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<https://doi.org/10.25959/23210978.v1>

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**TRUST AND THE CAPTURING OF SCHOOL-BASED POTENTIAL**

**Pamela Winsome Bishop, M.Ed.**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

*School of Early Childhood ~ Primary  
Education*

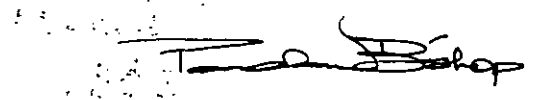
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## DECLARATION

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pamela W. Bishop', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pamela W. Bishop



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## ABSTRACT

### TRUST AND THE CAPTURING OF SCHOOL-BASED POTENTIAL

by Pamela Winsome Bishop

The importance of collegial trust to organisations has long been recognised. In school settings the achievement of trust between principals and teachers can be a vital ingredient in the development of school culture and effectiveness. Yet the nature and rapidity of changes being required of schools, plus the context in which principals and teachers are expected to implement initiatives, may test collegial trust. Despite the challenges which many principals face in the course of their work, some are more trusted by teachers than others.

This study investigated what four principals did or did not do to engender and maintain trust with teachers. As well, the study considered how externally-driven initiatives, which principals were required to implement with teachers, affected mutual trust. An examination of how trustworthy leadership contributed to school culture was also made.

An interpretive multiple-site case study framed the investigation. The researcher spent approximately ten weeks in four inner urban Melbourne secondary schools. During this time, each school's principal was shadowed for four days and interviewed extensively. The balance of the fieldwork consisted of observation, document analysis, and interviews with 112 teachers.

A combination of principals' personal and professional characteristics plus

work practices engendered and maintained trust with teachers. Trusting teachers, being knowledgeable, hardworking, caring, confidential, and having integrity were commonly favoured characteristics that attracted teacher trust. Work practices which engendered trust were non-exploitative, de-emphasised principals' power differentials with teachers, and encouraged controversy and critical dialogue. Teachers' perceptions of trust in their principals were evident along four dimensions: absolute, domain-specific, relational, and comparative.

The extent to which teachers thought their key interests were being advanced or diminished was often the standard which teachers used to determine trust in their principals. That standard came into play especially when principals implemented non-negotiable initiatives with teachers. When teachers consistently perceived trustworthy leadership from the principal which was congruent with the school's culture, mutual trust was enhanced and a strengthening of shared expectations occurred.

Results of this study highlighted principals' trust-engendering characteristics and practices. The study also found that when teachers were unable to discern the need for an externally-imposed key initiative, they often questioned the educational competency of those associated with its development. Such questioning frequently extended to principals who were actively involved in the initiative's implementation even though the rhetoric of much current educational change emphasises devolution and school-based management, and teacher participation in decision making. These findings have implications for the ongoing trust between principals and teachers and the capturing of school-based potential.

To Bill,  
for believing in possibility, sovereignty,  
and leading by example,  
with thanks.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The goodwill and efforts of many individuals contributed to this project.

A debt of thanks is owed to participating teachers from Kandos, Ruthven, Sarina East, and Sarina North Secondary Colleges (all pseudonyms). They generously gave of their time and views. Particular appreciation is extended to the four principals from those schools who, in keeping with the spirit of organisational learning, allowed their leadership practices to be scrutinised. Their willingness to entertain open questioning, criticism, and feedback about their work was impressive. The personal and professional courage involved in their gesture of openness was noted by many of their school-based colleagues as well as the researcher.

Special gratitude is extended to my Supervisor, Professor Bill Mulford. His caring manner, expert guidance, and integrity provided an enduring source of inspiration. It was both a pleasure and privilege to work with him. Special thanks also go to Dr. Neville Grady for the insightful and supportive reviews of my work. The thesis was strengthened as a result of his endeavours. In addition, thanks are offered to Sara Brain, Maureen Colarossi, Rev. Tim Costello, Chris Scott, Cathi Walker, and Jan Wood, all of whom are exemplary professionals in their respective fields. Finally, I remain grateful to my close friends for their support and companionship.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

To organisations in the Western world the importance of trust existing amongst work colleagues has long been recognised (Barnard, 1938; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kanter, 1977; McGregor, 1960). Yet what is comparatively new, for advocates who are convinced that trust remains a necessary ingredient in the vitality of enterprises (Carnevale, 1995; English, Frase, & Arhar, 1992; Fukuyama, 1995; Shaw, 1997), is the era in which such trust must operate.

With the demise of the Modern era, in the mid 1970's, went many firmly and widely-held understandings about organisational behaviour (Owens, 1995). By contrast, the emergence of the Postmodern period brought with it many circumstances and features that have influenced, in new ways, much of what occurs in, and the management of, workplaces. Amidst this, the on-going task for school principals—of harnessing the trust of teachers—may have been made more difficult.

This chapter provides a description and rationale for the study. The chapter initially considers the problem statement and background of the study. What then follows is a statement of purpose, the study's significance, and the research questions. These are further followed by the study's assumptions, limitations, definition of terms, and scope. Finally, a summary of the chapter is detailed.

## **Problem Statement**

In school settings, the achievement of mutual trust by principals and teachers is inextricably linked to the achievement of a vibrant culture and effectiveness (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993; English et al., 1992). However, for principals in particular, the obtaining of teacher trust may be difficult, especially when populations in many Western societies are becoming more cynical (Deal & Peterson, 1994) and in particular, where there is a culture of scepticism in the teaching profession (Leithwood, Menzies, & Jantzi, 1994). Moreover, with the nature and rapidity of changes being required of schools, and the context in which principals and teachers are expected to implement externally driven initiatives, the trust of school colleagues can be tested.

Given that some principals are particularly effective at their jobs (Leithwood 1992; Mulford, 1986), it is reasonable to posit that effective principals are more trusted by teachers than others. It is also likely that different policy initiatives issued through the principal may require teachers to have varying dimensions of trust in the principal, if implementation is to be achieved. Indeed, where a policy initiative is initially perceived by teachers as unnecessary, impractical or controversial, it may be that the trust in which a principal is held is a significant factor in being able to engender staff support for its implementation. Conversely, the failure to either galvanise teacher trust, or achieve mutual trust, may bode poorly for any ambitious policy platform.

Whilst there are clear and practical considerations that suggest it is important for leaders to be trusted by their colleagues, more intricate matters

surround the issue of trust amongst school-based educators. Some of those matters underscore the value of trusting relations, whilst others serve to highlight the limitations of intersecting organisational practices which jeopardise trust relations amongst school-based educators. As Australian literature on trust between school-based educators is scant, and the current era in which principals are required to lead colleagues is increasingly complex, the issue is deserving of attention.

In particular, school-based educators have limited or no access to Australian, research-based information about principals' practices which engender and maintain trust with teachers. School-based educators also have limited information about how the implementation of non-negotiable school initiatives affect trust between principals and teachers. This shortage of information extends to data about the contribution which trustworthy leadership can make to school culture. Hence, in this context, it is argued that school-based educators know too little about trust between Australian principals and teachers. It is further argued that, such a paucity of data restricts what school-based educators can draw upon to inform their practice. In turn, this has negative implications for professional and organisational learning.

This study examined aspects of trust between principals and teachers in selected Victorian secondary schools. In the course of doing so, the study captured some common and unique school events which involved principals and teachers. In relation to trust, the depiction of those events lends support to Bolman and Deal's (1991) claim that "what is most important about any event is

not what happened, but what it means" (p. 244).

### **Background**

Despite a trend toward local school-based decision-making, much of what (public school) principals and teachers in the Australian state of Victoria are expected to implement is based on externally-driven directives. When the content of the directives coalesce with the views of school-based personnel, it is likely to be faithfully implemented. However, when teachers at the school level are unconvinced of the merit of, or motives behind, non-negotiable initiatives, the chances of effective implementation taking place are considerably reduced. As each principal is mandated to implement key policy initiatives for state government schools, matters of trust often come into play when he or she seeks the assistance of teachers to ensure that each initiative is adequately addressed. Cunningham and Gresso (1993) contend that, at junctures like this, the culture in schools is such that implementation will be resisted by teachers unless a climate of trust exists.

In addition, how teachers or principals perceive that their professional and/or industrial associations have been omitted or involved in the development of centralised pronouncements, may influence the enthusiasm they have for the subsequent implementation phase. Many school-based principals have had no role in the exclusion of teacher associations from involvement in the preparation of centralised policy edicts. However, principals may have to deal with a view by teachers that the principals' industrial associations have been party to larger system-wide questions of exclusion. Moreover, Busman (1992) claims that

there is some evidence to suggest that teachers make judgements about teachers' actual involvement in school decision-making and the authenticity of participatory principals' strategies and education systems. When teachers believe that the principal genuinely seeks and values their involvement in decision making, he or she is more likely to be trusted. Busman argues that, in such situations, there is usually an increase in teachers' organisational participation.

