school decision-making (Caldwell, 1990; Brown, 1990).

Within Australia, in the States of Victoria and Western Australia, the more general term 'devolution' was adopted to describe the far-reaching changes to school governance and management (Caldwell and Spinks l988; Sharpe l993). Mulford and Hogan (1999: 139) observe that these changes included "an increased devolution of responsibility and accountability for the implementation of centrally-determined policies and priorities from centralised bureaucracies to individual schools and their communities". Legislation was introduced in Victoria giving policy powers to school councils, so the term 'self governing school' was also used (Caldwell, 1990). Restructuring in Western Australia in the form of devolution, initially addressed governance and the focus was on 'self determining schools' and 'school-based decision-making groups' ('Better Schools Report' Ministry of Education, 1987). To sum up on these differing restructuring emphases, Angus (1990) observed that in Australia 'restructuring' became associated with the redefinition of work practices and responsibilities agreed to by unions and employers.

The common thread in education restructuring in the countries considered so, is that self-management emerged at the school level, where there has been significant decentralisation of decision-making authority in relation to school operations. Notwithstanding the differing labels, the terms are meant to describe a changed education system, as depicted by Gaziel (1998: 320):

> A system of education enhancing the autonomy of members at the site level, by creating advantageous conditions for participation, improvement, innovation, accountability and continuous professional growth. Through decentralisation of authority from central offices

> and participation in decision making, school management tasks are set according to the characteristics and needs of the school and therefore school members have much greater autonomy and responsibility for making decisions related to the school curriculum, personnel development and allocation of resources.

Not all commentators are convinced by the restructuring rhetoric of community control and professional empowerment. Smyth (1993: 22) argues that devolution "is not what it purports to be – it is a budget cutting exercise masquerading under the banner of schools getting more control of their own affairs".

Capacity for self-management, it is asserted, is a necessary component of restructuring school systems because, along with the devolved authority, the school is expected to take responsibility for overall school performance and to make all the decisions relating to meeting the needs of the community it serves. These decision-making processes are implemented within a framework of policy guidelines established by the central authority and the school must demonstrate accountability to the central authority as well as to the community. This external pressure for school accountability for performance is an example of how re-centralisation processes accompany decentralisation initiatives (Levacic, 1998).

Proposals for reform in education, like those noted above, have not emerged within a vacuum and are often linked to broader social, economic and political agendas. The reforms have been mandated by political actors external to schools and have not originated with educators, or with schools, or with the education systems to which the schools belong (Beare, 1991: 22). There exist several

justifications and a number of complementary and competing reasons for increased autonomy for schools and changes to school governance and management (Caldwell, 1990; Lawton, 1992; O'Donoghue and Dimmock, 1998). These issues, factors and explanations relating to restructuring can best be classified as political, economic, organisational and professional dimensions.

Politico-economic Factors

The political dimension includes government reaction to complexities emerging in the transition from an industrial society to an information technology society. In an era of turbulent change affecting all facets of activity, decentralisation seems an expedient response for governments to adopt. Caldwell (1990: 15) notes that the implication is that this is a "reaction rather than the outcome of policy-making in an active or rational mode." The politico-economic values of equity, efficiency, liberty and choice can best be achieved, it is argued, through school site management, with authority and control over budget allocation, high community participation in decision making and the promotion of school diversity, as a way of delivering choice. In Australia, for example, there was a struggle for control of education policy between politicians, bureaucrats, parents and teachers, that saw the politicians taking the lead in implementing reform. According to Barcan (1999), education theory played only a minor role in these developments.

Watkins (1993) observes that conservative bodies, such as the Business Council of Australia, have lobbied in the political arena for education to reflect the management changes occurring in the business world. The Business Council demanded that the management structure of education should comply with nationally defined objectives and do so within a nationally defined system of rigorous accountability for teacher and student performance. Lingard (1990) identified another important player in the form of the Australian Education Council (AEC) that comprised the Commonwealth and State ministers for education. In the late 1980s this Council increasingly gained influence in areas such as the establishment of national goals for schooling and an Australia-wide curriculum. The growing power of the AEC highlighted a major shift away from educationalists and towards politicians and the business sector in decisions about how education in Australia is managed. Similarly, Harman, Beare and Berkeley (1991) concluded that ministers and political parties took a major role in the initiation and implementation of reforms. Devolved education systems had wide political appeal, with the political left being comfortable with the emphasis on equity and empowerment issues and the political right being attracted to the issues of choice and the economy. Chadbourne (1996) observes that Australian Labor governments tend to adopt corporate managerial models of devolution and Coalition governments, a market model.

What clearly stands out is that the influences of the economic dimension were dominant in reforms of education systems. Commenting on school reform

movements overseas, Barcan (1999: 29) notes that it was "economic rather than educational theory that sparked reform". Internationally, the restructuring trend coincided with the rise in the 1980s of a global economy and a push for economic rationalism "or neo-classical economic theory, that required a diminution of the role of the state" (Barcan, 1999: 28). The welfare state approach had overburdened governments and there was a call for a strong emphasis on economic efficiency and accountability in all government enterprises, including education. As Maclean and McKenzie (1991: 303) have stated, "the imperative of economic restructuring has placed schools and schooling under an increasingly critical spotlight". Louden and Browne (1993: 124) also observed that a view formed that education and many other government activities, should contribute to a nation's increased economic competitiveness in the global marketplace.

This development led to some incongruity. On the one hand, interest was created in the contribution that the education system makes to a nation's well being, especially where a nation appears to be slipping in economic terms. Education was then identified as a major factor in economic improvement strategies and calls were made for dramatic reform of the schooling system to produce a better educated workforce to advance world economic competitiveness (Elmore, 1990). On the other hand, economic rationalism caused cutbacks to be made in the funding of welfare programs, including education. By devolving authority and responsibility to the schools, a promised reduction in government expenditure was expected as central education authorities became leaner. Furthermore, funds were

no longer made available to maintain the relatively generous support of government schools (Barcan, 1999).

Changing international economic circumstances also resulted in rising youth unemployment and there were calls for schools to provide improved vocational training. Enhanced vocational education, it was argued, would serve at least two purposes: offer a refuge for young people and assist in the international competitiveness of industry. The irony in this argument, though, is that greater industrial competitiveness would lead to rising unemployment that would impact mainly on youth – the very group being assisted in the first place. To achieve global competitiveness, increased productivity would have to be pursued through a smaller workforce, thereby reducing employment opportunities (Barcan, 1999).

The ideology of economic rationalism also promoted the view, that schools should be relatively independent and be made to compete in the market place. Chapman and Aspin (1997: 126) state the argument as follows:

> Supporters of the market approach tend to adopt the view that education is a 'commodity'. …Schools (and other educational institutions) that are freed from bureaucratic constraints and costs, it is argued, can accomplish their goals most effectively, with the minimum of interference and danger of resource misuse, by responding to market forces and concentrating on the most efficient and cost-effective management of personnel, plant and resources at the institutional level.

The market metaphor was increasingly promoted, embracing the notion of education as a service to be delivered, or as a commodity to be purchased, as

opposed to the more traditional ways by which education was viewed as a 'public good' (Harman, 1991). Schools were exposed to more market oriented forces in the belief that competition between government-provided schools would deliver better quality educational services at less expense. The market pressures in such a competitive environment would force schools, it was asserted, to be economically efficient and provide the educational product in accordance with consumer preference (Chapman and Aspin, 1997). In the Australian State of Victoria, for instance, the market analogy was present in the 'Schools of the Future' initiative that promoted "programs of choice to make schools like the idealised free-market economy" (Apple, 1991: 23)

The repercussions of the global economic recession forced an international trend of shifting government expenditure away from strong support for education and welfare spending. In Australia, the economic rationalist ideology brought about reduced levels of government funding to education. Smart and Dudley, (1990: 204) observed that the education policy of the conservative Fraser government (1975-1983) had been characterised by budget cuts, rationalisation and "a strong and accelerating drift in Commonwealth Schools Commission funding away from state schools towards private ones". Not only was Federal education expenditure redirected, it was also reduced from 9% to 7% of Federal outlays (Smart and Dudley, 1990: 204). Under the Hawke Labour government which followed the conservative government of Fraser, education expenditure continued to be constrained by the economic imperative of either cutting or constraining Federal

expenditure. The Hawke government's approach caused education policy to be driven by economic priorities, assumptions and values, leading Smart and Dudley (1990: 220) to comment:

> Education, both in its practice and its administration, was to be aligned to the values and goals of efficiency, in financial rather than social terms, of productivity of international competitiveness and of deregulation of the private sector and re-orientation of the public sector towards the facilitation of economic productivity and profit.

Thus, education policy was harnessed increasingly to the needs of the national economy. A key policy document, *Strengthening Australia's Schools*, (Dawkins, 1988) was released by the Federal government in May 1988, that called for a 'clear statement' of the fundamental purposes, objectives and priorities of schools and school systems throughout Australia:

> Such a statement ought to recognise that schools are responsible for:
> * preparing young people for fulfilling personal lives and active membership of the community;
> * Preparing all students to take their place in a skilled and adaptable workforce in which further education and training throughout their working lives ill become the norm; and
> * Playing their part in overcoming disadvantage and achieving fairness in our society.
>
> They ought to provide a coherent curriculum appropriate to contemporary social and economic needs. … Fairness for all young Australians and the efficiency and effectiveness of Australia's overall approach to schooling are also important elements of a national effort. (Dawkins, 1988: 4)

The economic rationalist ideology also brought about greater levels of government funding to the Catholic and independent schooling sectors in the nation. As noted above, the Federal government of Fraser redirected funding away from State schools towards private schools. Between 1975-1976 and 1982-

1983 Federal funds to government schools fell by 12%, while those to non-government schools rose by 94% and this at a time when more that 76% of all students attended government schools (Dudley and Vidovich, 1995: 80). This funding drift was reflected in the Australian States as their governments imposed severe expenditure cuts on public schools. For example, between 1988-89 and 1993-94 State and Territory governments increased their expenditure on students in non-government schools by 42% compared to a mere 7% increase for students attending their own State schools (Morrow, Blackburn and Gill, 1998: 12). This, in turn, contributed to a drift of students from government to private schools, leading Morrow, Blackburn and Gill (1998: 12) to conclude "that in at least some of the States the steadily increasing trend of students transferring from the public to the private school sector has been encouraged by State governments"

The prevalence of the language of the market is another example of the economic justification for restructuring. Regarding England and Wales, New Zealand, much of the United States of America, and the State of Victoria in Australia, Marginson (1998: 74) observed that "government school systems have been reorganised as competitive markets, in which funding is proportional to enrolments and schools compete with each other for students and hence income." Beare (2001: 69) notes that schools and education systems are "borrowing both the names and the concepts of business"; "Schools are talked of as though they are private businesses or enterprises providing a product (learning) to a set of clients (students and parents)" (Beare, 2001: 33). Proponents of the market

approach, seem to adopt the view that education is merely a 'commodity' (Chapman and Aspin, 1997). In this language of the market, parents and students are referred to as 'clients' or 'customers' and schools are expected to provide a quality 'product' or 'service' in the context of 'deregulation' and 'privatisation'.

Despite the metaphor of the market economy being widely used to justify new policies for schooling, there is, according to Marginson (1998: 75) "no evidence that the creation of competitive markets in public education has led to a discernible improvement in the quality of teaching and learning." Godard and Taylor (2002) note that while advocates of choice in schooling predicted a rise in standards attributable to market forces, whether or not any improvement has occurred is still unclear. The implication of these comments on the marketisation of education is that restructuring of school systems is motivated by economic rationalism only for cost saving and bears little relation to student outcomes.

Organisational Factors

The application of organisational theory to school organisation forms the third category of explanations for restructuring. Indeed, restructuring has been a feature of many public sector institutions in Western countries in recent decades. As governments attempt to contain the cost of the welfare State they are adopting similar models for public administration. The new form of public administration was described by Osborne and Gaebler (1993) in the following way:

> They are lean, decentralized and innovative. They are flexible, adaptable, quick to learn new ways when conditions change. They use

competition, customer choice and other non-bureaucratic mechanisms to get things done as creatively and effectively as possible. (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993: 2)

Recent thinking in educational administration tends to argue that a simple bureaucratic structure no longer copes with the complexities of modern management. Beare and Boyd (1993: 8) observe that schools are now being remodelled in light of this thinking. In particular, they are following a managerial design found in business enterprises operating in the private sector of the economy. Schools are seen as complex organization best able to perform by a centralising of core values with a decentralising of operations. This is the 'loose-tight' structure described by Peters and Waterman (1982), whereby there is firm central control in those areas of central importance, such as policy ('tight') and wider freedom given to member units where local initiative and responsiveness is required ('loose').

Professional Factors

The forth category of issues, factors and explanations relating to restructuring are the aspects of the professional dimension of restructuring. These focus on the pursuit of professional autonomy and empowerment in an effort to improve the satisfaction of the professionals engaged in teaching. The theory of self-managing schools suggests that it is "teachers who will be most empowered by this reform" (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998: 64). Caldwell (1993:xiii) asserts that "there is a strong body of evidence that decentralisation enhances job satisfaction and professionalism on the part of principals and teachers". Collaborative working

relationships with colleagues, students, parents and other professionals is promoted. Fewer bureaucratic structures, it is argued, would contribute to this new professionalism, because collegiality is tending to replace hierarchy. Knight, Lingard and Porter (1993) suggest that devolution of decision-making could lead to a form of 'democratic professionalism' by facilitating participation of teachers and other stakeholders.

This brief overview shows that the overall pattern of restructuring throughout much of the English speaking world, while not uniform, is remarkably similar even though it does not have a rigid and unchanging meaning. Across continents, the simultaneous emergence of similar reforms are viewed as being in response to broad economic, political and cultural imperatives (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998). The discussion has revealed common elements of restructuring in education systems evident in a range of countries. Numerous reasons for the international trend are posited and show that there is considerable interplay between these justifications, which have been classified as political, economic, organisational and professional dimensions. Australia is no exception to these restructuring trends in education. The following section in this chapter now surveys the Australian context.

Australian Context of Restructuring

In Australia, schooling is constitutionally the responsibility of the States through their respective ministers for education. Until recently, public education at primary and secondary levels was typically administered through highly centralised State government departments of education. This central bureaucracy in each system largely determined the curriculum and maintained control through an extensive set of regulations, an inspectorial system and state-wide public examinations (Caldwell, 1990). Senior bureaucrats in the education departments made all the major professional and managerial decisions. The school principal acted as an agent of the central authority in each system to implement the policies and decisions made by officials in the central office. The involvement of teachers and parents at the school level was limited (Chapman, 1990). This approach to school administration was based on the assumption that centralised control of the provision of schooling was necessary for maintaining efficiency, effectiveness and equality of opportunity, uniformly across each State.

Until the 1960's the Commonwealth government of Australia primarily resourced the universities and provided limited resource support for schools. Most of the funding for school education came from the State governments with centralised resource allocations that left little for discretionary use by schools. In the 1960s and 1970s a variety of political and social forces provided the impetus for Commonwealth government intervention in school education. Concern about science education and the provision of modern teaching facilities arose in the

1960s and state-aid debates commenced, resulting in special Commonwealth grants being made for school education. A major drive for change came in 1972 with the election of a Labor government that had a social reform mandate. The newly elected government commissioned an inquiry into Australian school education and in 1973 *Schools in Australia: Report of the Interim Committee of the Australian Schools Commission,* (Interim Committee of the Australian Schools Commission, 1973) chaired by Dr P. H. Karmel (hereafter referred to as the 'Karmel Report'), was published.

The 'Karmel Report' became the base line document guiding the thinking and planning concerning Australian education, with 'devolution of responsibility' heading the list of underlying principles. This report challenged the long-standing centralist bureaucratic tradition in Australian education and led to the formation of the Australian (later Commonwealth) Schools Commission. It had a social democratic agenda that highlighted the principles of equality and participation, the Karmel Report provided justification for and pointed the way towards, devolution and decentralisation (Dimmock and Hattie, 1994: 37). This development is well captured in the following quotations from the 'Karmel Report':

> The Commission favours less rather than more centralised control over the operation of schools. Responsibility should be devolved as far as possible upon the people involved in the actual task of schooling, in consultation with the parents of the pupils whom they teach and, at senior levels, with the students themselves ('Karmel Report', l973: l0)

> No single pattern is necessarily the best. Diversified forms of schooling are an important part of the search for solutions. Increased resources made available to the schools will not necessarily result in

> children either learning better or being happier in them. . . This is an important reason for bringing responsibility back to the school . . . All-round improvements are more likely to emerge from experimentation with different approaches than from centralised administration of change. ('Karmel Report', l973: 11-12)

Caldwell (1995) observes that there followed a series of special-purpose grants to the States, many to be disbursed to schools on the basis of submissions prepared with teacher and community input. These grants increased in number and were complemented by State-initiated grant programs. To administer the grants in accordance with associated agreements, the centralised bureaucracies of State education departments expanded in size and complexity. The significance of these developments is that they foreshadowed devolution and restructuring. The grant program arrangements brought teachers and parents together in school-based decision-making processes in the preparation of school plans and submissions. Community participation was facilitated by a variety of structures for decision-making, which in some States, became mandated as school councils or school boards. Other States encouraged similar structures on a voluntary basis.

With these developments, the stage was set for the restructuring of the large education departments, which was to gather momentum in the l980s. Concerns relating to cost, efficiency and delivery of public education were debated and there was a perception that the large education departments had become constrained in their capacity and flexibility to respond positively and swiftly to changing needs and circumstances. What followed in every State and Territory education system, was a series of management reviews and restructures with

varying degrees of success (Bergin and Solman, 1992: 175). Beare (1995: 144) records: "Throughout the 1980s more than fifty documents or government reports were issued dealing with the restructuring of Education ministries". This stream of policy documents commenced in 1980 in the State of Victoria with a *Green Paper on Strategies and Structures for Education in Victoria* (Hunt and Lacy, 1980). The other States followed with similar reports. These reports prompted some serious thinking about the fundamental principles of education administration, with a significant concentration on structural reform that had similar features across Australia.

According to Beare (1995: 144) seven common features emerged in the restructuring of education systems in Australia:

1. Efficiency and good management as priorities: Economic considerations were a priority. There was an emphasis on cost-management, cost effectiveness, and the efficient allocation and use of resources.

2. Simple, political control: The new structures re-established clear and simple lines of control. Some powers were re-centralised and ministerial authority and responsibility was emphasised.

3. Portfolio and policy co-ordination: The Minister's office and the system's central office became responsible for portfolio co-ordination, policy advice and policy-making. The details of implementation and day-to-day administration were devolved.

4. Lean head-office management: The large central education bureaucracies were dispersed and replaced by lean, head-office management.

5. Devolution of responsibility: Every State and Territory system experimented with some form of regionalisation. A strong common theme in all the restructuring efforts was that schools must be given greater responsibility to order their own affairs. Terms such as 'the self-managing school' and 'the self-determining school' were used and the role of the principal, as an effective manager, was emphasised.

6. Excellence before equity: The documents talked about 'better schools' or 'excellent schools' or just 'excellence', suggesting that the school's management must be responsive to the clients' wishes in a kind of free market for educational services, and that the school should observe best international practices. Excellence was to be judged on outcomes, not on inputs or internal processes.

7. National priorities: The Federal government emerged as one of the key players in deciding educational policies and practices, imposing its own priorities on education, sometimes for defence purposes, but more often because the justification was economic.

It is contended by Beare (1995) that these characteristic features of restructured education systems reflected similar changes and structures in the private business arena and even moved closer to resembling the private school model of governance and operation. To a greater or lesser extent schools acquired increased authority and professional responsibility for management in the areas of

finances, utilities, facilities, staffing and curriculum. The restructuring movement

transformed Australian education systems. As Beare (1995: 147) puts it:

> The model was based upon ideology rather than research, but it had
> grown out of free market economics, many public reports in several
> countries, and an awareness that bureaucratic systems were artefacts
> of industrialisation, of a past era and were ill-suited to the political
> realities of the internationally conscious, post-industrial states.

The last two decades have witnessed schools across all Australian States and

Territories assuming a vast array of new functions that were previously performed

centrally. The process of restructuring in schooling systems resulted from State

government-initiated reform that commenced in the early to mid 1980s in an

attempt to produce better value, accountability and quality assurance. Devolution

or decentalisation has meant that school administrators and teachers have had to

take on additional roles and responsibilities requiring enhanced skills and

competencies. The next section of this chapter now discusses the process of

restructuring in one of the States of Australia, namely, that of Western Australia.

Restructuring in Western Australia

In 1987 the newly created Ministry of Education in Western Australia introduced a

radical plan to restructure the State education system with its publication of the

Better Schools in Western Australia: A Programme for Improvement (Ministry of

Education, 1987) (hereafter referred to as the 'Better Schools Report'). The

genesis of this restructuring program can be traced through four crucial policy

documents, three of which deal explicitly with education and the fourth with a Labor government policy relating to the Western Australian public service (Porter, Knight and Lingard, 1993).

The first of these key reports relating to education was the 1984 publication of *Education in Western Australia: Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Education in Western Australia* (Committee of Inquiry into Education in Western Australia, 1984) chaired by Mr K.E. Beazley (hereafter referred to as the 'Beazley Report'). This was a comprehensive review of school education in Western Australia in fulfilment of a pre-election promise of the Burke Labor government which had concerns regarding the relevance of the existing provision for education in the State ('Beazley Report', 1984: 1). The review was broadly in favour of reducing social inequality for groups and individuals, and the promotion of equal opportunity in education, as well as recommending a broad range of educational reforms, including the provision of greater community participation in school decision-making as stated in recommendation 154:

> That all school communities (staff, parents, students and other) in government schools be offered a description of a range of alternative organisational procedures from which the school will develop means of obtaining a community contribution to school-based decision-making. (Committee of Inquiry into Education in Western Australia, 1984 Recommendation 154)

The devolution of education decision-making that the report promoted was justified by the committee's perspective on participative democracy and a concern for more effective schooling. This push for devolution and accountability is

viewed by Porter, Knight and Lingard (1993: 238) as a prefiguring of aspects of later restructuring thus "opening a small space on the field of possibilities for the later development of the Better Schools document".

In contrast to the broad brief for the 'Beazley Report', the next key report accounting for restructuring in Western Australia had a strictly limited focus on secondary assessment and tertiary selection aspects of schooling. The report entitled *Assessment in the Upper Secondary School in Western Australia* (Ministerial Working Party on School Certification and Tertiary Admissions Procedures, 1984) (hereafter referred to as the 'McGaw Report') was also published in 1984. The committee's goals of technical efficiency in assessment and selection procedures and a broadening of the upper secondary curriculum for tertiary bound students would be achieved by a measure of devolution. While the 'McGaw Report' rejected complete devolution, it did recommend an equal sharing of assessment between moderated school and central processes and can be seen as another plank in the policy platform for restructuring of the Western Australian State education system.

A third policy document was not specifically focused on public education, but still had a profound influence on its future organisation. In 1986 the then Premier, Mr Brian Burke, presented a White Paper entitled *Managing Change in the Public Sector: A Statement of the Government's Position* (Burke, 1986). In a period of economic restraint the White Paper focused on public sector reform and clearly

intended to align the organisation of government agencies with contemporary conceptions of sound management practices as stated in the section of the paper headed "The Political Dynamic":

> An important development in industrialised societies is a perception by many segments of the population that large institutions cannot solve their problems. The perception is reflected in three important political trends which have appeared throughout much of the world including Western Australia.
>
> - There is a movement towards decentralisation. Large centralised institutions are being increasingly perceived as irrelevant to many individuals and as a consequence, smaller community-based organisations are now emerging, a fact recognised in the regionalisation policy of this Government.
>
> - There has been a widespread growth of a self-help ethos as large numbers of people reject the opinions of the 'experts', including those in government. The Government will continue to encourage development of non-government organisations.
>
> - There can be observed the rise of a 'participative' democracy which, to some extent, is supplanting traditional representative democracy as individuals band together to advance locally-based initiatives, often centred on single issues. To meet this need the Government has encouraged greater community involvement in decision-making. (Burke, 1986: 3)

The government wanted to diminish large departments like the Education Department that had "evolved into rigid centralised structures with accumulated functions that had never been subject to an independent, whole-of-government review" (Angus, 1990: 2). The policy being promoted by the White Paper was corporate managerialism and was presented as a way of achieving greater efficiencies and responsiveness to client needs.

The term 'corporate management', expresses an intention to supersede bureaucracy with corporatisation, which meant reconfiguring government agencies so that they operate like business corporations while remaining government instrumentalities (Beare 1995: 139). Commenting in 1994, the report of the Ministerial Independent Assessment Group on Devolution, chaired by Dr Hoffman entitled, *Devolution of Decision-making Authority in the Government School System of Western Australia* (Perth: Education Policy and Coordination Bureau, 1994) (hereafter referred to as the 'Hoffman Report') described the instruments of the model as "corporate strategic planning, 'flat' organisational structures, program budgeting, program management and policy frameworks" ('Hoffman Report', 1994: 16). The model being adopted was taken from the corporate sector and applied to the public sector. The model involved some devolution in the area of administration and service delivery, but not political devolution as the cabinet and ministers retained the role of setting policy goals. Policy implementation and delivery of services was to be through decentralised decision-making, with accountability being assured through performance agreements and functional reviews. The White Paper signalled a major restructuring of government agencies that would be stimulated, together with improved procedures for the management of change. The new policy of government plainly provided the justification and framework for the restructuring of the government education system.

To progress the government's policy, the Western Australian Government Functional Review Committee was formed and was invited by the energetic Minister for Education, Mr Pearce (a former school teacher), to conduct a review of the Education Department and the structural aspects of the Ministerial portfolio of education during 1986. The functional review culminated in two reports by the committee. The first, entitled *A Review of the Education Portfolio* (Western Australian Government Functional Review Committee, August 1986), addressed the relationships between various agencies in the portfolio and the senior level structure of the Education Department. The second report entitled, *A Review of the Administration of State Schools in Western Australia* (Western Australian Government Functional Review Committee, 1986) examined the Schools Division which was the largest section of the Education Department and was responsible for the delivery of education to all government primary and secondary schools (*Better Schools Progress Report*, 1988: 29). The two reports of the Functional Review Committee were explicit about responsiveness and concluded that the Education Department's centralised structure was no longer capable of adapting quickly or appropriately enough to rapid changes in the economic and social environment. Emerging from the functional review were the beginnings of a restructured Education Department to be known as the 'Ministry of Education'. This was to have a flatter structure, more clearly articulated line management and a smaller central bureaucracy (Angus, 1990: 2). This change in the agency's title reflected the renewed interest of government in education.

The fourth policy document crucial to the commencement of restructuring initiatives in the Western Australian education system, is *Better Schools in Western Australia: A Programme for Improvement* (Ministry of Education, 1987) published by the newly formed Ministry of Education in January 1987 (hereafter referred to as the 'Better Schools Report'). The 'Better Schools Report' represented a précis of the more significant recommendations contained in the report of the functional review committee referred to above, and was endorsed by the government of the day as a framework for restructuring the organisation and the administration of education in government schools in Western Australia. Although the 'Better Schools Report' signalled numerous changes to the organisational and administrative practices of schools, it provided little explanation for the need for the radical change the report promoted, except in terms of the broad public sector reform agenda of the government.

The 'Better Schools Report' outlined the rationale for change as follows:

> The administrative style of education, as for other Government departments, must be one of:
> - responsiveness and adaptability to the needs of the community and to Government priorities;
> - flexibility in the use of resources to meet these goals; and
> - accountability to the Government and the community for the standard of service and funding. (Ministry of Education, 1987: 5)

There was little in this statement that was specifically related to improving teaching and learning in public schooling. Angus (1990: 1) was critical of the purposes and assumptions that underpinned the 'Better Schools Report', arguing

that they were never explicitly stated, nor was their applicability to a large schooling system ever tested prior to implementation.

Angus (1990: 3) explained the devolution ideal underpinning the 'Better Schools Report', in terms of means and ends. He identified four steps:

1. Desired outcomes are articulated by central office.

2. Resources are provided to school decision-making groups in order that stated outcomes are achieved.

3. Empowered school decision-making groups determine strategies to achieve the outcomes.

4. Schools account for progress towards achieving agreed outcomes.

Angus (1990: 4) went on to identify the elements of the machinery outlined in the 'Better Schools Report' to make the system operate, including mandatory school development plans; single-line budgets for schools; formally established school-based decision-making groups that would endorse plans and approve budgets; an external auditing system; a central office focused on defining policy parameters and standards; and school support services decentralised into schools or in district offices. The recommendation of increasing parent participation in consultation and school decision-making was a central element of the restructuring process (O'Donoghue and O'Brien, 1995).

While the 'Better Schools Report' used the word 'devolution' to describe its reform agenda and referred to devolving significant responsibilities, no definition

of the word was provided in the document. While the 'ordinary' meaning of devolution is the delegation of a centrally held power, in the ensuing industrial disputation accompanying the Report's implementation, the notion of devolution became contentious, confused and problematic. Rizvi (1994: 1-2) summed up the situation: "The truth is there is no single uniform meaning of the term 'devolution'. It is an inherently political concept, the meaning of which is struggled over and contested." Angus (1990: i) records that the term 'devolution' refers to "a changed relationship between the central authorities and the schools which constitute the system [and] suggests enhanced local capacity to make certain kinds of decisions." Sharpe (1994: 4) offered the following definition:

> 'Devolution' is a process through which an agency of control (such as a government school system) deliberately relinquishes aspects of control over the organisations for which it is responsible, thus moving them along the continuum in the direction of total self-management.

All this discussion on the definition of 'devolution', represents a feature of the 'Better Schools' program of restructuring, in that the elements of the reform program were not fully stated and we have to rely on *post hoc* explanations (Angus, 1990).

After seven years of devolution, the 'Hoffman Report' (Education Policy and Coordination Bureau, 1994) formally addressed the issue of definition and observed that in the Western Australian government school system, the term 'devolution' had been employed to refer to:

- School principals establishing councils and committees which enable teachers and parents to have a say in the running of schools;
- the central office handing over to schools, regions or districts, the authority and responsibility to make certain decisions;
- the handing over of set tasks (jobs, work) that used to be carried out centrally but which are now carried out locally;
- the handing over of funds that used to be administered centrally;
- the handing over of funds that have been saved by the discontinuation of some part of the Education Department's operations; and
- the amendment or repeal of Education Act Regulations.

('Hoffman Report', 1994)

Certainly in the Western Australian context, devolution defines a changed relationship between the central authority and the schools, with so called, empowered decision-making responsibilities being assumed by schools involving some of the allocation of human, financial, material and curriculum resources. The definition provides for schools remaining part of the system and continuing to operate within a framework of legislation, policies and priorities determined by the central authority.

Following the release of the 'Better Schools Report', an ensemble of policy documents was published to provide policy and guidelines to implement the program for improvement. The ensemble includes nine documents published between 1987 and 2002. There were four policy implementation documents that focus on school development plans, school decision making, school accountability and school financial planning and management. A system level strategic plan for the triennium 1998 – 2000 was formulated in 1997 to implement these four policy

documents. Ongoing developments in the area of school accountability produced a draft school accountability framework in January 1996. After extensive trialing and consultation, this framework was replaced in 1997 with a refined version although it remained in draft form. In August 1999 a new approach to school accountability proposed a shift away from the school development plan as the vehicle of accountability, to be replaced with an annual school report. These accountability arrangements were confirmed in the final version of the policy as published in June 2002: *The School Accountability Framework*. (Department of Education Western Australia, 2002). It is contended that these policy developments reflect the evolutionary nature of devolution in the Western Australian context.

This evolving policy of restructuring of the government schooling system continued with a further major restructure of the central and district offices being introduced in 1997. This move further downsized the central office to fulfil a lean policy development role and rationalised district offices from 29 to 16. The position of 'district superintendent of education' was abolished and replaced with a 'district director of schools' overseeing slightly increased resources within the expanded education districts. Each education district was administered by at least one district director "who ensured that schools operated effectively and efficiently and that their planning complied with Education Department policies and priorities" (Education Department of Western Australia, 1999: 19).

Another rationalising initiative also introduced in 1997, was termed Local Area Education Planning (LAEP) (*Local Area Education Planning Framework.* Education Department of Western Australia, 1997) and was intended to review, in consultation with local communities, the existing provision of school infrastructure to amalgamate and plan for new schools where appropriate. In addition to this reform, a system-wide process for the performance management of all staff was introduced, as well as the abolition of the transfer procedure in favour of transfer and promotion by merit for school administrators.

Concurrent with these initiatives, a new body was formed with the proclamation of the *Curriculum Council Act 1997* which transferred responsibility for curriculum development from the Education Department to an independent agency. The Curriculum Council's purpose is to design curriculum, assessment and certification structures for Western Australian schools. The Curriculum Council developed a new outcomes based *Curriculum Framework* (Curriculum Council, 1998) for all schools in Western Australia, which was designed to have a significant impact on pedagogy. In the restructuring process, the establishment of an independent Curriculum Council and the introduction of the new Curriculum Framework represented a shift in the restructuring focus from reform of management structures reform of teaching and learning. In 1999 the Curriculum Council initiated a comprehensive review of post compulsory education, in an effort to provide more relevant courses of study for senior secondary students.

The government also initiated a major overhaul of the Education Act 1928 and replaced it with the School Education Act 1999.

The framework for government schooling had been undergoing widespread restructuring, especially since the 1987 release of the 'Better Schools Report'. A decade later in the Annual Report 1998-1999 the Education Department reported to the Western Australian government, the following description of the schooling system:

> In 1998, each government school had significant decision-making responsibility, was accountable for student outcomes, exhibited responsiveness to community needs and government policies and was encouraged to explore flexible approaches and structures for delivery of schooling. All schools were responsible for significant aspects of educational planning and administration, financial management, performance reporting and curriculum delivery and were required to establish their annual priorities through development planning processes that reflected government and systemic policies, local community needs and the identification of student outcomes that required particular attention. Schools were accountable for their performance in improving student outcomes and managing resources through district directors to the Director-General, Minister for Education and government" (Education Department of Western Australia, 1999: 19).

All these policy developments occurred rapidly, changing the management of government schools in Western Australia, but they did not allow for local variables. Western Australia is a geographically large State and there appears to be little allowance in the policy ensemble for approaches appropriate to varying circumstances within different districts and schools. At the individual school level, the response to substantial and complex change initiatives may range from reluctant adoption, through resistance to the restructuring program. It is not yet

known how these policies have impacted on school management practices and in particular, about how school administration teams have managed their work accordingly. The study reported later in this thesis is offered as a major contribution to address this deficit.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the background to education restructuring internationally, at the national level in Australia, and within the Western Australian government schooling system. It has been shown that during the two decades from 1980 there has been remarkably similar restructuring of education systems, characterised by devolution and decentralisation, across continents in response to broad economic, political and cultural imperatives. The appearance of reshaped education systems resulting from the restructuring policies implemented in many countries, is well described in the following quotation of Beare (2001: 33):

> The once centralised educational bureaucracies (whether public or private) have now divested themselves of day-to-day control of individual schools. Instead, they put in place accountability, regular audit and quality control machinery and then leave the school alone to carry on its own business (almost literally). They have done away with middle management, downsized and carry only monitoring functions and global policy-making roles. They have shrunk to being a strategic core. This is the story of most education departments in Australia, the national system in New Zealand, some provincial systems in Canada and the local education authorities in Great Britain.

