

**PURSUING AN ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT: HOW THE PROCESS WAS  
DEALT WITH IN ONE SCHOOL**

by

S.R.P. Clarke

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in the Graduate School of Education, the University of  
Western Australia

April, 1997

## ABSTRACT

Major educational restructuring has been occurring in many countries throughout the world. A significant aspect of this restructuring has been an acknowledgement of the primacy of teaching in the educational process. In Australia, one emphasis on teaching as a major component of educational restructuring has emerged mainly through the industrial arena. Legislation has been enacted throughout the country supporting the principle of agreements negotiated at the workplace either in conjunction with or completely replacing the existing legally binding agreements establishing work conditions for employees within an industrial sector. Education systems and schools are now in a position to re-examine the nature of teachers' work and the defining of this work is no longer restricted by the all-embracing terms of a collective agreement. Rather, the nature of the work to be undertaken in a particular educational system or in a particular school can now be determined by the specific needs of the system or the school.

In Western Australia, schooling operates in two basic sectors, namely, the government sector and the non-government sector. The study reported in this dissertation aimed to develop theory about how, in an attempt to reach an agreement for its teaching staff, the process of enterprise bargaining was dealt with in one school, and focused on the non-government sector.

The framing of the research question in terms of how the process of enterprise bargaining was 'dealt with' is consistent with the meta-theoretical position of symbolic interaction. In accordance with the theoretical assumptions of the research agenda, the data gathering methods employed were semi-structured interviews and the examination of documents. In addition, 'Grounded theory' modes of analysis which are consistent with symbolic interaction, were utilised.

The outcome of the research was a set of theoretical propositions about how an independent school dealt with the process of enterprise bargaining. The first proposition asserts that the process of enterprise bargaining at the School was dealt with according to a sequence of clearly identifiable stages. The second proposition contends that the process which led to the enterprise bargaining agreement was dealt with by all parties maintaining trust in each other throughout. The maintenance of this trust was facilitated by, and reinforced by, the maintenance of a communication network. This network allowed parties to be able to communicate with each other at all times even if through a third party and allowed trust to be rebuilt when it broke down. The third proposition contends that the process which led to the enterprise bargaining agreement was dealt with by the Headmaster creatively employing his leadership qualities in a manner which maintained the involvement of all parties throughout.

A variety of implications are offered based on the study. First, there are implications for theory in three broad areas: micropolitical theory, leadership theory and industrial relations theory. This is followed by implications for practice in the areas of management and administration, leadership, governing bodies of schools, trade unions, and teachers. In considering each one of these areas ramifications for professional development are also highlighted

## DECLARATION

I certify that this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person where due reference is not made in the text.

S. R. P. CLARKE

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In submitting this dissertation I wish to express my gratitude to the Headmaster of the research school and to the participants. It is self-evident that without their willingness to cooperate, this study would not have been possible.

Many people have given me intellectual support and stimulation in developing my ideas. I am particularly indebted to my supervisor, Dr Tom O'Donoghue. He has been a constant source of sound advice and his inimitable brand of Gaelic charm enabled me to stay on track. I should also like to thank my co-supervisor, Associate Professor Keith Punch, for the guidance he has always given me. In addition, I am most grateful to my external supervisor, Dr Rod Chadbourne, who has been very generous with his time and expertise.

In more general terms, I wish to record my appreciation of a variety of staff at both the Graduate School of Education and across the University. These people have contributed a great deal to the study without necessarily knowing it.

Finally, my profound gratitude is due to Allison and Harriet for the sacrifices they have endured over the years. It has been their unswerving faith in my ability to complete the task that sustained my commitment.

Enfin!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
DECLARATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	viii
Chapter	
1 INTRODUCTION	
The Purpose of the Study	
The Policy Context	
Justification for the Research	
The Research Focus	
Research Methods	
Conclusion	
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction	
Expression of Current Dissatisfaction with Teaching in Australia	
The Emerging Literature on Award Restructuring and Enterprise- Based Bargaining	
An Analysis of the Theoretical and Conceptual Dimensions of Bargaining	
The Micro-Political Perspective	
Conclusion	
3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	
Introduction	
Theoretical Underpinnings	
The Research Focus	
Data Collection	
Validity and Reliability	
Data Analysis	
Conclusion	
4 THE CONTEXT OF ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AT THE SCHOOL	
Introduction	
The Administration of Schooling in Western Australia	
The Research School in Historical Perspective	
The School from a Contemporary Perspective	
The Response of the Non-Government Schools Sector to Industrial Changes	
The Players in the School's Enterprise Bargaining Process	
Conclusion	

## 5 FIRST SET OF THEORETICAL FINDINGS

Introduction

Stage One: Building Commitment

Stage Two: Distinguishing the Substantive Issues for Negotiation

Stage Three: Persuasion

Stage Four: Collision Course

Stage Five: Closure

Stage Six: Tying up Loose Ends

Conclusion

## 6 SECOND SET OF THEORETICAL FINDINGS

Introduction

Main Proposition

Conclusion

## 7 THIRD SET OF THEORETICAL FINDINGS

Introduction

Main Proposition

Conclusion

## 8 CONCLUSION

Introduction

The Research Findings and the Matter of Generalisability

Implications of the Research Findings for Other Bodies of Theoretical Literature

Implications of the Research Findings for Future Research

Implications of the Research Findings for Practice

## REFERENCES

## APPENDIX

## LIST OF TABLES

Table

1.1 Stages and Sub-Stages of the Enterprise Bargaining Process at the Research School