The era in which principals and teachers presently operate may not be one in which they are able to inform adequately the government of the day about practical dimensions of schooling, or to provide immediate and frank feedback. However, this apparent failing within 'the system' may not have prevented some genuine attempts at the school level to model integrity and value trust, even if it has meant that, as Deal and Peterson (1994) suggest, some principals have learned to "...discover ways to bend rules so that the learning needs of children are served" (p. 49). To principals who have valued trust, this study should serve as a support for their endeavours. For those principals (and other educationists) who, by contrast, have not yet found the matter of trust to be integral to school effectiveness, it is hoped that studies such as this one may offer worthwhile local information and provoke further reflection.

### **Purpose**

The general purpose of this study was to explore the place, value and consequences of trust in (secondary school) principal-teacher interactions. The study specifically aimed to:

1. Identify practices adopted by principals that enhanced teacher trust (of principals in particular).
2. Describe noteworthy aspects of policy implementation that impacted upon mutual trust (between principals and teachers).
3. Identify influences that trustworthy leadership had upon school culture.
4. Provide an explanation of the vital role trust plays in school-based policy implementation and the working lives of principals and teachers.

### **Significance**

The nature of many teachers and teaching generally is such that, for the committed, efficacious members of the profession, the job is much more than a job! With the job often comes a solid attachment to purpose and a 'critical eye'. Principals and teachers frequently view initiatives with caution until they are convinced that they are in the interests of either the students, themselves, and /or the community.

This study highlighted the interplay between sectoral interests, roles, and identities in school settings and showed how these can influence trust amongst educators. In particular, the study focused on how principals—in considered and unintended ways—engendered feelings of trust and/or mistrust with teachers. The study also noted how the implementation of some key principal responsibilities impacted on trust.

Despite the apparent proclivity of many Western governments to expect school-based personnel to adopt key educational initiatives that they have little or no part in except but to implement, this study underscores the need for



engagement with teachers, rather than (top-down) "balkanisation" (Hargreaves, 1994). While engagement is difficult and time-consuming, it ultimately may be a more productive process than top-down initiatives. As this study demonstrated, teachers appreciated principals' efforts to collaborate with them. Many of the practices adopted by principals, in the course of collaboration, added to teachers' trust of their principal. Such practices also aided teacher cooperation. Thus, if "bottom-up" or school-initiated change is to be effective systemically, understanding the place and potential of principal-teacher trust is important.

The efforts of some principals in this study showed that the task of harnessing—and maintaining—trust is often problematic and invariably an ongoing one. The study also showed a range of school situations where there was no shortage of colleagues adjudging whether the principal was, at the least, trustworthy. This underscores the importance teachers assign to principals' interpersonal practices with themselves and their colleagues. In turn, it suggests that principals need to exhibit highly effective interpersonal skills. Providing a depiction of various dimensions of trust played out by principals and teachers in the course of their work days may also have provided learning opportunities for educationists keen to explore, as Greene (1988) suggested "... stories that open perspectives on communities grounded in trust, flowering by means of dialogue, kept alive in open spaces where freedom can find a place" (p. 134).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What do principals do to engender and maintain trust with teachers?
2. How does what principals are required to implement with teachers affect mutual trust?
3. How does trustworthy leadership contribute to school culture?

### **Assumptions**

The study was based on the following assumptions:

1. Concepts of trust would vary between and within schools.
2. Trust was an intricate social reality that undergirded much of what teachers and principals did in schools.
3. Trust could be viewed in relative or absolute terms, depending upon the circumstances and individuals involved.
4. Trust was both an idiosyncratic aspect of self and potentially a multidimensional attribute when enacted with or amongst others.
5. There would be occasions (in schools) when teachers or principals claimed to trust (either self, other person/s, event or system), yet the claim was not supported through discernible behaviour. This would not necessarily render the claim to be unreliable.
6. Distrust, in a variety of forms, would be in existence in all schools; such distrust would not necessarily be problematical.
7. Various dimensions of conflict would be evident in all schools; such conflict was sometimes, but not always, beneficial (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

## **Limitations**

Whilst ideally the study may have benefited from the researcher spending more than the equivalent of ten school weeks in the field, it was not possible due to time and other practical constraints. As well, four case depictions which were in 'working class' schools may not have provided the contrasts that may otherwise have been gleaned through the addition of further case schools.

## **Definition of Terms**

<b>Case study</b>	"An-depth investigation of an individual, group, or institution" (Gay, 1992, p. 235).
<b>Civic community</b>	" ... patterns of civic involvement and social solidarity ... " (Putnam, 1993, p. 83).
<b>CSFs</b>	Curriculum and Standards Framework, a series of documents which the Department of Education (Victoria) produced in the early to mid 1990s. These documents detail curricula that all Victorian public schools must implement.
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education (Victoria).
<b>Frameworks</b>	A series of documents which the then Ministry of Education (Victoria) produced in the early to late 1980s. These documents detailed recommended curricula for all Victorian public schools to implement.
<b>Institutional socialisation</b>	" ... is conversion of individual incumbents ... " (Putnam, 1993, p. 38).
<b>Instrumentality</b>	"...the use of means to achieve an end" (Arendt, 1958, p.157).
<b>Interpretive Theory</b>	"states that meaning—and hence, reality—is constructed through the social interaction of people within a social setting. Meanings change in the course of interaction because the participants hold different perceptions; thus reality is flexible and based on interpretations, rather than fixed" (Bennett & LeCompte, 1990, p. 32).

<b>Modern era</b>	From the end of the Middle Ages until the mid 1970s.
<b>Norms</b>	Are those standards of practice or attitudes shared by teachers.
<b>Sacred norms</b>	"... those principles guiding professional behavior that establish meaning in teachers' work lives, that embody their purpose for teaching in their respective settings" (Rossman, Corbett, & Firestone, 1988, p. xi).
<b>Postmodern period</b>	Following immediately after the Modern era.
<b>Poststructuralism</b>	"Also called postmodernism, refers to specific forms of cultural critique that have emerged in intellectual circles since the mid-1970s. These critiques refuse the appeals of epistemological absolutes and embrace the wisdom of a multiplicity of positions acknowledging the contradictions implicit in them and accommodating ambiguity (Hutchinson & Wilson, 1994, p. 302).
<b>School culture</b>	"... the set of shared expectations about what is and what ought to be, derives from both the more distant external environment common to most schools and the local setting" (Rossman, Corbett, & Firestone, 1988, p. 122).
<b>Social capital</b>	"... refers to features of social organisation, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1993, p. 35).
<b>Trust [macro level]</b>	"A quintessentially social reality that penetrates not only individual psyches but also the whole institutional fabric of society" (Lewis & Weigert, 1985, p. 982).
<b>Trust [micro level]</b>	"reliance on the ... person, or some attribute of a thing; confident expectation of something; hope" (Macquarie Dictionary, 1997, p. 2269).
<b>VCE</b>	Victorian Certificate of Education.

### Scope

This study was broadly underpinned by a sociological perspective. The

decision to base the study on a sociological foundation was made following consideration of a number of matters. In the course of planning the study it was deemed likely that demographics would be referred to at various stages. Aspects of roles, groups, and social institutions were also regarded as being consequential to the character of the study design. These dimensions of a study were considered to fit well within the purview of sociology (Merriam, 1988, p.26). In addition, it was anticipated that aspects of school culture would be dealt with at a number of points in the investigation. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) claimed "sociologists use culture ... to theoretically inform their qualitative studies" (p. 39).

Although the disciplines of history or psychology could have provided a bedrock for the study, the most viable alternative to sociology was considered to be anthropology. In particular, the prospect of locating the study as an ethnography contained several attractions. On the one hand, the commonly used data collection methods in ethnography of participant observation, interview, and documentary analysis (Merriam, 1988) dovetailed with the data collection methods considered appropriate to respond to the study's questions and settings. Further, the study's interest in culture was suggestive of an ethnographic approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

The researcher was also keen to learn of the meanings participants assigned to concerns such as 'trust' and the nature of principals' duties. A preference to grasp meanings could have been achieved through an ethnographic study (Wax, 1971). Finally, the expected "thick description"

(Geertz, 1973) that would accompany such a qualitative investigation was common to ethnography. In contrast, there were compelling reasons to discount the use of ethnography.

Wolcott (1982) has made clear his belief that ethnographic studies require very lengthy periods of time in the field. Wolcott's notion of lengthy refers to (at the least) several months and preferably a year. In regard to the length of field stays, Eisner (1984) also argued that "ethnographers spend months, even years, studying small cultures" (p. 197). Time requirements were taken seriously during the planning stages, as, for practical reasons, the researcher expected to be able to enter the field for a total of up to three months.

Owens (1982) suggested that some of Wolcott's repeated concerns about the legitimacy of claims-making on the part of researchers who identify work as ethnographic, amount to gate-keeping. Owens believes that other aspects which govern a study are of greater import. What matters, according to Owens, is the adequacy of the approaches taken in studies which operate under a naturalistic rubric. Although it is likely that Wolcott's argument (that many studies which claimed to be ethnographies were not so), emanated from precisely a concern over standards of adequacy, his more recent position indicated an expanded perspective.