The discussion offered in this chapter included a focus on the implementation of an evolving restructuring policy in the Western Australian government education system whereby schools have assumed new roles and responsibilities, within districts that are charged with a quality assurance role and a leaner central office adopting a policy development role. This provides the context to the research reported later in this thesis. The next chapter now outlines the relevant empirical literature by way of further background to that research.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature that provides a framework for addressing the central question of the research reported in this thesis, namely, "How are school administration teams managing their work in an education system undergoing restructuring?" There are three inter-related bodies of literature. Firstly, there is the literature on traditional school administration and the changing nature of school administration in diverse situations. Secondly, there is the literature probing the impact of restructuring on different groups involved in managing schools. Thirdly, there is the body of literature related to the evolving concept of school administration teams (also known as school or senior management teams) and how they are managing in the context of restructured school systems.

Some clarification is required in the use of the terms administration, management and leadership. Much of the work of principals and deputy principals is an amalgamation of administration, management and leadership. As features of administration, Bates (1995) pointed to 'structures of organisation' and 'control and maintenance'. Lakomski and Evers (1995: 3) observed that "administrative action including decision-making … is considered to be rational or scientific". While sometimes the terms are used interchangeably, leadership is different from

management. Indeed there exists some overlap in management and leadership functions (Kerry and Murdoch, 1993). According to Kotter (1990: 103) "Leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary systems of action". Both are necessary to ensure organisational effectiveness. Management must be a part of leadership if organisational objectives are to be achieved (Kerry and Murdoch, 1993).

Kotter (1990) conceptualised management as being about coping with complexity. With the emergence of large organisations, managers and administrators attempt to direct both human and non-human resources through planning and coordination. Managers and administrators structure the work of people, such as teachers, essentially through the use of formal authority but also by bureaucratic means of control. Kotter (1990) considers leadership is about coping with change. A feature of the modern organisation is constant change in response to customer demand. Indeed, a function of leadership is to create change and setting the direction of that change is fundamental to leadership (Kotter, 1990). Leadership is defined by Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (1993: 8) as being "the process of influencing an organised group toward accomplishing goals". Leaders bring about change by influencing people through the use of personal power and are primarily concerned with personal interactions. Thus management and leadership are closely related conceptually and practically (Lloyd, 1985: 295).

While there are differences between the terms administration, management and leadership, the use of the terms in this thesis will reflect the interchangeable usage in the literature and in the way participants in this study have used them.

Traditional School Administration and the Changing Nature of School Administration

The management and administration of schools was traditionally a bureaucratic process with the principal or headteacher as the main player. According to Bell (1992), the head's role has long had two basic dimensions – the educational or professional dimension, and the managerial or executive dimension. Bell (1992) notes that, traditionally, the former dimension was emphasised in the administration of schools and it was common for heads to also have a teaching duties.

While the head or principal may be the prime leader in a school, Day, Johnstone and Whitaker (1985) observed that there are many tasks that are the legitimate concern of every leader in every school and suggested the following task areas:

- the school's climate relating to how people work together;

- the curriculum and the related teaching and learning processes;

- management of relationships within the school;

- involvement in the processes of evaluating, assessing and recording student performance.

Since traditionally the administration of schools was predominantly performed by principals/headteachers, this section will focus on their particular role. Consideration, however, will also be given to the evolving role of the deputy principal/deputy headteacher. The emphasis is on literature pertaining to traditional school administration mainly in England and Wales, the United States of America and Australia, and commences with a discussion of the general elements of educational administration.

The nature of educational administration is the way in which decisions are made and action is taken so that the educational institution achieves its goals (Kimbrough and Nunnery, 1983). Back in the 1940s, Moehlman (1940) argued that the activity of educational administration includes all the processes that are implemented to make policies and procedures effective, which implies that such policies and procedures were developed by some higher authority. Likewise, Sears (1947: 210) asserted that by tradition, administration in school systems was considered to be a task of "applying authority that has been created in laws or granted by boards of education".

Five different kinds of educational administration activity were identified by Campbell, Corbally and Ramseyer (1958), namely planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling. The Southern States Cooperative Program in Educational Administration (1954) described five 'general administrative methods' used in the performance of educational administration. These were:

defining needs and exploring problems; seeking information, determining resources and providing consultants; proposing policies, formulating possible courses of action and offering alternative proposals; initiating and implementing plans; and evaluating progress. Kimbrough and Nunnery, (1983: 261) note that the American Association of School Administrators referred to 'constituent functions' of school administrators as planning, allocation, stimulation, coordination and evaluation. A similar formulation by Gregg (1957) consisted of seven components: decision making, planning, organising, communicating, influencing, coordinating and evaluating. It will be noted that these descriptions are similar to the 'collaborative school management cycle' promoted thirty years later by Caldwell and Spinks (1988) that incorporates goal-setting, need identification, policy-making, planning, budgeting, implementation and evaluation.

While the terms in each of these descriptions differ, and there is great similarity in the statements, decision-making is seen as a critical component of educational administration. Whatever terms are used, there seems to be agreement that for an educational organisation to function, decisions must be reached about what is to be done, plans must be developed in terms of goals, financial and human resources must be allocated in terms of the planning, people must be motivated to act, teamwork must be ensured and a determination must be made of the extent to which the goals were achieved in terms of the predetermined plans and standards (Kimbrough and Nunnery, 1983). The object of educational administration came

to be activities that made it possible for teachers and their students to work together under conditions deemed conducive to learning (Kimbrough and Nunnery, 1983). Moehlman (1940) believed that administration was essentially a service activity. Reeder (1941: 6) argued that school administration did not exist for itself, that it was only a means, not an end and that to teaching and learning, it always had to be a servant.

Which calls to mind the concept of 'servant-leader'; one first coined by Robert Greenleaf in his 1970 essay entitled *The Servant as Leader*. In this short work Greenleaf wrote: "The servant-leader is servant first … It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first" (Greenleaf, 1970: 7). Greenleaf believed true leadership emerges from those whose primary motivation is a desire to help others to achieve their potential (Spears, 1995). At the core of the servant-leadership notion is a long term, transformational approach to life and work which has the potential to create positive change throughout society (Spears, 1995). Greenleaf (1977) also applied his thinking to the field of education and argued that servant-leadership should be at the core of educational administration.

Campbell, Fleming, Newell and Bennion, (1987) commented that in the distant past, administration in the small schools of the time was hardly differentiated from teaching. As the schools grew in size, the number and complexity of tasks increased, requiring that a specially designated person assume responsibility for them. In the United States of America the person was designated as the 'principal

teacher' who continued to function in the classroom, but who also served as the controlling head of the school (Pierce, 1935). In the early part of the 20th century, the principles of scientific management, specialisation and the division of labour, began to separate the principalship from teaching (Murphy and Beck, 1994) and schools assumed the basic characteristics of bureaucracies (Kimbrough and Nunnery, 1983). King (1968) observed that all schools contained some bureaucratic features and that the authority of all headteachers had a bureaucratic component. The headteacher of a school was viewed as the possessor of superior knowledge and was able to exercise considerable power. Similarly, Anderson and Van Dyke (1963) observed that earlier in the twentieth century, school administration in the US was characterised by autocratic practices and principals regarded themselves as 'experts' in education. Few people questioned the propriety of their authoritarianism since this was the accepted pattern of administration in other institutions.

Principals of large secondary schools assumed more of an administrative role as they reduced their teaching role. Indeed, Ree (1968: 116) asserted that the 'manager-head' of the day "need not be a great scholar, nor even a good teacher". In contradiction of this view, studies by numerous researchers (Coulson, 1976; Nias, 1980; Lloyd, 1985; Clerkin, 1985) of the traditional role of English primary heads prior to the *Education Reform Act 1988,* showed the primary school head as being leading teacher with the title 'headteacher', thus signalling that they were to be thought of as teachers rather than administrators. Indeed, Percival (1968: 117)

found the concept of "amateurism in management" to be prevalent amongst older headteachers, who professed with pride their lack of expertise in organisation and management. These heads preferred to disown management skills in case such skills affected their profession as an educator.

Hughes (1972: 34) observed that the role of traditional primary and secondary heads in England, was regarded as "an invariant, the fixed point which could be taken for granted while other aspects of the educational system were subject to change" and that the headteacher had become the "focus and pivot of his school". The headteacher in most English schools, according to Baron (1970: 183), held a position of absolute power and was the "autocrat of autocrats". Baron considered such headteachers preserved a degree of authority and influence, far greater than that exercised by others of the same rank in other countries. According to Morgan (2001), headteachers became institutionally and culturally empowered with this image.

Headteachers were certainly powerful authority figures as the following description illustrates:

> The traditional view, supported by research from the 1960s and 1970s, perceived the primary school head as a benevolent autocrat, whose paternalistic style of leadership thrived during comparatively stable times within an internal authority structure which concentrated virtually all power into the one pair of hands. These were men and women having an ego-identification with the school, causing them to think of it as their own and therefore to feel a deep sense of personal responsibility for everything and everyone in it. (Lloyd, 1985: 294)

They were expected to mould their school in accordance with their own views and they exercised ultimate authority over matters of general school policy. These headteachers were described as "pivotal, proprietal and paternalistic" (Coulson, 1976: 276) and were often seen "as the personification of the school" (Lloyd, 1985: 297). Headteachers not only had the power to define their own role, they also had power to define the roles of their subordinates, the teachers and students (King, 1968). Their personal style was characteristically authoritarian or autocratic (Morgan, 2001). Nias (1980) observed the centrality of headteachers in 'their' schools verged on 'dictatorial leadership'. Thus, the headteacher as the primary school's leader had considerable independence, had undisputed authority within the school and frequently took the initiative (Hughes, 1972: 35). The primary school headship at least, was mainly concerned with organisational power, with headteachers performing a key role in a web of power relations within their schools (Hall and Southworth, 1997).

Prior to the education reforms of 1988 in England and Wales, the role of the secondary head was increasingly being defined in terms of the management competencies also being highlighted in other organisational leadership roles and reflected a concern with heads as managers as well as leaders and leading professionals (Hall and Southworth, 1997). Hughes (1972) also interpreted the secondary head as leader in professionally staffed organisations. The secondary school head operated as the 'chief executive' and was regarded in the organisation as the 'leading professional'. Acting in a highly interdependent manner, the head

as chief executive, was mainly concerned with allocative and co-ordinating functions within the school and with the governing body and the external community. It is interesting to note a suggestion in the 1970s research of Hughes (1972), that secondary schools were more advanced in the adoption of participative decision-making than were primary schools.

Lloyd (1985: 293) noted that, compared with the average secondary school, primary schools were relatively small organisations and their internal authority structure was correspondingly much less complex. The primary head had no tradition of delegation in the 'flat' classroom-based structure of these schools, leaving the head as the most influential and powerful figure, with the capacity to impose a very personal and egotistical regime in the school. The most common approach to primary school leadership was paternal and coercive (Lloyd, 1985).

The research of Clerkin (1985), Coulson (1986) and Davies (1987) into the work of primary heads demonstrated that the activity of heads was largely conceived in terms of functions and tasks and was viewed as highly autocratic in style. Similarly, Jenkins (1985) found heads' task involvement was limited in the main to administrative and functional tasks, but that heads viewed their work as people centred, with the largest proportion of their time being spent on interpersonal contact. Kmetz and Willower (1982: 73) found that primary principals had a preference for verbal media and live action, observing as follows: "The principals' worlds at work were basically verbal. They spent more than two-

thirds of their time talking with people." Studies of the work behaviour of secondary principals by Martin and Willower (1981) and of primary principals by Kmetz and Willower (1982), showed the principals' work as being characterised by high intensity, brevity, fragmentation and frequent interruption of a large variety of tasks. Davies (1987) also observed primary school heads undertaking a multitude of activities at an unrelenting pace throughout the day. These studies show that much of what heads did in the management of their schools was reactive rather than proactive. Kmetz and Willower (1982) noted that the pace of work of primary principals compared to principals in secondary schools, was less hectic as they engaged in fewer activities, had fewer interruptions and dealt with less correspondence.

Research into the administrative tasks of secondary heads by Lyons (1974) and Hall, Mackay and Morgan (1986), confirmed a similarity between primary and secondary heads, of the brevity, discontinuity and people-intensive character of the head's tasks. Two Australian studies of principals by O'Dempsey (1976) and Willis (1980) similarly reported a busy work pace, task variety, brevity, fragmentation and a preference for verbal interaction. Clerkin (1985: 299) concluded that headship was:

> More often about tackling a high intensity of tasks with frequent interruptions rather than a systematic ordering of curricular or organisational programmes based on agreed policies or clearly understood management structures.

Turning now to the evolving role of the deputy principal or deputy headteacher, it was observed by Todd and Dennison (1978) that it had been almost a tradition in

English schools for the position to lack any role definition and that this had arisen because of a similar lack of role definition for headteachers who acted as paternalistic autocrats. Burnham (1968: 177) wrote: "The role of deputy head in schools today lacks definition; there seems to be a deliberately vague air about his [*sic*] duties". He concluded the role was more like a "faithful handy man [*sic*] to a head". The observations of both Burnham (1968) and Todd and Dennison (1978), showed delegation by the head was the key to the deputy's role, but the problem was that the head was autocratic in nature and delegation was minimal. Burnham (1968: 177) noted that "far too many heads have little or no capacity for delegation; nor inclination in some cases". Some heads viewed the role as an extension of themselves. Burnham (1968: 178) described this as the 'shadow aspect' of the role of deputy. Lloyd (1985: 299) confirmed this problem, writing as follows: "The deputy's role is dependent on the head's capacity and inclination for delegation; if he has none, the role scarcely exists."

This situation produced feelings of frustration in deputies. They had gained a position of considerable status in schools, yet they were denied a role matching their expectations (Todd and Dennison, 1978). The deputy became merely the transmitter of the head's decisions and instructions and was not selected for any ability of taking initiative or for making decisions (Burnham, 1968). It was also evident that deputies were mainly allocated duties of a clerical and routine nature, increasing their sense of role ambiguity. Burnham (1968: 177) asserted that "an examination of these duties indicates that clerical help is required, not the

professional insight and competence of an experienced colleague". The position of deputy was largely anomalous and showed little consistency from school to school (Burnham, 1968; Todd and Dennison, 1978). One way of dealing with this was for deputies to assume socio-emotional functions within the school, to the extent that Burnham (1968) noted they derived considerable satisfaction from this role. It saw them representing staff to the head, building staff loyalty, reducing tensions and anxieties and obtaining staff cooperation. Burnham (1968: 184) concluded that the ambiguity, frustration and conflict shrouding the deputy head's position would be resolved if the role was determined not by delegation, but "as a 'right' of differentiating forces within the organisation".

In secondary schools in the United States of America, the 'assistant principal', was a position which similarly comprised a variety of duties (Anderson and Dyke, 1963). Weiss (1953) noted that 70% of their time was spent in the areas of administration of the educational program and, like their English counterparts, in personnel. Assistant principals also aspired to the position of principal and considered the position to be a training period for promotion to the principalship (Bolden, 1956). Martin (1958) commented that women assistant principals were likely to find that their position was about as high as they could rise in secondary school administration.

In England, the position of the deputy headteacher became clearer with the introduction of the comprehensive secondary school, producing a greater need for

bureaucratic systems (Todd and Dennison, 1978; Morgan, 2001). This organisational response to the growth of secondary education saw the establishment of "varieties of department and faculty systems and the introduction of a second-in-charge" (Morgan, 2001: 21). With the increase in size resulting from the comprehensive structure, secondary schools were allowed to appoint additional staff at deputy headteacher level (Todd and Dennison, 1978). This innovation called for a review of the role, job descriptions had to be developed and deputies came to regard their position as preparation for eventual headship. The rewards of the position included taking over from the head for brief periods, assisting the head to administer the school, possessing influence, gaining acceptance of ideas, having greater responsibility for decision-making and generally being allowed a part to play in school administration (Burnham, 1968).

Hughes (1972: 36) noted that in the late 1960s and 1970s, a markedly different style of leadership was being recommended in England and Wales, whereby the head forms an "informal senior colleague relationship" with staff, in harmony with concepts of "participative leadership" and "job enlargement". Hughes (1972: 37) observed that the *Gittins Report* (Central Advisory Council for Education (Wales) Primary Education in Wales, 1967) described the changing role of the primary school head: "the head is to be the leader of a team, who works alongside the staff in a democratic situation of ordered freedom." Thomason (1970) observed that the secondary head's role was 'extensible' in that he had considerable freedom to mould the role to his own personality and in this he was

similar to a 'top business executive'. As the complexity of the head's role intensified, however, negative aspects began to appear.

In describing aspects of role strain and role overload of both primary and secondary heads, Hughes (1972: 39) pointed to the greater complexity of the role at the secondary school level "undermining the health and morale of many heads of large comprehensive schools". To address this issue, Hughes (1972: 40) recommended greater staff involvement in a "collegial authority system" which was expected to make "strenuous and time-consuming demands on staff at all levels" as management by a team was being considered. It was also recognised by Hughes (1972) that with the introduction of more democratic management procedures and with widespread participation, the head's personal influence might grow, even though the head's apparent authority was diminished.

It has been shown in this section, that the bureaucratic organisation of schools led to autocratic processes for their administration. Principals evolved from being autocratic to becoming democratic and adopting participative styles of leadership. The role of the deputy principal was ambiguous and inconsistent from school to school. With increasing size and complexity of schools, particularly secondary schools, deputies were able to take a greater role in school administration and leadership. The role of principal and deputy, as well of the roles of others in the school community, was set to change even more as restructuring policies were implemented in education systems.

The Impact of Restructuring on Different Groups
Involved in Managing Schools

The era of education restructuring, devolving responsibilities and decision-making to the school level, has enormous implications for the organisation and administration of schools. Kaufman (1977) forecast that one of the main effects of such reorganisation would be to redistribute sources of influence and power in schools, with many relationships being altered and many people being required to play new roles. Chapman (1986) noted in her research into school reform in Victoria, Australia, that the relationships between principals, staff and parents had changed and that this had a positive influence on principal effectiveness. Changes in the definition of key roles, professional relationships and expected outcomes certainly began to transform the work of many categories of school-based educators (Crow and Peterson, 1994). These role changes and modified relationships between key groups involved in managing schools are now described, in turn, as they are portrayed in the relevant literature. The key groups include principals, deputy principals, secondary school teaching administrators, teachers, parents and students

Principals

Bradley, (1992: 19) reports research into the changing role of principals during restructuring that found principals experiencing more change "than any other group". According to Edinger and Murphy (1995: 68), the multitude of societal, economic and political forces being imposed on schools in recent decades,

together with the increasing complexity of the learning environment, the shifting professional relationships within education systems and schools, and the introduction of participatory decision-making, all caused "the principalship to evolve into one of the most demanding and challenging administrative positions in modern social service organisations". Lambert (1984: 7) reviewed the changing nature of headship skills from the 1960s from a personal perspective as a practitioner and concluded the task of heads had become "extremely complex" and demanded "management and personal skills of a very high order and complexity". Back in 1960, Lambert (1984) considered the head needed a relatively small number of managerial skills, which were often not recognised as such because of the relatively simple and static nature of many schools. Commenting on the situation twenty years later, Lambert (1984) asserted that schools were more dynamic and complex, requiring heads to possess a wide range of skills as administrative responsibilities were devolved to the school level.

Such devolution has been described by Wohlstetter and Odden (1992) as 'administrative decentralisation' and principal control. However, Hallinger, Murphy and Hausman, (1992: 22) found that principals viewed the effects of restructuring on themselves "almost exclusively in terms of a loss of control and power", as fewer decisions would be made by themselves as primary decision-maker, as was the custom previously. Wohlstetter and Briggs (1994) noted that the principal, as a member of a school decision-making group, had no control over the composition of the group and its leadership, and often had no veto power over

their decisions. Then again, referring to numerous studies over the previous two decades of restructuring, Pristine (1994: 123) concluded the vast majority of studies "identified the principal as a key player." Weindling (1998: 307) also records that headteachers played "the pivotal role in leadership and management of schools". The devolution of power to schools in the form of more control over finance and resourcing has, according to Moore, George and Halpin (2002), contributed to profound changes in the function and role of the headteacher in England and Wales. They assert that the headteacher now operates increasingly as a managing director as well as the key leader and visionary.

It was argued by Crow and Peterson (1994) that principals in restructured schools, were faced with new roles in at least four areas: political, cultural, environmental and managerial. In the political sphere, they noted more people are included in the decision-making process in restructured schools in the belief that this will enhance the commitment and effectiveness of all involved, but that this calls for political skills. Weindling (1998) also observed a new and varied range of people involved in managing schools, consequently creating changes in their working relationships. He also noted a greater mutual dependence between those responsible for and affected by management, requiring a substantial degree of participation. Similarly, Wohlstetter and Briggs (1994) observed the principal's new role interacting with a wider range of people, including community members.

The principal assumes at least three political roles in these settings, including negotiating responsibility boundaries, facilitating consensus and mediating conflict (Crow and Peterson, 1994). In this environment of change, Hargreave's (1991) notion of 'contrived collegiality' draws attention to the tense nature of consensus building that requires the principal to possess political skill in negotiating conflict. Watkins (1991) found that advertisements for principals in Victoria, Australia, emphasised the need for school leaders to demonstrate expertise in negotiated decision-making with an array of individuals who represent a variety of interest groups in the school community. Referring to Israeli principals, Goldring (1992) found similar expectations, whereby principals had become more responsible for mediating conflict than ever before.

The cultural role identified by Crow and Peterson (1994) focussed on building a new school culture. They note Deal and Peterson's (1990) identification of five roles that leaders enact when building organisational culture: "symbol, potter, poet, actor and healer" (Crow and Peterson, 1994: 5269). These functions emphasise the symbolic, transformational, linguistic, dramatic and therapeutic qualities involved in the leader's work (Crow and Peterson, 1994). Principals enacting cultural leadership, perform the role of facilitators of change by encouraging debate about restructuring issues and maintaining a focus on vision and direction. Bredeson, (1993: 34) also noted a change in principal leadership "from managers in charge to facilitators on call".

With reference to environmental roles, Crow and Peterson (1994) claim that restructuring increases the responsibility of the principal in developing and communicating the school's mission to the wider community. The environmental role enacts principals' entrepreneurial skills as they gain the commitment of community leaders and mobilise resources to achieve the school's mission. Principals increasingly become involved in maintaining networks external to their school.

The change in the managerial role, as viewed by Crow and Peterson (1994), centres on the increased responsibility and accountability for resources devolved to the school to manage. The heightened management responsibilities, according to James and Vince (2001: 313) are "increasingly time consuming and demanding". Weindling (1998: 307) reviewed research showing that restructuring had created "new leadership and management tasks alongside significant changes in many that existed before" and declared that "school leadership is not what it used to be". Chadbourne (1996) found most Western Australian secondary principals expressed concern that their capacity to exercise educational leadership had been seriously undermined by the steady accretion of administrative and managerial tasks unloaded on schools during the devolution process. However, principals find themselves responsible for more managerial tasks for which they usually have not had prior training or experience. In England and Wales this change presented a problem for heads "who regarded themselves primarily as

head teachers with few managerial responsibilities" (Crow and Peterson, 1994: 5270).

Commenting on the complexity inherent in the new role, Caldwell (1998) refers to research into the leadership role of secondary principals in Victoria, Australia:

> There was greater complexity and a higher level of responsibility in accountability, school community relations, direction setting, personnel and financial management and for many, ensuring the survival of the school. Principals were becoming less hands-on and more involved with external networks, relying more on delegation and the support of senior staff to cope with daily demands. (Caldwell, 1998: 457)

With education restructuring, the role of principal becomes increasingly more diverse and complex (Fullan, 1992). Power to make autonomous decisions related to the local school and to effect change places further demands on principals as they assume many more managerial responsibilities. Caldwell (1998: 456) refers to research that indicates the "extraordinarily rich and complex role for the primary principal under the new arrangements". Principals today are being forced to clarify roles and responsibilities at a time when schools and societies they inhabit are in a state of turmoil (Murphy and Hallinger, 1992). The pace of change brought on by restructuring causes contemporary principals to be "dancing on a shifting carpet" (Edinger and Murphy, 1995: 68).

Williams, Harold, Robertson and Southworth (1997) report that in New Zealand, England and Wales, and the United States of America, principals sought to

balance educational leadership and organisational management, but recognised that the management role severely cut into the available time principals had to act as educational leaders. They considered that principals with an educational leadership orientation viewed school management as a means to an end, but after restructuring, the principals feared the managerial role would become an end in itself, taking them away from what they see as being their essential role as principal.

James and Vince (2001: 311) also record the restructuring changes as involving a shift from being a 'people person' towards being 'more management orientated'. Weindling (1998) found that following the *Education Reform Act 1988,* headteachers in England and Wales felt they were more managers of their schools than headteachers. Research by Evetts (1994: 44) into the changing work culture of headship found that the expansion of managerial and executive tasks, and a reduction in educational leadership, meant that "headteachers were more completely managers and administrators". Webb and Vulliamy (1993: 313) consider secondary heads had become "corporate managers" with aspects of educational leadership being severely reduced. General education concerns related to curriculum and student achievement had been removed from the head's role and been delegated to other managers within the school. The "new headteacher is a corporate manager first; aspects of educational leadership have diminished dramatically" (Evetts, 1994: 46). Ball (1993: 115) views this change as the deliberate result of ideological attempts by government to "harness

headteachers as agents to implement their reforms". However, in their study of the evolving principalship in a small rural school district in British Columbia, Canada, Edinger and Murphy, (1995) found that principals perceived themselves as administrators rather than managers.

Hallinger and Heck (1996: 738) consider that accepted ideas of the role of school principal have evolved in recent decades "from manager, to 'street-level bureaucrat', to change agent, to instructional manager to instructional leader to transformational leader". Furthermore, they discern less emphasis being given to the instructional leadership role and more to models construed as being more consistent with school restructuring, such as transformational leadership. Leithwood (1994) notes transformational leadership emphasising empowerment, directly affects teacher motivation and commitment, leading to the form of extra effort needed for significant change. Glasman and Heck (1992) claim the changing role conceptualisations result from restructuring demands made on schools and the move to a more open form of governance. This development has implications for the style of school management adopted by principals operating in restructured systems, which Hallinger and Heck (1992) regard as requiring less emphasis on centralised, directive forms of management and a greater emphasis on participatory leadership and decentralised decision-making.

The research of Glickman, Allen and Lunsford (1994) involving principals leading democratically transformed schools in Georgia, USA, revealed that

principals frequently talked of moving away from a traditional, directive administrative role, and used descriptors such as that of 'facilitator', 'organiser' 'encourager', 'supporter' and 'enabler' to express their new role. They also considered that their roles had changed from "being the sole decision maker to an equal participant in the decision-making process" (Glickman, Allen and Lunsford, 1994: 207). In Australia, Watkins (1991) declared that principals could no longer be viewed as the chief authority figures in schools, but should be seen rather as facilitators, coordinators and mediators. Conley and Goldman (1994: 238) also recognised an emerging style of principal leadership characterised by high teacher involvement in, and ownership of decisions, management of the school's vision and an emphasis on significant change and improvement. They called this 'facilitative leadership' and defined it as "behaviours that enhance the collective ability of a school to adapt, solve problems and improve performance" and "achieve goals that may be shared, negotiated or complementary". In moving to facilitative forms of school leadership, principals need to base their authority, not in formal positions, but rather in their personal, interpersonal and professional competencies by cultivating collegiality, cooperation and shared commitment among all with whom they work (Murphy and Beck, 1994). Glickman, Allen and Lunsford (1994) suggest that a key factor in the success of this approach is the principal's trust in teachers and the ability to communicate that trust.

Glickman, Allen and Lunsford (1994) point to other studies that showed increased interaction between principals and teachers as a result of democratic decision-

making. Teachers in these schools were appreciative of working with a principal who believed in them, but they were aware of the personal risk that the principal was taking. Arriving at decisions based on democratic principles, opens up communication resulting in a candid exchange of ideas increasing the sense of vulnerability of the principal to criticism. These principals working in restructured schools had to learn to share their authority and responsibility, to show humanness, to admit mistakes and to be a team member. In a similar situation, a practising facilitative principal noted how sharing her decision-making responsibilities in her school lessened her sense of loneliness and increased teachers' sense of ownership in decisions (Bergman, 1992). Indeed women school principals seem more suited to democratic work cultures according to some commentators. Weiss and Cambone (1994: 291) reported studies showing women principals generally adopting a more participatory style of leadership and they have been found to "spend more time with teachers and visiting classrooms, than do male principals".

Shakeshaft (1989: 172) argues that women principals also better "interact with teachers and students more than men do". On this point, Coleman (1996: 173) concluded from her research into the leadership styles of female secondary headteachers, that a specifically feminine aspect was "their ability to communicate with staff, parents and pupils" and that they could be "identified as androgynous leaders able to select from a range of feminine and masculine qualities". Likewise Caldwell (1998: 457) recorded findings of recent research suggesting that in the

Victoria, Australia setting, women principals tend to be "attitudinally more disposed than men to the emerging role of principal in the self-managing school". However, Collard (2001) casts doubt over claims made about gender and leadership, concluding from his research with Australian school principals, that the principal gender factor interacts significantly with factors related to where principals are located in the school systems; "In particular, whether they worked in a primary or secondary setting or in a government, Catholic or Independent school frequently exerted a more powerful influence than their gender" (Collard, 2001: 352). Harold (1998: 352) observed the New Zealand experience of restructuring and noted that initial fears that the educational reforms would stifle women's opportunities to promote to principal roles "have not been entirely realised". His investigation demonstrated that between 1989 and 1996, the percentage of women in elementary school principalships, had risen from 19% to 32% and in the secondary sector, from 19% to 25% (Harold, 1998: 352). These observations indicate that women are more likely to adopt facilitative styles of leadership and management and are increasingly being promoted to the principalship.

There are many aspects of the work of principals that have changed as a result of education restructuring that has decentralised decision-making to the school level, thereby affecting the micropolitical environment of the principal (Blasé and Blasé, 1997). This is the downside of the impact of restructuring on the principal. The research of Peterson and Warren (1994: 219) led them to conclude that "it

reconfigures the power and work of school principals and teachers, increases political activity and increases uncertainty and conflict". Pristine (1994) noted increased confusion and concern for principals arising with the disintegration of organisational bureaucracy and its established routines. Peterson and Warren (1994) also noted that principals were left without many of the traditional forms of authority. James and Vince (2001: 313) believe that in the midst of restructuring these are "uncertain and anxiety-provoking times" for principals who accept that anxiety is an integral part of their role. As they attempt to "control the uncontrollable", principals feel isolated in their role, hamstrung by legislation and overwhelmed at the expectations that others have of them (James and Vince, 2001: 311). Weiss and Cambone (1994) noted that as schools adopted shared decision-making, the principal's authority was limited. Williams, Harold, Robertson and Southworth (1997) also admitted a reduction in the professional leadership of the principal with restructuring.

Commenting on the more stressful life of principals, Harold (1998: 349) found that restructuring created a "dramatic increase in workload and its accompanying increase in negative stress". Part of the reason for this stress is the extent of conflict in schools as accustomed ways of interacting are challenged. Webb and Vulliamy (1996: 293) observed that one of the consequences of restructuring is the "heightened degree of conflict in the school" as school staff confront and debate serious issues and "unfreeze obsolete ways of work". Harold (1998: 351) found "the impact of even small scale conflict can be stressful for principals".

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The literature reviewed in this section has described the impact of restructuring initiatives on school principal role and behaviour. There is less emphasis on centralised, directive styles and more emphasis on participatory leadership and shared decision-making. Principals were being seen as facilitators and coordinators. Turning now to the impact of restructuring on deputy principals, it will be shown that similar changes in role functioning emerged.

Deputy Principals

The impact of restructuring on the role of deputy principal has enabled the deputy to step out from under the shadow of the principal. It will be recalled from the earlier part of this chapter that the traditional position of the deputy principal was largely anomalous, inconsistent from school to school, and the role largely existed by the extent to which the principal delegated duties (Burnham, 1964). Teachers' perception of the traditional role of deputies was accurately expressed by Owen, Davies and Wayment (1983: 51): "To many staff, the deputy headteacher is the person appointed to the school staff to understudy and deputise for the headteacher whenever necessary".

In schools, the deputy's task involvement was limited mainly to administrative and functional tasks (Jenkins, 1985), to supporting the principal in the running of the school (Picken, 1987) and to assisting the principal in performing the principal's own responsibilities (Doring, 1992). The practising deputy headteacher fulfils "a large number of tasks varying from school management to

mundane clerical work" (Owen, Davies and Wayment, 1983: 51). Most deputy principals also valued their involvement in the formal activity of teaching. Indeed, Jenkins (1985) found that teaching was viewed by deputies as their most important activity. Todd and Dennison (1980) also found in their research on deputy principals that teaching was highly valued and made an important contribution to their job satisfaction. Herein lies the source of role ambiguity and stress in the job of deputy principal. While simultaneously being loyal and of assistance to the principal, the deputy had teaching duties that caused him/her to interact with others who may have competing expectations of the deputy (Doring, 1992). However, Todd and Dennison (1980) reported from their research that the role situation of the deputy principal was changing and that in the view of many deputies a definite role was emerging.

Recognising that the relationship between the deputy and the principal is crucial, Lancaster (1991) suggested the principal and deputy needed to consider a clear demarcation of responsibilities and authority. Jenkins (1985) reported research showing a difference in the environment orientation was already apparent, with deputy principals having an internal orientation, in contrast to principals who demonstrate an external orientation. Any link to the external environment by deputies is usually with parents. In these ways the roles may be differentiated.

As a practising primary deputy principal in Western Australia, Ridden (1993) considers the role of deputy has changed significantly and believes it will continue

to change. He suggests five (5) dimensions along which to demonstrate the changing role. The first is a movement away from teacher to manager. In the past, he asserts, deputies were teachers who assisted the principal by doing some administrative tasks, but are now seen as school managers with a whole school perspective who also teach a little. With the shift in focus from teacher to manager, there is also a shift from task orientation to goal orientation. Ridden refers to a discussion paper by Campbell-Evans (1990) that indicates deputies need to cease seeing their role in terms of tasks and duties, and to focus on the goals of the school and work with the principal to achieve those goals. The third dimension shows the focus of the deputy's role moving from delegation to negotiation. Instead of the principal telling the deputy what tasks are to be attended to, the executive staff spends time discussing what needs to be done and to decide who is best equipped to do it. There is also a shift from an individual focus to a team focus. In the past, the principal and deputy tended to work alone attending to their own tasks, but Ridden (1993) sees a clear move towards shared leadership. He believes the executive team needs common goals and a common purpose for the school to be effective.

The fifth dimension represents a shift from constraint to empowerment. From a situation of deputies feeling constrained by their principal, Ridden (1993) asserts they now have the power to make their jobs what they want. They also have both the power and the responsibility to work with their colleagues to achieve the goals of their school.