In referring to the value of qualitative approaches generally, Wolcott (1994) stated "we have been less attentive to whatever costs and conditions accompany these advantages ... " (p. 414). In comprehending other

implications in respect of decision-making about research, Wolcott's latter stance may open the way for further debate about theoretical links. Thus, in this instance, the decision to privilege a sociological bias over an anthropological one arose from an appraisal of inclusionary and exclusionary criteria, the researcher's consideration of any participating school's concerns, and a conclusion that a sociological orientation could adequately frame the study.

In particular, this study was informed by interpretive theory. Historically, interpretivism has been located within sociology (Merriam, 1988). However, the realm of interpretive inquiry has extended beyond a single discipline during the past three decades; it is now able to capture a wider view (Bennett & LeCompte, 1990). Such a potential enables, for example, psychological, and management perspectives to be considered. Bennett & LeCompte argue that in being open to a range of standpoints, interpretivism can be oriented toward an integrative perspective. Such an outlook recognises that multiple sources of knowledge and perspectives may provide a richer depiction of the lives and issues being studied.

### **Summary**

Whilst private enterprise has long recognised the organisational importance of trust, by and large, schools have not. Yet a small chorus of educationists is asserting that, by strengthening trust between principals and teachers, organisational effectiveness can be enhanced.

The existence of trust between principals and teachers provides a basis upon which a vibrant culture can develop. Moreover, as principals are required

to lead schools amidst increasingly complex circumstances, having a mutuality of trust with teachers may sustain teacher cooperation.

Further, trust may be an effective resource for principals and teachers to draw upon when faced with an unwelcomed, externally-initiated directive which has to be implemented. Without trust, principals may experience teacher resistance as they attempt to implement directives which are perceived by teachers to be inappropriate or unnecessary. By contrast, a mutuality of trust may contribute to increased organisational commitment amongst teachers. Similarly, trust is a necessary ingredient for bottom-up or school-initiated change. In this respect, principals and teachers need access to more literature which details research findings about trust between principals and teachers.

The adoption of an interpretive sociological standpoint enabled this study to recognise multiple perspectives and thereby capture much of the diversity—and complexity—in the four participating schools.

### **Chapter Outline**

In the next chapter literature on pertinent aspects of micro and macro level trust will be reviewed. Subsequent chapters then elaborate the Methods and Procedures (Chapter 3), Results (Chapter 4), Data Analysis (Chapter 5), and Summary, Conclusion, and Implications (Chapter 6).



## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

In what follows, an examination is made of the literature in respect to the value and/or act of 'trust'. In the course of this examination, a brief overview of disciplinary perspectives (economic, management, psychological, sociological) together with a summary will be given. As well, an integrative perspective that moves beyond the traditional disciplines will be developed. Some lengthy accounts of selected studies is deemed necessary because, within the field of educational administration, trust has not had a history of interest that it has had, for example, in the sociological domain. Therefore, the breadth and depth of education studies pertinent to trust are not what would have been found to support a more 'established' topic of inquiry.

In addition, where newly-developed perspectives exist which have implications for trust between principals and teachers, or may assist in the understanding of this matter, they are outlined in detail. That these new perspectives originate from fields outside of education is not regarded as necessarily problematic. Because school life is, in varying ways, a mirror of the wider life of society (Eklind, 1995), that is, schools have much in common with other communities and non-school organisations, the prospect exists for non-school-based literature to inform. These new perspectives will be followed by an appraisal of relevant education studies and literature which pertains to the

Victorian public school system. An overall summary draws together all the threads examined throughout the chapter.

## **Perspectives on Trust**

### ***Traditional Disciplinary Perspectives***

Within the Western world, neoclassical economics remains the most dominant model within its field. Neoclassical economics embraces concepts of rational choice and utilitarianism (Etzioni, 1990). Essentially, rational choice is regarded as the basis by which individuals, organisations or countries make selections (Inglehart, 1990). Thus, if a decision is to be made in the workplace or other setting on a rational choice basis, self-interest concerns become paramount. According to Etzioni, "neoclassical economics historically assumed that people have one overarching goal: to satisfy their own materialistic desires"(p.31). Added to this, rational decision-making has also been associated with personal loss minimisation (Tyler & Kramer, 1996). In other words, participants approach decision-making with a view to maximising gains and minimising losses.

In 1989 in the United States, a new perspective emerged with the establishment of the International Society of Socio-Economics (Etzioni). Socio-economists believe that people have their own interests to serve, but that when making decisions, other matters are also considered. Etzioni claims that moral and social values are involved in the process of deciding. The effect of interests and values being weighed in the consideration of an issue sometimes

results in the individual's interests being advanced, and other times subordinated (often to the interests of a group) in the course of decision-making.

Swedberg (1993) claimed that socio-economics represents an attempt to combine a social view with an economic stance so as to provide a fuller interpretation. In Swedberg's opinion,

... the economic arena consists of a number of mechanisms that are truly social in nature, such as trust, cooperation and competition. Economists have paid relatively little attention to these forms of interaction; and when they have discussed them at all, they have usually done so in purely economic terms (p.xviii).

Thus socio-economists stand in contrast to rational choice proponents who have considered trust to be, in effect, a commodity to be purchased from the employee for the purpose of reducing organisational costs (due, for example, to less verification being required). Socio-economists such as Swedberg believe most employees want qualitative concerns, as well as remuneration issues, addressed in the workplace. In effect, this is refuting the notion of a purely transactional relationship between employee and employer which characterises a neoclassical perspective.

Trust, as with many other dimensions of work relations, is regarded by socio-economists as having intrinsic worth and the potential to create collective benefits (Etzioni, 1990). Unlike much of the neoclassical thinking which ignores—even refuses—qualitative contextual concerns, the newer discipline actively seeks to comprehend the links between individual and community, and workplace and community. Further, whilst the established tradition is vigilant in curbing debt so as not to burden subsequent shareholders and taxpayers, socio-

economists are concerned with ensuring that legacies of intrinsic substance are also passed on inter-generationally, such as social and moral values (Etzioni).

### *Management Perspective*

Within the management literature, a succession of writers have argued in favour of the need for trust to be present in organisations (Barnard, 1938; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Bennis & Townsend, 1996; Kanter, 1977, 1989; McGregor, 1960). Common amongst these writers is a belief that, by galvanising trust within an organisation, productivity, and in turn, profit will be enhanced. In what at the time was a groundbreaking text, Barnard argued that executive personnel should have faith in other members of the organisation. Barnard believed that employees were essentially predisposed to being cooperative and that, as a consequence, the primary task facing management was to address how to better tailor jobs to the interests of employees. Too much of what transpired in organisations was counterproductive to the reservoir of goodwill that employees brought to the job. Thus Barnard considered that management should be less concerned with creating formal work structures and more oriented toward capitalising on the available goodwill so as to maximise workplace cooperation.

In a similar vein, McGregor's belief that employees were fundamentally well-intentioned led him to argue for organisational leadership that was premised upon his Theory Y assumptions. These assumptions, which were McGregor's assessment of the inclinations of most human beings, demanded leadership which could channel the basic desire of employees to work

effectively. This affirming and optimistic account by McGregor stood in stark contrast with what he believed to be a more widely-accepted view of employees by managers.

The popular view of employees, which McGregor encapsulated in Theory X, resulted in management which emphasised control and punishment. As such, it embraced an untrusting view of employees, their motives and capacities. Theory X style management employed techniques which were focussed on minimising the consequences of employees' untrustworthiness. This dim view of employees, McGregor believed, not only enjoyed widespread acceptance amongst management personnel in the United States at the time, but also often resulted in employees correspondingly delivering limited productivity. Such inadequate work performances, in McGregor's view, did not confirm the existence of a majority of employees as having an untrustworthy Theory X orientation. Instead, most employees who initially were Theory Y in direction, adopted Theory X characteristics on-the-job, in response to management strategies which employees found to be restrictive, coercive or overly directive.

Over a quarter of a century after McGregor developed this proposition, a study which drew conclusions that paralleled the interpretation of employees (starting out as Theory Y-type proponents and ending up more oriented to Theory X employees), was conducted in schools (McLaughlin, Pfeifer, Swanson-Owens, & Yee, 1986). The study by McLaughlin et al., observed that frequently teachers began their careers with optimistic and energetic outlooks. After only a few years, the researchers observed, such hope had often turned to

despair. McLaughlin et al. believed the problem needed to be addressed by education authorities reviewing how organisational factors could better assist, rather than inhibit, the efforts of teachers.

In a recent consideration of trust within organisations, Bennis and Townsend (1996) also gave support to the notion of organisational leaders trusting—and showing that they trust—employees. This is, according to the authors, the starting point for organisations which are keen to create "...a trusting environment" (p.62). Unless leaders entrust, they will be unable to capture the trust of employees, and thereby forfeit the opportunity of achieving an effect of cohesion. Thus Bennis and Townsend consider "...trust is the emotional glue of institutions" (p.63). Although no definition of trust is provided by Bennis and Townsend, caring is regarded as one of the ingredients which contribute to trust. The authors believe leaders need to care about others within an organisation and show employees that they are allied with them. Bennis and Townsend believe that if trust between leaders and employees can be achieved, the organisation will be able to achieve more productive results, both internally and externally.