According to Ridden (1993), the implication of the movement along these five dimensions is that there is clearly a need for principals and deputies to work closely as a team. They need to develop modes of thinking as a team, of sharing responsibilities and of negotiating roles and they increasingly view themselves as co-managers of an organisation. In the restructured education system, deputies must be effective team leaders, change managers and facilitators focused on achieving the school's goals.

Secondary School Teaching Administrators

Education restructuring has also impacted on the position of the secondary school teaching administrator. In secondary schools in Western Australia, this position is the first promotional position above the level of classroom teacher and as such, the position can be viewed as providing a middle manager role. This situation is similar to heads of department in England and Wales, where they are regarded as the middle management tier in a tripartite structure (Brown, Boyle and Boyle, 2000). Generally in the Western Australian school system their role is as head of department of a distinct subject or group of subjects. They are responsible for the supervision of approximately five to eight teachers forming a small subject department or faculty. The position is closely linked to the old bureaucratic order existing prior to the Western Australian 'Better Schools Report' (Ministry of Education, 1987). Despite this bureaucratic aspect, secondary teaching administrators are strategically placed for the development of learning programs and to contribute to decision-making in key policy forums within the school

(Harvey, 1997). In the context of restructuring in the Western Australian government school system, the role of head of department has changed significantly.

Harvey (1997: 46) investigated the response of secondary teaching administrators (STAs) in Western Australian secondary schools to the education reform agenda and concluded: "The drive to make schools more flexible, responsive and accountable is redefining the STA role". He found that many secondary teaching administrators had become reactive instead of proactive in responding to change because of the "intensification of their work" and a perceived diminution of their professional status. Harvey (1997) also observed secondary teaching administrators dealing with the dilemmas of deciding the proportion of the professional effort they should assign to their teaching obligations and their administration role, as well as being torn between commitment to their department and whole school activities. In an era of restructuring they perceive blocked career progression opportunities and are dissatisfied. In the short term at least, the effect of restructuring on this group of school personnel, seems to be that of demoralising them and producing in them a negative orientation to educational change. Similarly, the impact of restructuring on teachers, while having some positive effects, has tended to be perceived as being negative to some extent.

Bureaucratic systems of control over schools were seen to be incompatible with the professional autonomy of teachers and could be detrimental to teacher morale

(Darling-Hammond and Wise, 1985). A devolved system providing increased autonomy for schools is more responsive and adaptive to community needs and it is claimed (Beare, 1983; White, 1989) that localised decision-making is preferable, as principals and teachers are in the best position to diagnose and provide for the needs of the students with whom they have direct contact and who are best able to access local information. Increased autonomy for schools introduced through restructuring initiatives, was intended to create conditions facilitating participation of various groups, including teachers, promote teachers' continuous professional growth (David, 1989), encourage teachers' sense of commitment and enhance their level of professional expertise (Darling-Hammond and Wise, 1985).

Teachers

Perhaps the greatest change introduced by the restructuring movement for teachers is their increased participation in school decision-making and there exists some evidence to show a mixture of positive and negative outcomes of this development (Chapman, 1990). This mixture of positive and negative outcomes for teachers was recorded by Peters, Dobbins and Johnson (1996: 56) in their research in a small sample of primary and secondary schools in Australia undergoing restructuring the following observation:

> The majority of staff felt that they had greater involvement in decision-making processes about teaching arrangements, curriculum organisation and student discipline and welfare. … In contrast, a substantial minority of participants (up to one third of teachers) reported that they felt a loss of autonomy about aspects of their work and that decision-making was, at times, manipulated by school leaders

and other powerful change advocates in the school. (Peters, Dobbins and Johnson, 1996: 56)

Gaziel (1998) found teachers in autonomous schools were more likely to perceive the schools they worked in and themselves, as possessing greater power through their participation in school decision-making. He claims that by taking part in forming school policy, these teachers felt more committed to their school, developed a sense of community and supported each other more effectively than before. Chapman (1988) found that teachers' motivation to contribute to school decision-making depended on their confidence in their ability to have influence over the making of important decisions that would actually be implemented. Duke, Showers and Imber (1980) noted that teachers would only devote some of their time to participate in school decision-making if they perceived such participation to be more rewarding than classroom teaching. However, increased participation of teachers in decision-making at the school level could be expected to bring about enthusiasm, interest, commitment and effectiveness (Dimmock and Hattie, 1994: 41). White (1989) maintained that devolution might improve the self-esteem, morale and efficiency of school staff. Petri and Bingham (1998) claim that teacher commitment appears to be higher in restructuring schools characterised by collegiality and professionalism. Moreover, a sense of efficacy and community is fostered where teachers know each other's work and are supportive of their colleagues (Brown, Boyle and Boyle, 2000). These findings support Stiegelbauer's (1994) suggestion that collegial organisations, rather than hierarchical ones, best facilitate change and improvement.

David (1999), however, asserts that participation in shared decision-making does not necessarily confer benefits on all those involved. Chapman (1990) reports that not all teachers choose to involve themselves in school decision-making and management, because the perceived costs of involvement exceeded the personal benefits. The additional time associated with this involvement could contribute to increased tiredness and stress among teachers and was also found to distract teachers' energy away from their teaching duties (Chapman, 1988). This distraction was neatly described by Weiss and Cambone (1994: 291) who reported teachers believing that "an elephantine amount" of decentralisation discussion had only "brought forth a small mouse" of results. Hallinger, Murphy and Hausman (1992) found from their interviews with principals to determine the impact of restructuring on teachers, that principals were concerned about reduced classroom effectiveness of those teachers participating in decision-making committees. Similarly, Dimmock (1995) records that many Australian teachers claimed that restructuring was adding to their non-teaching workload and thereby adversely affected their teaching performance. David (1989: 51) notes the extra workload of shared decision-making, is perceived by teachers as "yet another set of top-down demands". Avoiding extra workloads and preferring the congeniality that superficial structural change may bring, teachers may then retreat to their classrooms and let administrators 'get on with it' (Mulford and Hogan, 1999).

Indeed, Peters, Dobbins and Johnson (1996) found that collaborative approaches in restructured schools were problematic for some teachers. While a goal of

changing structures in schools has been to break down the isolation which has traditionally characterised teaching, it appeared in their research that for some teachers it actually increased a sense of isolation. Many teachers commented on the difficulty of cooperating with colleagues who had very different beliefs and ways of working. Well developed interpersonal skills were required of teachers fro them to work successfully with others and some teachers had to cope with feelings of insecurity when their practice was scrutinised by colleagues.

A premise underlying greater teacher participation in school decision-making is that improved instructional activity will follow, resulting in improved outcomes for students. Therefore it is of concern that teachers seem not to be modifying their classroom activity. Hess (1992: 283) reported concern that the increasingly involved role of teachers in planning for school improvement did not translate to them perceiving a need "for much change in their basic classroom practices". Likewise, Taylor and Bogotch (1994) found in their research into school-level effects of teachers' participation in decision-making that they did not alter their teaching methods as a result of greater involvement in decision-making.

Female teachers, compared to male teachers, do not seem to be reaping expected outcomes of increased participation that the restructuring initiatives offer. Studies in Australia (Blackmore, 1986; Chapman, 1988) and the United States of America (Alutto and Belasco, 1972; Riley, 1984) reveal the reality of gender imbalance in participation rates. Women are excluded from decision-making structures

because of the way in which they are configured (Blackmore, 1986) and men hold the overwhelming majority of positions on committees (Chapman, 1988). Women desire lower levels of participation (Alutto and Belasco, 1972) and men are more militant than women and will more actively seek access to school and district processes for participation (Riley, 1984).

It was anticipated that restructuring would enhance the professionalism of teachers, as it was expected to empower teachers with the authority, responsibility and accountability associated with professional status (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988; Hunter, 1989). However, it was observed by Seddon (1997: 242), that relative to their predecessors, contemporary teachers are more subject to managerial regulation, less autonomous and self-regulating and less well paid and satisfied. She concluded that this confirms an assessment that teaching is being de-professionalised. Likewise Spaull (1997), referring to the Australian State of Victoria, claimed that de-professionalisation of school teaching had occurred through deregulation of the education labour market and a number of managerial interventions. Sullivan (1994) concluded that the status of classroom teachers could be decreased as principals assume roles that increase their status, but weaken the partnership with teachers that previously existed in schools. Mulford and Hogan (1999), investigating effects of restructuring in Tasmania, Australia, found teachers to be unconvinced that it had improved their professional authority or their sense of professionalism. However, looking into the future, Caldwell (2000: 489) believes "teachers' work will be values-centred, research-based,

outcomes-oriented, data-driven and team-focused, with lifelong professional learning the norm as it is for medical specialists".

Parents

Embodied in restructuring reforms is usually the principle that all sections of the school community should work as partners in the interests of the school and its students. The potential of restructuring is to enable the participation of parents in school decision-making. In many restructured school systems, some form of school based decision-making group, 'school council' or 'governing body', is required to ensure stakeholder representation. Typically it includes parents and community members (Davies and Ellison, 2000).

Parents are being involved in school decision-making groups to make available their expertise to enrich schools and their children's education (Lloyd, 1992). Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989: 199) assert the parent body constitutes a "rich fund of skills and expertise, knowledge and experience" that goes beyond the capacities of teachers. Tapping into this resource, they argue, enriches the educational experiences of students. However, the Local Education Authorities in England and Wales and Grant Maintained Status school governing bodies, despite being referred to as forms of "parent power" are, according to Deem (1996: 66), "nothing of the sort, since they can only include a tiny fraction of parents from any given school and they also include non-parents". Deem (1996) argues that school site-based management in England and Wales has seen an increase in the

powers of central government through the handing over of power to politicians rather than parents and communities. Deem (1996) found that parent members of governing bodies rarely participated in debate about fundamental aspects of schooling. Strike (1993) claims that efforts in the United States of America to reduce bureaucracy through the restructuring of education have been perceived as being the means of reducing rather than enhancing local democratic involvement in schools.

In their interviews with principals to explore the impact of restructuring on parents, Hallinger, Murphy and Hausman (1992: 336) found that most of the principals in the study believed "the role of parents would be altered by restructuring". They considered parents would gain greater voice in the decision-making process and would be more informed and possibly more tolerant after understanding the problems teachers face. Most significantly, principals agreed that there was a strong possibility of parents forging more effective partnerships with schools and becoming more involved in the education of their children. Likewise, Mulford and Hogan (1999) in their survey of teachers and principals in Tasmania, Australia, regarding the introduction of local school management, found most believed it had a strong capacity to improve community involvement in school decision-making and school community relations, as it shifted power and authority from the centre out to school communities. Their study, however, found teachers did not observe any significant shift of power and authority from principals to school staffs and community. Furthermore, Mulford and Hogan

(1999: 157) concluded that "the data on the shift to greater community involvement in schools are also not encouraging".

While principals in the Mulford and Hogan (1999) study reported that all members of their school communities had appropriate opportunity to participate in decision-making and that the process was collaborative, cooperative and consultative, only relatively low levels of parent involvement actually occurred. The study revealed that in the overall planning process and in the determination of school goals and priorities, principals considered there to be little parent participation. School Councils were also viewed by principals as having little or no influence over any area of school policy, save perhaps in financial management and professional development (Mulford and Hogan, 1999).

Students

Hallinger, Murphy and Hausman (1992: 336) conducted interviews with principals to determine the potential impact of school restructuring on students and other groups and found about half of the principals mentioned students as likely beneficiaries of restructured schools. However, the principals spoke rather vaguely of students "reaping the benefits" of restructuring and only a small minority of the sample predicted "enhanced student performance". Peters, Dobbins and Johnson (1996: 51) investigated the relationship between restructuring and organisational culture in a small sample of Australian schools and found the majority of respondents reporting that school restructuring had

dramatically improved student behaviour and attitudes. Their perception was that their "students were experiencing many of the benefits of a more collaborative culture and as a result were happier, more confident, responsible and cooperative" in their approach to school work and relationships. They were also more actively involved in classroom and school decision-making. In contrast, Mulford and Hogan (1999: 150) reported that local school management in Tasmania, Australia "had least impact on student discipline and behaviour, student engagement, equity in student outcomes and the quality of student learning."

The reports of Mulford and Hogan (1999), and Peters, Dobbins and Johnson (1996) differ in relation to student-induced teacher stress. Morgan and Hogan (1999) reported that high school teachers claimed the largest source of stress as being poorly motivated students and student behaviour, which their research found least improved by restructuring. Yet Peters, Dobbins and Johnson (1996) reported improved student behaviour and attitudes had contributed to higher staff morale.

Whitty, Power and Halpin (1998: 86) conclude from their review of research on education restructuring that there exists "little evidence to show that student performance improves as a result of self-managing status". However, Chrispeels and Martin (2002: 329), investigating the effects of leadership teams in restructuring middle schools in the United States of America, claim such teams that "function well and stay focused on student learning can have a positive effect

on student outcomes". They refer to other research by Leithwood and Menzies (1998) and Odden and Wohlstetter (1995) that confirm improved student outcomes following the formation of school leadership teams. Principal leadership also has an indirect impact on students, as Heck (1993) found when he investigated principal leadership in a sample of Singapore secondary schools. Heck (1993: 163) claims the sum total of principal activities "helps promote productive student outcomes" and he asserts that his study provides empirical support for cross-cultural studies that "highlight the centrality of the principal's role in facilitating academic performance in schools".

This section of the chapter reviewed the literature describing the impact of restructuring policies on the roles of the main groups involved in managing schools, namely: principals, deputy principals, secondary school teaching administrators, teachers, parents and students. It has illustrated changes in the way key roles are defined, the altered relationships between the various groups, heightened expectations and the transformation of work in schools that have occurred following the implementation of restructuring initiatives.

The Evolving Concept of School Administration Teams

The creation of a management team of school administrators has never been a government policy in England and Wales (Wallace and Hall, 1994). In England

and Wales, the term senior or school management team ('SMT') had become widespread by the mid 1980s (Wallace and Hall, 1994). In Western Australia, this team became known as the 'school administration team' or simply 'admin'. This section of the chapter reviews the literature tracing the emergence of the concept following the introduction of restructuring policies.

Morgan (2001) asserts that the development and spread of a team approach to the higher-level management of schools in England and Wales, is a recent phenomenon, evolving from the management relationship between the headteacher and the deputy head of a school. However, the evolution of the concept of a senior management team occurred over about two decades. Morgan (2001: 22) states that "the emergence of a cooperative, inter-dependent team took time to develop and be accepted" and he observed that it was not until 1987 that "a modern concept of the SMT, as a team with collective responsibility, began to emerge". Hoyles (1968) and Morgan (2001) observed that with the growth in size and complexity of schools, resulting from the rise and dominance of the comprehensive school from the 1960s, headteachers were no longer able to keep within their own hands the numerous tasks that could be juggled as heads of small schools. Their professional leadership responsibilities also increased as the curriculum expanded from 1950. Lambert (1984) also noted that since 1960, schools had become far more dynamic and complex, requiring a range of skills beyond the competence of a single individual. He asserted that the role of headteacher became too large to permit total control by one autocrat.

To meet these challenges, headteachers were encouraged to delegate and share responsibilities (Lambert, 1984). Many headteachers began to rethink their own role and consider what tasks could be retained as essential for them and what could or should be delegated (Hoyles, 1968). There followed a sharing of responsibility by the headteacher with other colleagues to assist in the management of the school. A hierarchical system was created and reinforced by changes to teachers' salary structures and the institutionalising of the role of deputy head in 1956 (Morgan, 2001). Todd and Dennison (1978) contended that the previous non-role of deputy headteacher was changing as a result of the evolution of large secondary schools with complex problems, multiple deputies and awareness among heads of modern consultative management processes. Heads then brought their deputies into management teams. Grace (1995: 195) records that within schools there was "a cultural transition which can be broadly described as moving from single leadership autocracy to shared professional decision making". Esp (1982: 71) argued that with the headteacher adopting the role of leader of a team, it implied a move away from the traditional concept of "the head as undisputed king of the castle". In Australian schools, Walker and Stott (1993:38) found principals to be adopting major roles as facilitator and leader, observing that "participative processes and collaboration, rather than position power and domination, are the order of the day".

There was, then, an increasing emphasis on headship as a team activity with the senior management team as the central decision-making body (Morgan and Hall,

1982). Jenkins (1985) asserted that the emergence of a top management team in schools consisting of head and deputy heads was not uncommon. It was recognised by Hall, Mackay and Morgan (1986) that these teams were largely a reflection of the school's culture of shared decision-making. According to Adair (1986), a team is a formal work group and although it might be temporary and its membership may be subject to frequent change, it can be distinguished from a group because it has a common task and because its members make complementary contributions. Katzenbach and Smith (1993: 112) prescriptively define a team as "a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals and approach, for which they hold themselves accountable." Weindling (1998) also concluded that a common purpose, clear roles, collective decision-making, joint responsibility and a united front were all factors in successful teams in schools.

O'Neill (1997) contends that the team model provides a structure and means of managing school operations and the management of teaching. He argues that it does this by "encouraging norms of openness, interdependence and clarity of focus together with a clear task-driven purpose and an explicitly collaborative process" (O'Neill, 1997: 87). The role of the senior management team, according to Wallace and Hall (1994: 57), was to "manage the school within the leadership of the head, supported by the governing body". Their research also identified the educational purpose of the senior management team through the words of a deputy participant in the study: "The basic aim of the management team is to

maximise the potential of the students and staff" (Wallace and Hall, 1994: 57).

Cardno (1998: 59) found in her study of senior management teams in self-managed schools in New Zealand, that both primary and secondary schools appear to rely heavily on teams to carry out school functions and to contribute to effective school management. She found that senior management teams were used for "decision-making related to school-wide tasks" (Cardno, 1998: 58). In Australia, Walker and Stott (1993: 37) found that principals participating in their research "were in agreement as to the major purposes of the SMT: decision-making, monitoring and feedback, and planning and policy making". Walker and Stott (1993) also found that most principals specifically referred to the consultative purpose of the senior management team, but that some principals had difficulty in identifying an overarching purpose for the team.

Following the *Education Reform Act 1988* in England and Wales, there was a rise in the authority of governing bodies, which included parents, business and community representatives, that challenged the authority of the headteacher (Deem, 1990). On this, Morgan (2001:21) records: "To counter this perceived threat to their authority as well as autonomy and for the efficient management and administration of their schools, even the most autocratic heads needed to accept systems of team management at the most senior level." Secondary headteachers responded to the changes and increased demands on them that was also introduced by the *Education Reform Act* of 1988, by further developing senior management teams, delegating responsibilities to deputy heads and curriculum coordinators,

encouraging whole-school planning and accountability among all staff and engaging in more rigorous development planning (Webb and Vulliamy, 1996). Likewise, Gillborn (1989: 77) observed secondary headteachers placing "increased reliance upon senior management colleagues within their schools". Webb and Vulliamy (1996) found that even in medium sized primary schools in England and Wales, headteachers were building management teams to assist them to deal with multiple system initiatives. Wallace and Huckman (1996) also reported that headteachers in large primary schools were increasingly turning to some form of senior or school management team to provide them with support for the management of their schools in the post-education reform environment. However, they observed that senior management teams in secondary schools had a longer history that had emerged with comprehensivisation over the previous two decades.

Thus, according to Morgan (2001), a culture of managerialism in English schools was firmly established from the 1980s, but concedes the emergence of a cooperative, interdependent team, took time to develop and become accepted. Stoll and Fink (1996) note the influence on team formation in schools of the adoption of the ideas of collegiality, high expectations, shared values and shared beliefs from the school improvement and school effectiveness movements of the 1980s. Hall and Southworth (1997) perceive increasing reliance on shared leadership in schools entailing a distribution downwards from the senior management team. Senior management teams however, were not mandated by

reform legislation, but were "the brain child of the head", were "created by the head", and their composition and range of responsibilities were determined by the head (Morgan, 2001: 23). Similarly, Evetts (1992) considered that heads had substantial manoeuvrability in shaping the structure of their senior team.

Heads also had to perceive themselves as team leaders if the senior management team was to be effective. According to Bell (1997), the senior management team is a collection of cooperating professional colleagues adopting a collegial approach to management in schools, but he cautions this will not happen automatically. The headteacher, as team leader, must employ a set of team management strategies for the teamwork to be effective. However, Walker and Stott (1993) found, in their study of senior management teams in ten Australian schools, that principals generally did not undertake activities that had a specific purpose of team development and the improvement in the work of their management teams: "In essence, very few specifically developmental activities took place" (Walker and Stott,1993: 36).

Wallace and Hall (1994: 189) consider secondary headteachers have as much to lose as to gain when they commit themselves and senior colleagues to a team approach to managing the school, claiming "the head has much to lose" and is "the most vulnerable member of the SMT" if the team fails. After further study, Hall and Wallace (1996: 300) stated that "adopting a team approach in more than name is a high risk strategy". If the senior management team cannot agree, or

experiences unresolved conflict, the head faces a degree of disempowerment and a loss of credibility as the team leader (Morgan, 2001). The same risks are evident in primary senior management teams, which have the added risk of lower levels of resourcing preventing time for meetings during the school day (Wallace and Huckman, 1996).

Thus, in England and Wales there has been an increasingly widespread management strategy of forming senior management teams in both secondary and at least in the larger primary schools. The increased emphasis on the principalship as a team activity is a response to the complexity of school management in restructuring systems. Recognition of the need for delegated responsibility, shared decision and policy making, and a generally wider distribution of workload, are the elements prompting the formation of senior management teams as an organisational strategy to assist principals to cope with their jobs (Evans, 1998). Brown, Boyle and Boyle (2000: 45) state bluntly that "schools can no longer rely on hierarchical and autocratic forms of management." In Western Australia, the then CEO of the Ministry of Education stated: "These days, the principal is a team leader and part of the school executive team" (Nadebaum, 1990: 21). Effective senior management teams are also viewed as being crucial to school improvement. A study by Russ (1995: 5) into collaborative management and school improvement found that in 'improving schools' the "senior management team actually worked collaboratively and were [*sic*] considered by other staff to be a team".

The senior management team model has also been introduced in New Zealand schools to a very high degree, across all types and sizes. Research by Cardno (1998) revealed an average of 90% of schools had established such teams. She describes the senior management team as comprising the principal and other senior managers who "with appropriate delegations, performs the myriad tasks that now comprise management at the executive or senior level of schools" (Cardno, 1999: 11).

While there is no mention of 'school or senior management teams' in the literature on the United States of America, there is certainly discussion of moves in recent decades towards 'shared leadership', 'facilitative leadership', 'consultative management' and an emphasis on teamwork. The assumption of the new roles and an expectation for interaction with a wider range of groups demands new technical and interpersonal competencies of principals. Murphy (1994) refers to research that indicates school reform in the United States of America has increased principals' workload as well as expanded the repertoire of skills they need to function effectively. The new dimension of leadership required of principals, it is claimed by Spence (1993), would involve the ability to work with, and through, and be a part of, a team structure, and it was expected they would create and sustain new teams where they are needed. Goldman, Dunlap and Conley (1993: 70) report principals building "teams with diverse skills" thereby demonstrating facilitative leadership. Murphy (1994: 26) reported

principals as being "more consultative, more open", "more democratic" and "becoming increasingly aware of the need for more participative management".

Johnston and Pickersgill (1992) recognised the need for collective responsibility and accountability, and perceived the principal's role as one of "team-oriented leadership". This requires principals to know when to take the lead and when to confirm the leadership offered by their colleagues. Among the skills this kind of leadership calls for, are self-knowledge and knowledge of one's staff regarded as individuals and as team members (Johnston and Pickersgill, 1992). Blasé (1993) has written extensively on the micro-political environment in schools and suggests that structures such as formal committees and teams in which principals participate, would limit the capacity of principals to control and manipulate. In collaborative school environments there is no controlling role for the principal. Prestine (1994) stresses that such a collaborative organisational culture emphasises a web of relationships and points to the important role of the principal in defining and stimulating effective teamwork among teachers. Principals participating in a network of relationships must routinely change positions in the process of decision-making so that at times they will be at the forefront and at other times they may be in the background or even on the sidelines; "The Principal's position at the centre of the web of relationships in the school affords the opportunity to notice those things that may serve as catalysts for change" (Prestine, 1994: 148). Supporting this perspective, Glickman, Allen and Lunsford

(1994: 211) assert that new roles of principals frequently required them "freely to be one among many".

The research literature referred to in this overview of the emergence of the concept of school administration teams, clearly shows a trend towards the widespread adoption of teamwork. As Hall and Wallace (1996: 299) note:

> Teamwork's payoff comes from the synergy that is created. From this synergy team members achieve more that the aggregate of what they can do as individuals.

Walker and Stott (1993) concluded that one of the key benefits of senior management teams is that "creative ideas can be generated and possible solutions to problems can be critically evaluated". Top management teams in schools are given labels such as 'senior' or 'school management teams' and 'school administration teams'. In both primary and secondary schools such teams are formed by principals as a means to more effectively cope with the increasingly complex workload of school management and leadership, as well as providing opportunities to engage other groups and individuals in school decision-making.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature that provides a theoretical foundation to the study reported in this thesis. First, it has examined the literature on traditional school administration and the changing nature of school administration. Secondly, it reviewed the literature probing the impact of restructuring on

different groups involved in managing schools. Finally, the literature related to the emerging concept of school administration teams was presented. The incidence of a senior management team providing joint leadership and workload sharing in schools is well established in England, Wales, Australia and New Zealand. However, there is need for further research to uncover how school administration teams are managing their work in education systems undergoing restructuring and to gain an understanding of the processes the team members adopt for the management of schools. The next chapter provides a detailed examination of the methodology of the study reported in this thesis, which then leads to an analysis of the data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the theoretical foundations, research design and methods employed to investigate the central question of the study reported in this thesis, namely: How are school administration teams managing their work in an education system undergoing restructuring? The emphasis on 'managing' at the school site expresses the interpretivist nature of this research project, because it focuses on the manner in which school administration teams have interpreted the meaning of the policies relating to restructuring of the WA government school education system. Furthermore, the patterns of the interactions between the members of a school administration team, comprising the Principal and Deputy Principal(s), and the processes they adopt, are important to gaining an understanding of how they deal with the management of the school. To approach the study in this way is to base it on the social theory of symbolic interaction and this, in turn, implies the use of qualitative methods of research.

This chapter will describe the methodology employed in the study. First the theoretical underpinnings of the research are described and justified. Second, an outline of qualitative research is provided because qualitative research methods were considered to be most appropriate in addressing the central question. Third,

attention is given to the guiding questions used to explore the major research question. Fourth, the methods of data collection followed in the research process are described. Fifth, issues concerning reliability and validity within qualitative methodology are addressed. Sixth, an account of the mode of data analysis is presented. Finally, ethical issues associated with the study are addressed.

Theoretical Framework

Interpretivism

The research was designed to gather a richness of data from the selected school administration teams about the way in which they have managed their work. The interpretivist paradigm is particularly suited to this task. The interpretivist perspective is an empathetic understanding of human behaviour, based on the view that reality is what is internally experienced and socially constructed through interaction. Of prime importance are the social meanings which people attach to the world around them and the interpretivist approach involves searching for those patterns of meaning that people use to make sense of their world (Sarantakos, 1993). The purpose is to gain an understanding of the meaning, from the perspective of the participants in the study, of events, situations and actions in which they are involved and the accounts that they provide of their lives and experiences. It is not only the physical events and behaviour being observed that is important, but also the way in which the participants make sense of these and how their understandings influence their behaviour (Maxwell, 1998).

This focus on meaning is central to the interpretive approach to social research (Bredo and Feinberg, 1982; Rabinow and Sullivan, 1979).

Symbolic Interactionism

This study anchored its theoretical perspective in a particular stream of qualitative research known as *symbolic interactionism*. Symbolic interactionism is both a theory and an approach to the study of human behaviour, and it examines the symbolic and the interactive together, as they are experienced in everyday lives; "Symbolic interactionism typically deals with small scale, everyday life, seeking to understand processes, relationships, group life, motivations, adaptations, and so on" (Woods, 1992: 365). Put simply, symbolic interactionism emphasises the nature of interaction, implying that human beings are constantly acting in relation to each other. Blumer (1969: 47), one of the pioneers of modern symbolic interactionism, describes this social theory as follows:

> It is a down-to-earth approach to the study of human group life and human conduct. Its empirical world is the natural world of such group life and conduct. It lodges its problems in this natural world, conducts its studies in it, and derives its interpretations from such naturalistic studies. ... Its methodological stance, accordingly, is that of direct examination of the empirical world... (Blumer, 1969: 47)

Blumer's work was based on that of George Herbert Mead (1934) who postulated that the individual develops a 'sense of self' through interaction with others. This sense of self is created during childhood as the child makes judgements about the way he or she is perceived by others. The process continues through adulthood,

with each individual constructing an image of how he or she believes others view them through the social interactions they experience.

The emphasis that is placed by symbolic interactionism on social interaction as a formative process, requires a particular conceptualisation of the self. Central to this formulation is the notion that human beings are capable of seeing the self as an object or, to put it more simply, the possession of a self is the ability to talk to one's self. Thus, the individual is a self-conscious person who is able to employ this intelligence in the organisation of action. In this sense, the self has a directive quality. However, the self emerges from interaction as the individual responds to the way others define that person. As a result, individuals' behaviour is heavily influenced by what is perceived to be the orientations of others towards them within a particular context (Woods, 1992).

Thus, of all the key concepts within symbolic interactionism including self, interaction, interpretation, voluntarism and symbolic language, the concept of self is of primary importance to the understanding of the symbolic interaction approach (Woods, 1992). The concept of self enables the individual to engage in self-interaction, for the self becomes an object for the person to think about, assess, communicate with, and act towards. The continuing interplay between the individual as subject and the self as object, enables individuals to anticipate the reaction of others when one is to act in a certain manner. In short, "the possession of a self provides the human being with a mechanism of self-interaction with

which to meet the world – a mechanism that is used in forming and guiding his [*sic*] conduct" (Blumer, 1969: 62).

Emerging from Mead's analysis of social interaction are two forms of interplay: non-symbolic interaction, whereby individuals respond directly to one another's gestures or actions, and symbolic interactionism, whereby the individuals interpret each other's gestures and act according to the meaning yielded by the interpretation (Blumer, 1969). As explained by Blumer (1969: 2-5), the nature of symbolic interactionism rests on three fundamental premises:

1. "The first premise is that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them" (Blumer, 1969: 2). By 'things' Blumer includes a range of phenomena from concrete to abstract as well as the situations in which people act. Blumer's first premise is represented in this study by enquiry into the school administration team's perspectives on what the restructuring phenomenon means for their work. The methods of data gathering and analysis selected for this study, aimed at uncovering the shared meanings that led to the formation of school administration teams and their subsequent mode of operation. This richness of data also contributed to an understanding of the context within which the participants act.

2. "The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows" (Blumer,

1969: 2). Meanings are social products that arise during interaction and are personal to the individual. The attribution of meaning to objects through symbols is a continuous process with the symbols being gestures, signs, language and anything else that may convey meanings. In the present study, the focus of the interviews was on the interactions between school administrators and the processes they engaged in to implement the restructuring policy. Inquiries were also made to determine how a concept of teamwork and understandings of related processes, contributed to effective school administration in the different schools.

3. "The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he [*sic*] encounters" (Blumer, 1969: 2). Social actors attach meaning to situations, others, things and themselves through a dynamic process of interpretation. How something is interpreted depends on the meanings available and the particular sense the interpreter chooses to make of these meanings at that time. This premise also had implications for the study reported in this thesis, in that inquiries were made as to how the concept of a school administration team was interpreted and reinterpreted in the selected schools. This research included uncovering the shared meanings of the group of administrators as well as other groups within the school community.

It can be seen from the foregoing discussion that a fundamental principle of symbolic interactionism is that meaning arises from social interaction. According

to this position, interaction is a creative process in which meanings are assembled as determined by the individual's interpretation of his or her own intended actions and the actions of others. The person in a given situation assigns meaning to the behaviour of others so as to enable himself/herself to engage in appropriate action. People are constantly in a process of interpretation and definition as they go about different situations involving the actor, others and their behaviour, together with physical objects. A situation can only have meaning through people's definitions or perspectives of the situation constructed through a process of interpretation (Woods, 1992). Because the assessment of a situation is influenced by personal experience in what are perceived to be similar circumstances, ultimate understanding will differ between individuals.

On this, Taylor and Bogdan (1984: 10) state that while "people may act within the framework of an organisation, culture or group, it is their interpretations and definitions of the situation that determine action and not norms, values, roles or goals." Thus people's perceptions and interpretations of their world have significant meaning. It is important therefore for the researcher to explore the manner in which participants arrive at an understanding about the phenomenon of interest and act towards it in relation to their own interpretations and experiences. Researchers can achieve this mindset by viewing themselves also as social objects, in order to take on the role of others and adopt their standpoint (Crotty, 1998). The relationship of this theoretical approach that emphasises placing oneself in the position of the other and seeing events from the perspective of others (Crotty,

1998) is clearly connected to the focus of this study of school administration teams and how they manage their work.

Research Design

The focus of the study reported in this thesis is school administration teams in the context of education system restructuring. The purpose of the study was to address the question: How are school administration teams managing their work in an education system undergoing restructuring? Based on observation and interviews over time in selected primary and secondary schools, the study aimed to capture the reality of teamwork and its contribution to effective school based management.

In pursuit of the main research question, a set of guiding questions was developed. These guiding questions were proposed at the outset of the study as they represented the interesting facets and foci of attention (Miles and Huberman, 1994) pertinent to the research focus and were viewed as being productive pointers to generate the richness of data important to the central research question. The data gathering process was thus guided by the following questions:

1. How is the concept of a school administration team being interpreted (and re-interpreted) in 2001 in the selected schools and what are the associated structures?

2. What are the school administration teams' perspectives on what the restructuring policy ensemble means for them in regard to their work in 2001?

3. What processes do they engage in to implement the restructuring policy ensemble and how do they manage their work accordingly in 2001?

4. For selected respondents with 'institutional memory', how have school administration teams managed the various restructuring developments since 1987, as they emerged with the evolving Education Department's 'policy ensemble'?

It has been noted that in the principal research question the emphasis on 'managing' at the school site expresses the interpretive nature of this study. To frame the research in terms of how principals and deputy principals manage their schools and 'handle', 'cope with' and 'deal with' restructuring, is to base it on the social theory of symbolic interactionism. Similarly, the guiding questions are based on Blumer's three premises of symbolic interactionism. Guiding question one is in keeping with the premise that meanings are handled in and modified through, an interpretive process. Guiding question two is defined by Blumer's first premise that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that things such as physical objects, other people, categories of people, institutions or guiding ideals, have for them (Blumer, 1969). Blumer's second premise, namely, that social interaction is the source from which meanings are derived, is

represented by guiding question three. Guiding question four relates to Blumer's first and second premises.

Each of the guiding questions was broken down into a set of interview questions to facilitate conversations with the participants in the study. The interview forms one of the main data collection tools in qualitative research as it is an effective method of assessing people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and their constructions of reality (Punch, 1998). The interview questions formed an interview guide or *aide memoire* (Burgess, 1984). It is important to note that the questions were formulated only as examples of questions that could be asked during the interview to explore the themes, issues and topics pertinent to the study. According to Burgess (1984), with in-depth interviewing there should be no set of preconceived, structured questions, nor should there be a pre-set or fixed order of questions. Similar questions were asked at each of the case study schools and in addition, other questions focussing on the uniqueness of each school's context were put to the interviewees. As the research progressed these initial questions were refocused, refined or elaborated in response to the information emerging from the interviews and observations.

A Qualitative Research Approach

For the study reported in this thesis that focuses on the process of school management in a restructuring schooling system, the model of the phenomenon

that emerges from the literature and from anecdotal evidence, prompts the adoption of a research approach that can provide sufficient scope for understanding the phenomenon in all its complexity. The aim of the study was a comprehensive description and interpretation of a contemporary phenomenon, namely how members of school administration teams interact and manage their work. In this regard, the qualitative approach was considered appropriate.

Qualitative research refers to "research procedures which produce descriptive data: people's own written or spoken words and observable behaviour" (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 4). Through qualitative investigation, a researcher is able to know the participants personally and to view them as they are developing their own definitions of the world, and one learns about groups and experiences, about which very little is known. This approach centres on settings and the individuals within those settings, meaning that the focus of the study, be it an organisation or an individual, is not reduced to an isolated variable or to a hypothesis, but is viewed instead as part of a whole (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975). In-depth interviewing, participant observation and document analysis are three approaches that have served as the prime tools of qualitative research. These three approaches allow the researcher to hear participants speak about themselves and their experiences, out of which can develop an interpretation of how the world is seen from their perspectives and the significance of the meanings they attach to their experiences.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory methods of data gathering and analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990a) that are consistent with the central theoretical position for this study, namely symbolic interactionism, were adopted for the study. Grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a method for the study of complex social behaviour. Grounded theory, like ethnography, the phenomenological approach, life histories and conversational analysis, is a qualitative research approach that is "inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990a: 23). It can be viewed as a specific form of ethnographic inquiry that develops theoretical ideas emerging from the data through a series of carefully planned steps, that ensure theory does not come from sources other than the data (Crotty, 1998). Grounded theory methods include procedures for inductively developing theory about a central research question from data generated through investigating associated guiding questions. These procedures necessarily require that data be collected from several cases, sites or situations that have the potential to hold a richness of data relevant to the study. These data can then be analysed to commence the process of constructing a pattern of relationships that evolve into a theory (Glaser, 1992).

The researcher frequently returns to the field of study to gather additional data which, in turn, are analysed, coded, categorised and compared with previously gathered data (Charmaz, 1983; Corbin, 1986). The researcher checks any developing ideas with further specific observations and makes systematic

comparisons between observations. This subsequent data collection is, in effect, a sampling process that aims to identify and develop concepts and categories that have proved theoretical relevance to the evolving theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990a). This process is referred to as theoretical sampling.

Unlike the sampling conducted in quantitative investigations, theoretical sampling cannot be planned before the commencement of a research study (Strauss and Corbin, 1990b). Rather, decisions about sampling evolve during the research process itself (Bickman and Rog, 1998). However, it is often the case that reasonable predictions can be made prior to the commencement of a study, about the likely locations and sites at which a particular phenomenon will be evidenced. In the study reported in this thesis, it was apparent that not all schools would have the requirements of a school administration team, as defined in this study. Therefore the decision was made to select a balanced sample of primary and secondary schools in the school categories known as 'Levels 5 and 6,' having a Principal and at least one Deputy Principal. Because of constraints of time and distance, a limit was placed on the extent of data gathering. Accordingly, the technique of modified inductive analysis was employed. This technique was developed for practical purposes when the task of gathering data from all possible sites becomes too much to accomplish in a single investigation (Stainback and Stainback, 1984). In modified inductive analysis, the investigator limits the number of cases or sites to be investigated, making no claim that the substantive theory to emerge from the research is inclusive beyond the defined locations

(Stainback and Stainback, 1984). Therefore, in this study, data were collected from four of the schools identified as having a school administration team within a suitable distance from the researcher's location in a rural area of the State of Western Australia.

For the reasons explained above, this researcher limited data collection to a small sample of appropriate government schools and it is important to note that this is consistent with the grounded theory method. The nature of sampling in grounded theory method and the nature of grounded theory by itself, is such that the representativeness of the sample from which data will be gathered is less important than the representativeness of concepts that relate to the phenomenon under investigation. In the adoption of grounded theory methods, it was not intended that the theoretical construct to emerge from this study would be generalised to a larger population, in the sense that generalisation is understood within the positivist paradigm (Denzin, 1983). Rather, the objective, as in all grounded theory research, was to develop theory that takes account of the conditions under which the phenomenon exists, the action-interaction that applies to it and the associated outcomes or consequences (Merriam, 1988).

Case Studies

The decision to focus on four selected schools as case studies is justified by the potential of case studies to permit the researcher to get as close to the participants as possible and enable the uncovering of the subjective understandings of the

phenomenon that are of most importance. A case study is a meticulous examination of a single subject, a group, a phenomenon, or situation or event, that provides insight into a particular research concern (Yin, 1984; Krathwohl, 1998).

Merriam (1988: 11) identified four essential properties of a qualitative case study. First, a case study must be particularistic, meaning that a particular situation should be the focus. This specificity of attention makes the case study an appropriate design for examining how people deal with a given issue. Secondly, a case study should be descriptive to the extent that the end product should be a complete and literal description of the phenomenon under study. Thirdly, a case study should be heuristic because it seeks to create the discovery of new meaning and a rethinking of the phenomenon presented. Finally, a case study should be inductive, meaning that generalisations, concepts or hypotheses should emerge from the data that are grounded in the context itself.

Case study research involves the collection and recording of data about a case and the preparation of a report on the case (Stenhouse, 1978). In undertaking case study research, care needs to be taken to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the case. Stake (1994: 244) summarises the main conceptual responsibilities of the qualitative case researcher as:

1. Bounding the case, conceptualising the object of study
2. Selecting phenomena, themes, or issues – that is the research questions – to emphasise
3. Seeking patterns of data to develop the issues
4. Triangulating key observations and bases for interpretation
5. Selecting alternative interpretations to pursue

6. Developing assertions or generalisations about the case.

The case study reported in this thesis is one of the three main types of case study as distinguished by Stake (1994): intrinsic, instrumental and collective case study. The instrumental case study is one in which a particular case is examined to provide an insight into an issue, but the collective case study extends the instrumental case study to cover several cases to learn more about the phenomenon. As Krathwohl (1998: 332) explains: "The case study is sometimes a step in a larger study where cases are combined in support of an overall explanation or theory" that arises out of a cross-site analysis. This case study fits the latter type, that of collective case study, because the research investigates how school administration teams in four separate schools manage their work in the context of system restructuring.

The Sample

The State of Western Australia is geographically very large and culturally diverse. The Government school system across the State is divided into sixteen education districts with ten of the districts covering rural areas. Each district contains between 20 and 40 geographically proximate schools. Constraints of time, funding and accessibility dictated that the case study schools be located in the region in which the researcher resided, that being the Goldfields education district and the adjacent education districts of Esperance and Northam. These districts contain the full range of Government primary and secondary schools.

As previously explained, school administration teams are defined, for the purpose of this study, as being comprised of a Principal and at least one Deputy Principal. The actual number of administrators in a school administration team varies according to the size and complexity of a particular school. In keeping with the aim of probing a variety of school contexts, a purposive sampling approach was adopted to select case study schools. It was decided to select a senior high school (level 6) catering for students in Years 8 to 12; a district high school (level 5) with students in Years 8 to 10; a large primary school (level 6); and a slightly smaller primary school (level 5).

The researcher developed a productive rapport with each of the participants in the study, as this aspect of the research is considered essential if the participants were to be encouraged to reflect critically on their experiences. Rapport is based on a sense of trust and cooperation that facilitates a free flow of information (May, 1993). The aim of building rapport was to make the participant feel an important part of a worthwhile exercise (Kogan, 1994). Building rapport is also critical to gaining access and acceptance in the case study schools. The researcher was able to gain access and acceptance in the schools and also to develop positive relationships with the participants on the basis of his knowledge of the Government schooling system; his long experience (three decades) as a teacher and administrator in Western Australian rural schools; his experience in teaching in primary schools, district high schools and senior high schools; and his experience in and knowledge of school management processes and issues. This is consistent

with the recommendation of Bruyn (1966) that qualitative researchers should develop a role association through which the participants in a study can come to value and trust the researcher enough to be willing to share thoughts, act as they usually do and answer many questions about their work.

Data Collection

The main data collection methods were semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The data were gathered in an iterative process because in qualitative research data gathering and data analysis are tightly woven processes. An additional aspect of this study is that grounded theory method was used, which has as its explicit purpose, the generation of theory from data. Thus, guided by the research questions, a first set of data was collected and analysed. Then a second set of data was collected, guided by the directions emerging from the analysis of the first set of data. In this way, data were collected and analysed during the period July 2001 to October 2001.

Interviews

The semi-structured in-depth interview was chosen as one of the most suitable means of data gathering. The interview is one of the main data gathering tools in qualitative research. It is an effective way of accessing peoples perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality (Punch, 1998). Merriam (l988) identified three main variants of the interview: the highly

structured, the semi-structured and the unstructured form. They can all be applied to the individual face-to-face verbal exchange as well as face-to-face group interviewing (Fontana and Frey, 1998). At one end of the continuum of interviewing methods is the tightly structured and standardised form, in which the interview questions as well as their order, are predetermined. At the opposite end of the continuum, the interviews are unstructured and open-ended, being exploratory in their objectives, and do not rely on a pre-prepared set of questions. A semi-structured approach employs loosely defined questions for guidance during the conduct of the interview. It was thus decided to adopt this form of interview as it would provide the opportunity for dialogue between interviewer and participant which "moves beyond surface talk to a rich discussion of thoughts and feelings" (Maykut and Morehouse, l994: 80). In order to elicit this depth of response from each participant, each interview was sufficiently long for rapport to be established between the two parties, usually between one-and-a-half to two hours.

An interview guide was developed from the guiding questions and was used to provide a general direction for the interview process. Interview questions were deliberately open-ended so as to encourage information-rich responses and were flexible in order to allow the participant to provide some direction for the interview. In this, the researcher was influenced by Minchiello's (1990) argument that a requirement of the semi-structured interview schedule is that it should not dictate the structure of the conversation. The primary function of the interview within the research agenda was to reveal the participants' perspectives of their

own roles and those of others in the process of school management, their perceptions of the restructured environment, and their perspectives of the experiences encountered. This approach also addressed the concern of feminist and other researchers relating to the hierarchical relationship of interviewer and respondent in traditional interviewing. Minimising status differences between interviewer and respondent and developing a more equal relationship based on trust, produces greater openness and insight, a greater range of responses and therefore richer data (Reinharz, 1992).

Throughout all of the interviews, care was taken to use the skills considered necessary to ensure that the interviews proceeded as productively as possible. These included active listening, which demonstrates that the interviewer is hearing, reacting and occasionally constructing interpretations; focusing, or keeping the interview on the subject; explicating where material is incomplete or ambiguous; and checking for accuracy by pressing points, rephrasing and summarising (Woods, 1992). In this way, the researcher became a partner with the participant, with both of them working together to "get the story straight" (Wilson and Hutchinson, 1991: 270).

Interviews were taped with the consent of the participants and notes were also taken during the conversations to further enhance the sense that the researcher made of the interviewee's perspective (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). The recorded interviews were then transcribed verbatim to provide the best database

for analysis (Merriam, 1988). Transcribing the interviews verbatim was considered useful to enable the use of quotations in the descriptive and analytical sections of this thesis, because participants' statements can transmit a very rich density of meaning (Ruddock, 1993). Prior to analysis and reporting, a copy of the transcript of each interview was provided to the relevant participant with an invitation to make any amendments considered necessary to ensure accuracy of the record.

Document Study

The study of policy documents produced at the system level and school level formed the other main source of data. The interpretation of mute documents poses a challenge for the interactionist approach that confers considerable importance to interaction with speaking subjects (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). However, for the sake of a holistic and comprehensive study that aimed to understand the complexity of a phenomenon in its context, it was considered a necessary research strategy. In addition to the system level policy ensemble referred to in Chapter One, relevant policy documents formulated within each of the schools selected for case study, were also analysed. These documents included role and duty statements, descriptions of organisational structures and outlines of decision-making processes. Punch (1998) identifies four themes associated with the analysis of documentary data: the social production of the document - how the document came into being; the social organisation of the document - how it is written and read and by whom; by direct analysis of text for meaning; and by the

application of different theoretical perspectives to the analysis. These themes were considered when the documents were studied, so as to provide a broader understanding of the management structures and practices established in the school. They were also employed to guide the construction of some interview questions relevant to the localised context.

Reliability and Validity

In order for research studies to have any effect on theory or practice, they must possess credibility; the insights and conclusions must be perceived as true to readers, educators and other researchers (Merriam, 1988). The issue of reliability and validity is more appropriately approached in this interpretivist study in the tradition of symbolic interaction, in terms of credibility, dependability, consistency and trustworthiness. Reliability refers to the extent to which the findings of a piece of research can be replicated (Yin, 1984) and the study addressed this issue of reliability through appropriate research design, and, in particular, through the way in which data were collected, analysed and interpreted. According to Guba and Lincoln (1981: 288), the quality of research design can be assessed through "dependability and consistency", meaning that given the data collected, other researchers would be able to reach agreement that the results made sense. In the study reported here, the development of an audit trail through the adoption of careful reporting procedures that firstly document the researcher's movement through the data collection, analysis and interpretation process and secondly, provide an appropriate explanation of the main features of the qualitative research

methodology that enhance the 'dependability' and 'confirmability' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) of the study. Dependability refers to the rigour relating to the consistency of the findings and confirmability refers to the "extent to which the data and interpretations of the study are grounded in events, rather than the inquirer's personal constructions" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 324).

The validity of a study depends upon the researcher being able to demonstrate an accurate representation of participants' constructions of reality; how participants actually view themselves and their experiences (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Internal validity concerns the internal logic and consistency of the research, ensuring that its findings are based on valid comparisons (Punch, 1998). Internal validity can be enhanced by triangulation, whereby multiple methods of data collection and analysis strengthens both reliability and validity. Triangulation involves cross-checking or cross-referencing the data (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993) by combining different perspectives of the same event to provide a durable and complete picture. In this study, two sets of semi-structured interviews with individual participants, together with a study of relevant policy documents, provided multiple means by which to check findings. Another practice that promoted internal validity of the study is member checking by which data and interpretations were referred to the people from whom they were derived to check that the concepts were plausible (Merriam, 1988). In this way the criterion of credibility or truthfulness of interpretations and findings, is addressed.

External validity refers to the issue of generalisability of the study's findings, but in qualitative studies the concept of transferability is preferred (Punch, 1998). Are the deductions transferable to other settings and contexts? Strategies employed in this study that facilitate judgements to be made about the transferability of the conclusions to other contexts, include the detailed analysis of interview transcripts, observation notes and documents, purposive sampling and the logical presentation of theoretical propositions supported by relevant examples from the data. The researcher has clearly laid out the details of the research context, data collection and analysis, so that a reader may make his/her own judgements about transferability to other settings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of examining and recognising the value of the evidence collected to address the central research question of a study. The study reported in this thesis adopted grounded theory procedures that enable the researcher to develop "theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990b: 273). The process involves a continuous interaction between data collection and data analysis. Accordingly, data gathering and analysis were conducted concurrently between July and October 2001. These processes were tightly interwoven, with each phase of analysis guiding subsequent data collection and are consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of this study, namely symbolic interaction.

The use of these methods involves "an intricate process of reducing raw data into concepts" (Corbin, 1986: 102) which are then developed into categories and related sub-categories as the basis of a theory. This, in turn, involves the use of explicit coding and analytical procedures that are designed to generate a theory that is integrated, consistent, close to the data and plausible (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 105).

The analysis of data in this study employed two of the three major types of coding, namely, open coding, and selective coding (Glaser, 1992; Strauss and Corbin, 1990a). While each of these are distinct analytic procedures, it is often the case that the researcher will alternate between the modes of analysis. In this study of school administration teams, the researcher moved back and forth between the two types of coding throughout the period of the study in much the same way as he alternated between the processes of data gathering and analysis. The researcher was aware that despite the precise nature of these coding procedures, they are not mechanical or automatic, nor do they guarantee to produce results (Diesing, 1972). The data is closely scrutinised and this makes use of the "theoretical sensitivity" of the researcher, that is, "the ability to recognise what is important in data and to give it meaning" (Strauss and Corbin, 1992a: 46). Accordingly, the coding procedures were applied flexibly and in accordance with changing circumstances throughout the period of data gathering, analysis and theory formulation. The forms of coding and how they were used in the study will now be considered in turn.

Open coding is the first step to analysing data and is the process of "breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990a: 61). It is the process whereby concepts drawn from data are identified and developed in terms of their properties and dimensions. The aim of open coding is to open up the inquiry and without this analytical step, the rest of the analysis and interpretation would not be able to be conducted. Through the process of open coding, one's own and others' assumptions about a phenomenon are analysed, questioned or explored, which, in turn, leads to new discoveries (Strauss and Corbin, 1990b). This process is demonstrated by the following example of data analysis through open coding of an interview transcript to develop an understanding of the importance the school administration team placed on the quality of teaching and learning:

Interview Extract	Coding
We certainly have a school priority which is uppermost in our minds. At the moment, for example, it's all about teaching and learning in terms of Purposeful Pedagogy and that's sort of driven a lot of the emphasis in the school at the moment.	**Teaching and learning** **Purposeful pedagogy** **School priority**
When we were planning for this year, we got all of our MIS in and did a bit of an analysis of the issues raised through our looking at how our students had performed and how our strategies had gone for improving the school. A lot of it was classified under a heading of 'teaching and learning' and things like 'providing rich tasks' and 'relevance of the curriculum' and 'allowing kids to be engaged, challenged and motivated and supported in their environment'.	**School planning** **Data analysis** **School improvement** **Teaching and learning focus** **Rich tasks** **Relevance** **Engagement**

TABLE 1: Example of data analysis through open coding of an interview transcript

During the 2001 school year, the researcher integrated the categories generated and developed through open coding into a theory about how school administration teams 'manage' their work in a school system undergoing restructuring. This

process of integrating categories, with particular reference to a central or "core category" (Strauss, 1987: 69), is known as "selective coding" (Glaser 1978: 61). Selective coding is the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships and filling in categories that need further refinement and development (Strauss and Corbin, 1990b).

Following these coding procedures, the researcher then turned to formulating propositions by analysing the data using a mode of inductive analysis. This method is described by Taylor and Bogdan (1984: 127), as being "a procedure for verifying theories and propositions based on qualitative data". The inductive analysis procedure was formulated by Znaniecki in 1934 to assist in the search for universal propositions. Punch (1998) observes that today it is frequently used for the systematic examination of similarities contained in the data to develop concepts or ideas. The steps involved in analytic induction are relatively uncomplicated and the following description is after that provided by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 234):

1. Develop an initial definition of the phenomenon to be explained.

2. Investigate some cases of the phenomenon and note potential explanatory features.

3. On the basis of data analysis, form a hypothetical explanation intended to identify common factors across the cases.

4. Investigate further cases to test the hypothesis.

5. Where the hypothesis does not fit the facts from these new cases, reformulate or redefine the phenomenon

6. This procedure of examining cases, reformulating the hypothesis and/or redefining the phenomenon is continued until new cases continually confirm the validity of the hypothesis, at which point it may be concluded that the hypothesis is correct.

Ethical Considerations

Administrators in the selected case study schools were firstly approached informally to seek their participation in the research and this was followed up with a formal letter. This formal correspondence included a consent form (see Appendix) and a description of the research project, details of the data collection methods and timetable, discussion of the worthwhile nature of the study and an assurance of confidentiality. All data were treated confidentially and administrators were assured that their identity would remain confidential and would not be disclosed either verbally or in publications based on the study.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the research design and methods employed to investigate the central question of the study reported in this thesis, namely, how are school administration teams managing their work in an education system

undergoing restructuring?   The emphasis on 'managing' at the school site,
expresses the interpretivist nature of this research project and points to the
adoption of the social theory concept of symbolic interactionism which, in turn,
implies the use of qualitative methods of research.   Qualitative research supports
the notion of subjectivity that allows personal expression and individuality in
approaching participants and generating and analysing data (Sarantakos, 1993).
The methodology was designed to gather a richness of data of the lived
experiences of the selected school administration teams about the way in which
they have managed their work.   The interpretivist perspective was adopted
because it provides an empathetic understanding of human behaviour based on
the view that reality is what is internally experienced and socially constructed
through interaction.   Consistent with this view of human behaviour, the study
used grounded theory methods of data gathering and analysis.

Data collection focused on interviewing and document study and took place in two
secondary schools and two primary schools in two education districts in rural
Western Australia during 2001.   Open and selective coding techniques were
followed to reduce the raw data into concepts that were, in turn, formed into
categories and related sub-categories as the basis of theory.   Code notes and
methodological and theoretical memos were written throughout the data analysis
and theory development phases of the study.   Through the systematic coding of
transcripts and documents, together with the methodical storage of code notes,

categories and memos, the researcher enhanced dependability, credibility and transferability (Miles and Huberman, 1994) of research findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

CASE STUDY: SCHOOL A

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the context of the first of the case study schools and to present the research findings related to this case. Throughout this thesis the school referred to in this chapter is termed 'School A' and the town it serves is referred to as 'Town A'. The first part of the chapter describes the situation of the research school both from an historical and a geographical perspective. Having established the broad background, the next part then presents the contemporary scene at the school. Some of the data relating to each of these two parts of the chapter have been extracted from school documents and private correspondence with the participants. The final part of the chapter addresses six inter-related propositions developed from the data in relation to the central research question.

Geographical and Historical Background of Town A

With a population of approximately 3500 in June 2001, the town is located in the State of Western Australia, approximately 250 kilometres east of the coastal city of Perth, the State capital. The town serves as a small regional centre in a sheep/cereal grain farming area in the eastern margin of the Western Australian

wheatbelt. The town has a hinterland of approximately 2000 people. They utilise the town as their commercial and retail centre. With an economy based on agriculture, sheep and grain farming is the main industry in this area. Some of the other industries include agricultural service industries, manufacturing, Government agencies, an abattoir, education, building, cabinet making, plumbing, electrical, retail, automotive engineering, hospitality and entertainment. The town is also located on the two main land transport links to the Eastern States of Australia.

The nature of the opening up of Western Australia during the nineteenth century and the subsequent geographical spread of towns, demonstrates how changing technologies can influence rural population densities, the mobility of farmers and, consequently, the size and spacing of towns (Western Australia: An Atlas of Human Endeavour, 1979). The town was originally settled in 1889. As with many rural towns in Western Australia, the discovery of gold further east stimulated the town's development. It started as a bush shanty used by gold prospectors on their way from Perth to the goldfields. In 1893 the construction of the railway line to the goldfields extended to the town and around the same time settlement of farmland began.

History of Government Schooling in the Region

Formal schooling was introduced to the case study school's area in the early 1900s through the establishment of small schools classified as provisional, or Class 7, one-teacher schools which averaged between 10 and 20 students (Rikkers, 1982). The first such school for the district opened in June 1906 in a small settlement (*The Education Circular*, 1906). This settlement was the main town for the district until the town in which School A served grew in importance around the railway station. Another school was opened in August 1907 and the two schools initially operated on a part time basis until 1909 when they commenced operating on a full time basis. The school serving the small settlement closed in 1945 (Rikkers, 1982), but the school in Town A continued operating as the only school in the town providing primary and secondary schooling until a new primary school came into existence at the beginning of the 1962 school year with an initial enrolment of between 101 and 300. These two schools catered for children living on farms around Town A as well as children from families living in the town.

In 1950 the number of secondary school students in the district increased and a junior high school was established for young adolescent children between the ages of 12 and 15. This school (School A) had a teaching staff of 13 (*The Education Circular*, 1950) and it effectively met the education needs of secondary school students in the district until increasing numbers of students living in the district caused a demand for post compulsory courses. By 1957

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when additions were officially opened, the school operated as a five-year high school (Rikkers, 1982).

School A was later classified as a 'senior high school'. The term 'senior high school' was first used in the School's Staff Classification List 1959 and first appeared in the 1960 Report of the Education Department of Western Australia. Senior high schools were the only schools that provided the full secondary course of five years and their establishment depended on factors such as the number of fourth and fifth year students enrolled, the distance from the nearest senior high school and the availability of qualified staff (Western Australia. Committee on Secondary Education, 1969).

Current Government Schooling in Town A

Currently there are two primary schools and one senior high school (School A) catering for the educational needs of children living in the town and the region. There is also a residential college for secondary students boarding away from home. The families come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, extending from unemployed to professionals and from self-employed business people to farmers. Some families with children attending the schools are dependent on social welfare as their major source of income. About 15% of students come from Aboriginal families. Many of the students live on farms and

travel into school each day. Approximately 40% of the total student body of the town's schools, including the high school, travel to school each day by school bus. The enrolment in the schools has been declining for several years, reflecting greater use of labour-saving farm machinery and the amalgamation of farms in the district. Many of the staff of the town's schools are long-term residents of the town and are unlikely to move away from their school in the immediate future. Over half of the staff have at least 15 years of teaching experience and there are some teachers in the early years of teaching.

Supporting families with secondary school aged children in the immediate district of Town A and the wider region, is a residential college. This is situated in the town close to School A.   The role of residential colleges is to provide accommodation for children who, by reason of the geographical location, are unable to attend a high school in their local area. Town A's residential college is one of eight hostels operated by the Western Australian Country High Schools' Hostels Authority.   Opened in 1962, the residential college was the first government school hostel built in Western Australia, providing accommodation for up to about 80 male and female students.   In 2001 the enrolment totalled approximately 60, with girls and boys ranging in age from 12 years (Year 8) to 18 years (Year 12).   While the proportion of girls to boys has increased in recent years, the total number of boarders has remained fairly constant over the past 5 years. Students mainly come from farming families in the immediate area and other towns, but the hostel also attracts students from distant regions in the State.

The Contemporary Scene at the School

School A is a government school that provides education for Year 8 to Year 12 students. These students are generally aged from 13 to 17 years. The school has a student population of approximately 400. About half of the students live at home within the town's boundaries and about a third live on farms and travel to and from school by school bus each day. The retention rate of students attending School A from Year 8 to Year 12 is approximately 70% compared to the State average of 60%. From Year 10 to Year 12, the retention rate is about 85% compared to the State average of 61%. These data suggest that School A is an effective school in terms of providing relevant courses of study.

Reasons for leaving school before secondary graduation include families leaving the town or district. Other students, especially those students enrolled in vocational courses, leave school before completing their course to take up employment. Post compulsory students (over the minimum leaving age of 15, or attending Year 10) select courses from three strands: Tertiary Entrance Examination (TEE) courses (29%), general studies (42%) and vocational education and training (VET) courses (29%). The trend over the past ten years is for a declining number of TEE students compared to increasing numbers of students engaged in VET courses.

School A has approximately 30 classrooms that include many specialist facilities. There are 11 general classrooms shared by the English, mathematics, society and

environment, and languages other than English (LOTE) learning areas. Most teachers teach in their own classroom or in rooms in their own learning area. Specialist facilities are provided for the learning areas of the arts, health and physical education, science, technology and enterprise. There is also a library and an Education Support Unit. A performing arts centre and a hall/gymnasium are shared community facilities, meaning the school has exclusive use during school hours or when required for educational purposes, while the Shire Council manages community use out of school hours. The school is fully air-conditioned.

The teaching staff in 2001 totalled 34, comprising one Principal, two Deputy Principals, five Heads of Department and 26 general classroom teachers. The school also employs a non-teaching support staff of 17, including part-time staff. About 25% to 30% are beginning teachers in their first two years of teaching, with about another third considered long term residents of the district. The school is a 'local merit selection school', meaning that while teaching staff are appointed by the central office of the Department of Education, administrators in promotional positions are selected by a school-based panel with a representative from an external school or education facility. Six of eight promotional positions in the school have been filled via the local merit selection process.

The school administration team comprises the Principal and two Deputy Principals. The Principal, Catherine (pseudonym), is classed as a Level 6 Principal under the *School Education Act 1999* that provides for six broad banded

levels for appointment, promotion and salary purposes of teachers and administrators. Catherine has been a level 6 Principal of senior high schools that cater for students in Years 8 to 12 since 1990, when she was first appointed to School A. She had previously been a secondary teacher, then Level 3 head of department, before serving as a Level 4 deputy principal of senior high schools. Both deputy principals are in their second year of service as Level 4 deputies to School A.

Theoretical Propositions

Seven major propositions with regard to how school administration teams are managing their work at School A in a climate of restructuring emerged from the analysis of the interviews. The first proposition states: the school administration team members consider that the way in which they manage their work is determined largely by their view that curriculum issues should be their most fundamental concern. Proposition two states: it is significant that when talking about curriculum issues, the school administration team is actually using it as a synonym for concern about the quality of teaching and learning. Proposition three states: the importance that the school administration team ascribes to issues of teaching and learning drives the way in which they manage their work and this in turn is strongly reflected in their approach to selecting people for appointment to their school. Proposition four states that as they manage their work, a team approach amongst the school administration team members is maintained through

frequent *ad hoc* meetings and there is a high degree of communication. Proposition five states that members of the school administration team view their work as very important and are prepared to spend considerable time completing schoolwork in their personal time. Proposition six states that the importance that the school administration team ascribes to issues of teaching and learning drives the way in which they manage their work, and this in turn is also strongly reflected in their approach to accountability. The final proposition states that School Councils are established to formulate the school's educational objectives and priorities. The reality is that the school administration team does not place major store in the School Council's advice in this regard. Consequently, they manage these views in a way that is consistent with their own view of the direction the school should take. Each of these propositions will now be considered in turn.

Proposition 1. The school administration team members consider that the way in which they manage their work is determined largely by their view that curriculum issues should be their most fundamental concern.

This proposition focuses both on the manner in which this school administration team has interpreted the meaning of the policies relating to restructuring of the Western Australian government school system, as well as clearly demonstrating the significance of their shared belief in the importance of curriculum, pedagogy

and learning, and its close link to the way in which they are managing their work. The study reported in this thesis revealed that the members of this school administration team interpret the restructuring policies as being largely about 'curriculum'. It will be recalled that restructuring in Western Australia was introduced initially to improve school governance and management through school-based processes. However, the restructuring initiative progressed to a focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Accordingly, it is not surprising that this school administration team identifies its purpose as being educational and particularly to maximise the potential of teachers and students.

The great importance that this school administration team places on curriculum issues is evidenced in the following observation by the principal: "I don't recall much discussion at all about curriculum prior to '87, whereas now, for me, it's all consuming!" This passion for curriculum came partly from the principal's previous involvement in curriculum development at the system level when she worked for a period of two years in the Curriculum Branch in the central office of the former Ministry of Education. Returning to schools as a head of department, she enthused and engaged her faculty staff in rewriting and restructuring courses of study. Remarking on the effectiveness of her faculty team's curriculum development work in former times, she observed: "It revolved around how much energy you could whip up amongst your teachers and how committed they were to doing anything different". It seems to be a similar situation now as she promotes the importance of curriculum development in her school.

Proposition 2. It is significant that when talking about curriculum issues, the school administration team is actually using it as a synonym for concern about the quality of teaching and learning.

As stated above, the school administration team interprets the restructuring policies as mostly being about curriculum, by which they actually mean the quality of teaching and learning. The principal articulated this view in the following way:

> The focus is always on curriculum because if we don't get that right then I think we're missing what the school is all about. So unless good curriculum is happening in every classroom, then the school isn't doing what it's meant to.

This quotation illustrates the point that, for the principal, 'curriculum' is synonymous with the teaching and learning activity in the classrooms of the school and that student learning outcomes represent the paramount goal. Confirming this perspective, the principal commented: "The core business of school is actually the outcomes for students." One of the two deputies stated: "We certainly have a school priority which is uppermost in our minds and it's all about teaching and learning in terms of purposeful pedagogy". Attesting to the importance the school administration team placed in their concern for curriculum he went on to say: "That's sort of driven a lot of the emphasis in the school at the moment."

The other deputy stated: "One of our school priorities is pedagogy." This deputy had recent experience as a teacher and school administrator in England and observed: "I think this system has got it right, in that it seems to be much more focussed on what's happening in the classroom; in changing teaching styles and that sort of thing." This deputy and the teachers she worked with held a strong focus on pedagogy and aimed to dedicate their time almost exclusively on classroom teaching activities. She concluded by saying: "Here the emphasis definitely seems to be on the sort of pedagogy and the kids." This school administration team is doing all it can to ensure teachers are focused on 'good curriculum' as its 'core business'.

In the context of this school, it is appropriate for the school administration team to focus on issues of teaching and learning. This is because the other thrust of restructuring in Western Australia, school management, was relatively easy to address, it being a small secondary school. The principal is very experienced in her role and has been leading this school for many years. She has established effective school management structures and decision-making processes. Improving curriculum and pedagogy has more meaning in this context. At the same time, given the tradition of a top down approach, the likelihood of a principal concentrating on curriculum and pedagogy to the extent that she does, would probably not have been so pronounced had it not been for the State's restructuring policy in education.

Proposition 3. The importance that the school administration team ascribes to issues of teaching and learning drives the way in which they manage their work, and this in turn is strongly reflected in their approach to selecting people for appointment to their school.

To assist schools to become properly self-determining, it was announced in the 'Better Schools Report' that steps would be taken to decentralise staffing procedures and devolve as many staffing decisions as possible to the school level. This new staffing principle was a reversal of the previous highly centralised approach. To ensure teacher supply to rural and remote parts of Western Australia, the central office of the Department of Education had been responsible for the recruitment and appointment of teachers, and the selection and appointment of school administrators to government schools. Western Australian government schools were later invited to apply to be classified as local merit selection schools, thus giving those schools the opportunity to participate in the selection of some of their staff.

When the local merit selection trial was announced, the principal of this school immediately applied to join the trial project so that she could influence the selection of people for promotional positions to her school. "I'm very lucky that I quickly got into that merit selection trial", she stated, "I could see the opportunity and it has paid dividends." Soon the school was in a strong position to select on merit the people the school administration team believed to be most suited to the

unique circumstances of the school. As one of the deputy principals said: "Heads of learning areas and deputies have been selected locally under merit selection and that's made a big difference. We've really been able to pick people who we believe are what the school needs and what the students need." His comment, as a member of selection panels, illustrates the belief the school administration team holds that being empowered by the Department through participation in the selection process has benefited their school.

When selecting teachers for appointment to school leadership positions, such as head of department (Learning Area) and deputy principal, the school administration team looks for teachers with a track record of active involvement in curriculum development. The principal stated:

> It determines very heavily how we select our administrators. For every position we advertise, Levels 3 and 4 that is, I have a two page screed that I adapt for the learning area or for the position and it is all about the role of the teacher or the learning area head, in teaching and learning. We then select people who can demonstrate that they are good at that.