Several points need to be made about the literature discussed above. The contributions by Barnard (1938) and McGregor (1960) were not amplifications of studies which were primarily focussed on trust. Rather, they represent early and prominent commentaries about the potential organisational benefit to be gained (via productivity, and ultimately profit) by adopting management strategies which themselves develop from an optimistic assessment

about basic human behaviours and motives. The more recent contribution by Bennis and Townsend provides a thoughtpiece which reflects the meanings the authors now give to their experiences in academic and business settings, both as participants and as consultants. Although only done briefly, Bennis and Townsend refer to, and draw upon an earlier and more substantial study in which Bennis was involved, which specifically developed findings pertinent to trust and leadership (Bennis and Nanus, 1985).

Bennis and Nanus conducted a series of interviews and observations of 90 prominent business leaders in the United States. These took place over periods of between three hours and five days. The unstructured interviews were aimed at establishing the strengths and weaknesses of participants' (own) leadership practices. Participants' opinions were also canvassed concerning what they regarded as their key career decisions. From the responses provided by the ninety participants, Bennis and Nanus identified four common themes. Trust emerged as one of the four themes. Participants spoke of different dimensions of, together with altered ways of valuing trust. Nonetheless, leaders agreed on the importance of trust to the effective functioning of an organisation.

In Australia, a survey of 119 senior business executives similarly found that workplace trust was considered vital for organisational effectiveness (Macleay, 1997). Trust was also regarded as a necessary ingredient for successful organisational change. Most executives claimed that workplace trust was needed to assist with intra-team or departmental cooperation. Only 20 % of those surveyed believed that there was strong trust between departments in

their corporation. Moreover, the task of improving workplace trust was deemed to be very difficult, in part because of a lack of people skills by managers within the corporation.

By contrast, in the study reported by Bennis and Nanus (1985), leaders claimed that they achieved this with the assistance of workplace colleagues and by implementing particular strategies. Bennis and Nanus described this as "...trust through positioning" (p.26). Positioning meant being aware of what was "...right and necessary" (p.45). Trust, according to the leaders' responses, was necessary because of the need for cooperation and cohesion within the organisation.

Leaders believed they needed to be visionary, visible, and credible. This assisted in gaining support from other workplace personnel even when they were unconvinced about particular directions or policies. Further, relations of trust within an organisation were regarded as necessary in situations which required patience and tenacity; often results were very slow to achieve, invoking trust as one of the means of sustaining commitment. These and similar stories led Bennis and Nanus to regard trust as "...the lubrication that makes it possible for organisations to work" (p.43).

Shaw (1997) also argued that trust between employees and managers is vital to assist with organisational change. Today's organisations must change, Shaw contends, in part, because of the competitive environment most exist within. Those organisations which do not change risk becoming redundant. Shaw suggests that trust assists managers and employees to better adapt in the



course of responding to, and being part of, organisational change.

Distrust in organisations is a product of members' experiences and knowledge. This is a feature of organisational life to be understood, in Shaw's view, rather than discounted. The challenge it offers to organisations is to remove policies which contribute to the development of distrust by members. Shaw contends that one of the ways to reduce distrust is through newly, and collaboratively-developed quality controls which support rather than diminish trust.

According to Shaw, the major challenge for managers wishing to develop a high-trust organisation is, put simply, to achieve results, act with integrity, and demonstrate concern for organisational members. For results, integrity, and concern to be achieved, attention needs to be directed toward the organisation's leadership practices, structures, and culture.

### ***Psychological Perspective***

Since the mid-1970s, an increasing number of social psychologists have conducted studies on organisations and management (Carroll, 1990). Carroll argues that such a movement has, in part, been a response to diminishing enrolments in psychology departments and the consequent short-fall of funds to personnel within that field. The trend amongst social psychologists to move to business schools has also been done, according to Carroll, in the context of a substantial split between the fields of social psychology and organisational psychology. It is beyond the realm of this study to document the separation of these two sectors. However, in recent years the gap between the two has been

reducing (Carroll). In this section of the literature review an examination will be made of recent (psychological) studies of trust within organisations—most of which emanate from the field of social psychology.

Many social psychologists believe that, despite the volume of studies which suggest otherwise, an understanding of trust between people within organisations which is premised upon notions of rational choice, is inadequate (Creed & Miles 1996; Tyler & Kramer, 1996). Instead, social psychologists have concentrated on the interpersonal transactions which occur between individuals as a means of comprehending trust in organisations (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996).

In focussing on trust in interpersonal transactions, several social psychologists have concluded that expectations, risks, and contexts play influential roles in determining the extent to which trust is realised (Lewicki & Bunker; Lewis & Weigert, 1985). Other researchers, such as Creed and Miles (1996) have focussed their investigations on organisational design. Creed and Miles argue that the design of organisations contributes to the extent and way in which trust will develop between managers and employees. Whether the design is traditional, based on a human relations model or is anchored to a human resources model—the practical implications for trust will vary. Regardless of which design prevails in an organisation, Creed and Miles believe that complementary managerial philosophies (which enhance trust) can be employed when dealing with employees.

Studies which investigate aspects of organisational influence on trust

need to be considered alongside studies which examine why individuals trust, if a fuller grasp of the issue is to be achieved (Tyler & Kramer, 1996). Carroll (1990) noted that almost all of the studies which continue to emerge from the field of social psychology are deductive in form, and that the field has avoided taking up some of the realities which are central to workplaces. For these reasons he believes some changes are needed in the way the discipline proceeds with research. Although Carroll believes social psychology is rigorous, in his view, it needs to take greater account of the contributions of participants who are members of studied organisations. Implied in Carroll's view of limitations within the field, is the need for fewer laboratory-based, and more (organisationally) site-based investigations.

Despite recent emphases given to acknowledging that the trust extended by many individuals towards others (and organisations) may not simply be hinged upon calculations of self-interest, the field remains divided (Tyler & Kramer 1996). The persistence within psychology to assign frequently only instrumental (or self-interested) motives to individuals' trust relations risks the prospect of not canvassing morally—or philosophically—grounded explanations. Studies by Brewer & Kramer (1986) suggested that non-instrumental factors such as group identification may also provide further understandings about organisational trust. Irrespective of whether the explanations concerning interpersonal trust are grounded in instrumental or non-instrumental motives or process and outcome interpretations, the emphasis within social psychology leans toward the individual as a means of locating

understandings.

### *Sociological Perspective*

For many sociologists, trust is regarded as a basic part of social life (Coleman, 1990; Giddens, 1991; Luhmann, 1980). When used to form the basis of an expectation, trust can reduce the complexities inherent in social life (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1984; Garfinkel, 1967) and social systems (Luhmann). By expecting that events, individuals or institutions will perform in a particular way prior to the actual circumstance, trust acts as a catalyst to action (Coleman; Giddens). Without this ability to predict outcomes, and without any trust, individuals would be unable to function effectively (Luhmann).

When enacted as an expectation of the behaviour of others (or self), trust provides a foundation for stable relationships (Blau, 1964). The relationships which can prosper from such expectations include friendships as well as personal and professional associations (Eisenstadt & Roniger). However, in many situations, relations of trust between individuals go awry: Both trusting and untrusting relations occur in the context of the institutionalisation of trust within a society (Barber, 1983; Coleman, 1988; 1990; Putnam, 1993), and the degree of ambivalence which individuals have toward such institutionalisation (Eisenstadt & Roniger). According to Eisenstadt and Roniger, the ambivalence and meaning assigned to the institution of trust have their roots in the process of socialisation. The family, education, employment, and other society-wide influences largely contribute to the socialisation of individuals.

Thus, although there is a tension for individuals between what is generally expected in society in terms of trustworthy behaviours and what they regard as appropriate, some sociologists view this as fundamentally a function of cultural and social structural variables (Barber, 1983; Luhmann, 1980). Seen in this light, trust is regarded as a form of social control which both supports the interests of a community and shapes member behaviour (Barber; Blau, 1964; Gambetta, 1988a; Luhmann). Moreover, when trust is located with the interests and behaviours of communities, it is possible to identify intra-country and local differences in the way trust permeates the social order (Putnam, 1993). This enables relatively low-trust and high-trust communities to be understood regardless of whether or not they have been established on a similar basis. Explanations which are embedded in the context of the interests of a community also recognise the possibility of there being discontinuities or differences between the spheres of institutional influence which ultimately exert power over people and phenomena (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1984).

In sum, sociological explanations have often been oriented toward developing universalistic understandings that emphasise the influential roles which institutions and cultures have on individuals (Silverman, 1994). In other recent accounts, sociologists such as Coleman (1988) Giddens (1991) and Putnam (1993; 1995) have emphasised individuals' capacity for agency and their capacity to shape, as well as be shaped by cultures and institutions.