She concluded by saying: "It takes somebody really special and really focussed on what's good in a school curriculum, to be able to deliver that."

In addition to a record of involvement in curriculum development, other aspects of applicants related to teaching and learning were sought. One of the deputy principals who participated as a member of the selection panels was asked to describe the attributes in which the selection panels were interested and replied:

> Someone who has a vision and has a strong emphasis on curriculum and who has also shown they can work with other people. We get a

lot of graduates in this school. We get a lot of teachers who re-enter the workforce after a period of time, so we are really looking for someone who has a good understanding of curriculum, but also has a demonstrated capacity to work with others and improve outcomes in other teachers' classrooms rather than just their own.

This statement indicates that the school administration team considers that school administrators should possess the ability to work with teachers to improve teaching and learning.

This is a relatively small senior high school, with only three level 3 head of department positions in addition to the school administration team members (two level 4s and one level 6), so their individual contribution to, and impact on, the school's performance would be significant. The importance of the school in engaging in the selection of personnel for promotional positions, is summed up by the following statement from the principal:

Local merit selection has been, in my opinion, absolutely fantastic for this school, because I've been able to give a context of the school and get someone who can fit that profile instead of 'one size fits. It has really meant that the people who come in are focussed on what the school wants to do, not so much on their own careers.

Attention by this school administration team to issues of teaching and learning is considered to be a very important part of their work. The members of the team use their authority to ensure they select people most suited to their school's needs.

This school would normally not have had authority to directly select its teaching staff were it not for the Local Merit Selection trial program introduced as part of the education system restructuring in Western Australia. However, no more

schools have been included in the program. This point illustrates the re-centralisation process. The central authority devolved some of its responsibilities to a limited number of schools in a trial project, but did not extend the ability to locally merit select teachers to all schools wishing to do so. The devolved responsibility was expected to be widened to all schools following the trial, but instead was retained by the centre. Yet, given that schools like School A in a restructured education system, demonstrate the capacity to select their own staff, it seems that it would have been worthwhile expanding the local merit selection program as was originally expected.

Proposition 4. As they manage their work, a team approach amongst the school administration team members is maintained through frequent *ad hoc* meetings and there is a high degree of communication.

A school administration team was formed comprising the principal and the two deputy principals and it operated as a cohesive school managing unit. One of the deputies said: "We call ourselves the 'administration team'." The principal believes in working with and developing people as opposed to dictating to or controlling them. "We work as a team where they [the deputies] want me to work as a team, because they are very, very capable people. I try not to impose on them", she explained.

The female deputy offered the following observation:

> I think what really makes this team work is Catherine's (pseudonym) style of leadership. Basically she let's us get on with it. You feel like you can make some kind of a decision and you are going to be able to go with it. Catherine doesn't want to be in everything.

From this comment it can be seen that the deputies feel they are valued and have the principal's confidence in their ability. The principal does not attempt to control the school administration team, but by the same token is viewed as being in an authoritative position. "I have my hand on the tiller. I have a course within which I can steer", the principal said.

Explaining her approach to her work with the school administration team, the principal said:

> I actually like to be the leader in the school and I like to be the leader of people who are themselves leaders and who care about the kids. I'm not just a leader, I'm a teacher and I think leaders in education have to be different from leaders in business.

The school administration team views itself as the central decision-making unit in the school and manages its work with frequent informal meetings and impromptu discussions as issues arise and develop during the course of a school day or week. One of the deputies described as follows the way they operate:

> Effectively the way we work, as I described earlier, with Susan [pseudonym] and me sharing those things, we have basically been reporting back to Catherine. We don't have formal meetings, but at least four or five times a day, we may sit down and discuss an issue. Sometimes we may sit down at length after school to talk through something.

The deputy's view is corroborated by the following comment from the principal in reply to the question: What sort of meetings do you have with your deputies? "Totally *ad hoc*. We just wander past one another's offices and drop in and ask questions." She is also cognizant of the busy workload of her deputies, as revealed by the comment: "I try not to impose on them and to waste their time being briefed by them".

The principal's main contribution to the workings of the school administration team is to act as an advisory resource. One of the deputies remarked: "With Susan and me being new deputies, we spend a lot of time talking with Catherine, sounding her out about certain things. Catherine has been like a resource in terms of her vast experience". The principal agrees, explaining this attitude in terms of her long experience as an administrator in schools: "That's simply because I've been around long enough to be strategic about the way you do things", she said. The principal insists that her involvement in any consultation between members of the school administration team does not mean that any decision reached is in compliance with her wishes alone. The principal explains:

> Rarely does the discussion with me change what they are doing. Maybe I'll say, "Have you thought about such and such?" or "You might like to call so and so".

One of the deputies remarked: "She steers what we are doing as a result of those meetings but it's not that Catherine sits down and says: "This is the way I want the school development planning, for instance, to look. Go away and do that." The other deputy concurred, saying:

> She's not the sort of boss who stands over you and says, "This is the way it has to be" or "This is the way I want it to be." She really has given us a lot of freedom to go ahead and run things the way we want it to run.

These comments further indicate that the deputy principals feel they enjoy the confidence of their principal. They confidently go about managing their work and the school without undue control by the principal, but they clearly know they can turn to the Principal for advice when they think they require it.

While the deputies frequently confer with the principal, these consultations are not conducted in a formal meeting at a set date and time. However, if an issue is considered difficult to work through, the school administration team members do come together. As one of the deputies puts it: "All three of us will sit down if say it's a complex issue with a student. I believe any sign of anything that's reasonably complex, Catherine is involved." He also observed: "We often meet with all three of us after school or during the day and have a chat about where we are going with a particular area, be it school development planning or curriculum improvement." The point being made here is that the school administration team does not have set times for formal meetings during a week, but rather they meet when the need arises.

This mode of managing their work by members of the school administration team relies on close cooperation, trust and good communication. One of the deputies observed:

> There is a whole lot of overlap with all sorts of things and it's been an interesting aspect of my work over the last year and a half, working with someone else truly collaboratively over a lot of issues and with Catherine it is the same. It's more of a true collaborative approach.

This collaborative mode of working together as a school administration team is strengthened by a recent initiative to learn more about themselves with an investigation into their individual learning styles. As one member of the team commented:

> We did a PD on different learning styles and we had to map our own style. We each had very different learning styles. Catherine took that to mean that we make an effective team because we have three of the four bases covered.

The belief that they are a more effective team is based on them possessing a personal understanding of their different ways of learning, which enables the school administration team to take account of this aspect in communication amongst them.

This easy communication pattern builds their trust and confidence in each other. Augmenting self confidence was identified by one of the deputies as an advantage of working in a school administration team when he stated: "I think it certainly gives me a bit of confidence. You don't feel as though you're alone". When dealing with a situation or an issue, he prefers to consult the other deputy and the principal because, as he admitted, "You feel a lot more confident sometimes in the decisions or courses of action that you make". Taking the time to confer with others also ensures attention is given to all aspects of an issue: "it's more of a

considered position that we've taken before we act", declared one school administration team member.

Another perceived advantage of working as a school administration team is related to professional isolation. The principal is aware of being isolated by her most senior position in the school and believes she gains more satisfaction by maintaining a team approach to her work, as the following comment reveals: "It's much more fun. I hate just sitting in my office and being isolated". A deputy also prefers to work as a team, saying of his work: "I enjoy what I'm doing here and hopefully it's made a difference".

The above statements point to the greater satisfaction the principal and deputies enjoy by working as a school administration team. The high regard the school administration team members have for their work is summed up in the following quotation from the principal:

> Our bottom line is what's good for kids and if we don't model what's good for kids, no one is going to believe that when we tell them. So what it meant for me, was having a team of people that was seen to be caring for the school and was individually and collectively seen and believed to be working for the benefit of the whole community through their children.

The new Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998) promotes teamwork as a learning outcome for students. The way in which this school administration team approaches its work provides a good model of teamwork but it may not have always been like this. In the past the administration of schools was performed

largely by principals, but restructuring in the Western Australian government education system shifted many responsibilities from the centre to schools. This increased the complexity of the role of principals and prompted them to form and work with school administration teams. Shared decision-making, delegated responsibility and a wider distribution of workload became the features of school management in a restructured system. However, the hierarchical structure of principal and two deputy principals, as was the case in School A, can inhibit the teamwork of the school administration team. It could be argued that the principal of this school was addressing this constraint on teamwork by avoiding formal meetings that could perpetuate the hierarchical structure, opting instead for *ad hoc* meetings.

This response serves to reinforce the notion postulated in an earlier chapter of this thesis about Western Australia being so large and so diverse that a single model of restructuring and devolution could not be successfully imposed on all schools. There had to be flexibility for interpretation of the restructuring policy at the local level to suit a school's context. In other words, it was wise to recognise that different schools should have the opportunity to develop different models.

Proposition 5. School administration team members view their work as very important and are prepared to spend considerable time completing schoolwork in their personal time.

The members of the school administration team are all highly committed to their work and while they derive considerable personal satisfaction, they recognise that it forms a large part of their lives. The principal views her role as leading a school staff that demonstrates a caring approach to the way the school performs and how the school contributes to the well being of the community. "What it means for me is forming a team of people that is seen to be caring for the school and is individually and collectively seen and believed to be, working for the benefit of the whole community through their children", she said.

During a recent holiday period the town experienced some tragic events that impacted on the school community. Despite it being vacation time, members of the school administration team attended memorial services. In relation to the dreadful events, both deputy principals participated in a night-time meeting of the local Safer WA Committee during their holidays. Then in the first week back at school after the holidays, they all attended a parent information evening that, according to Susan, "went on to 8.30pm". She observed: "You make a decision, 'I'm not going to go, I've done my bit', but you end up giving up your own time."

Susan obviously gains satisfaction from the role she plays in the school and may speak for the rest of the school administration team when she stated: "I enjoy what I'm doing here and hopefully it's made a difference. I think that's what it's about, to make some kind of difference to how the school runs". The school is a busy place and there are days when issues arise suddenly and they are prevented from attending to the tasks they planned to tackle. "Some days you just don't get a chance to work on your own agenda and you often have to take work home" said Daniel (pseudonym). The final comment on the way in which their work impacts on their time goes to Susan who stated: "It takes up a lot of your time".

Restructuring of the Western Australian government education system has generated heightened management responsibilities for principals and deputy principals. Their expanded work load demands greater commitment of personal time as the comments above illustrate. This is not to say that the increased workload is a reason to abandon restructuring. With more experience, professional development and, perhaps, coaching over a period of time, the workload may become more easily managed. What is now considered difficult and time consuming for school administration teams could become instinctive at a later date.

Proposition 6.   The importance the school administration team ascribes to issues of teaching and learning drives the way in which they manage their work, and this in turn, is also strongly reflected in their approach to accountability.

The restructuring process in the Western Australian government schooling system devolved authority and some responsibilities to schools, but the central authority also expects schools to demonstrate greater accountability to both their local communities and to the Department of Education.   The principal of this school embraced accountability, and her attitude to the requirements is summed up in the following observation:

> I remember thinking when accountability was first mooted, as something that teachers and deputies and principals had to get involved in. For me it was [a case of] "It's about time". So when devolution was seeming to give with one hand and take with the other because accountability was part of it, I actually was very, very pleased, because I liked the fact that we have a lot of public money and a lot of power in our hands and a lot of influence and we should show what we do. We should be accountable for it.

While some schools may view accountability as a threatening and negative concept, it is apparent from the above statement that this principal approached the requirements in a positive manner to showcase student and school achievement: "I like to say, yes I'm doing these things and I'm accountable for doing it. I find it very easy and very non stressing."

The school principal is accountable to the district director for the school's performance. The latter conducts a formal review of the school each year. In describing the procedure, the principal indicated how comfortable she was with the conduct of the district director's review:

> He asks me to design a day for him - all the bodies I think would be useful for him to form a picture of how the school is going [including] School Council members. He gets a picture of what we're trying to do and what the results are. Then he usually sees me at the end of the day and gives me a summary of what he's seen. He's very supportive.

She also observed: "He never tries to catch me out. He always tries to get a good picture. Mind you, I'd be very savage if he did try to catch me out!"

To examine the school's practices and to implement initiatives aimed at improving the quality of curriculum, teaching and learning, the school administration team has established processes within a framework of school development planning. A cycle of student and whole-school data collection, analysis and review contributes to the production of the School Development Plan that sets out the school's goals and strategies for the coming year, against which it can be held accountable. The plan enables the school to determine priorities, assign a budget and provide the community with information about school directions.

In formulating the School Development Plan, the school administration team in this school conducts a review of school performance and this is an integral part of

the accountability process. The principal summarised their accountability rationale: "Our MIS [management of information system] is all about showing that the school is accountable with public money and with kids. [We say] 'We're doing this and this has happened – the data on this is such and such.'" One of the deputy principals is responsible for managing the collection and processing of information produced by their ongoing cycle of review and planning. He described part of the process whereby he involves the heads of learning areas to collect, review and analyse data and make recommendations:

> The process is that we have some proforma and some strategies to direct our learning areas in certain ways, to collect data and start reviewing and analysing that data and making recommendations. What they do is review student performance, review the strategies they have put in place and do a review of where they are.

Formal meetings are conducted as part of the process and these are called 'accountability meetings'. Commenting on this review and planning activity, the deputy said: "Accountability meetings are with our heads of faculties, where they run through what their learning area has achieved and what they have uncovered through their MIS". The deputy then collates and classifies the information and presents it to the staff. "I then put that information out to the whole staff and we reflect on that", he said.

Teamwork within the school administration team is demonstrated in this accountability review and planning procedure, as both deputies work

collaboratively. The other deputy describes her participation in the following way:

> We put together a summary about the common sorts of things that were coming up for the school and then in Term 4 when we have a whole school meeting, we give the summary about what's going on in the school and the findings and what the recommendations are. Then from that, as a school, we discuss what our school priority is going to be.

This comment indicates that the whole staff is deliberately engaged in the review procedure. It is supported by a further comment of the principal when she said: "I try to involve staff in this school. I think it's an excellent thing to do for the senior staff. For two years in a row now, we have brought together all the heads of learning areas and teachers in charge of areas and we get them to say what they've been doing." The principal believes that the involvement of other staff has been of great benefit to them and admitted: "[The review] was to present to [the district director] but it turned out to be great PD for the staff involved as well. They had the opportunity to feel good about what they are doing in school."

The devolution of responsibilities from the centre to schools created a need for processes whereby schools could demonstrate accountability to their community and the government. Accountability was a requirement of the 'Better Schools Report':

> The administrative style of education, as for other Government departments, must be one of … accountability to the Government and the community for the standard of service and funding. (Ministry of Education, 1987: 5)

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The 'Better Schools Report' introduced the concept of a School Development Plan to focus 'co-operative decision-making' and as a means by which schools could demonstrate accountability. The 'Better Schools Report' made it mandatory for all schools across the State to formulate a School Development Plan and the minimum elements were set out in policy and guidelines. Through the accountability processes established in School A, the school administration team showed fidelity to the restructured system's requirement. However, it was not necessary for all schools to use a prescribed format, which could be viewed as a concession of the restructuring policy to the distinctive features and needs of the local school context. In this respect, it is to the credit of those who imposed restructuring in Western Australia that there was some recognition of the diverse realities over such a vast geographical region.

Proposition 7. School Councils are established to formulate the school's educational objectives and priorities. The reality is that the school administration team does not place major store in the School Council's advice in this regard. Consequently, they manage these views in a way that is consistent with their own view of the direction the school should take.

The restructuring movement endeavours to increase accountability of schools to parent bodies and school communities. In Western Australia the 'Better Schools Report' of 1987 had, as one of its principles, 'self-determining schools' and called

for greater community participation in school management. This was to be achieved through the formation of a "school-based decision-making group" to ensure accountability to the local community. These groups were constituted to enable community participation in the formulation of a school's educational objectives and priorities through a school development planning process.

The new Western Australian *School Education Act 1999* (Division 8 Subdivision 1) and the associated *School Education Regulations 2000* (Part 6) provided for the formation of School Councils that all government schools would have to ensure were established by June 2003. A School Council is formed with the fundamental purpose of enabling parents, students, staff and members of the community, to engage in activities that promote the best interests of students and that will enhance the education provided by the school and to share partnerships between the school and the community. It is expected that a School Council would be enabled to take part in certain decision-making, including:

- establishing and regularly reviewing a school's objectives, priorities and general policy directions;
- the planning of financial arrangements necessary to fund those objectives, priorities and directions;
- evaluating a school's performance in achieving them; and
- formulating codes of conduct for students at a school

According to the *School Education Act 1999* and associated *Regulations*, a School Council cannot intervene in the control and management of a school or intervene

in the educational instruction of students. Neither can it exercise authority over teaching staff or other persons employed at a school. The Act also prevents a School Council from intervening in the management or operation of a school's finances.

The participants in this case study were given an opportunity to describe the degree of power and influence actually exercised by parent representatives in this school. The comments of all three members of the school administration team indicated their view that the School Council had very little influence on school decision making. In answer to the question about how the School Council is involved in working with the school administration team the principal stated: "Peripheral really. The School Council has on it one of the deputies, and myself. Susan is actually [the current] elected chair of the Council." This particular deputy commented: "We have a P&C and a School Council. We didn't have a School Council last year. That actually really only started up properly this year". She said that she thought that there was a school decision-making group in the past: "I'm pretty sure there was something before", but that it probably was not called "School Council". "There was one in 1999, then there wasn't in 2000 and then we restarted it in 2001", she explained.

She went on to observe: "The previous deputy when he left here said, 'this is something we need to look at. It's not running well at the moment.' When this issue was explored further, the deputy (who is the current chair of the School

Council) admitted: "They haven't really been involved in decision making at all at the moment. No, they haven't had much input as to school decision making as such, but I'm not sure how much decision making they will actually do." In a subsequent interview she confirmed this view replying to a question about how much influence the decisions of School Council will be by saying: "Probably limited. They don't know enough about the running of the school."

Talking about the influence of the School Council, the other deputy principal simply said: "We have a School Council. I don't think that's been a real strength in this school - the way we work with our Council." When asked to describe the impact of School Council decisions on his work he observed: "Their decisions probably don't have a great impact on the way I work." All these comments signify that parent members of the School Council of School A, rarely participated in debate about fundamental aspects of schooling.

The establishment of the School Council in this school is progressing slowly and as the principal recognises this she is providing time for them to explore their role: "Mainly, I think, up until now this year, we've just been working on how the council will work." The deputy principal agreed, saying: "We are establishing what is our sort of job this year. They've also been looking at school uniform and our MIS."

It appears therefore that in this senior high school, the School Council is not fully operational and in the opinion of the school administration team does not have a large impact on their work. The principal's view is that the members of the School Council do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of school operations: "I try to make them feel important and valued and that kind of stuff, but until they really understand how a school works, it's hard for them to feel like that." The principal deliberately involves the School Council in the accountability procedure conducted by the district director by arranging for them to meet and discuss school performance with the district director during his visit to the school. She also invites their participation as school representatives in education events: "When [the district director] wants to speak to anybody or when we want representatives anywhere, I try to invite the School Council along to give them a profile in their own minds as well as publicly."

However, the School Council is involved in decision-making by the deputy principal responsible for school development planning processes: "One really significant involvement they have had in the past was when we worked though our priorities." He described the review and planning processes in which the School Council parent representatives could participate by sitting in on meetings of staff as they review the MIS (management of information system) data collected about student and school performance as priority areas:

> They have also sat through accountability meetings. Accountability meetings with our heads of faculty, are where they run through what

their learning area has achieved and what they have uncovered through their MIS.

While he believes that this is effective, he also said: "I think it has been a very good process for them to get involved in that decision making". He recognises that their involvement in school decision making is limited: "That's probably the only example I can think of, where the School Council has had a real and significant involvement in the grass roots of what's going on in the school". He also considers the point in the school development planning process, where the School Council is consulted and involved, to be a significant step "where we are presenting information to them and seeking their input on some of the decisions". He admits though, that their involvement has been fairly passive and described a procedure whereby the completed school development plan is distributed to members of the School Council and "they review and ratify that plan". Not surprisingly, therefore, he observes: "We haven't found they have wanted to go anywhere different from the staff." While the school administration team seems comfortable with the current level of participation in decision-making by the School Council, Daniel admits to it requiring some improvement when he states: "It's [the role of School Council] an area we have identified that we probably need to improve on and strengthen. It's something we really need to work on".

The 'Better Schools Report' introducing restructuring in Western Australia, made it mandatory that school decision-making groups, later known as School Councils, be established in all schools in the State. However, in School A the

restructuring policy requirement is embraced but not entirely adhered to. A School Council is being established but effective influence in school decision-making is yet to be achieved. It may be that to successfully gain parent and community participation in school decision-making, a longer timeframe than anticipated may be required. It is difficult enough to gain staff participation in decision-making within a school without concurrently promoting and establishing parent and community involvement. These groups, in a sense external to the school, require time to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to have effective influence in school decision-making. As restructuring is embedded more attention could be applied to the needs of parent and community members of School Councils.

Conclusion

In this chapter a case study of a country senior high school was presented. The first part described the situation of the research school, both from a geographical and a historical perspective, and also outlined the development of government schooling in the town from its beginnings until the present. Having established the broad background and the history of the research school, the next part presented the contemporary scene at the school. The chapter then addressed seven inter-related propositions with regard to how the school administration team members are managing their work.

The first proposition stated: the school administration team members consider that the way in which they manage their work, is determined largely by their view that curriculum issues should be their most fundamental concern. Proposition two stated: it is significant that when talking about curriculum issues, the school administration team is actually using it as a synonym for concern about the quality of teaching and learning. Proposition three stated that, the importance the school administration team ascribes to issues of teaching and learning drives the way in which they manage their work, and this in turn is strongly reflected in their approach to selecting people for appointment to their school. Proposition four stated that, as they manage their work, a team approach amongst the school administration team members is maintained through frequent *ad hoc* meetings and there is a high degree of communication. Proposition five stated, members of the school administration team view their work as very important and are prepared to spend considerable time completing schoolwork in their personal time. Proposition six stated, the importance that the school administration team ascribes to issues of teaching and learning drives the way in which they manage their work, and this in turn is also strongly reflected in their approach to accountability. The sixth proposition stated: School Councils are established to formulate the school's educational objectives and priorities. The reality is that the school administration team does not place major store in the School Council's advice in this regard. Consequently, they manage these views in a way that is consistent with their own view of the direction the school should take.

CHAPTER SIX

CASE STUDY: SCHOOL B

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the analysis of the second of the case study schools. The first part describes the geographical and historical background of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Eastern Goldfields region of Western Australia in which the school is located. The next part describes the development of government schooling in the city up to 2001. The contemporary scene at the school is then presented. The final part outlines and discusses five inter-related propositions developed in relation to the central research question of this thesis.

Geographical and Historical Background
of Kalgoorlie-Boulder

The Eastern Goldfields region, centred on Kalgoorlie-Boulder in Western Australia, is famous for its mineral wealth, for its unique Western Australian outback environment and for its rich history. Primarily gold and nickel are mined presently, but an increasingly diverse geology is being discovered that includes diamonds (*Kalgoorlie-Boulder Business and Community Directory*, 2001: 225). Located to the east of the State's capital of Perth on the west coast, the region is the largest in the State and is made up of the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the

towns of Coolgardie, Kambalda, Norseman, Menzies, Leonora, Leinster, Laverton and Warburton. The climate is semi-arid with hot summers and cool winters, and receives only low rainfall. The topography of the Eastern Goldfields region centred on Kalgoorlie-Boulder is predominantly flat, with many salt lakes, some hills and low ranges. Salmon Gum woodlands cover a wide area, with low mallee and red soils. These natural features are interspersed with evidence of old mine workings, being a legacy of the region's early mining history (*Goldfields-Esperance Economic Perspective*, 2001). Gold mining has been central to the development of the region's economy and the settlements of Coolgardie, Boulder and Kalgoorlie developed rapidly after gold was first discovered in the region in 1892.

The present City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder is an amalgamation of the former municipalities of the Shire of Boulder and the Town of Kalgoorlie. The two officially became one local authority on 1 February 1989 (*Kalgoorlie-Boulder Business and Community Directory*, 2001: 225). Kalgoorlie-Boulder City is a modern bustling regional centre located 596km by road from Perth. Kalgoorlie-Boulder is the largest centre in the Eastern Goldfields and is the region's principal administrative centre with State and Federal government agencies located in the city. In 2000 the population of Kalgoorlie-Boulder was 32,042 (*Goldfields-Esperance Economic Perspective*, 2001).

Much of the infrastructure of the Perth metropolitan region is replicated in this inland city. Schools, both government and private, offer schooling from kindergarten to Year 12, and a university multi-sector campus provides a variety of courses, including vocational education and training (*Goldfields-Esperance Economic Perspective,* 2001: 11).

Manufacturing activity in Kalgoorlie-Boulder principally supports the local mining, exploration and pastoral industries. The mining, retail trade and construction sectors are the largest employers in the Goldfields. Mining is the largest employer of all and employs over 5000 residents, making a significant contribution to the Western Australian economy. In 1999/2000 the output of the minerals industry in the goldfields region was valued at $3.0 billion or 14.2% of the State mineral total. Gold production represented 64.3% of the State's production and nickel represented 37.1% of the region's total mining production (*Goldfields-Esperance Economic Perspective* (2001: 5-6).

History of Government Schooling in Kalgoorlie-Boulder

Several private and church operated schools at first catered for the hundreds of children living in the Goldfields (Thomson, 1997). In 1895 a school reserve was gazetted in Kalgoorlie and the first government school to be established in the area, opened in May 1896 and was known as the Kalgoorlie Government School (Rikkers, 1982). Meanwhile, there was a need for a government school in

Boulder and in May 1897 the first government school in Boulder opened. (Thomson, 1997). Enrolments at both schools grew and by December 1897 Kalgoorlie School had 300 pupils (Henderson, 1996) and the new Boulder School had 240 (Thomson, 1997).

To accommodate the increasing population of the immediate area around the Golden Mile, the opening of other schools soon followed. Government schooling at the primary level in the twin cities of Kalgoorlie and Boulder, seems to have been well provided for by these schools, although some schools were later closed (Rikkers, 1982).

Located midway between the twin inland cities of Kalgoorlie and Boulder, Eastern Goldfields High School opened on 21 May 1914 with Mr A J Irvine as headmaster and with an enrolment of 128 students (*Report of the Education Department for the Year 1914*: 89). Eastern Goldfields High School soon became classified as a four-year high school until 1917, at which time it was classified as a five-year high school. Eastern Goldfields High School lacked sufficient accommodation for the number of students wishing to continue their education beyond primary schooling and Boulder High School was opened in 1952 (*The Education Circular*, 1952: 3) with 300 students attending in its opening year (Education Department File F139351 - Folio 50 dated 06/03/1952). The school operated as a three-year high school until the two high schools amalgamated in 1962 when additional classrooms and facilities were opened at

the former Eastern Goldfields High School which was then classified as a senior high school. At that time, all the secondary students in Kalgoorlie and Boulder attended the same school that had an enrolment of 1,130 (Folio 171 of Education Department File F008860 - *Eastern Goldfields High Buildings File)* and a teaching staff of 49 (*The Education Circular,* 1962: 112).

During the century following the opening of Kalgoorlie School, the size and number of schools reflected the economic fortunes of the region (Henderson, 1996). Great fluctuations in student enrolments from year-to-year occurred, largely as a result of the price of gold on the world markets. The gold price affected mining and economic activity in the Goldfields, with downturns in response to reductions in the gold price, flowing onto reductions in student enrolments at the schools. By the later 1990s, the city had developed a diverse economy that was becoming more resilient with regard to gold price fluctuations.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the population of Kalgoorlie-Boulder in June 2001 was estimated to be 29,735 (www.abs.gov.au). Serving the city of Kalgoorlie-Boulder by 2001, were ten (10) government schools, including two education support centre schools each attached to another school but operating as independent government schools. Eight were primary schools accommodating about 3,460 primary pupils and about 1300 secondary students in one government senior high school. The senior campus of this school was co-located in 2000 with the Kalgoorlie Campus of Curtin University of Technology

that includes a technical and further education operation, Curtin College of Higher Education and the Western Australia School of Mines.

Contemporary Scene at the School

School B is a government primary school that provides schooling from Kindergarten to Year 7 for children aged from 4 to 12 years. This school is classified by the Department of Education as a Level 5 primary school because its student population lies between the range of 250 and 700 enrolments. The enrolment at the time the data for this thesis were gathered was approximately 550 students. The school is located in one of the oldest of Kalgoorlie's suburbs. The school first opened in 1902 and consists of a fine old brick main building together with extensions and new buildings added over the past nine decades.

Students of School B are from varied backgrounds, with some belonging to third generation Kalgoorlie-born families. Other students are from families engaged in the mining industry and regularly move between mining locations around the State and even interstate. There are also students in the school who belong to various Western Australian Aboriginal groups and form approximately 7% of the student population. Generally speaking, families are attracted to the city's diverse employment opportunities and parents of the school's students are employed in the business, mining, banking and government sectors. The attendance rate of the student body is very good at 94.8% and compares well with the State average of 94.7%.

The school's student population is formed into 17 generalist primary classes, 2 pre-primary classes and 2 Kindergarten groups. There are also specialist classes in physical education, music/drama and Indonesian. Children participate in two physical education classes each week as well as attending clinics with visiting coaches. The music/drama program focuses on singing and the drama activities used to further implement the cooperative and collaborative school culture priority. Some students are also able to participate in an instrumental music program. Children in Years 3 to 7 participate in two sessions of Indonesian each week focussing not only on language acquisition but also an understanding of Indonesian cultures. Students identified as talented and gifted are involved in a district wide Primary Extension and Challenge program that supplements the learning activities provided by classroom teachers for advanced learners. Junior students who have been identified as at-educational-risk are catered for through a reading recovery and speech program.

The school's teaching staff, including part time teachers, consists of 32, including a Level 5 Principal and two Level 3 Deputy Principals and a support staff of six. The *School Education Act 1999* provides for six broad banded 'levels' of teachers and administrators for appointment, promotion and salary purposes. Staff turnover at School B is relatively low when compared to other government primary schools in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. There is a blend of both highly experienced and graduate teachers. The school's teachers come from a variety of backgrounds. They include Western Australian trained, interstate and overseas-

trained teachers. Currently a lack of relief teachers residing in Kalgoorlie-Boulder has meant that teachers are unable to gain access to the ongoing professional training they require, as it is usually only available in the Perth metropolitan area which would require expensive travel and time absent from their classes. Some essential professional development is provided and conducted locally by the school, on student-free days and by the Goldfields district education office.

Resources available at the school include a well-developed computer network that provides Internet access to most classrooms and a ratio of over one computer to every 10 students. The school currently has 14 permanent classrooms and six 'transportable' classrooms, as well as a purpose built Kindergarten located off site. The school has a newly built library, a dental clinic provided by the Health Department and sporting facilities including basketball courts, cricket nets and a grassed oval.

The school administration team is comprised of the Principal and two Deputy Principals. Each of these has a substantive appointment. The Principal, John (pseudonym), has a teaching career spanning 35 years and took over as Principal of this school about a decade ago having previously been the substantive Level 5 Principal of another primary school in Kalgoorlie. Tony (pseudonym) is one of two Level 3 Deputy Principals and was first appointed to School B in 2000. He has had school administration experience as acting Deputy Principal and as a

Level 3 Principal of a small rural primary school prior to taking up his position at this school. While in his position at School B, Tony took up an opportunity to be acting Principal of a nearby primary school during Semester one, 2001. The other Deputy Principal is Fiona (pseudonym) who is in her third year as Deputy of School B

Theoretical Propositions

Five inter-related propositions relevant to how the school's administration team is managing its work in the context of restructuring emerged from the analysis of the data gathered through interviews with the team members. First, the establishment and maintenance of trusting human relationships is a high priority for this school administration team. Secondly, the members of the school administration team actively maintain trust in each other. Thirdly, the establishment and maintenance of trusting human relationships amongst the school administration team is reflected in them having easy access to each other for informal discussions about issues as they arise and not being reliant on regular formal meetings. Fourthly, while the school administration team demonstrates a concern for trusting human relations, which is extended to the wider school community, the involvement of the School Council in school decision-making is considered a low priority. Finally, the low priority given to School Council's involvement in school decision-making can largely be attributed to the approach of the principal. Each

of the propositions that form the central focus of this analysis will now be considered in turn.

Proposition 1: The establishment and maintenance of trusting human relationships is a high priority for this school administration team.

The staff of School B is known by the school community to be stable with well-founded effective working relationships. The female deputy principal, Fiona, claimed that "this has always been a fairly collaborative school in that teachers work together for planning and things like that." The other deputy principal said: "Right through the school there's teamwork and collaboration." This is in no small part because of the principal's desire to establish and maintain a workplace in which his staff feels comfortable. As the principal described it, "they are working in an environment where they feel safe and supported." That trusting human relationships is a high priority is evidenced by the perspective of the principal in which he sees the working environment as driving the leadership of the school: "What drives the leadership? The simple word would be *environment*". He elaborates by saying: "The environment is one where people have trust, where people are happy, where people know they're respected and where they are valued." A key factor in the level of teacher commitment in this school appeared to be the principal's trust in his teachers and his ability to communicate that trust.

John had some years of experience as a principal prior to taking up the position at this school and he was keen to create a trusting school culture. He said: "I came to [School B] with the specific purpose of setting a culture that the school environment would be one whereby you just trusted it implicitly." His reasons for setting himself this objective are that he believed trusting human relationships are fundamental to the effectiveness of every thing in which the staff would be engaged. "You cannot learn, you cannot administer, and you cannot lead unless the environment is right", he said. In this intention, John was supported by a similar goal of Fiona who said: "One of my aims when I came here was to develop a really collaborative structure within the staff." Such a collaborative work environment in a school requires the principal to relinquish some of his or her power and control. John recognises this and he believes that "as the leader you have to be prepared to accept that you don't have to have a say in everything. You don't have to be on every committee and you don't have to be involved in every decision." John views his principalship as a team activity and promotes teamwork in his school, while his leadership demonstrates that he is a 'key player'.

The principal set about influencing the selection of staff to recruit the people he felt would best create a collaborative staff. "I have actively recruited people who I know subscribe to that environmental theory and as a consequence we have a very tight knit, strongly supportive team of teachers", he claimed. "I worked on a culture for the staff that, when I made a decision, or the admin team made a

decision, it was a decision that was made to benefit all staff, not for an individual staff member". It was apparent that such democratic decision-making was appreciated by teachers.

The principal also worked to achieve a school culture in which there was shared leadership within a spirit of accountability. In his terms, "shared leadership and devolved leadership in a school, is about people being responsible for the decisions they make", and he tells his teachers that "whatever decisions you make, you have to be able to justify." Because of the principal's leadership there is high teacher involvement in, and ownership of, decisions. This pattern of shared leadership and stability has endured, despite some potentially disruptive role changes within the school administration team, through one of the deputies taking up a position as acting principal in a neighbouring school, and through serious illness causing the principal to take sick leave for most of the 2000 school year. During this time the female deputy acted in the position of principal.

One of the principles on which the restructuring policy in Western Australia is based, is the notion of self-determining schools. This principle, in turn, rests on the enhancement of teacher professionalism. By promoting teamwork and shared decision-making in a working environment of trust, the principal of School B has been facilitating the enhancement of the professionalism of his teaching staff. A culture of trusting human relationships in this school has led to a school that epitomizes the self-determining school concept. Members of staff feel valued as

professionals and are confident to participate in school decision-making. They take responsibility for their decisions and their school's performance.

Proposition 2: The members of the school administration team actively maintain trust in each other.

The principal and deputies consider themselves to be a team. When asked what they called themselves, a deputy stated emphatically "admin team". This perspective is a reflection of the school's culture of shared decision-making. There does not appear to be any tension in the roles the members of the school administration team perform or in their daily interactions. This is evidenced in the male deputy's comment: "It's significant that we get along as a team. There's very little conflict within the team".

The roles each team member performs are not fixed and become merged to suit situations. "I guess we just don't have traditionally prescribed roles. We have a policy that says, if there is a problem and you're the person on hand to manage it and you have the background to manage it, then deal with it", explained the principal. Similarly, Fiona describes their working relationship as "a very loose arrangement. We don't really have set roles or responsibilities." The male deputy (Tony) described their roles as being more like "general areas in which you will work" and they overlap. It was apparent that the deputies were beginning to move

from seeing their role in terms of tasks and duties, to focus instead on the goals of the school and to working with the principal to achieve those goals.

Tony went on to add: "I find the process here very consultative in terms of I don't have the principal coming to me and saying, 'this is what you have to do, go away and do it'. I suppose as a team you develop a culture that means you never have to say that", he went on to explain. This comment indicates that the deputies regarded their role as being shaped more by negotiation with the principal rather than delegation by the principal. The principal believes it is more effective for the school administration team to spend time discussing what needs to be done and who is best equipped to do it.

The principal believes that his deputies have confidence in the knowledge that if they had a problem the principal would support them. Fiona's comments sustain this view as she says that "John allows us a lot of freedom to do what we think we need to do. We know that we have his trust." It is apparent that the principal has communicated his trust in his deputies and as a result has gained high commitment from them.

Traditionally the deputy's role in schools existed to the extent to which the principal delegated duties. Restructuring has altered the professional relationships between deputies and principals. It has changed the definition of key roles and transformed the work of school-based educators. In a restructured system these

changes are apparent in School B as the deputies and principal work as a team. They think of their roles differently, share responsibilities and negotiate their roles. It is unlikely that this transformation of relationships and roles would have happened without the introduction of the restructuring policy.

Proposition 3: The establishment and maintenance of trusting human relationships amongst the school administration team is reflected in them having easy access to each other for informal discussions about issues as they arise and not be reliant on regular formal meetings.

The principal maintains an open door policy that facilitates easy access to him by his school administration team as well as all staff. As issues arise they consult each other. Fiona says: "If an issue comes up, it usually results in a discussion between either Tony and me or if John happens to be here, it's between the three of us. We will discuss issues as they come up and suggest alternative solutions and then put it to staff." Frequent informal contact by members of the school administration team is facilitated by the use of email on the school's administration network. "It's a lot easier for me to ask five questions of John throughout the day on e-mail and get a quick response, than it is to have an extended discussion about it", claimed one of the deputies.

As their professional relationship has matured they have felt less need to conduct regular formal meetings of the school administration team. They have found that there is sufficient communication between them without coming together at set times on set days. "We used to have Monday morning meetings, but now John's level of communication through memos is very high I find. There's no shortage of information to find out where people are at any particular point in time, but all our discussions generally happen informally. The principal observed: "Our meetings are based on need. If we don't need to have a meeting in the week, we don't have a meeting in that week." However, while the female deputy principal agrees that meetings are held on a needs basis, she would prefer to have set meetings, but she admits that they are all too busy and "finding a time when we can all sit down together is difficult." This deputy summed up their working relationship, saying: "Me and Tony work really well together and John doesn't constrain us in any way. If we need guidance we know it will be there. He gives us the freedom to make decisions as we see fit."

As was noted in School A, there is a high degree of communication within this school administration team and the need for regular formal meetings of the whole team is not considered necessary. In the midst of multiple system initiatives there is clarity of purpose on the part of the school administration team. They communicate informally and understand they have the authority to make decisions without seeking the approval of the principal. Again, the reason for the openness and interdependence between the deputies and the principal of School B is the

restructuring of the education system. The restructured system has changed the roles and relationships of the people involved in managing schools. One reason the principal may have for not convening regular meetings of the school administration team could be that he did not wish to display his hierarchical status as it may affect the enlightened interdependence developed in his school.

Proposition 4: While the school administration team demonstrates a concern for trusting human relations, which is extended to the wider school community, the involvement of the School Council in school decision-making is considered a low priority.

An effective School Council needs the encouragement and support of the principal to become involved in decision-making. Yet while this school goes to considerable length to maintain staff participation in decision-making processes, it does not extend a similar invitation to the School Council. Referring to the development of the school plan, Fiona described the role of School Council in school decisions as being "fairly minor".

The other deputy who had recently been acting principal in a nearby school observed: "In this school it's not fully developed. The School Council is not as active in terms of the processes at the other school." The principal said: "Parents are invited to be in on school development days", but he did not attempt to

describe their involvement. Both deputies would prefer a greater role for the School Council and its close participation in the decision-making processes and in the preparation of the school plan. Fiona said that during her time as acting principal she did promote the involvement of School Council. "When I took over as acting principal for a while, parents had a lot more say because that's the way I like to run the Council", she said. The reason the School Council has a minor role in school decision-making in School B is revealed in the discussion of the next proposition.

Despite the aim of the system restructuring policy to increase parent and community participation in their schools, these comments reveal that the School Council had little influence over school policy and only minor participation in decision-making in School B. As was suggested in the first case study reported in this thesis, more time may be required for schools to fully embrace parent and community participation. More time and effort than anticipated at the promulgation of restructuring in Western Australia is required to build the knowledge base and skills of parents so that they may perform their role in the restructured system.

Proposition 5: The minor role played by the School Council can largely be attributed to the approach of the principal.

The low priority given to School Council's involvement in school decision-making was explained by one of the deputy principals. "That's mostly because that's the way that John set up that process. So its mostly a result of John's influence and the way he likes to run it", observed Fiona. The principal's view is that parents are not really interested even when they are invited. He claims: "Very few of them ever take up the opportunity. Some of them do and I don't have a problem." He believes that in the years since the introduction of School Councils in 1987, there has been little increase in parents attending P&C meetings or being involved in School Councils. "In fact I think you could probably point to some schools where there is actually a decrease in parental involvement", he explained. Perhaps it comes down to the principal's behaviour despite what he says. It seems the parents and the School Council do not feel genuinely invited.

One of the reasons for being reticent in establishing a strong School Council may be that its involvement may slow down the decision-making processes in the school. This school administration team prides itself on its flexibility and its ability to make timely decisions. In commenting on the process he observed at another school, a deputy complained that there was "a lot more negotiation; a lot more seeking of advice and seeking people's opinions". The greater degree of consultation had the effect of extending the time for decisions to be determined.

This lack of participation by the School Council is of concern to the deputies. As one of them said: "When I've spoken to John about it, it's an area that he's not that keen on, so it's an area I don't want to push and upset the apple cart." The deputy considers the solidarity of the school administration team too important to risk causing division by promoting the participation of parents through the School Council.

The policy ensemble enabling restructuring in Western Australia called for a more collaborative approach to school management than had traditionally been the case. Principals were charged with responsibility for ensuring that parents and other members of the community were given the opportunity to participate 'meaningfully' in the policy setting aspects of the school development plan. It is acceptable for different school communities to be at different stages of participation in school decision-making. However principals, such as the principal of School B, could be more inviting and accommodating to ensure parent and community participation reaches the level envisaged by the restructuring policy.

Conclusion

Five inter-related propositions relevant to how the school's administration team is managing its work in the context of restructuring, were discussed in this chapter. Firstly, the establishment and maintenance of trusting human relationships is a high priority for this school administration team. Secondly, the members of the

school administration team actively maintain trust in each other. Thirdly, the establishment and maintenance of trusting human relationships amongst the school administration team is reflected in them having easy access to each other for informal discussions about issues as they arise and not be reliant on regular formal meetings. Fourthly, while the school administration team demonstrates a concern for trusting human relations, which is extended to the wider school community, the involvement of the School Council in school decision-making is considered a low priority. Finally, the low priority given to School Council's involvement in school decision-making can largely be attributed to the approach of the principal. The next case study, that of School C, will now be considered.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CASE STUDY: SCHOOL C

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the analysis of the third of the case study schools. The first part of the chapter outlines the situation of the research school both from an historical and a geographical perspective, and also presents the contemporary scene at the school. The four propositions regarding how school administration teams are managing their work in relation to the school in question are then outlined and elaborated upon.

Geographical and Historical Background of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the School

This case study school is located in the city of Kalgoorlie-Boulder in the Eastern Goldfields region of Western Australia. As was stated in a previous chapter in this thesis, the Eastern Goldfields region of Western Australia is centered on the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder that is an amalgamation of the former municipality of the Shire of Boulder and the Town of Kalgoorlie, which officially became one local authority on 1 February 1989. The rich historical background of the settlement of the Eastern Goldfields region during the gold rushes of the late nineteenth century, was described in Chapter Six.

As also described in a previous chapter in this thesis, the first government school to be established in the area around the gold mining towns of Kalgoorlie and Boulder, opened in May 1896 and was known as the 'Kalgoorlie Government School'. To accommodate the increasing population of the immediate area around the Golden Mile, the opening of other schools soon followed, including School C that is the subject of this case study.

School C opened on 8 August 1904 as the fourth major school in the town of Kalgoorlie in the Eastern Goldfields region of Western Australia. Correspondence contained in Department of Education File No. F06780I records the calls by residents for a new school to serve the needs of families living in areas south of the Kalgoorlie Central School. There was some controversy regarding the site chosen by the Minister for Education for the new school. A record of a deputation by the Municipal Council of Kalgoorlie on 28 August 1903 states that the site "is flooded in winter and is a dust hole in summer". In a memorandum dated 9 March 1904 the Office of the Superintendent of Buildings advised the Inspector General of Schools that a contract for the construction of a new school in Kalgoorlie was let with a completion date set for 9 June 1904 (File No. F06780I). The first Head Teacher was a Mr Arthur Lasscock and according to his correspondence dated 9 August 1904 (File No, F06780I), the school had an enrolment of 118 children in August 1904.

School C is now a large government primary school in the city of Kalgoorlie-Boulder that provides education for children from kindergarten and pre-primary to Year 7. The school enrolls children from a number of families that have had up to three generations attend the school. School documents highlight that among former students are past Rhodes Scholars, members of parliament as well as successful business people. This school is classified by the Department of Education as a Level 6 primary school because it previously had a student enrolment over 700. Level 6 primary schools are the largest category of schools in terms of student population. In recent years the student numbers have been declining and in 2001, it had a student population of approximately 620 with a high level of transience reflecting the demographic trends in the school community. About 18% of the student population are Aboriginal students. The overall student attendance rate is 91.7%, which is slightly lower than similar schools and the State average.

The students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and student behaviour is seen as a major issue in the school. The teaching staff in 2001 totalled 37, including one principal, one vice principal, two deputy principals, and one Level 3 advanced skills teacher. It also employs a non-teaching support staff of 17, including part-time staff. The teaching staff is characterised by its youthfulness and inexperience, with about 60% being in their first 5 years of teaching. A comprehensive teacher induction and mentoring program is implemented to assist teachers newly appointed to the school. Apart from general

primary teachers, the staff also includes specialist teachers in physical education, drama, music, learning technologies, early intervention, talented and gifted education, literacy and numeracy. Non-teaching staff include three clerical officers who manage the administration of finances, correspondence, enrolments and public relations for the school. Other staff members include a library officer, Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers, gardeners (job share), teacher assistance special needs aides, and canteen staff.

The school administration team is made up of the principal, vice principal and two deputy principals. The principal is classed as a Level 6 principal under the *School Education Act 1999* which provides for six broad banded levels for appointment, promotion and salary purposes of teachers and administrators. This is the principal's first appointment to a Level 6 school having taken up the position following a period of time working in the Department's central office. Previously he had been principal of a rural district high school and a primary school in the Perth metropolitan area.

The last year a substantive principal worked in the school was in 1998. This is indicative of the turbulent nature of appointments to senior management positions in this large primary school. The vice principal remarked in an interview for this case study that the new principal was her fifth in this school and the twelfth administrator she has worked with in her three-and-a-half years in this school. The vice principal was first appointed to the school as a Level 3 deputy principal

and this year is her second as an acting Level 4 deputy referred to in this school as vice principal. One of the Level 3 deputy principals has been in the school in that position for three years, having previously taught at another primary school in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The other Level 3 deputy principal, while substantive in that appointment, is a temporary deployment to School C.

The school has 23 classrooms, 4 pre-primary units, a centre to accommodate pre school children a library, a covered assembly area and a canteen. The school is well resourced and offers a wide selection of special programs. In 1999 the school's administration facility was upgraded to include new office space and a new separate staff room and preparation area. Storage and sufficient space for support staff has been an ongoing issue and is improving. Collaborative planning is a feature of the school and to encourage curriculum planning groups of teachers are timetabled to take a common period of time free from class contact. Technology has been a major focus and all classrooms are networked and have access to the Internet. The learning technologies teacher works along side classroom teachers to develop student skills in using computers and the Internet. Children are able to use email, multimedia computers, digital cameras, and a variety of applications and programs.

Theoretical Propositions

Four propositions relating to how the school's administration team is managing its work in the context of restructuring emerged from the analysis of the data. The first proposition states: Because of the perceived lack of common understanding among school administrators of their role, the development of a cohesive school administration team is seen as important by the principal. The second proposition states: The commitment to the development of a cohesive school administration team is reflected in the principal's objective to establish appropriate roles and decision-making processes. The third proposition states: There is a perception at the school that the school's performance is affected by the high turnover in school administrator positions. The fourth proposition states: Although School Councils are established to formulate the school's educational objectives and priorities, the reality is that the School Council does not have effective influence in this regard. Each of these propositions will now be discussed in turn.

Proposition 1: Because of the perceived lack of common understanding among school administrators of their role, the development of a cohesive school administration team is seen as important by the principal.

Commencing as a new principal during the school year, as opposed to commencing at the beginning of a year, can be difficult. A new principal is confronted with disadvantages such as having responsibility for the

implementation of the school development plan, yet not being party to the previous planning process. Another disadvantage is inheriting administrative structures that may not suit the new principal. One advantage of assuming the position of principal during a school year could be that the school may already be functioning reasonably effectively, enabling the new principal to observe and plan for improvement as he/she becomes established.

Such is the case of the principal of School C who commenced in the position at the beginning of Term 3 (Semester two) of the research year. After arriving mid-year at the school, he deliberately spent some time observing school operations. He said:

> I've made it clear to everyone that what I'm doing this six months is planning for 2002. I'm not going to change a whole lot of things this year. If in planning for 2002, there are things we need to change and they are ready, we will change them.

He has a strong view of the need for an effective school administration team because he considers it is the main driver of school improvement. "My view of the admin team, is that they are the essential people to hold the vision of the school. They are the key people who make sure things stay on track," he said. He described his main goal as being to develop the effectiveness of the school and said: "What I want is a school that is really well run and providing quality education."

Despite his intention not to make changes early in his principalship, but consistent with his belief in the requirement for a cohesive and effective school administration team, he did immediately implement a significant change in the school's senior management structure. Several weeks prior to taking up the principalship, he made a short visit to the school where he met key people and introduced himself to the staff. The two-day visit enabled the new principal to observe the organisation and operation of the school, and left him with some concerns that he felt needed immediate attention. He said: "It was very clear from my two day visit, about the problems that were here". He observed the movement of students around the school and commented: "When I came out it was very chaotic. Kids would just run everywhere! There was no organisation as such." In reference to the way in which the administrators worked, he noted: "Even when we sat in the admin team meeting, there was a lot of competitiveness and a lot of angst between people. There was a lot of disagreement about what different people were doing."

In the principal's view, this school administration team did not demonstrate cohesiveness. So concerned was he that he resolved to make changes as quickly as he could, as is revealed in this comment: "I made a decision before I finished the visit". Prior to departing he discussed his concerns with the senior deputy principal and they agreed to set up a separate office for this Level 4 deputy as a way of signifying her role as being different from the other deputies and being

closely aligned to the principal. The following comment by the principal gives voice to this notion:

> It's an interesting admin structure here. We have two Level 3s, a Level 4 and a Level 6. When I came in, they were all basically seen as deputies – three deputies. It didn't acknowledge that there is a Level 4 as well, because of the complexities of the school. One of the first things I've done is change that. One, by saying the Level 4 is a Level 4. In terms of my structure, more of the day-to-day management stuff in the school will eventually fall to that person. She has a line management responsibility to the two deputies. The other thing I did was physically move her out of the deputies' office, because the three of them were all in one office. She has her own office and is separated from the deputies.

Another strategy the principal used to signal a different role, was to change the title from deputy principal to that of 'vice principal'. The principal clearly wants the vice principal to be seen as being senior to the two Level 3 deputy principals, to be 'line managing' the performance of the two deputies and to assume responsibility for the day-to-day school operations. He admitted that he was performing that management role. In answer to the question: "Who runs the school on a day-to-day basis now?, he replied: "At the moment, I am still. I feel in terms of the day to day operations, I would prefer [the level 4 deputy] to start managing that, so I can actually look at the whole picture stuff and manage the overview stuff." The vice principal seems to have some understanding of her altered role, saying:

> The role of the vice principal is to take on more of the management of the school, rather than the principal being solely responsible. Taking on more of that overall management because it is like a Level four principal position. I think the goal is to eventually have the vice principal performance managing the deputies.

Judging by the above comment it is apparent that the principal has conveyed his plan for building a school administration team by defining the various roles and responsibilities.

This arrangement, however, is viewed by the other administrators as being counter productive. The vice principal and the deputy principal who were both continuing as administrators of this school from the previous year, valued the teamwork of the administrators in the previous year. All of the deputy principals were located together in the one large office and this environment facilitated collaboration and the formation of a common vision of their role in the school. The deputy principal described the situation: "The three deputies were in the one office and we'd bounce ideas around all the time. Issues would come up and instead of trying to handle them on your own you could talk about them and come up with some sort of strategy." The vice principal commented: "We had a very strong administration team last year. The team clicked extremely well". A deputy principal passionately stated:

> The features of last year – all admin were very approachable and we all seemed to have similar ideas and understandings. We were altogether [in the same office] the year before. We were on board for staff input. We sat down with staff, we listened to them, we discussed, we talked, we had all this going. We knew what the direction was, we all had the same understanding of the direction for the school last year and from day one, the school development day, we could give the staff direction.

Similarly, the vice principal believed the members of the previous school administration team held a common understanding of their role, saying:

> As an admin team last year, because we had a clear understanding, we all knew our areas of responsibility. I think the underlying strength of it was that everybody understood the school very well. We had a lot of communication going on between us. We felt comfortable and we trusted each other.

This comment suggests that in the previous year, an effective team had operated based on good communication, collaboration and the satisfaction of the team members.

This situation changed dramatically with the arrival of a new acting principal for the first semester. Despite this person having a great deal of experience at the system level and already being a substantive Level 5 principal of district high schools, he seemed to have adopted an autocratic approach and ignored the school development plan that he had inherited. This angered the teachers and administrators continuing from the previous year who had worked collaboratively on the school plan. One of the deputy principals described the situation with the following comment:

> For this year, we had everything in place to go, but as of day one when the acting principal stood up, it was completely different from what the School Plan was. It fell down right there on that first day. From day one, the language was very shrouded and confusing. There was no time for discussion. I remember it vividly! We hadn't even discussed anything with the admin team prior.

Without consultation with key people in the school, the acting principal apparently introduced his own agenda and approach to school improvement. In doing so his behaviour was more in keeping with Baron's (1970) description of the traditional head teacher being in a position of absolute power. Objections

raised by the other administrators were dismissed. On this, one deputy principal commented: "I said I wasn't happy with this approach and I was more or less told that this was the way it was going to be and the issues I had raised weren't a concern and staff just had to get on with it." By behaving in an autocratic manner, the acting principal made it almost impossible for an effective school administration team to be formed during his semester-long principalship. Forming a cohesive team was going to be a challenge for the new principal.

As he had already observed competitiveness and disagreement between the administrators, and because of his belief in school administration teams, the new principal set himself the goal of a unified administration team. He described his reasons and actions by saying: "At this stage the admin team is something I'm trying to form. Getting that to happen with a vision about how admin should interrelate and how the people in the school should interrelate with each other." He describes the advantages of such teams in terms of increased output and better decisions. He said: "Teamwork is important. You get more done and it helps you get better ideas". The new Principal went on to remark: "I think you've got to have a common understanding amongst the admin team itself", but he notes: "You get mixed messages coming from the admin here".

The deputy principal whose return from ten weeks long service leave coincided with the arrival of the new principal, observed him closely during the first few weeks and believes his expectations focus on teaching and learning: "One that

comes to the fore is curriculum – the actual teaching and learning that happens at the classroom level." She believes that this concern for teaching and learning activity as being the key because it then opens up to or is linked to the Curriculum Framework, assessment, performance management and student behaviour management. On this point she commented: "Because you have an engaging, interesting curriculum that is inclusive, motivating, has purpose, has clear direction and students participate at a higher level. I think that's where we're heading. Challenging teachers to progress and change and to innovate their pedagogy."

As has been stated in an earlier chapter, education restructuring can redistribute sources of influence and power in schools, with many people being required to play new roles. Thus it should not be surprising to find in School C that people involved in managing their school are confused, or have only a limited understanding of their roles. The fact that this school has endured two and a half years without a substantive principal has impacted on role definition. These factors highlight the importance of taking into consideration the different contexts of different schools when implementing the restructuring policy across a large and diverse State. This school may have been proceeding in the desired direction in accordance with restructuring initiatives, but this progress has clearly been disrupted. The new principal of School C is now about to rebuild a school administration team and mould new ways for his team members to relate to each other.

Proposition 2: The commitment to the development of a cohesive school administration team is reflected in the principal's objective to establish appropriate roles and decision-making processes.

The new principal in Term 3 commenced making changes by discussing his ideas regarding decision-making processes and structures and by outlining his expectations for the school administrators and how they worked together and with the staff. He explains: "At the moment I'm going about it by talking and putting things in place and, I suppose, putting some expectations. I'm putting expectations and dismantling some things that were in place." One of the problems he perceives is convincing his administrators to change the way they go about their business. "The stumbling block I'm having at the moment is actually getting some of the admin to change. They need to be open and listening", he says.

Another obstacle he detects is that his administrators have differing beliefs about school management; "I think the other difficulty is that some people come from different beliefs. You are trying to change their belief system." The principal is focussing here on "a belief about decision making processes, which is that I think staff really need to provide the detail and the admin team needs to provide the framework for them that they should work within. The decisions are made on that framework or that belief." He recognises that this will be difficult, but he is prepared to deal with the issue through careful attention to managing their

performance. "That may not be possible and I suppose that's when performance management comes in. If I can't change their belief, I have to manage their behaviour so their behaviour fits in with the belief system", he concluded.

The years since restructuring was introduced in the Western Australian government education system have highlighted the pivotal role principals play in leadership and management of schools in the State. As the school administrators come to terms with their altered roles, the principal of School C is also examining ways of improving the school's decision-making processes. He is leading the staff to form a shared understanding of their purpose in the school because he recognises that they do not understand or could not articulate their purpose. The principal has also realised that some of his deputies have closed minds to the changes brought on by restructuring. It is unlikely that this attention to accommodating new roles and decision-making in schools and the formulation of a shared understanding of their collective purpose would have come about without the introduction of education restructuring.

Proposition 3: There is a perception at the school that the school's performance is affected by the high turnover in school administrator positions.

In many schools in rural and remote areas of Western Australia, there is a high turnover of staff, including school administrators, from year to year. School C is

no exception. Reflecting its size, it is the only Level 6 primary school in the city of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and has a principal and three deputy principals. During the past several years the pattern at this school is for principals to stay for only a short time, usually lasting two years or less and for a series of acting principals, with little experience, filling the position. Within the school community there is a perception that this high turnover of school administrators is affecting the school's performance.

One of the deputy principals who had served in Eastern Goldfields' schools for more than a decade, described the high turnover as being a widespread phenomenon in the district: "In schools in the Eastern Goldfields, basically people stay two or three years then move on. There's someone different coming through the whole time." The vice principal expressed amazement over the frequent turnover of principals and deputy principals at School C when she said: "I'm working with administrator number twelve now. It's the twelfth administrator I've been working with in my three and a half years here!" Regarding the new principal for semester two of the year, she claimed: "This is my fifth principal!" One of the deputy principals had discussed the school's situation with a long-term teacher in the school: "She's been here fifteen years. She's had ten different principals and can't say how many deputies she's had!"

Lack of continuity of the school leadership in this school has affected the school's improvement program, as indicated in the observation of a Deputy Principal: "I

don't think, at this stage, there is a sense of direction here and I think that's the biggest point. The staff don't know what the vision is. The staff don't know where they are going." She added, "There is no stability and no continuity." The newly appointed principal also commented: "Most probably because of all the acting principals, there is no clear ownership of anything. There are people who have a lot of different things that they want to run, and have been running them in isolation, but there is no clear focus about what the school is trying to do or what teachers should do or how teachers should operate." Further supporting the view that the school's performance had deteriorated, reflecting the high turnover of administrators, a deputy principal observed: "Being in the Goldfields for fifteen years, I used to see School C as a model school. There's been a steady decline over the years and that's because of principals not being here long enough – just moving on. And deputies as well."

Even though there has been a frequent replacement of administrators, one of the features of the school that had recently been developed was a culture of collaboration among teachers and staff participation in forming the school plan. This aspect of school decision-making suffered when the acting principal arrived as a deputy principal noted:

> At the beginning of this year we had people who came in with their own ideas and had just run with them. So the culture of collaboration and participation tended to fall down. We have done such a lot of work on staff input that made them feel valued and have ownership of the school improvement plan.

The effect of the most recent acting principal in ignoring the school plan and introducing change without consultation with staff, caused some staff to leave the school. Some teachers who according to her "have had enough of being devalued and things being uncoordinated" had either left the school or submitted transfer applications. "Unfortunately we are losing so many of our good staff that it's going to take a while for us to recover", she said. However the new principal believes that while there was staff collaboration and participation, there also seemed to have been a lack of administrative control and reporting protocol. He said:

> Line management has become very loose. We have a lot of committees running, but the committees don't report back to anyone! We have a curriculum committee developing what it wants to do in curriculum, but it doesn't report back to the admin.

It seems from this comment that the school administrators had been left out of the decision-making loop making it difficult for them to perform their management role.

Before restructuring was introduced schools in Western Australia were characterised as being relatively simple and static requiring of principals only a small range of managerial skills. With more and more responsibilities being devolved to schools through restructuring, schools have become more dynamic and complex, requiring principals to possess a wider range of skills. In this environment the principal becomes a key leader and visionary. A shared sense of purpose and understanding held across the staff of School C is a product of the

principal's leadership and vision. It is contended that this leads to enhanced school performance. School C clearly suffered successive years of discontinuous principal leadership. Any shared understanding of purpose or goal developed during this period was difficult to sustain beyond the tenure of an acting principal or other administrator. In the context of the restructured education system, this would appear to indicate that it is crucial for the performance of schools that a degree of continuity in administrator positions is established.

Proposition 4: Although School Councils are established to formulate the school's educational objectives and priorities, the reality is that the School Council does not have effective influence in this regard.

The participants in this case study were given an opportunity to describe the degree of power and influence actually exercised by parent representatives in this school. The comments of the members of the school administration team indicated their view that the School Council had very little influence on school decision-making even though they all thought School Councils could be useful. The principal spoke of the importance of parent participation in school decision-making, but his concept seems little more than providing an audience for parent views, as the following reflection indicates:

> I really like parental input; I think it's good. I think they give you a perception of what they see, even if it's not real. I mean, if you actually looked at it, it may not be true, but that's what they perceive. You need to listen to parents; find out what their

concerns are and even hear what they say they would like, but then bring it back down to what it is they want to achieve and work with them on that.

Part of the problem is a lack of understanding of the role of parent members of a School Council and, indeed, the role of School Councils. One of the deputy principals observed: "I don't think schools and the parents have a good handle on councils. There is still not that clear understanding of what their role is and how they work within a school".

The other deputy principal said: "When I first arrived, there didn't seem to be a lot going on with the School Council. It was just like talking over this issue and talking over that and whatever". Adding to the confusion is the fact that the same parents form both bodies. On this, one of the deputy principals stated: "There is a School Council here. The School Council is basically the same people who are on the P&C [Parents and Citizens' Association]". The principal also expressed some unease about how the two bodies would operate, saying: "It's going to be interesting to see how the new structure goes – having a P&C and a School Council – and having the structure quite different, whereas before all the reps from the P&C were on the School Council. That's not necessarily the case any more".

The perspectives of the vice principal and the deputy principal who had been members of the previous year's school administration team and were familiar with the school's decision-making processes, differed about the contribution and

influence of the School Council. While the vice principal described the way in which the school involved the School Council in a semi positive light, the deputy principal undoubtedly indicated that a minor role was played by their School Council. The vice principal said:

> When we did our planning for 2000, we actually brought in our planning document and shared it with them. We ran through the material that had been put in place that eventually led to the decision on what our focus would be. Then the next step, once the plan was in place, was to share it with them and feedback was sought.

Apparently there was some consultation between the school administrators and the School Council, but only after the school plan was almost completed. This conclusion is confirmed by the vice principal who, indicating a somewhat patronising approach, stated: "Their role has really been one of being educated about what's going on in the school, what the planning is about and what we are endeavouring to achieve and why." The vice principal avoided implying that the School Council was a 'rubber stamp', but did indicate that the School Council's role was limited and had little influence on identifying school priorities and direction. She described their restricted role as one of only "looking at the planning and ratifying it" as well as "reporting to them what you are doing".

The deputy principal was more direct and responded: "No, it's not" when asked if the School Council was involved in the development of the school improvement plan. When asked as to who decides the priorities, she replied: "In the past, we have looked at the school data and we've actually just asked teachers". Then when asked if the School Council has had an input to this decision-making, she

answered: "No. We've got all the review together and we put that to the School Council and they've never disagreed. They've always said, 'This is wonderful'." It is clear from statements made by the school's administrators that at this point in time the School Council does not have effective influence in formulating the school's educational objectives and priorities.

The situation in School C regarding the decision-making participation and influence of the School Council is similar to that found in the first two case studies reported on in this thesis. In accordance with the system's restructuring policy, a School Council has been formed, but in reality it has little authority. Education restructuring in the form introduced in Western Australia relies on effective parent and community participation. As was suggested in the first case study reported in this thesis, more time may be required for schools to fully embrace parent and community participation. It seems more developmental activity may also be required to assist parent and community representatives to gain the knowledge and understandings to take a more proactive role in school decision-making.

Conclusion

In this chapter, a case study of a large primary school located in a regional and remote centre of Western Australia, was presented. The first part described the situation of the research school, both from a geographical and an historical

perspective. The next part presented the contemporary scene at the school. The four propositions with regard to how the school administration team members are managing their work formed the main part of this chapter. The first proposition stated: Because of the perceived lack of common understanding among school administrators of their role, the development of a cohesive school administration team is seen as important by the principal. The second proposition stated: The commitment to the development of a cohesive school administration team is reflected in the principal's objective to establish appropriate roles and decision-making processes. The third proposition stated: There is a perception at the school, that the school's performance is affected by the high turnover in school administrator positions. The fourth proposition stated: Although School Councils are established to formulate the school's educational objectives and priorities, the reality is that the School Council does not have effective influence in this regard. The fourth case study, that of School D which is a district high school, will now be considered.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CASE STUDY: SCHOOL D

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the context of the fourth of the case study schools, which is the only district high school considered in this thesis, and to discuss the findings of the research related to this case. In this thesis the school is referred to as School D. The first part of the chapter describes the situation of the research school both from a historical and a geographical perspective. Having established the broad background the next part then presents the contemporary scene at the school. Some of the information for the background and the present-day situation has been extracted from school documents and private correspondence with the participants. The final part of the chapter presents three propositions regarding how the school administration team at this school is managing its work in an education system undergoing restructuring.

Geographical and Historical Background
of Town D and the School

The town (referred to in this thesis as Town D) in which School D is located is geographically isolated in an eastern region of Western Australia. The town is located more than 700km east of Perth, with the nearest major regional centre being approximately 200km to the south. It is situated more than 700km west of

the State border. The town is the major centre for the surrounding region. The region's climate is semi-arid with hot summers and cool winters. The area receives only low rainfall supporting a variety of eucalypt and mulga woodlands. Within the area there are vast salt lakes that are believed to be the remnants of an ancient river system.

Town D grew rapidly after the discovery of gold in the 1890s despite being established in an area suffering acutely from a shortage of water (average annual rainfall is 276mm) and isolation from major centres. It was declared a town in 1895 and became a municipality in 1896. By 1905 the town had a population of around 3,000.

School D first opened on 27 October 1896 with an enrolment of 31 children (*The Education Circular*, 1899). A railway line was constructed from the southern port of Esperance in 1927. However, a reliable supply of water via a pipeline from Coolgardie to the north did not arrive until 1936. During the period of the Great Depression between 1918 and 1930 the population of Town D declined, but rose to about 6000 people coinciding with a gold mining boom in the early 1930s. By 1953 there was sufficient demand for schooling and the State School was classified as a junior high school with a staff of eleven (*The Education Circular*, 1953: 42) catering for students up to 15 years of age.

Today the town is the main urban centre of the Shire. It is the centre for gold and nickel mining operations in the area, this being the main industrial activity. The local economy also comprises tourism and service industries such as government agencies, including a hospital, a school and shire services. The local environment with its relatively unspoilt native flora, fauna and scenery, is attracting increasing numbers of eco-tourists. The population of Town D in 2001 is approximately 1100 people and includes a rich mix of nationalities, ages and socio-economic backgrounds. A significant proportion of the town's population is highly transient and many people reside there for a relatively short time. The fluctuating fortunes of the mining industry and increasing importance of tourism to the local economy have an ongoing effect on community and school student demographics.

Contemporary Scene at the School

As mentioned above, the first school at Town D opened in October 1896 to cater for children to the age of 14 years. The current school is classified as a district high school. According to the Education Department's Annual Reports, between about 1950 and 1974, rural schools of combined primary and secondary students to age 15 years were known as 'Junior High Schools'. Before 1950 'Junior High Schools' were known as 'Central' or 'District High Schools' and after 1974 they were called 'District High Schools' again. School D is the only government school in the immediate district, catering for the educational needs of children in an age range from the part time 4 year old pre school children to Year 12 post

compulsory students aged up to 17 years. It is unusual for a district high school to accommodate post compulsory aged students as most district high schools only provide three years of secondary schooling. However, a special program introduced a mixed-mode approach to the education of Year 11 and 12 students to enable less academically oriented students to study correspondence courses under the supervision of a tutor and have easy access to specialist teachers at the school. The current ten post compulsory students are engaged in a flexible program that consists chiefly of vocational education and training courses.