### *Summary of Traditional Disciplinary Perspectives*

Traditionally the fields of economics, psychology, and management have

been dominated by perspectives which emphasised the interests of the individual in respect of decisions to trust and trust relations. Sociology and parts of social psychology stood apart from these fields to the extent that its view emphasised the powerful role and influence of groups and institutions in the shaping of individual trust (Barber, 1983; Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1984; Luhmann, 1980). Nonetheless, some acknowledgment was given to the matter of individual interests being advanced by the exchange of something, for example, cooperation, by adherents to the structural-functionalist stream of sociology, such as Parsons (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1984). Also at odds with the more established views of the disciplines are the perspectives which have been associated with the emerging sub-disciplines, particularly in the area of economics. Several of the newer interpretations (Carnevale, 1995; Coleman, 1988; Inglehart, 1990; Putnam, 1993) give heightened recognition to the importance of democratic institutions and the notion of collective interdependence in shaping relations of trust amongst individuals.

Additional acknowledgment is also given to the meanings which individuals assign to the processes and outcomes of decision-making: Choices are attached to the interests of self, but reference is made (in the course of decision-making), to the interests of others together with morally-informed notions of appropriate behaviour. These conceptions of how and why relations of trust manifest themselves in community and organisational settings are moving away from an atomised view of the individual (Coleman, 1988, 1990; Etzioni, 1990).

Moreover, many recent examinations highlight a relational and obligational link between individuals, trust, and community (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993). They also note a greater capacity for agency on the part of individuals—enabling the association between, for example, an organisation and employee to be one where each shapes the other (Giddens, 1991; Putnam, 1993; 1995). This notion of agency can also be considered with the matter of cumulative influence. Cumulative workplace influences are those situations in which the results of (often) separate events combine in such way as to create a separate effect. The effect may, for example, result in an altered organisational culture.

Although many of the underlying assumptions are now quite similar across many disciplines and studies (concerning the need for, and beneficial effects of trust), the particular emphases given to explain how workplace trust manifests itself remain distinct. Norms and networks have been regarded as especially significant by some researchers (Coleman, 1988; Cox, 1995; Granovetter, 1985; Putnam, 1993;1995). Others highlighted the role of individually-held characteristics and expectations (Giddens, 1991; Tyler & Kramer, 1996), and organisational identity (Kramer, Brewer & Hanna, 1996; Tyler & Dawes, 1993). Poole (1996) suggested organisational identity and an unwritten psychological contract which employees variously possess, can explain much about workplace trust. Still others believe that the forms of organisation and management provided are critical in eliciting trust (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bennis & Townsend, 1996; Carnevale, 1995; Creed & Miles,

1996; McGregor, 1960). Overall, many differing ways of approaching workplace trust are favoured across the disciplines.

Despite the disparate nature of the perspectives which are highlighted by many recent studies, what also is common to many is the inclination to recognise multiple concerns and influences, many of which may have previously been seen to be the province of another discipline. This means that recognition is increasingly being given to a host of variables which are considered influential, and from that group of situational, communal, and personal factors, several are emphasised. Thus, there appears to be a trend toward viewing organisational trust within an encompassing or integrative framework.

In so far as this study is concerned, an integrative perspective is favoured to the extent that it does not disclaim the possibility of multiple meanings and differentially located influences of workplace trust between principals and teachers. It also provides the chance for any cumulative relationships to be described without being unnecessarily bounded by historically-determined outlooks associated with particular disciplines.

In the next section further attention will be given to several key studies which, in different ways, adopt or are oriented toward an integrative perspective.

### **Integrative Perspective: Moving Beyond Traditional Disciplines**

Several studies pertinent to organisational trust have evidenced a willingness to move beyond some of the parameters traditionally set by their respective disciplines. These will be considered in some detail. The first study,



by Inglehart (1990), provided an economic and sociopolitical examination of culture amongst Western countries. The vital nature of trust was noted together with a new way of understanding how individuals, groups, and nations may be disposed toward trusting relations. Inglehart argued that citizens' and countries' willingness to trust can be depicted on a continuum and is significantly predicated on held-values and history.

The subsequent studies highlight the importance of trust within a framework of social capital. The concept of social capital is not well understood. However, examinations by two internationally-recognised (Coleman, 1988; 1990; Putnam, 1993; 1995), and one Australian researcher (Cox, 1995), which depict social capital in detail, are outlined. Although all three are sociologists, each adopts an integrative rather than classical perspective in his/her discussion of trust and social capital.

### ***Trust Within the Western World***

Inglehart (1990) claimed that common to advanced industrial societies is a trend which suggests that both cultures, and what people want from life, are changing. He, like Fukuyama (1995) North (1990), and Putnam (1993), wrote that the changes are gradual. Drawing on longitudinal data, such as the annual Eurobarometer surveys over an eighteen-year time frame, to locate social developments, Inglehart argued that changes to each country's culture are shaping internal economies. Changing cultures are influencing local growth rates and the kinds of development which are pursued.

In broad terms, Inglehart observed that the publics of Western countries

have been shifting away from an emphasis on materialism to a post-material emphasis, which is oriented toward quality of life concerns. This observation was explained by Inglehart as occurring due to Western peoples having largely satisfied fundamental communal requirements (food, clothing, shelter) and that, therefore, such publics are moving to satisfy other interests. On the basis of Inglehart's evidence, the trend toward satisfying more sophisticated quality of life requirements, can be explained by changing or changed values among populations.

Values that were previously focussed on amassing wealth have moderated, and are slowly but steadily being replaced with values that are oriented toward, for example, aesthetic concerns. In his study, Inglehart (1990) conducted analyses of data from "hundreds of thousands of interviews" (p.5) which were taken from more than twenty-four countries including Australia, Canada, Japan, and the United States. From this, Inglehart developed an explanation that acknowledges the importance of trust within populations.

Like Kanter (1977), Inglehart believed one feature of trust—or distrust—is that it can influence expectations when conditions are unclear, or cannot be controlled. Indeed, Inglehart located the first significant emergence of a postmaterialist cohort in the Western world as occurring during the Vietnam War era in the United States. Using pooled data from representative national samples, Inglehart also provided, for example, cross-nation responses for 1976 to show that, when asked to rate how trustworthy other countries were, the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War contributed to a diminution in

its relative standing.

When the answers to the same question were asked a decade later, Inglehart showed that the standing of the U.S. had slightly declined. This is explained in terms of a recognition by participating publics that the Atlantic Alliance had been slanted in the interests of the United States, plus the tightening of intra-European bonds. Inglehart's data analysis provided a range of such scenarios which highlight the intricate nature of local and cross-country developments regarding materialist and postmaterialist profiles. These profiles have application to individuals as well as large scale groupings of people. Represented on a continuum, Inglehart showed that postmaterialists are more trusting toward other individuals and nationalities. Materialists were identified as less trusting of both groups of people or individuals.

Inglehart's treatment of longitudinal evidence suggested that this is not surprising in terms of nations. The primary orientation of a country (postmaterialist or materialist) can be traced to its economic development. Countries that have moved beyond a stage of production (which was oriented to goods development), and essentially are information, and service-producing, are postmaterialist societies. Those which continue to focus on the production of goods are materialist societies.

Inglehart's data were distilled further to show that, to date, the global trend is from materialist to postmaterialist societies: no countries change from postmaterialist to materialist in profile. Moreover, within each country, there are individuals who have a materialist orientation and individuals who have a

postmaterialist outlook. Inglehart noted that, corresponding to the depictions of contrasting national orientations, individuals who concentrate their efforts on satisfying material wealth are distinct from those who are largely interested in matters which go beyond material accumulation. Inglehart showed (in considerable detail) how this portraiture is intricate in reality. Also, in contrast to Fukuyama (1995), an implied inadequacy was not assigned by Inglehart to, for example, the less communal materialists.

Brady (1994), in a series of commentaries on Australian culture and society, also commended the need to respect sectors of the community which are preoccupied with such interests. Indeed, her perception was, in one sense, at odds with Inglehart's because she argued "...that Australian society by and large worship false gods, an unholy trinity of Mammon (God of wealth and possessions), Moloch (God of struggle and ruthless competition) and Marilyn Monroe (emblem of the murderous power of the mindless search for pleasure and sensation)" (p.306). Inglehart's examination nonetheless took account of more specific influences, effects, and consequences of postmaterialists and materialists.

By employing (retrospective) tracking procedures on the data, Inglehart has been able to identify a lead-time, which is related to whether an adult eventually adopts materialist or postmaterialist life priorities. The lead time may be as great as six decades, although it is more frequently gauged to be about 30 years: Inglehart (1990) contended that values which prevailed in preadult years are taken into adulthood and maintained until at least middle age. If an

individual is born in an era of relative security and comfort, he or she is more likely to evidence postmaterialist priorities. When this happens, over a period of decades and en masse, Inglehart's evidence showed that "...the publics of relatively rich societies are least likely to emphasise materialist values, and most likely to emphasise postmaterialist ones" (p.57).