Approximately 250 students comprise the school's student population, of which Aboriginal students represent 30% of the total. The majority of students live in the town. Local contractors provide six school bus services that travel an average distance of approximately 90kms and carry about 40 students, including 9 students from an Aboriginal community located some distance from the town, to school each day.

Teachers and support staff at School D have a variety of experience, knowledge and skills. The traditional profile of mainly young inexperienced teachers staying just two years or less has changed recently with the introduction of a Country Incentives Program. The package offers teachers who stay in the school for a minimum of three years, permanent status (subject to satisfactory service), double transfer points and financial incentives. Government-provided housing has been

improved and rents have been lowered. This incentive program has reduced the traditional transience of teachers at this school.

The school's staff comprises 22 teachers, including a principal, two deputy principals and 19 support staff. There are eleven primary teachers, seven secondary teachers and a district relief teacher. Among the support staff, are two Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers who work with teachers and Aboriginal students. The school is supported by district education office that provides Curriculum Improvement Officers, School Psychologists, an Occupational Therapist, a Retention and Participation Officer and a Finance and Administration Officer. The Health Department, Family and Children's Services, a Group Training Scheme company, the local Shire, Juvenile Justice Department and the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, are some of the external agencies that provide specialist advice and assistance to the school.

School facilities include primary, secondary and specialist teaching areas supported by a library and resource centre and a reception and administration centre. The library and resource centre is fully automated, has a CD ROM facility and Internet access, and also houses a telematics centre and a Westlink service which the wider community is encouraged to utilise. All rooms have air conditioning and gas heating.

The primary section of the school consists of two clusters of classrooms separated by the library. Each cluster has six classrooms, two 'wet' areas and reading resource room and storerooms. The buildings are surrounded by grassed playing areas and are well shaded by trees. The upper primary cluster houses children in Years 4 to 7, an education support unit, and specialist teaching areas for photography, art, and computing as well as a large open area. The secondary cluster consists of fully equipped science, home economics, computing and design and technology rooms as well as six general classrooms. The lower primary cluster houses classes of children in kindergarten to Year 3 and includes a music room. Two adjacent purpose built centres accommodate the pre-school and pre-primary students. These areas are fully fenced with lawn, shade and are stocked with a good assortment of play equipment. A canteen is housed in a large undercover area that is capable of seating the whole school. Basketball/netball courts, three playground areas and a grassed oval provide recreational areas for students. Community sporting facilities include a swimming pool, golf course, squash courts and the town oval and all are within walking distance of the school.

In March 2000 a devastating fire destroyed the administration, science and design and technology buildings and equipment. The rebuilding program was completed mid 2001 resulting in modern administration, science, computing and design and technology buildings. The entire school now has an integrated network with more than 150 ports through which staff and students can access the Internet, CD

server, and other networks and programs. With these new buildings, School D presents as a well organised, attractive school.

The school's curriculum offering at all levels, implements the recently introduced Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998) and Student Outcome Statements (Education Department of WA, 1998) that sets out what all students should know, understand, value and be able to do as a result of the programs they undertake in Western Australian schools from kindergarten through to Year 12. The Curriculum Framework provides a flexible structure around which schools can build educational programs that ensure students achieve common learning outcomes.

The curriculum for primary students covers the eight learning areas of the Curriculum Framework, namely, the arts, English, health and physical education, languages other than English (LOTE), mathematics, science, society and environment and technology and enterprise. Special programs include Primary Extension and Challenge (PEAC) and music, together with visiting performances and camps. Secondary programs for students in Years 8 to 10 combine traditional subject offerings in the eight learning areas with contextually based integrated student centred courses such as multi-cultural foods and craft for fun and profit. Year 11 and 12 students access a variety of general studies courses including vocational education and training, but not courses at Tertiary Entrance Exam (TEE) level. Special programs include music, advanced furniture making and

Tournament of the Minds (TOMS), together with visiting performances, artists and science shows and many specialist and general camps.

In 2001, the school's administration team comprised a principal and two deputy principals. Elizabeth (pseudonym), the principal, is classed as a Level 5 principal under the *School Education Act 1999*. She first came to the school in the capacity of acting principal in 1999 and later that year her appointment was made substantive. Elizabeth had previously been a Level 3 head of department of physical sciences in senior high schools in the metropolitan area and the country. Both deputy principals in 2001 were in their first year as acting deputies. Frank (pseudonym) has considerable teaching experience in primary schools and was a curriculum improvement officer in one of the State's district education offices before taking up the acting position of Level 3 deputy principal at School D. Initially, Frank was responsible for the school's secondary operations, but for the second semester in 2001 he has taken on a broader role as acting Level 4 deputy principal. As such, he still has responsibility for secondary operations, but in addition he is responsible for all curriculum issues from Kindergarten to Year 12. Although the Level 4 deputy principal position was widely advertised it could not be filled and it was decided, because of his long experience, to promote Frank and expand his role. Under this arrangement, the other deputy principal position was responsible for primary operations. Although only having three and half years of primary teaching experience, Michelle (pseudonym) was appointed to this acting position for semester two.

Theoretical Propositions

Three propositions relating to how the school's administration team is managing its work in the context of restructuring emerged from the analysis of the data gathered through interviews with the team members. The first proposition states: to manage what they view as a challenging school community, the development of a cohesive school administration team is seen as important by the principal and is reflected in the principal's objective to establish appropriate roles and decision-making processes. The second proposition states: the inexperience of teachers in what they perceive to be a difficult school environment is of concern to the school administration team. Consequently, the school administration team views its main purpose as supporting teachers. The final proposition states: although School Councils are established to formulate the school's educational objectives and priorities, the reality in this school is that the School Council does not have effective influence in this regard. Each of the propositions that form the central focus of this study, will now be considered in turn.

Proposition 1. To manage what they view as a challenging school community, the development of a cohesive school administration team is seen as important by the Principal and is reflected in the principal's objective to establish appropriate roles and decision-making processes.

In her description of the challenges facing the school, the principal included inexperienced teachers; poor student behaviour; changing student demographics

as families of mining professionals transferred out of the district; the increasing proportion of students classified as educationally-at-risk; high unemployment; high rate of violence in the community; lack of parental support for the school and a reluctance of parents to participate; and community reaction to her being the first female principal. On this last point, the principal referred to disparaging comments such as: "Aren't we good enough for a proper principal?" which she considered to be hurtful. The principal believed the best way of dealing with these negative influences was to build a strong and cohesive school administration team for 2000. "I really wanted to work hard at developing a cohesive admin team", she said. That was the year prior to the research described in this thesis and she seemed to have succeeded in this objective saying: "The year started off fantastically!" In the interview immediately after saying this, she exclaimed: "Then we had the fire!"

The event causing the greatest impact on the school and wider community, was the deliberately lit fire that destroyed much of the school in March 2000. This was the difficult context in which the principal was working towards creating a school administration team.

The fire was started by young vandals and smouldered for a week because two of the areas were a science laboratory and a design and technology facility, where chemicals and combustible materials were stored. All areas except the library had been vandalised and/or fire damaged. The principal lamented: "All of us in

admin, science and D&T, lost everything. There was nothing left!" This experience devastated the staff and students of the school and caused tensions in the wider community. "The staff was so stressed. It was so difficult that I'm not surprised quite a few of the staff members were on stress leave from time to time", she said. Any disruption to a school's normal routine can cause students to act up. Such an extraordinary event as this fire was, impacted on the students' behaviour to such an extent that the principal described their behaviour in this manner: "The kids just went feral". Stress caused by the ordeal was not limited to the young staff. It seriously affected one of the administrators, as the principal related: "I think the acting secondary deputy, basically had a nervous breakdown at that point".

In the several weeks prior to the fire the school administration team functioned effectively, managing the issues in a challenging school environment. However, the traumatic experience of the fire strained relationships amongst the members of the school administration team for the rest of 2000. "It was just so hard … so stressful", explained the principal. During the weeks and months following the demoralising fire, the working relationship between the principal and the acting secondary deputy principal, deteriorated and the concept of a school administration team, vanished. The principal felt deliberately undermined by the acting secondary deputy principal until he transferred to another school at the end of the year. With the departure of this secondary deputy, the principal was given an opportunity to recommence building a cohesive administration team for 2001.

The principal set about this task with enthusiasm, arranging for the new team to spend some time together at her house on the coast during the summer holidays prior to the commencement of the new school year. The purpose was "To get to know each other, have a few wines, have a bit of fun and work on developing a common set of values, purpose and goals", she explained. The newly appointed secondary deputy principal appreciated the initiative. He described the venture in this way:

> Elizabeth made a huge effort to establish a team ethic. Two weeks before school started we went down to her house and I met her and [the Level 4 deputy principal]. We spent a week together planning and talking about school issues and getting to know one another personally. It set the foundation for a really good team here.

The principal and deputy principals believed the school administration team worked well during semester one 2001, continually building a collaborative work environment. They often came together to create a greater understanding of their roles. In describing their operating style the principal said: "We're working as a team and we've got common values." She was also mindful of developing initiative and leadership in the team saying: "I really see the role of principal as developing leadership in the deputies". In this, she was successful, because the Level 4 deputy principal received a promotion to principal of a small primary school in the metropolitan area for the second semester of 2001. Also confirming the effectiveness of the principal's objective to build a cohesive school administration team, the acting secondary deputy principal observed: "Her efforts to draw us all together have been quite extraordinary".

At the commencement of second semester 2001, the principal had to form a new school administration team as only herself and Frank, the acting secondary deputy, remained. A young, relatively inexperienced, but effective primary teacher, Michelle, was appointed to replace the primary deputy principal who had just been promoted to another school. The roles of the members of the new school administration team were clarified and their processes for decision-making as a team were re-established. The principal described her team building action in the following way:

> As soon as we knew [the previous Level 4 deputy principal] was going, Michelle, Frank and I met for an afternoon and just brainstormed and nutted out how our roles were going to go. So that was a collaborative thing. We brainstormed all the roles and then split them up.

They decided that Frank, with his long experience in both primary and secondary schooling, would continue to act as secondary deputy principal, while assuming a broader role as acting Level 4 deputy principal. In this role, he would assume responsibility for all curriculum issues from Kindergarten to Year 12. The other deputy principal position would only be responsible for primary operations. The school administration team considered this arrangement to be an appropriate use of their experience and skills. When asked, each of the new administrators affirmed that they considered themselves a team. "It doesn't matter what initiative any of us embark on, we share it, run it past one another so we are all fully aware of what's going on all the time", observed the principal. The new primary deputy principal confirmed the collaborative nature of the school

administration team by commenting: "There is a strong feeling of a team, but it's not explicitly said".

Putting aside the extraordinary disaster that impacted on the school community, the situation in School D is similar to that of School C, in that there have been frequent changes of administrators. In each of these two case study schools the principal has recognised the need to form a cohesive school administration team, which is, it is argued in this thesis, an evolving feature of restructured education systems. This response of the principals of Schools C and D demonstrates that they are keen to form a cohesive school administration team in their respective schools as a strategy for managing their work which has been made more complex by the extra responsibilities devolved from the central authority. School D appears to be struggling to implement the restructuring policy ensemble which adds weight to the argument that it is important to consider the differing contexts of different schools when implementing the restructuring policy across a large and diverse geographical region such as Western Australia.

Proposition 2. The inexperience of teachers in what they perceive to be a difficult school environment is of concern to the school administration team. Consequently, the school administration team views its main purpose as supporting teachers.

Many of the teachers in this district high school are beginning teachers in their first years of their teaching career. They have been appointed to a school classified by the Department of Education as being a 'difficult to staff school'. The school is relatively remote and situated in a town located a great distance from the nearest most populous centre. On a daily basis, these young teachers deal with very challenging student behaviour. Being concerned for their well being, the principal described her main focus as building confidence, by assisting them so that they are sufficiently confident to make decisions in their classrooms and that the teacher aides are also confident enough to support the teachers. She elaborated on this focus saying:

> Confident of being supported; confident to have a go. Confident that if they ring up a parent and have a talk to them, they will know what they're talking about. Confident in that if they're uncomfortable with a parent they can ask for one of the admin team to go into that meeting and be there. Confident that they will get the professional development they need.

The principal considers this approach with her teachers to be the most effective way of ensuring the students are engaged and learning. She said: "Then I can help them meet the needs of the different students in their classes". Of the

centrality of her own role in the school, the principal stated: "I know we are supposed to say we are here for the kids, but I see me being here for the staff".

Two of the challenges facing the school, from the perspective of the principal, were poor student behaviour and the increasing proportion of students classified as 'educationally-at-risk'. Much of the management of student behaviour seems to be conducted by the deputy principals, possibly because the teachers are relatively inexperienced and do not manage the behaviour incidents effectively. The students appear to be difficult to deal with and the newly appointed acting primary deputy principal described student behaviour as "a huge issue". The other acting deputy principal said: "A lot of what I do in this school is MSB [managing student behaviour]. That's a big issue here. A small number of students cause an enormous amount of work". The primary deputy principal described the behaviour of students as "bizarre" and said it "ranged from swearing, to pushing, to fighting, to throwing food, messing up the room and becoming violent". The school administration team appears to be heavily involved in supporting teachers and taking responsibility for dealing with disruptive students.

The collaborative leadership style of the principal is reflected in the formation of teams, as a strategy to support teachers. The secondary deputy principal commented: "I think there is a tendency these days for teachers to want to work as teams". To assist teachers in their management of student behaviour in

secondary classes, the deputy principal has rearranged some classes according to their abilities. "I've set up team situations where one teacher will take a small group of kids, while the other teacher takes the bulk of the class on a more advanced instructional basis. That's working well", he said. There is little attention to setting direction for curriculum improvement while this deputy and the rest of the school administration team members deal with daily issues of discipline across School D.

The discussion above on this proposition brings into clear focus the matter of the implementation of the restructuring policy as a 'one-size-fit-all' model across a State as large and diverse as is Western Australia. The school administration team at School D is experiencing great difficulty just coping with the day to day issues and appears unable to fulfil its senior management role. As the staff are young and inexperienced in teaching students displaying extremely disruptive behaviour, the school administration team has assumed responsibility for dealing with student behaviour as a way of supporting teachers. This focus of the work distracts the school administration team from bigger picture role of providing visionary leadership. The issues this school administration team are confronted with are day-to-day issues of just keeping the school functioning. There is no comparison in the mode of operation of the school administration team in School D compared with that at School A. Again, this supports the assertion made earlier in this thesis that the different contexts of different schools need to be

taken into consideration when implementing the restructuring policy across a large and diverse State.

3. Although School Councils are established to formulate the school's educational objectives and priorities, the reality in this school is that the School Council does not have effective influence in this regard.

For a variety of reasons, this school has rarely enjoyed full support from the community and parent participation seems limited to the Parents' and Citizens' Association (P&C). The principal observed that "Parental support is fairly limited. The P&C is pretty good, but in terms of other meetings, we get very few parents along". The secondary deputy principal confirmed this observation saying: "In this school we have some participation. We have parents who we have taken on to our School Council, although a lot of that sort of participation is antagonistic here." The reason for a lack of participation in the School Council seems to be because it had only just been formed in 2001 and the role of parent members was not clearly understood. The principal said: "The School Council has only recently been formed [and] this year is finding its way about what we're supposed to do". Prior to the School Council being formed at this school there had been a school decision-making group that may have operated in a similar way to the newly formed School Council, but the principal admitted not being fully aware of the role and function of either body. She openly commented: "The year

before, the school decision-making group wasn't very functional at all. That has a lot to do with my inexperience as a principal. We are just finding our way." When asked her opinion of the value of the School Council, the principal stated, "In this community, no: because they are not representing the third of this community who are really alienated and against any form of bureaucracy and authority". When asked to describe how the decisions of the School Council affect teachers, the newly appointed primary deputy principal responded: "Our school council hasn't been very active, or as active as I thought it would be. They haven't had many meetings. But as a teacher I don't think it really impacted very much". As found in the other case study schools, there is little parent and community participation through an active School Council despite it being a principle of the restructuring policy in Western Australia.

As was suggested in the first case study reported in this thesis, more time may be required than anticipated at the time of the restructuring initiative for schools to be ready to fully embrace parent and community participation. It seems more developmental activity may also be required to assist parent and community representatives to gain the knowledge and understandings to take a more proactive role in school decision-making. In School D there is much work to do to gain the community's confidence and interest in their school. This factor highlights the difficulty of imposing a restructuring policy on al schools without reference to differing school contexts.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a case study of a district high school located in a small town in a region relatively remote from Perth, the capital city of Western Australia. The first part described the situation of the research school, both from a geographical and an historical perspective. The next part presented the contemporary scene at the school. Three propositions relating to how the school's administration team was managing its work in the context of restructuring, were discussed in this chapter. The first proposition stated: To manage what they view as a challenging school community, the development of a cohesive school administration team is seen as important by the principal and is reflected in the principal's objective to establish appropriate roles and decision-making processes. The second proposition stated: The inexperience of teachers in what they perceive to be a difficult school environment is of concern to the school administration team. Consequently, the school administration team views its main purpose as supporting teachers. The third proposition stated: Although School Councils are established to formulate the school's educational objectives and priorities, the reality is in this school that the School Council does not have effective influence in this regard. The next chapter presents a cross-case analysis and discussion of the nineteen propositions that emerged from the four case studies.

CHAPTER NINE

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

Introduction

In the preceding chapters, four case studies were presented outlining the perspectives of participants in the study reported in this thesis. The study was designed to gather a richness of data from the selected school administration teams about the way in which they have managed their work in the context of an education system undergoing restructuring. The interpretivist paradigm was particularly suited to this task. In the development of each case, grounded theory methods of data gathering and analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) that are consistent with the essential theoretical position for this study, namely symbolic interactionism, were adopted.

The decision to focus on four selected schools as case studies is justified by the potential of case studies to permit the researcher to get as close to the participants as possible and enable the uncovering of the subjective understandings of the way in which members of school administration teams manage their work. Through the use of inductive analysis procedures, nineteen (19) propositions derived from the total of four case studies were formulated. In this chapter the findings in relation to each set of propositions from each of the four case studies, are now compared and contrasted in a cross-case analysis.

The chapter presents a discussion of three 'clusters' (Miles and Huberman, 1984) of propositions common to some of the case study schools and another cluster of propositions that do not fit into the other three clusters. The focus of cluster one is communication and meeting arrangements. Cluster two centres on team cohesiveness and decision-making processes. The third cluster comprises the largest group of common propositions and is related to the influence of School Councils. Cluster four comprises propositions that represent the differences across the four cases studied in the research. The chapter ends with a brief conclusion.

Four Clusters of Propositions

The nineteen (19) propositions arising from the interviews conducted at the case study schools were examined and compared. In doing so, cognisance was taken of Miles and Huberman's (1984) recommendation to use an interpretive 'tactic' of proposition grouping. This tactic was called 'clustering' by Sarantakos (1993: 309), in which "events, sites, actors and processes that have similar patterns or characteristics may be sorted into categories, grouped together". Ten (10) propositions were categorised by theme. They formed three clusters, or groups, of propositions common to some of the schools. The remaining nine (9) propositions focussed on different aspects unique to each school, a finding that reflects the differing contexts in which school administration teams operate. This clustering was conducted using a matrix containing each of the nineteen propositions derived from all four case studies, thus enabling the researcher to identify themes and

trends. In choosing 'labels' for each of the propositions and the subsequent clusters, some of the words actually used by the participants in the study were adopted.

Cluster One: Communication and Meeting Arrangements

The first of these common groupings focussed on aspects of communication and the meeting arrangements found in two of the case study schools, namely Schools A and B. These two factors are inter-related and arguably contribute significantly to the effectiveness of a school administration team. The data revealed that underlying these two factors is a theme of trust. Trusting relationships were found to be important to the way in which members of the two school administration teams communicated, especially through the arrangements they made for meetings.

It was evident in the case study of School A that there was a high degree of communication and trust among the team members. The deputy principals knew that the principal trusted them and that they possessed delegated authority to act with confidence. This style of school management is characterised by a less directive approach that emphasises participatory leadership and decentralised decision-making (Hallinger and Heck, 1992) in which trust is a significant component. Similarly, Conley and Goldman (1994) recommended school principals in restructured education systems develop a facilitative leadership style that enhances the collective ability of a school to adapt, solve problems and

improve performance. The study reported here revealed that a principal acting as a facilitative leader demonstrating trust in his or her deputies, led to enhanced communication within the school administration team.

The secondary school principal of School A, in a similar way to the primary school principal of School B, did not attempt to control the school administration team, but by the same token she was viewed as being in an authoritative position. In restructured education systems there is a need for principals to be less of a chief authority figure (Watkins, 1991). The principal of School A had established her leadership and professional credibility over her several years. She had successfully combined the 'chief executive' and 'leading professional' roles so that they became mutually supportive and complementary elements of the leadership process (Lloyd, 1985). This should not be surprising as Weiss and Cambone (1994) reported studies showing women principals generally adopting a more participatory style of leadership. Likewise, Caldwell (1998: 457) recorded findings of research suggesting that in Victoria (Australia), women principals tended to be "attitudinally more disposed than men to the emerging role of principal in the self-managing school", although this is not to say that all female principals adopt a participatory leadership style.

It was found that the senior high school administration team in the case study of School A did not rely on regular meetings at set times. The study found that as they managed their work in the relatively small senior high school, a team

approach was maintained by the school administrators through having frequent *ad hoc* meetings. Impromptu discussions were held as issues arose during the course of a school day or week. Sometimes these meetings would occur outside of school hours.

These observations regarding the way in which this school administration team at School A managed its work through unplanned meetings, trusting relationships and open communication lines, are comparable to the way in which the administration team at School B operated. These findings concur with the views of Crawford, Kydd and Riches (1997: 4) who included in a list of several indicators of effective teams, such elements as, "good communication, collaboration, listening skills, enjoyment of membership, dynamism and motivation".

In the case study of School B, the establishment and maintenance of trusting human relationships amongst the school administration team members is reflected in them having easy access to each other for informal discussions about issues as they arise and not being reliant on regular formal meetings. In this primary school the principal maintained an open door policy that facilitated easy access to him by his school administration team, as well as all staff, because he aimed to create and maintain a school environment where people felt trusted, respected and valued. This perspective of his role corresponds to the research of Glickman,

Allen and Lunsford (1994) who found that a key factor in teacher commitment was the principal's trust in his teachers and the ability to communicate that trust.

As issues arose the school administration team of School B consulted each other to determine appropriate action. Frequent informal contact by members of the school administration team was facilitated by the use of email on the school's administration system network. As their professional relationship matured, they felt a diminishing need to conduct regular formal meetings of the school administration team. They found that there was sufficient communication between them without coming together at set times on set days. Reflecting the assertion of Glickman, Allen and Lunsford (1994), the principal believes that his deputies are aware of his trust in them and that they have confidence in the knowledge that if they had a problem he would support them. However, while the female deputy principal agreed with the policy of formal meetings only being held on a needs basis, her personal preference was to have regular meetings at set times, but she admitted that they were all too busy for such a schedule of meetings. This observation depicts the reality of human/'living' organisations where different perspectives abound.

Thus, in the school administration teams of these two case study schools, it was found that because there were trusting human relationships and open communication among team members, frequent or regular scheduled meetings were not considered necessary. These two administration teams, one working in

a primary school setting and the other working in a small secondary school, illustrated all these factors and both were considered to be highly effective. This finding is noteworthy for it is at odds with a commonly held assumption that for the school administration team to function effectively it would be essential to meet regularly. For example, for effective team functioning, Everard (1996) considers that team leaders need to establish regular and purposeful meeting schedules. Leithwood (1998) noted that communication is likely to improve among members when they are meeting together regularly. The Wallace and Hall (1994) study for example, found that senior management teams met at least once a week although the duration of the meetings varied. Cardno (1998) in her study of senior management teams in New Zealand secondary schools reported 81% of teams had regular scheduled meetings. Yet these school administration teams in the two case study schools functioned without the need for regular formal meetings.

Education restructuring at the system level has transformed relationships and the work of many categories of educators at the school level, as forecast by Kaufman (1977) and Chapman (1986) and found in the research of Crow and Peterson (1994). The systemic reorganisation has redistributed sources of influence and power in schools and altered professional relationships. Changes in the definition of key roles, has occurred with many people being expected to play new roles. On this, point Bradley (1992) found principals experiencing more change than any other group. In Australia, Watkins (1991) asserted that principals working in

restructured school systems could no longer play the role of the chief authority figure and had to be seen as facilitators, coordinators and mediators. The case studies of Schools A and B found both principals adopting these new roles in an attempt to ensure that their schools operated effectively.

Cluster Two: Cohesiveness and Decision-Making Processes

A theme of school administration team cohesiveness and decision-making processes characterised the second cluster of propositions. These inter-related factors are illustrated in the case studies of Schools C and D. The inter-relationship of these two factors may appear unusual. Indeed one might expect that cohesiveness would be more appropriately linked to the factor of communication in the first cluster. The reason for cohesiveness being linked, in this study, to decision-making processes, is that the principals of Schools C and D articulated the view that for the establishment of effective decision-making, cohesiveness was required among their respective administrators. The two principals believed that with this bond, productive teamwork would be realised.

It is interesting to observe in both case studies C and D, that this concern with cohesiveness by the principals was in response to adverse circumstances. In School C the unfavourable situation was a result of a new principal taking over mid year from an acting principal who was perceived by the deputies and staff to be divisive and disinterested in working collaboratively during the first semester of the school year. The new principal felt there was a lack of common

understanding among the three deputies of their roles and that this impacted on any sense of cohesiveness. The case study of School D found the principal's objective of developing a cohesive school administration team was a response to what the staff view as a 'challenging school community' and followed a disaster that had occurred during the previous year when most of the school's buildings had been destroyed by an act of arson.

In School C where the principal assumed the position mid year, it was the new principal's view that the school administration team did not demonstrate cohesiveness. He first formed this view during a brief visit prior to taking up the principalship and his first weeks in position at the school confirmed his concern. While intending to avoid introducing changes, he was so concerned that he immediately set about implementing changes to the operation of the school administration team, their roles and responsibilities, as well as changes to improve the decision-making processes. The principal anticipated that this would probably lead to improved staff morale as teachers begin to sense some cohesion in the school brought about by the principal's positive initiatives (Lloyd, 1985).

The case study of School D found that this school was the only school in the study where a deliberate, planned approach had been taken to advance team building prior to the commencement of the school year. It will be recalled that this district high school principal had arranged a week of work-related and social activities designed to rapidly build her school administration team, while all staying in her

holiday house on the coast during the last weeks of the school holidays. This team apparently worked very well during the first semester of the research year, but a membership change occurred in the team when one of the deputies was promoted to another school mid year. This caused a re-examination and reshuffle of roles. The principal along with the continuing deputy and the new deputy principal reviewed their roles in a collaborative manner and reassigned responsibilities by agreement with each member's strengths. The principal then commenced building her new school administration team.

Considering that teams are more capable than individuals of solving problems and thinking creatively (Handy and Aitken, 1986), it is perhaps surprising that this was the only school administration team in the study that indicated it had purposefully worked at team development. Team building activities are common in commercial organisations where the goal is profitability in a competitive environment, but such a framework is not likely to be accepted in professional service organisations such as schools (Wallace and Hall, 1994). A different approach was activated during education restructuring introduced to England in the mid 1980s whereby appropriate team building activities were an increasingly prominent feature of management development courses for school managers. Yet while Walker and Stott (1993) argue the senior management team is the most important team in any educational establishment, their research in a small sample of Australian schools showed that little was done to consciously develop the team and its effectiveness. Similarly, Cardno (2002) working with senior management

teams in New Zealand schools, found a low emphasis on team training and development.

It is consistent with the literature that the principal of School D was the instigator of the team development activity, as for example, Wallace and Hall (1994) found that senior management teams were the 'brainchild' of head teachers. The principal of School D played a critical part in creating and promoting a shared culture of teamwork. In the principal's view it had strengthened the cohesion of her team. The principal held a strong conviction that one of her main roles was to develop leadership skills in her deputies. It is apparent in the comments of the participants of School D that individually all members of the team were keen to expand their management knowledge and skills through ongoing team development exercises.

Thus, the study reported in this thesis parallels the findings of other research cited here, revealing a lack in schools of planned team building and developmental strategies. Only in School D in the sample did team development activity occur in a deliberate planned manner. Of the many barriers to team building, one important difficulty is finding time. Indeed the principal of School D convened her new management group during the summer school holidays for her team development exercise. The need to get the job done often leads school administrators to focus on specific tasks rather than on planning and coordination (Quinn, Faerman, Thompson and McGrath, 1996). It is however recognised that

not many specific details of the team development activities was forthcoming from the School D participants. The team development exercise could perhaps have been strengthened for this school administration team by the use of a facilitator or a consultant working with the team through a structured program of activities.

While there was consensus in these two case study schools (C and D) that the main focus of the school administration team was to build a cohesive team, together with making improvements to their decision-making processes, the main focus of the other two schools participating in this study differed in each case as to the 'lens' or main focus of attention. This is perhaps because the other two schools had already created cohesive and effective school administration teams and were able to turn their attention elsewhere, especially to teaching and learning. In all case study schools in the study reported here, there was a willingness among the school administrators to establish and maintain a 'culture of teamwork' defined by Wallace and Hall (1994) as shared beliefs and values about working together to manage their school.

The work of a school administration team entails making a stream of decisions relating to change and developing good practice. The decisions ranged across school-wide issues such as whole school policy and procedure for the management of student behaviour, to detailed administration matters, such as how the school administration team could best support teachers facing particular problems or gaps in their curriculum knowledge. Each school administration team adopts its own

way of making decisions. The principals of Schools C and D had similar goals in this regard, but went about adopting decision-making processes differently, reflecting the different context of the two schools.

The principal of School C expressed his concern about existing decision-making and intended to change what he termed, his administrator colleagues' 'belief system' about decision-making processes. It was his view that the staff needed to provide the detail while the school administration team provided the framework within which they all worked. In other words, the school administration team formed school policy and procedural guidelines within which they expected staff to make decisions. If this practice was not complied with, the principal indicated that performance management procedures would be adopted to ensure staff behaviour fitted into the 'belief system'. This seems to suggest autocratic processes, but may also be viewed as 'strong leadership'.

In School D, the principal believed that their decision-making processes should be based on a common set of values and a culture of collaboration. This perspective is in accord with that of Hall, Mackay and Morgan (1986) who reported that the decision-making of successful school administration teams was largely a reflection of a culture of shared decision-making. As decisions were taken by administration team members in School D they would consult other members so that the whole team was fully aware of what was happening in different parts of the school. In terms of establishing decision-making processes in their respective schools, the

principal of School D viewed her role as a 'team activity' (Morgan and Hall, 1982) more so than the principal of School C who appeared to view his role more as 'director' (Quinn, 1988).

The intense focus on team cohesiveness and decision-making processes evidenced in some of the case study schools is a direct result of the pressure applied to schools through educational restructuring at the system level. The pressure is brought to bear by the devolution of responsibilities from the central authority to the school and by the resultant changed nature of relationships as school administrators seek to find ways of dealing with their work. Each school copes with these pressures differently, reflecting their different localised contexts.

Cluster Three: Influence of School Councils

The largest group of common propositions across the four case study schools related to the School Councils in Schools A, B, C and D. There were five propositions common to all the case study schools and relate to the participation, influence and effectiveness of School Councils in school decision-making.

It will be recalled that the Western Australian 'Better Schools Report' of 1987 had, as one of its principles, 'self-determining schools' and called for greater community participation in school management. This was to be achieved through the formation of 'school-based decision-making groups' to ensure accountability to the local community. With the enabling legislation of the *School Education*

Act 1999 (Division 8 Subdivision 1) and the associated *School Education Regulations 2000* (Part 6) the groups became known as School Councils. The purpose of School Councils is to provide a school's staff and its community with opportunities to participate in the formulation of a school's educational objectives, priorities and general policy directions and in the evaluation of a school's performance in achieving them. School Councils cannot intervene in the control and management of a school. School Councils do not have authority to intervene in the educational instruction of students and nor do they have authority over the teaching and non teaching staff.

O'Donoghue and Dimmock (1998: 167) raised doubts about the authenticity of the attempt to engage parent and community participation in school decision making processes and whether or not such participation can be effective. The research participants in all case study schools were given an opportunity to describe the degree of power and influence actually exercised by parent representatives on their School Councils. The comments by members of all the school administration teams articulated the view that their School Council had very little influence on school decision-making. The reasons for this perspective varied little from school to school and seemed largely shaped by the attitude of the principal in each school.

The actual wording of each proposition relating to the School Council theme varied from school to school in this study, but the following proposition sums up the phenomenon:

> Although School Councils are established to formulate the school's educational objectives and priorities, the reality is that the School Council does not have effective influence in this regard.

This proposition was aptly confirmed by the comment of the senior high school principal (of School A) who stated: "Peripheral really". It was clear from the participants' interview comments that in School A, the School Council was not fully operational and in the opinion of the school administration team, did not have a large impact on their work. Whitty, Power and Halpin (1998: 100) report that even when 'lay governors' had opinions to express they struggled to have a voice "let alone in having their views taken seriously". The more informed perspectives of the principal and staff members of School Councils tend to carry more weight than parent members. Watkins and Blackmore (1993) found in schools in Victoria (Australia), that most of the issues discussed were those raised by staff members and parental concerns were rarely discussed. Similarly, Vincent and Martin (2000: 475) found in schools in England that "curricular and organisational topics remained the preserve of the staff". The study reported in this thesis adds further evidence to show that parental influence through School Councils and such like groups is not as strong as was envisaged in the restructuring policies introduced in different parts of the Western world.

Referring to the development of the school plan in School B, a deputy described the role of School Council in school planning decisions as being 'fairly minor'. The other case studies of Schools C and D confirmed this perspective even though all participants in this study thought School Councils could be useful. The school administration teams all considered that the decisions of their School Council would have minimal impact on teachers, this despite the 'grandiose rhetoric' (Vincent and Martin, 2000) of the theorists promoting restructuring.

These comments demonstrating the ineffectiveness and lack of involvement of School Councils in decision-making, sustain the findings of Mulford and Hogan (1999: 147) who reported: "School Councils were seen by [Australian] principals as having little or no influence over any area of policy". Thus, the doubts raised by O'Donoghue and Dimmock (1998) about the authenticity of parent participation in school decision-making have been shown to be valid in the case studies reported in this study.

Mulford, Kendall, Kendall, Bishop and Hogan (2000) also found that staff working in Australian schools considered that School Councils play a minor role in decision-making and have a minimal impact. The reasons for this vary from school to school. For a variety of reasons, the case study of the district high school (School D) in the research reported in this thesis had rarely enjoyed full support from the community and parent participation seemed limited to the Parents' and Citizens' Association. The view of the senior high school principal

was that the members of the School Council do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of school operations. As Gordon (1993) found in the case of New Zealand, not all communities are equally endowed with professional expertise or have the cultural resources necessary for community empowerment in the governance of their schools. Besides, the parent representatives may have held only their own agenda at School Council meetings. Vincent and Martin (2000) found in their study of parent participation in secondary schools in England that many parent representatives were mainly interested in 'monitoring the progress of their own daughters', thus behaving not as representatives at all.