This means that an accurate prediction of a country's current orientation can be made by reference to its industrial profile from three decades prior. This adds strength to the contention by Inglehart (1990) and Putnam (1993) that changes to values, beliefs, and levels of trust occur gradually and are more easily discerned by reference to longitudinal data. The evidence amassed by Inglehart also made a clear linkage between postmaterialist communities and enhanced levels of life satisfaction. By referring to the annual Eurobarometer surveys and additional cross-nation data, he showed that populations which live in postmaterialist communities are more satisfied with life than materialists. Greater diversity—a finding which stands somewhat at odds with Fukuyama's (1995) analysis—enhanced interpersonal trust, senses of security, and lower rule-making characterise postmaterialist societies.

In addition, postmaterialists' voting patterns are oriented toward the parties which have emphases on issues such as the environment, public health, education, and housing—policies which are premised upon collective benefit. That finding of Inglehart's resonates with what Putnam (1993) identified in Italy when he conducted his longitudinal investigation. Generally, postmaterialist individuals are amongst the better educated members of a community and are

more inclined to work in a service sector. Postmaterialist countries also have better education systems for their publics. Perhaps not surprisingly, Inglehart's study showed that postmaterialists who live in countries that are largely materialist, are quite dissatisfied (by their circumstances).

By again employing tracking procedures on the data, Inglehart showed that materialists have not deserted the major political parties—instead they have moved from a traditional link with labour or union affiliated political parties across to the conservative political parties, which traditionally have been linked with pro-business, anti-environment, private sector development. Although within Australia such a trend appears to have been noted in recent government elections (Morgan Poll, 1996) Inglehart's study showed this to be a global trend by "blue-collar" workers who are focussed on satisfying materialist priorities and are concerned to achieve individual benefits. These people are less inclined to be trusting and interested in collective benefit. Again this finding was consistent with what Putnam's (1993) major study found.

What is also important in what Inglehart has investigated is that the influence of class is not crucial in explaining an individual's (materialist or postmaterialist) orientation. Rather, outlook is most influenced by values, as Inglehart showed by the increasing alliances between wealthy business people and individuals who are 'blue-collar' workers. This pivotal role of values is also recognised—if somewhat differently—by Brady (1994) when she noted of Australians "...the real question for most of us, after all, is not economic or political, much less technological, but existential...How to be? Put another way

it is a question of values, and some are more important than others" (p.230).

In respect to the coalition between big business and 'manual' workers, Inglehart contended that this coalition seeks to foster (fiscal) wealth-creation (as demonstrated by profits and jobs), whilst postmaterialists, having claimed a secure sense of sufficiency, are drawn toward collective provisions such as in the arts, environmental protection, and education.

What Inglehart's (1990) study did not show, which to some extent makes sense if his lead-time theory holds true, is the extent of any discontinuities experienced by postmaterialists who, despite being (occupationally) well-qualified, and in secure housing arrangements, also now—like many materialists—may find themselves having to work longer hours and support children into their early adult years. It is conceivable that such ruptures to Inglehart's powerful depiction would also affect on trust within such a community and workplace. If postmaterialists are, as his study showed, the cohort most actively supportive of, and involved in, collective-benefit initiatives in Western societies, it is viable to expect that contexts of excess labour, organisational 'downsizing', and reduced opportunities for younger people generally, have had some effects on their personal priorities and community contributions. In turn, this might be expected to be reflected in indicators such as levels of voluntary and charity work. Reference to local data showed that employed Australians are engaging in less voluntary and charity work (ABS, 1996a). An appraisal of the data showed also that women, as the predominate charity and volunteer workers, have increasingly entered the paid workforce,

which may, in part, explain this trend. Inglehart's study also did not explore in detail the influence of context in respect of other changes in how many individuals are involving themselves in collective-benefit enterprises.

In short, Inglehart's study provided compelling evidence of contrasting inter and intra-country levels of trust. Trust is linked with individually—and nationally—held values. History, Inglehart's study showed, has been influential in locating individuals with respect to opportunities. However, class backgrounds—whether appraised individually or nationally—have not been fundamental in respect of matters of trust. Instead, past and present features of the economy and forms of community engagement interplay with held-values to shape citizens' trust, which is in group or individual settings.

### ***Trust Within Social Capital***

Social capital is a term that applies to the resources which are evident amongst individuals and social structures (Coleman, 1990). Social capital can be, depending upon the circumstances, comprised of different elements. Norms, interpersonal trust, and social networks are important elements of social capital (Coleman, 1988). However Coleman (1988) believes that the composition of social capital is determined by the function of its elements, and that other elements beyond these key components can form social capital. To contribute to social capital, an element must be part of some social structure and facilitate an individual's action.

The concept of social capital, which originated with Loury (as cited in Coleman, 1988) has been popularised by Coleman who employed it as an aid to



understanding the actions of people and organisations. Coleman's use of the concept emerged, at least in part, in response to limitations that he perceived amongst theories posited by fellow sociologists, as well as amongst economists. Both disciplines were restricted by territorial defects—in the case of sociologists Coleman was concerned at an increasing charge that individuals were depicted by sociologists as being entirely at the mercy of the environment. In other words, an individual's actions were always developed reactively, thus leaving sociology open to criticisms of ignoring agency or seeing "...action as wholly a product of the environment..."(S96). In sharp contrast, economists continued to ignore—indeed strip—context in the course of portraying individuals as entirely self-absorbed and acting independently of all others in order to promote self-interests.

In essence, Coleman's (1988) concern was to identify individuals and their actions somewhere between the extremes of hapless victim and disconnected, autonomous actor. Individuals' purposive actions plus certain social contexts often gave rise to social organisations—and, in so doing, were not merely captive to an environment. In Coleman's scenario individuals' purposes enabled them to exercise influence with respect to shaping the environment. Moreover, in the course of taking account of individuals' purposes in their lives, efforts could not continually be reduced to actions of self-sufficiency.

The introduction of social capital thus contained links to economics and sociology but extended the way in which the links could together be

understood. In the course of daily living, Coleman argued, individuals were influenced by relations that were immediate and personal as well as by those which were available, but not necessarily activated constantly. That latter set of intermittent relations between individuals was called networks. Primary in the act of engaging interpersonally or with a network of relations was the matter of trust. The existence of trust enabled many complex procedures or arrangements to be minimised, thereby making such engagements more efficient. In order to illustrate his claim that trust, within social capital, was a viable proposition, Coleman depicted several examples of trust-in-action.

In brief, he pointed to the tradition among New York diamond wholesalers to allow in letting potential purchasers (other wholesalers) to take home bags of diamonds, which were often worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. The purpose was to enable examinations to be done in detail, at the merchant's leisure. Such an arrangement is not backed up by insurance or other forms of security. As noted by Coleman, diamond handlers are a predominantly Jewish and a tightly knit group, with complex and reinforcing family, religion, and community ties. Such ties, Coleman argues, account for the highly effective relations of trust—the expectations that generosity will be honoured are so emphasised that they are what Granovetter (1985) described as "embedded" (p.481). The penalties for abusing or breaking such an arrangement are severe and multi-pronged. Thus defection—symbolised through stealing or substituting stones—is quickly broadcast throughout the network of ties.

Obligations and expectations thus are intertwined in issues of trust as a

component of social capital, and play a part determining the degree to which, and dimension of, trust that will prevail. In elaborating on networks Coleman (1990) argued that information channels do more than provide a means by which defection can swiftly be notified to other members of a community. The networks—whether smaller and immediate, or larger and secondary—provide information which, in turn, can be used by individuals, or groups, to shape action. Such networks, Coleman claimed, do not create obligations and expectations in the manner which occurs in relations of trust, nonetheless the information provided by networks may be vital to decisions or actions which entail trust.

Norms are an influential, weighty form of social capital. Indeed, some of the most powerful norms—whether they are nationwide or micro-community based—are internalised according to Coleman (1990). In such situations they can be extremely effective facilitators or constrainers of action. Coleman noted, too, that the functioning of norms which inhibit or propel actions may not necessarily be in the interests of an individual or a community, although in many circumstances they are beneficial in effect.

Coleman (1988) contended that "all social relations and social structure facilitate some forms of social capital..." (S105). Some social structures, however, are more effective in enabling social capital to develop. In brief, networks that have effective norms, have the facility to enact closure of the social structure. Coleman believed that norms basically are forms of control "...to limit negative effects or encourage positive ones" (p.S105). In effective

social structures, norms of one sort or another activate to meet the prevailing circumstances. Moreover, a matter of closure also occurs in networks which can provide an efficient way of influencing actions. In closed communities where a web of ties bond members, or in some situations where familiarity and common interests occur, closure can be powerful in activating norms or mandating obligations and expectations through social structures.