Another finding of the study was that there were also knowledge gaps within the case study schools about the function and authority of School Councils. The principal of School D admitted not being fully aware of the role and function of the School Council citing her inexperience as a reason. Similarly, in one of the participating primary schools one reason for the apparent ineffectiveness of the School Council seemed to be a lack of understanding of the role of parent members of a School Council and, indeed, the role of School Councils generally.

The low priority given to the School Council's involvement in school decision-making in School B was explained by a deputy principal as being a result of the principal's influence. The principal's perspective was that parents were not interested in becoming involved in school decision-making even when they were invited to participate. Perhaps it comes down to the principal's behaviour despite

what he says, for it seems the parents and School Council members did not feel genuinely invited.

One of the reasons for being reticent in establishing a strong School Council may be that its involvement may slow down the decision-making processes in the school. Most of the school administration teams participating in this study pride themselves on their flexibility and their ability to make timely decisions. In commenting on the involvement of School Councils in the decision-making process, one of the participants complained that there was considerably more negotiation. The greater degree of consultation had the effect of extending the time for decisions to be reached and this was a significant concern for all the principals participating in this study. Participating principals may also have been attempting to retain some former powers. As Mulford, Kendall, Kendall, Bishop and Hogan (2000: 75) have argued: "SBM [school based management] may have shifted power and authority in decision-making to the school and its principal but further decentralisation within schools is yet to occur in any significant way". The case studies reported on here indicate that more attention needs to be directed to School Council participation in school decision-making if the restructuring policy is to be embraced.

While a degree of commonality across all four case study schools has been found in this study on the theme of the influence of School Councils in school decision-

making, there remain significant differences as to the reasons for a lack of participation by School Councils and especially parent members.

Cluster Four: Differences Across the Four Cases

This cluster focuses on the differences across the four case studies and discusses the remaining nine propositions which are each evident in only one of the schools. The unique contexts of each of the case study schools caused the school administration teams to have a different focus, or lens, as they managed their work in relation to restructuring.

In the only senior high school in the study, the most important issue, or focus, of the school administration team of School A was curriculum and pedagogy. This cohesive team considered that the way in which they managed their work was largely determined by their view that curriculum issues should be their most fundamental concern. However, it is significant that when talking about curriculum issues the school administration team in this secondary school was actually using it as a synonym for concern about the quality of teaching and learning.

This perspective of the school administration team of School A is important in the context of the restructuring policy ensemble. The principal of this school has remained in the position for several years. She believes she has established effective school management structures and decision-making processes and is able

now to shift her attention to issues of curriculum and pedagogy to a degree that would not have been probable under the top down approach to these issues prior to the introduction of education restructuring. In the highly centralised, bureaucratically structured department, the likelihood of a school principal concentrating on curriculum and pedagogy to the extent that she does might not have occurred. Improving curriculum and pedagogy in her school has more meaning in the present context not only for her but also for her school administration team.

Similarly, in the other school in which a cohesive school administration team had already been formed, namely School B, the focus was on maintaining trusting human relationships as the key strategy for ensuring effective curriculum delivery and optimal student outcomes. By promoting shared decision-making in a working environment of trust, the school administration team of this school was facilitating the enhancement of teacher professionalism. A culture of trusting human relationships in School B has led to a school that epitomizes the 'self-determining school' principle of the 'Better Schools Report' and is in accordance with the restructuring policy that promoted a form of school-based management. Members of staff feel valued as professionals and are confident to participate in school decision-making. Petri and Bingham (1998) noted that teacher commitment was found to be enhanced in restructuring schools characterised by collegiality and professionalism. In the case studies of Nias, Southworth and Yeomans (1989) it was found that 'valuing people as individuals' was a strong

feature of collaborative schools. Staff take responsibility for their decisions and their school's performance.

In this primary school, school leadership was recognised as a shared responsibility even though the principal was seen to be very much in charge in that he had institutionalised his authority over several years. Having regard for the concept of 'leading professional', the professional credibility of the principal is an important factor in the process of influencing the work of colleagues (Lloyd, 1985). In this vein, the school is known by the school community to be stable, with well-founded effective working relationships. It was the objective of the long serving principal to construct and maintain a workplace in which his staff felt secure and supported. Building on this objective, one of the deputy principals said she too set herself the goal of developing a valuable collaborative teaching environment for the staff with whom she worked closely. In School B the deputies and the principal worked closely as a team and had developed modes of thinking as a team (Ridden, 1993).

It is also interesting to observe in both Schools A and B that the paramount concern of the respective administration teams in managing their work was on the one hand curriculum and pedagogy and on the other, trusting human relationships. Both of these flowed onto the goal of improved teaching and learning. That this concern, in turn, influenced the team's recruitment of new staff.

The centrality of the importance that the school administration team in School A ascribes to issues of teaching and learning driving the way in which they manage their work is strongly reflected in their approach to selecting people for appointment to their school. They believe that this ability to select their own staff - a direct outcome of restructuring in Western Australia for some schools - has made an important difference in their school because they appoint staff to fulfil specific school and student needs. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) recommended that schools in restructuring systems establish explicit selection criteria that show they are looking for people who can demonstrate initiative and curriculum leadership. When selecting teachers for appointment to school leadership positions in School A, such as head of department and deputy principal, the school administration team looks for teachers with track records of active involvement in curriculum development. That school administrators possess the ability to work with teachers to improve teaching and learning, is seen by the school administration team as an important attribute for recruitment to administrator positions.

The school administration team of School B was also recognised by themselves and staff as being well and truly cohesive. Its chief concern was the creation and maintenance of trusting human relationships and this in turn determined their recruitment strategies. The school administration team deliberately recruited staff it believed would best fit into a collaborative school culture. The administration team claimed that as a consequence, they had a tight knit, supportive team of

teachers. The principal also worked to achieve a school culture in which there was shared leadership within a spirit of accountability. He believed that shared leadership relied on his staff accepting responsibility for the decisions they made. The trusting human relationships lens of the school administration team certainly pervaded their approach to the way in which they managed their work in this school. The school administration team's concept of shared leadership and its ability to directly select its own staff was a direct outcome of restructuring.

Turning now to an analysis of other propositions specific to different schools, it was noted that the members of the school administration team at the senior high school, School A, viewed their work as so important that they were prepared to spend considerable time completing school related work in their personal time. This is not an uncommon occurrence for most teachers and school administrators. The members of the school administration team are all highly committed to their work and while they derive considerable personal satisfaction, they recognise that it forms a large part of their lives and impacts on their personal time. The female deputy principal of School A gained great satisfaction from the role she played in the school and believed her efforts made a difference. The school is a busy place and there were days when issues arose suddenly and team members were prevented from attending to the tasks they planned to undertake causing them to take school related work home to complete at night or on weekends.

It is clear that in an effort to manage their workload, members of school administration teams complete much of their work out of school hours. This concurs with the finding of Harold (1998) who concluded that restructuring creates a dramatic increase in workload. Compounding this aspect it was revealed in the study of School D that working in a school with a high proportion of inexperienced teachers is challenging for the school administration team. It will be recalled that the staff viewed the school community as being challenging, having low aspirations and poor perceptions of the value of education. These factors meant that members of the administration team also had to spend a considerable amount of their personal time completing tasks such as meeting with and working with teachers or engaging in other school planning sessions out of school hours either at night or on weekends.

In response to what the staff perceived to be a difficult school environment and the inexperience of the staff, the administration team considered its main purpose was to support teachers. A point made by O'Donoghue (1994) was that teachers were annoyed that the people imposing restructuring policies on their work did not recognise that many students do not attend school willingly and often were not motivated to learn, thus causing difficulties and stress for teachers. The principal described her main focus as building confidence in her young staff, by assisting them so that they were sufficiently confident to make decisions in their classrooms and so that the teacher aides were also confident enough to effectively support the teachers. The principal considers this approach with her teachers to

be the most effective way of ensuring the students are engaged and learning. In School D much of the management of student behaviour seems to be conducted by the deputy principals, possibly because the teachers are relatively inexperienced and do not manage behaviour incidents effectively. To assist teachers in their management of student behaviour in secondary school classes, a deputy principal rearranged some classes according to student abilities. This is an example of the strategies that the school administration team of this school introduced to support teachers, although it might be open to question that this was, in fact, a sound strategy.

In School C where the administrators had not, at the time of the research, formed a cohesive school administration team, there was a perception that the school's performance was affected by the high turnover of administrators. In fact, a recent change in principals mid year was the reason for the school not having a cohesive administration team. During the past several years the pattern at this school had been for principals to stay for only a short time, usually lasting two years or less and for a series of acting principals, with little school management experience, filling the position. The literature points out that to achieve whole-school, long-term change for improvement, there needs to be continuity of the school's administrators. After all, school leaders are central to the process of change in schools as they play a pivotal role in identifying the directions for educational change and supporting and promoting the change process (Peters, Dobbins and Johnson, 1996). In many schools in rural and remote areas of Western Australia,

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there is a high turnover of staff, including school administrators, from year to year. This phenomenon may not only impact on the school's performance, it may arguably affect the implementation of policy emanating from the central authority. In a context of high turnover of school administrators, the school administration team may only be able to implement policy in a disjointed manner.

Returning to the case study of the senior high school (School A), it was noted that the centrality of the importance that the school administration team ascribed to issues of teaching and learning driving the way in which they managed their work, was also strongly reflected in their approach to accountability. The principal of this school embraced accountability and encouraged her administration team and the school staff generally, to approach the requirements in a positive manner. Writing as a former Minister for Education in the Government of Victoria (Australia), Mr Hayward stated that he was 'determined' that schools given autonomy in that State, would be accountable to their local community and to the wider community for student improvement and for their performance in terms of their own objectives and priorities (Caldwell and Hayward, 1998). In that system, accountability was demonstrated through an annual school report. In Western Australia an annual school report was adopted as the vehicle for schools to show accountability. The school administration team of School A used the accountability process as an opportunity to showcase student and school achievement. The principal was successful in linking this process to school improvement. This observation is in keeping with the literature

on school effectiveness and improvement. According to Silins (1994), the principal is viewed as being the major source, although not the only source, of leadership contributing to the school improvement process.

The study reported in this thesis has examined the enactment of not just one single education restructuring policy, but an ensemble of related policies. These policies focus on specific aspects of the overall policy of restructuring the government system of education in Western Australia. Inevitably there will be overlap and policy is constantly evolving as new problems arise, as new conditions are set and new contradictions emerge (Crump, 1993). Education policy has been described by Power (1982) as being 'fluid', 'flexible' and 'precocious enough' to keep up with these changes. As changes appear and as problems arise they must be solved in context. As Ball (1993: 12) states:

> Solutions to the problems posed by policy texts will be localised and should be expected to display *ad hocery* and messiness. … Thus, the enactment of texts relies on things like commitment, understanding, capability, resources, practical limitations, cooperation and (importantly) intertextual compatibility.

The case studies reported here have illustrated different interpretations, different emphases and different degrees of implementation. The differences underscore the value of case studies nestled in their own localised contexts. They demonstrate how policy making is cyclical in nature and not linear. Policy-making is a process and not a product. Nor is policy-making a rational process (Vickers, 1995). The four schools that are the subjects of the research reported in this thesis, all demonstrate differing contexts and each case study illustrates that in

addition to the common features there are important differences in the way the restructuring policy has been implemented.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a cross case analysis and discussion of the nineteen propositions emerging from case studies conducted in four different school settings. Some of these propositions were formed into three clusters or groups of propositions related to three common themes. That the number of differences in the remaining propositions balances the number of similarities is important, because this confirms the value of the multiple case study approach adopted for this research. It also demonstrates the likelihood that the implementation of a policy of restructuring across the education system could never be uniform, as the particular context of each school impacts on the interpretation of the policy and the ability of each school to execute the policy.

One important finding of this research is that each of the schools participating in this study recognised that a school administration team had been established or at least was aspired to. Leithwood (1998) claims that teams are more likely to represent the range of interests in an organisation than is an individual and team members are more prone to understand and support decisions made through participation in such decisions. Two of the schools, the senior high school (School A) and one of the primary schools (School B), had developed a cohesive

and effective school administration team. At the time the research was undertaken mid-way through the school year, the other two schools were engaged in team formation, largely because of recent membership changes. It is evident from the research that of these two schools, the primary school (School C) had previously had a divided administration group and the newly appointed principal was actively engaged in team formation. The only district high school included in this study (School D), did have, what was considered by the case study participants, an effective school administration team immediately prior to a change in membership of the team mid year.

The last few decades have seen unrelenting reform in school systems around the world and these reforms have been "led by shifts in political power, but many policy documents remain just pieces of paper" (Crump, 1993: 30). Policy implementation and evaluation are, in a classical sense, the final stages of a policy program (Ham and Hill, 1983). Implementation has been viewed as the missing link between policy decision-making and policy execution (Crump, 1993).

The final chapter will now be presented. It constitutes an overall conclusion to the study reported in this thesis and discusses some implications for theory and future research. It also presents some ideas arising from the findings that may inform practice.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

Introduction

In Australia, England and Wales, New Zealand and the USA, schools have assumed more responsibility than ever before for resource allocation and the way in which they perform their functions. This has transpired as policies of restructuring have been introduced devolving many responsibilities to the school level. Australia is no exception to this trend with decentralised decision-making, sometimes referred to as school based management, having been implemented, to some extent, in all States and Territories.

In Western Australia the government school system has been undergoing restructuring since the mid 1980s, nevertheless, there has been little acknowledgement of the appropriateness of various proposals for local conditions. In other words, there does not seem to have been much allowance for different approaches to match the circumstances and needs of diverse schools. Very little is also known about the impact of the restructuring policy initiatives introduced by the Department of Education on the management of schools and about how school administration teams have managed their work. In particular, very little is known about the manner in which school administration teams have interpreted and reinterpreted the meaning of the restructuring policy, about how they have adapted

to new roles and modes of operation, and about the organisational structures which they formulated, and within which they operate.

This thesis has presented a study of how the school administration teams in selected schools located in three adjacent rural education districts of the Western Australian Department of Education, have managed their work in the context of restructuring. School administration teams comprising the Principal and Deputy Principals have been formed in response to the need for shared decision-making as part of the restructuring initiative. These cooperative, inter-dependent teams assume responsibility for the administration and management of schools to effect improvement in school performance. Each of the case study schools presents a different set of circumstances that impact on the way they are managed. The purpose of the study was to address the following central research question: How are school administration teams managing their work in an education system undergoing restructuring?

This concluding chapter is presented in six parts. Following this introduction, the next part summarises the research aim and methodology. The third part of the chapter is concerned with the matter of the generalisability of the findings. The fourth part considers the implications of the research for bodies of theory relating to the research question. The fifth part focuses on the value of the study for further research. Finally, the chapter presents some ideas arising from the findings that may inform practice.

Research Aim and Methodology

The aim of the research reported in this thesis implied a need to develop concepts and propositions to capture the totality of the processes adopted and which constitute what is meant when it is asked how school administration teams are managing or dealing with their work in the year 2001, in the context of the Department of Education's restructuring policy. Based on interviews in selected primary and secondary schools, the study aimed to capture the reality of what went on in each team in the light of systemic restructuring requirements.

In circumstances where knowledge is superficial, incomplete or absent, case studies may be able to make a valuable contribution (Punch, 1998). Such circumstances existed with regard to the focus of this study. Therefore, a case study approach was adopted. This constituted an attempt to sample for diversity within rural Western Australia rather than for similarity, while at the same time recognising that only a limited number of in-depth case studies could be conducted. Four schools were selected for the study, representing variation in terms of size, structure and the different mixes of socio-economic factors, as well as degrees of remoteness of their catchment areas. This sample provided a variety of perspectives for investigation even though the selected schools represented only a small proportion of schools in the region. In keeping with the goal of probing a variety of school contexts within the district, the selected schools included one senior high school, one district high school and two primary schools.

The interpretivist approach to understanding the phenomenon under investigation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) was adopted for the research project. This approach, in turn, necessitated the use of qualitative methods. In particular, it was decided that grounded theory methods of data gathering and analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) which are consistent with the central theoretical position for this study, namely symbolic interactionism, be adopted for the study. Data gathering was initiated using the three major approaches used by qualitative researchers, namely, interviewing, observation and document study (Punch, 1998). The primary source of data gathering was through semi-structured in-depth interviews. These interviews permitted the researcher to probe the participant's subjective experiences of the phenomenon in question. The six-hour duration of the first round of visits to each school for interviews allowed the researcher ample time to observe the school administrators going about their work. Relevant school documents were also collected during these visits and were later analysed.

An 'aide memoire' (Burgess, 1984) was developed for use in the interviews during the study, with further probing questions being asked as required. The interviews took place at each school so as to cause minimal disruption to the participants and at least two sets of interviews were conducted. Each follow-up interview at each site was aimed at probing for depth and arriving at a greater understanding of the complexity of the participant's perspectives. The follow-up questions in each case were based upon the analysis undertaken of the previous interviews at that site. Transcripts of interviews were provided to the participants so as to verify the data

collected and alterations were made where requested or where inaccuracies had been recorded. To provide a form of triangulation of viewpoints (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993), members of school administration teams were interviewed separately.

The interview data were analysed using grounded theory procedure of coding (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The data were first analysed according to a process known as open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) by which, initial categories were developed. Through a process known as 'selective coding' (Glaser 1978 61) relationships emerged between the categories of data. Following these coding procedures, a set of theoretical propositions in each case study was developed by analysing the data using a mode of inductive analysis as formulated by Znaniecki in 1934. Inductive analysis is a process for verifying theories and propositions arising from qualitative data (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). This process of analysis yielded a total of nineteen propositions.

The nineteen propositions were grouped into different categories or 'clusters' (Sarantakos, 1993). They were as follows:

- Cluster One: Communication and Meeting Arrangements

- Cluster Two: Cohesiveness and Decision-Making Processes

- Cluster Three: Influence of School Councils

- Cluster Four: Differences Across the Four Case Studies.

Cluster One: Communication and Meeting Arrangements

School A Case Study, Proposition 4: As they manage their work, a team approach amongst the school administration team members is maintained through frequent *ad hoc* meetings and there is a high degree of communication.

School B Case Study, Proposition 3: The establishment and maintenance of trusting human relationships amongst the school administration team is reflected in them having easy access to each other for informal discussions about issues as they arise and not being reliant on regular formal meetings.

Cluster Two: Cohesiveness and Decision-Making Processes

School C Case Study, Proposition 1: Because of the perceived lack of common understanding among school administrators of their role, the development of a cohesive school administration team is seen as important by the principal.

School C Case Study, Proposition 2: The commitment to the development of a cohesive school administration team is reflected in the principal's objective to establish appropriate roles and decision-making processes.

School D Case Study, Proposition 1: To manage what they view as a challenging school community, the development of a cohesive school administration team is seen as important by the principal and is reflected in the principal's objective to establish appropriate roles and decision-making processes.

Cluster Three: Influence of School Councils

School A Case Study, Proposition 7: School Councils are established to formulate the school's educational objectives and priorities. The reality is that the school administration team does not place major store in the School Council's advice in this regard. Consequently, they manage these views in a way that is consistent with their own view of the direction the school should take.

School B Case Study, Proposition 4: While the school administration team demonstrates a concern for trusting human relations, which is extended to the wider school community, the involvement of the School Council in school decision-making is considered a low priority.

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School B Case Study, Proposition 5: The low priority given to School Council's involvement in school decision-making can largely be attributed to the approach of the principal.

School C Case Study, Proposition 4: Although School Councils are established to formulate the school's educational objectives and priorities, the reality is that the School Council does not have effective influence in this regard. Each of these propositions will now be discussed in turn.

School D Case Study, Proposition 3: Although School Councils are established to formulate the school's educational objectives and priorities, the reality in this school is that the School Council does not have effective influence in this regard.

Cluster Four: Differences Across the Four Case Studies.

School A Case Study, Proposition 1: The school administration team members consider that the way in which they manage their work is determined largely by their view that curriculum issues should be their most fundamental concern.

School A Case Study, Proposition 2: It is significant that when talking about curriculum issues, the school administration team is actually using it as a synonym for concern about the quality of teaching and learning.

School A Case Study, Proposition 3: The importance that the school administration team ascribes to issues of teaching and learning drives the way in which they manage their work and this in turn is strongly reflected in their approach to selecting people for appointment to their school.

School A Case Study, Proposition 5: Members of the school administration team view their work as very important and are prepared to spend considerable time completing schoolwork in their personal time.

School A Case Study, Proposition 6: The importance that the school administration team ascribes to issues of teaching and learning drives the way in which they manage their work, and this in turn is also strongly reflected in their approach to accountability.

School B Case Study, Proposition 1: The establishment and maintenance of trusting human relationships is a high priority for this school administration team.

School B Case Study, Proposition 2: The members of the school administration team actively maintain trust in each other.

School C Case Study, Proposition 3: There is a perception at the school that the school's performance is affected by the high turnover in school administrator positions.

School D Case Study, Proposition 2: The inexperience of teachers in what they perceive to be a difficult school environment is of concern to the school administration team. Consequently, the school administration team views its main purpose as supporting teachers.

Research Findings and the Matter of Generalisability

The matter of generalisability of the findings of the study reported in this thesis relates to their external validity and the extent to which the study's findings can generalised to other situations. Maxwell (1998) observes that generalisability of the findings of qualitative studies is usually based on the development of a theory that can be extended to other cases. For this reason, Guba and Lincoln (1989) prefer the term transferability rather than generalisability. Transferability relates to the capacity of the research findings to be applied to other similar settings and contexts, with the goal of obtaining similar outcomes.

To facilitate judgements being made about the transferability of the conclusions to other contexts, the researcher conducted a detailed analysis of verbatim transcripts

of interviews, observation notes and documents, purposive sampling and the logical presentation of theoretical propositions supported by relevant examples from the data. The researcher has clearly laid out the details of the research context, data collection and analysis, together with a description of each case study school's unique setting so that a reader may make his/her own judgements about transferability to other settings. This approach of adopting careful reporting of procedures also enhances the dependability and confirmability of the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Here dependability refers to the rigour relating to the consistency of the findings and confirmability refers to the way in which the data and the interpretations of the study are grounded in events, rather than the researcher's personal presumptions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Notwithstanding the above discussion of generalisability and transferability, the study was designed to sample for diversity rather than for similarity within a small selection of rural Western Australian schools. It was observed in an earlier chapter that the cause of failure of implementation of change initiatives is related to the variations in school administrator perspectives and operating contexts. It was argued that while the intent of the restructuring policy was to change how government schools are managed, there has been little acknowledgement of the appropriateness of the various initiatives for local circumstances. Very little is known about the impact of these policies on the management of schools and about how school administration teams have managed their work. Because of the circumstantial uniqueness of the case study schools, it would be difficult to argue

that the findings of the study can be generalised to elsewhere. However, the study can serve to encourage readers to reflect on their own experience and enable them to derive new insights, understandings and meanings. In this way, the usefulness of the study is that it affords readers the opportunity to compare the data and analysis of this study to their own school.

Implications of the Research Findings
for the Theoretical Literature

The notion of education restructuring is widespread in the literature on educational change and reform (Louden and Browne, 1993; Hargreaves, 1994; Lee and Smith, 1994; Dimmock, 1999). Beare (1995: 132) claims that during the 1980s and 1990s 'wholesale restructuring' was a feature of both government and non-government schooling systems around the world. These restructuring initiatives have been designed to address the widespread concern regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of government schooling systems in light of evidence that education systems are not working (David, 1989). Australia is no exception in this trend, with a form of a deregulated, decentralised system replacing centralised planning, control and supervision in all States and Territories (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988; Thomas, 1992; Dimmock, 1993). Barcan (1996) observes that there have also been reductions in the size of Australian education bureaucracies and attempts have been made to decentralise authority and responsibility.

It was noted in the review of the literature relevant to the study reported in this thesis that there are three inter-related bodies of literature. Firstly, there is the literature on traditional school administration and the changing nature of school administration in diverse situations. Secondly, there is the literature probing the impact of restructuring on different groups involved in managing schools. Thirdly, there is the body of literature related to the evolving concept of school administration teams (which are also known as school or senior management teams) and how they are managing in the context of restructured school systems. The study has implications for each of these three areas of research.

Traditional School Administration

It will be recalled that the management and administration of schools was traditionally a bureaucratic process with the principal or headteacher as the main player. The study reported in this thesis has contributed to the relevant literature in that it has shown that while there has been a significant reduction in bureaucratic processes in schools the traditional structures in certain instances still persist. In particular, the bureaucratic hierarchy is still clearly evident and it may impede further participatory decision-making. As will be discussed below, the existence of such a hierarchy of roles can hinder the formation and effectiveness of school administration teams.

Traditionally school professionals have effectively excluded parents from becoming involved in school decision-making. However, in Australia, calls for

community participation in school governance date from the 'Karmel Report' in 1973 and were renewed with the publication in 1987 of the 'Better Schools Report' in Western Australia that mandated school-based decision-making bodies in all government schools. This move was confirmed by the *School Education Act 1999* and the *School Education Act Regulations 2000* that required all government schools to establish School Councils. The study reported in this thesis confirms other research (Mulford, Hogan and Lamb, 2001) which demonstrates that school professionals continue to be relatively unresponsive to the views of parents even though such a school-community partnership is mandated.

Impact on Various Groups

The body of literature relating to the impact of restructuring on the various groups participating in the management of schools has grown over the past two decades. That part of the literature pertaining to the impact on the work of principals has been of particular concern in this study. Research into the changing role of principals during the period of implementation of restructuring initiatives has found principals experiencing more change than any other group (Bradley, 1992). According to Edinger and Murphy (1995: 68), the multitude of societal, economic and political forces being imposed on schools in recent decades, together with the increasing complexity of the learning environment, the shifting professional relationships within education systems and schools, and the introduction of participatory decision-making, have all caused "the principalship to evolve into

one of the most demanding and challenging administrative positions in modern social service organisations".

The study reported in this thesis makes a contribution to this body of literature in that it investigated the practical aspects of how four principals in diverse school settings go about interacting with different groups as they manage their work. The study also demonstrates an ongoing need for further research into the impact of change on the work of Western Australian school principals and deputy principals, brought on by devolution policies, so that a clearer understanding of their work is reached, leading to the development of effective programs of preparation for these challenging organisational leadership positions.

Concept of School Administration Teams

This study also makes a contribution to the body of literature pertaining to the formation of school administration teams. Morgan (2001) asserts that the development and spread of a team approach to the higher-level management of schools in England and Wales, is a recent phenomenon, evolving from the management relationship between the headteacher and the deputy head of a school. However, the evolution of the concept of a senior management team occurred over about two decades. On this, Morgan (2001: 22) states that "the emergence of a cooperative, inter-dependent team took time to develop and be accepted" and he observed that it was not until 1987 that "a modern concept of the SMT, as a team with collective responsibility, began to emerge". This timing

coincides with the introduction in Western Australia of policies for devolution and restructuring initiatives.

The study reported in this thesis has shown that the formation of such teams was actively sought in each of the case study schools. The study demonstrates the recognition that school administration teams have arrived in Western Australia as elsewhere and appear set to stay for the foreseeable future, despite not being required by any departmental or government policy. This study offers an insight into school administration team formation and interaction in Western Australian school settings and the way in which such teams manage their work.

A limitation of the findings of this research is that the data were gathered mainly from two sets interviews with members of four school administration teams, along with a study of documents from each school. A greater richness of data might be uncovered by extensive observations and shadowing of school administration teams and by exploring the perspectives of teachers and parents on the work of teams, thus providing a more complete picture of the school administration team phenomenon in Western Australia.

Another significant finding of this study is that little has been done in a deliberately planned way to develop the effectiveness of school administration teams in the participating Western Australian schools. This finding confirms the research of Wallace and Hall (1994) in England, Walker and Stott (1993) in

Australia, and Cardno (1998; 2002) in New Zealand. It is clearly evident from all these studies that training for teams through structured development activities, while offering the potential for improving team effectiveness, plays a minor role compared with unstructured team development.

Implications of the Research Findings for Further Research

It has been argued in this study that very little research has been conducted into the manner in which school administration teams have interpreted and reinterpreted the meaning of the restructuring policy, how they have adapted to new roles and modes of operation, the organisational structures they have formulated and the different ways they operate in the different local contexts. This study presents numerous possibilities for further research relating to school administration teams and how they manage their work in the restructured Western Australian government education system.

Further research needs to be conducted to determine the extent of the formation of school administration teams across the State and across the school size classification. Comparative studies could focus on the adoption of school administration teams in primary and secondary schools. Additional micro-studies of the way in which individual schools are dealing with school decision-making and management are encouraged. In this respect, the present study serves as a

precursor to further research that can illuminate decision-making processes. It might be instructive, for example, to uncover the factors inhibiting the formation of school administration teams in Western Australia. Such research could advance the formation of school administration teams in other schools through targeted professional development of practicing administrators and in the preparation of aspiring administrators. Professional development could also focus on the role of the principal as leader/facilitator of the school administration team.

It would be informative to find out the true usefulness of school administration teams. Can such teams make a difference? Longitudinal studies could be carried out to uncover the reasons some teams fail to enhance shared decision-making over time. Such a study could observe team history and shared experiences as the team evolved. One interesting facit would be the way in which changes in team membership were accommodated. How do newcomers let go of their past and come to terms with the history of the current team?

To what extent does the use of school administration teams exclude others from participating in school decision-making? Further studies could investigate the criteria used by effective school administration teams in deciding which issues form their agenda. These studies would improve our understanding of the effectiveness of school administration teams. On this point, it would be worthwhile investigating what is required for the deliberate development of the knowledge, understandings and skills required for improving the effectiveness of

school administration teams. Attention also needs to be applied to the relationship between the school culture and structures and their impact on the role of the school administration team. How do we foster greater collaboration among individuals who are not committed to it?

Finally, it is recommended that a replication of the Wallace and Hall (1994) study of senior management teams at work in England be conducted as it would reveal what members of effective school administration teams in Western Australia actually do. Such a study would bring to light the range of approaches to teamwork in schools, the similarities and differences between school administration teams, the role of the team in managing the school, and structures and processes for carrying it out. The links between the school administration team and other groups through which the school administration team works in fulfilling the team role would also be made known. Ways of developing the capacity for teamwork in the management of schools could also be revealed. It is expected that the learning emerging from such a detailed study would have a significant impact on school improvement and effectiveness.

Implications of the Research for Future Practice

In the previous section consideration was given to the implications of the research findings reported in this thesis for the relevant bodies of theory and for further

research. Consideration is now given to the theoretical insights created from this study that have the potential to improve practice in schools.

It is apparent that there was a lack of a strategic process adopted by schools or the system to fully develop the knowledge, understandings and skills required of an effective school administration team. As a consequence the approach is a rather *ad hoc* process that includes on-the-job experience. Adair (1997: 187) observed that "good teams are not the products of chance". Effective teams need planned development activities and skill training. It should be remembered that to become a teacher it is necessary to complete four years of teacher training. Many school leaders have a long period of teaching experience and have often served in special positions. The difficulty is that the teaching experience does not adequately prepare the aspiring school leader for work in the position because the tasks are of a completely different nature. Furthermore, past or even existing school environments may have reinforced habits contrary to those that are needed for successful teamwork. Thus, there needs to be a strong emphasis on training for the development of a core set of teamwork skills.

The following team skills and understandings are suggested as being useful focal points in future school administration team development programs:
- Understanding the stages of team formation and development and the factors required for successful team performance
- Group process skills

- Developing shared understanding of roles and responsibilities

- Listening and feedback skills

- Communication skills

- Conflict resolution skills

- Skills for influencing others

- Problem solving skills

- Team effectiveness evaluation skills

Rather than provide professional development for individuals at principal and deputy principal levels, this study implies that relevant professional development needs to be provided for whole school administration teams. Wallace and Hall (1994: 196) also observed that "there is a strong case for targeting management development support on SMT's [school management teams] rather than solely upon individual managers". Team leadership appears very different from traditional bureaucratic, hierarchical conceptions that place individuals into different, limited functions and that consign them in superordinate and subordinate relation to one another. Rather than being defined by formal roles or positions, the team leadership that emerges and needs to be supported is more like Sergiovanni's (1987) concept of 'cultural leadership' and the 'power to accomplish' as opposed to 'power over people'. To enable schools to release their school administration team so that all the members of the school administration team can participate in such professional development at the one time, relief arrangements need to be provided by district education offices. These developmental activities for school

administration teams need to be sustained over a long period of time and not be 'one-off' events.

One such sustained professional development strategy is the notion of coaching, whereby an external facilitator is engaged to work with the school administration team. The facilitator could provide opportunities for extensive interaction among team members on the role, purpose and responsibilities of the school administration team. He or she could present feedback on the actual performance of individuals and of the team that is more likely to be objective than merely relying on what the school administration team members perceive about their practice. The external facilitator or consultant can provide other forms of assistance such as data gathering and analysis for strategic reviews of school performance, the conduct of action research by team members and the development of a management culture that values and sustains a focus on continuous improvement through self review of the performance of the school administration team.

It is recommended that such structured school administration team development activities be formulated, funded and introduced by the Department of Education and Training of Western Australia, perhaps through the Department's Leadership Centre, and provided to all large schools. Furthermore, it is recommended that specific funding of such development programs be provided in the school grant because the members of a school administration team are unlikely to be willing to

take a large slice of their school's professional development budget for their own

development as a team when there are so many competing needs of other staff.

69,445 words

APPENDIX A

CONSENT LETTER

Dear

How school administration teams are managing their work in an education system undergoing restructuring

I am pleased to invite you to participate in a study of the way in which school administration teams in Western Australia have managed their work in the context of Education Department's policy of devolution since 1987.

I am conducting this research as a doctoral student of the Graduate School of Education of the University of Western Australia. Using the data generated by you and other participants in this study, I am aiming to understand how school management operates in the context of this devolution policy. Devolution of education systems has been a feature of recent education change across the globe and this study will contribute to our understandings of this important contemporary issue.

I request your permission to conduct interviews with you, which will be recorded and transcribed prior to analysis. I will provide a copy of the transcript for you to read and verify, prior to my analysis. You can be confident that your contribution will be entirely confidential and you will not be identified personally in any way. You are able to withdraw from this study at any time. I will be contacting you in the near future to invite you to participate in an interview of approximately 90 minutes, which will be arranged for a time at your convenience.

If you consent to participate in this study, please complete and return the attached form.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this research, please contact me at the above address or on 0419 929 176.

Yours sincerely

John Mortimer

[date]

CONSENT FORM

How school administration teams are managing their work in an education system undergoing restructuring.

I have read the description of the research project and agree to be involved.

I understand that I can withdraw at any time if I wish.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

PLEASE RETURN TO
      Mr John Mortimer
      Eastern Goldfields Senior High School
      Locked Bag 9
      Revell Place
      KALGOORLIE WA 6433

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