To show this, Coleman referred to data from an earlier study which he coauthored (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). The previous study was concerned with high school student drop out rates, and entailed survey data from 1004 public, Catholic, and other private schools in the United States. The quantitative study data took account of socio-economic status, race ethnicity, number of siblings, number of school/residential shifts, mother's location in students' pre-school years, mother's expectations of child's educational attainment, household composition (of adults), intra-family frequency of personal conversations. The outcome from this study, according to Coleman (1988), clearly established that social capital existed within the family and in the community. Furthermore, social capital was most robust amongst the communities, individuals, and students who were involved in Catholic schools.

The dropout rate amongst Catholic secondary students was 3.4% and was used as being suggestive of social capital. By contrast, 14.4% of public school students dropped-out. Initial results from the private school data located the drop-out rate at 11.9%. Coleman (1988) further sorted the non-Catholic private schools into two data sets on the basis of whether they had religious

affiliations. The result of this further sorting of data identified non-Catholic religious schools as having a drop-out rate of 3.7% with other Independent private schools having a rate of 10%. These results, Coleman claimed, showed that religious affiliation contributed to effective intergenerational influence. In practical terms, the study showed that parents' norms in Catholic and other religious schools were effective in valuing education and controlling against defection (dropping-out) through household, school, and community-based networks.

This study also produced statistical results that showed it was much more likely that students would exit school early if they were from a single parent home, there were multiple children in the family, and a mother held no college expectations for her children.

Three brief points can be made with respect to the variables selected by Coleman (1988). First, the impact of (any) father's hopes concerning the student's educational attainment would seem to be potentially influential, yet it was not included. Second, no qualification was given concerning his selection of variables, which might convey the impression that all female-headed households (given that they are the major single parent demographic) are problematic. Thirdly, Coleman underplays the role of agency (on the part of students and their households) under such circumstances.

Despite these shortcomings, Coleman's application of social capital evidences a link between social and economic concerns: Trust is crafted through (trust-related) controls such as obligations and responsibilities plus norms and

networks. Thus, when trust is then combined with human capital, wealth is produced. But the wealth is, unlike the scenario which might be painted by mainstream economists, not always simply directed toward the persons who contributed the social capital. On an intergenerational basis between a parent who has successfully encouraged his or her student to complete school, the benefits are likely profound (in satisfaction) yet indirect—with the key beneficiary being the student. Using Coleman's model it would be reasonable to expect that this intergenerational commitment would be repeated by the student, should he or she later have children.

Coleman's (1988) study also evidenced—despite not being detailed in this review—examples of social capital being extended to school students via the efforts of parent's clubs in schools. Coleman claimed that these examples again pointed to flaws within claims that over-emphasised selfishness in actions. The efforts of successions of volunteer parents in schools have provided benefits which were able to be shared amongst large student numbers. In short, the concept of social capital is a means by which the role of trust within larger and (related) smaller communities can be depicted. It is also an end in itself—becoming a feature of robust societies, as the following studies suggest.

### *Social Capital in Italy*

A longitudinal study conducted by Putnam (1993), which spanned nearly two decades, produced compelling information on matters of trust. The study, which was based on the twenty regional governments of Italy, sought to explain why some institutions—in this case the regional governments—performed

differentially. Putnam took the view *a priori* that social context (in which these governments were embedded), would provide at least some of the explanation. Nonetheless, Putnam was less clear about which features of the social context would be influential in enabling institutions to perform in varying degrees of effectiveness.

Effectiveness was determined by an evaluation of policy pronouncements, processes, and implementation of twelve indicators (cabinet stability, budget promptness, statistical and information services, reform legislation, legislative innovation, day care centres, family clinics, industrial policy instruments, agriculture spending capacity, local health unit expenditures, housing and urban development, and bureaucratic responsiveness). The sociological study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods for gathering data. Between 1970 and 1989 these included conducting 760 interviews with councillors from six regions at four (time) periods during the near two decades; conducting an unstated number of interviews with, plus one nationwide survey of, community leaders (listed as bankers, farm leaders, mayors, journalists, labour, and business representatives); developing six nationwide surveys plus numerous smaller surveys of Italians to ascertain their political outlook and views about social engagement; referring to a substantial data base of statistical measures of the twenty regions' performances plus developing an unstated, but multiple, number of case studies in respect to the legislation produced in each region over 15 years. Further case studies of regional planning and institutional politics in six regions were produced over a

period of 14 years.

Putnam (1993) claimed that the institutional design component of his study was, in effect, held constant because fifteen of the regions were established in 1970 and the remaining five had begun shortly after World War II. Having only two common establishment periods offered a degree of control against theoretical arguments about disparate operating periods as a means of explaining effectiveness of institutional performances. Following collection and analysis of data, Putnam's initial stance was supported, he noted, as "by far the most important factor in explaining good government is the degree to which social and political life in a region approximates the ideal of the civic community" (p.120). This view also provided some direction in relation to answering the core concern about institutional effectiveness.

As Putnam's study detailed, the findings did not reduce to explanations which related to a neat division of the affluent northern Italy and the comparatively impoverished south. The rule-of-thumb stereotype was punctured by evidence of performances by regions from each geographic sector that forced qualifications (and hence further understandings) to be made. Instead, Putnam argued that it was particular features of communities which made the difference in explaining the vitality of effective institutional performance. Calabria, for example, was identified by Putnam as the least civic of all Italian regions. Any explanation which merely cast Calabria as southern-



based or pre-industrial economy, provided only limited assistance in any account of poor regional government performance.

A more intricate account, according to Putnam, noted Calabria as having a poorly performed government because of the comparatively uncivic nature of Calabrian society. Calabrians had relatively little say in government. When they did engage in, and with government, it was overwhelmingly for private and individual purposes, such as seeking a job or contract on the basis of a political favour from the local members of regional or federal governments. According to Putnam, this was also likely to be the case in Campania, Molise, Abruzzi, Sicilia (Sicily), and Puglia.

In a similar vein, the emphasis of the Calabrian government (and other similarly poor-performing regions) was on control, most commonly achieved via law and order provisions. This response was, in part, fuelled by a widely-held perception amongst Calabrians, that nearly everyone expected to break rules. Thus a preparedness, on the part of Calabrians, to violate rules was justified on the basis of fear of others being advantaged (by doing so ahead of the next person) and thereby warranting—on the part of government—an emphasis on law enforcement. Although not specifically one of the aims of the study, Putnam's research documented the ineffectiveness, both short and long-term, of this style of strong-armed governance.

Others (Gambetta, 1988; Pagden, 1988) have also provided detailed sociological and economic accounts of why, for example, societies like Calabria have been dominated by inept governance which emphasised law and order

whilst at the same time being riddled with the antithesis of honest community, namely the Mafia. In effect, such examinations provide evidence which casts doubt upon the efficacy of using imposed legislative (that is premised upon distrust and one-upmanship) as a means of achieving enforced order. Putnam's study recognised that all governments require 'bottom line' legislation for use in serious or drastic circumstances. However, what his study also established is that legislation which assumes that the most powerful should have the final say in any argument, can be quickly rendered hollow (in these instances because it is impractical).

In and across the poorly performing regions of Italy, Putnam's evidence showed this to be so. Government has been poor at law enforcement in response to organised crime, despite having legislative emphases in respect to law and order. In places like Campania, Sicily, and Calabria, government has not been 'on the ground' when the Mafia (which thrives in these regions in part due to highly effective networks and norms of fear, isolation, and individual interest) has established itself. The standing of government, the vulnerability of its citizenry, and the vacuous nature of the laws were evident when mandates were a prominent, top-down regional response. According to Putnam, his research partly explains the fifty-year failure by Sicily to respond to the grass-root infusion of the Mafia which has managed to infiltrate every strata of society.

By contrast, Putnam's (1993) data showed that government which supports, and is mirrored by communities which have substantial stocks of

social capital, will perform more effectively. Social capital, as Putnam assigned it, comprises "...trust, norms and networks" (p.167). He argued that regional governments such as Emilia-Romagna, Toscana, and Umbria feed off, and in turn feed, the greater efficiencies within their communities which are buoyed by solidarity and self-discipline. In turn, these have been underpinned by trustworthy expectations (that self and others will comply with agreed expectations), norms of collective provision and benefit, plus networks that foster engagement.

In essence, Putnam (1993) argued, these differences determine the effectiveness of institutional performance—in this instance, that of regional government. Putnam's study was careful to not romanticise the portraits developed in his thesis. Social capital and, in particular, trust, are vital in the creation and maintenance of effective communities and institutions. Those regions which had substantial or developing social capital were the better run sectors of Italian society, over the course of two decades. Lay people and community leaders were more trusting, tolerant, connected, and satisfied with themselves and their governments.

In overall terms, however, the social capital stock within Italian society—although clearly increasing—is not as substantial as that, for example, within the United States or many other parts of Europe. Most Italians still have considerable reservations about their federal government and the output of many regional government departments, despite widespread recognition of a clear improvement over two decades, in the input side of governments. Putnam

(1993) also noted that social capital—as a key means by which a civic community and effective governance can be achieved—did not represent a return to nostalgia or a close-knit, pre-modern society. Instead, his evidence showed that "the most civic regions of Italy—the communities where citizens feel empowered to engage in collective deliberation about public choices and where those choices are translated more fully into effective public policies—include some of the most modern towns and cities of the peninsula" (p. 115).

Putnam's (1993) study is important on several accounts. Firstly, it established a long-term and predominantly beneficial link between social capital (and in particular trust), robust community, and institutional effectiveness. In simple terms, social capital within communities influences how institutions operate—creating an effect of reciprocity and complementarity. The study also provided powerful documentation of what, in their initial state, are viewed as sociological (and perhaps psychological) constructs—trust, networks, and norms—evolve to play vital roles in producing (visible) economic benefits to institutions and communities. Heavy-handed governance within some regions is shown to be financially expensive and often self-defeating because promised (or threatened) penalties are unable to be implemented or policed.

This study is also impressive because it has brought back into consideration the issue of history, something that has often been deleted from, and is much needed in, sociological investigations (Perrow, 1991). History as part of sociology is important from a couple of standpoints. First, the study showed trends within and across regions that could be difficult to discern in a

study which had a shorter time-frame. The challenge of turning around a region that is relatively uncivic and low in stocks of social capital, Putnam's data suggested, is a task involving decades of time rather than years—just as the diminishing of civiness and social capital also can be shown more easily in the context of extended time analyses. In addition, the two common introduction times amongst the regions enabled Putnam to extinguish any attempts to explain away performance which were made on the basis of experience at the task. In this study, history provided the cumulative, reinforcing effect of contexts that were, in varying degrees, harnessed by, or devoid of, social capital and civiness amongst community. Trust was not able to be achieved simply by legislative mandate. Instead, relations of trust in the community required a great deal of time in which to establish themselves, or over which to be eroded. Similarly, norms of common benefit and reciprocity amongst citizenry usually predicted the performances of institutions.

Putnam's study showed how difficult and complex is the task of improving governance in regions such as Sicily for its governors. When combined with studies that trace the destruction of trust in Naples (Pagden, 1988), or the rise of distrust with the emergence of the Mafia late last century in Sicily (Gambetta, 1988) the magnitude of the problem facing authorities becomes even clearer. Such studies also provide support for Putnam's use of the term "path dependence" (in relation to poorly-performing regions) which was borrowed from a socio-economist (North, 1990, p.100). Putnam (1993) further referred to North's definition of this as meaning "where you can get to

depends on where you're coming from, and some destinations you simply cannot get to from here" (p.179).

In brief, Putnam's groundbreaking study provided evidence of a mutually reinforcing relationship between institutional efficacy and substantial social capital (amongst a community). In Italy, institutional efficacy together with greater stocks of social capital and, in particular, trust, mark those regions in which there is enhanced socio-economic achievement, benefit and thus 'civic-ness'. Moreover, the interpretations which Italians make about the communities in which they live, are linked to the behaviours which they adopt in their public (work and social) engagements. Those who live in communities which have, for example, networks of collective-good provisions and norms of cooperation are more likely to be citizens who identify both as an individuals and community members. In communities which are regarded by citizens as untrustworthy, fear, and alienation characterise many competitive forms of their engagements (particularly work), and members' identities are more individualistically oriented. Thus, on both a cumulative and intergenerational basis, communities which are characterised by social capital and institutional efficacy—civic communities—are more likely to have come from, and contribute to, a similar community profile. Putnam's study has shown that trusting communities beget, more or less, trusting communities and that untrusting communities, more or less, replicate themselves. Such changes are gradual and most evident over a lengthy time frame, but most problematic—in a post-industrial era—for those communities in which mistrust abounds.

### *Social Capital in the United States*

In a subsequent study of a relatively high-trust country Putnam (1995) noted, with concern, changes that were taking place in American civil society. Having taken account of the findings from a growing body of literature which was lamenting the loss of civic engagement in various parts of the world, Putnam made an examination of aspects of society in the United States which he believed would be suggestive of civic engagement, and ultimately a civil society. Although the study was based on contemporary society within the United States, Putnam believed that many of the developments which he identified, may also be taking place in many countries.

Amongst the indicators highlighted by Putnam (1995), one showed the decline in voter turnout to national elections between 1960 and 1990. Nearly one in four citizens, or en masse "...tens of millions of Americans had forsaken their parents' habitual readiness to engage in the simplest act of citizenship" (p.67). Between 1973 and 1993 the number of Americans who attended one public meeting in the course of a year, almost halved. Only one in eight Americans participated in any such public gathering. These dramatic changes in the ways Americans engage in their communities, according to Putnam, signal withdrawal and disengagement.

From the mid-sixties until the early-nineties, the level of trust extended by the public in the United States to the federal government had diminished. A similar trend has been noted in Australia (Morgan Poll, 1993a). Based on a comparison of their annual survey data, between 1983 and 1993, the number of

Australians who regarded their Federal parliamentarians as having "high" or "very high" ethics and honesty fell from twenty to eleven per cent (p.2). Likewise, in a nationwide survey of 1,187 electors which (in face-to-face interviews) sought Australians' views about politicians' broken pre-election promises, 91% knew that promises had been violated within the term of the government (Morgan, 1993b). In the same survey, of the electors who were aware of broken pre-election promises, more than half (56%) believed that the government should "not [be] forced to another election" (1993b, p.2). When contrasted with the declining number of Australians who regard politicians generally, as ethical and honest, the latter result is suggestive of electors regarding the failure to honour pre-election promises as generic to politicians. But, as with the situation in the United States, it may suggest a reluctance to exercise a vote more frequently than is absolutely necessary.

Also evident in the United States study of civil society by Putnam (1995), which corresponds with similar trends in Australia, was the declining participation of individuals in fraternal and charitable associations. Given their history of active volunteerism in the United States (Rifkin, 1996; Rifkin in Slavin, 1996) the trends appear to be particularly marked. Putnam claimed that only one in five citizens of the United States was volunteering in 1989, compared to nearly one in four fifteen years earlier. What Putnam's study also highlighted is a possible change in the way in which individuals engage in particular groups. In noting that the American Association of Retired Persons has the second-largest membership of any private organisation in the world,



Putnam recorded the fact that most of the members never meet each other.

Putnam's explanation of this suggests that the new forms of organisations which are attracting membership—but not in-person engagement—are those which serve the interests of those *within* the organisation. Many of the organisations which, over the last two or three decades have been losing members, were predominantly oriented to serving the interests of those *outside* of the organisation.

Putnam wrote that further examination of this possible trend is necessary before confident understandings can be developed. However, in part, Putnam associated the movement away from charity and allied involvements to the trend amongst women to enter the paid workforce. This view was echoed by Rifkin (1996). The trend was also evident in Australia (ABS, 1995). Further, in a consideration of the deleterious ways in which reducing social capital (and a consequential decline in public engagement) can impact on the economic, as well as social well-being of a country, Putnam referred to a dramatic change in the way one of the most popular recreations is now pursued. Putnam (1995) claimed "...that nearly 80 million Americans went bowling on their own at least once during 1993, *nearly a third more than voted in the 1994 congressional elections...*" (p.70).

Bowling solo has become such a problem in the United States, that the bowling-lane industry is threatened. The reduced presence of teams in ten-pin bowling has significantly affected the patterns of expenditure outlaid by bowlers. When bowling alone, Americans do not spend the equivalent of what

they would (on food, beverages) were they in the company of a team at the bowling lanes. Having conducted a detailed appraisal of other associational memberships, Putnam believes that the altered forms of connectedness that are developing are linked with issues of (diminishing) social trust.

In Putnam's (1993) earlier study, he argued that interpersonal trust and individually-held trust ultimately translated into widely-held social trust. In this study, Putnam claimed that there is a correlation between social trust and associational membership. Putnam believes this applies to individuals and states in the United States as well as to the nation as a whole. Drawing on the 1991 World Values Survey which showed that, amongst and within all 35 surveyed countries, civic engagement and social trust are highly correlated, Putnam (1995) concluded "...the greater the density of associational membership in a society, the more trusting its citizens" (p.73). Although Putnam acknowledges the substantial social capital that presently exists within the United States community, he believes it is being diminished.

Some of the reasons Putnam suggested, as to why social capital is eroding, can be explained with respect to altered spheres of engagement by women (from unpaid to paid work), reduced residential stability (locating in one area for shorter time periods), technological and disparate—but often cumulative—demographic transformations. Putnam, like Inglehart (1990), argued that these factors contribute to an incomplete explanation. Also incomplete, he argued, are understandings about the extent of social capital (as a possible multi-dimensional concept), the development of social identities in

organisations and workplace social capital.

In all, Putnam again cautions (as he did in his earlier study) against romanticising former periods of community engagement. Yet, amidst any consideration of civic communities, Putnam (1995) argued the benefits—as well as the costs—need to be factored in, and "...perhaps most urgently, we need to explore creatively how public policy impinges (or might impinge on) social capital formation" (p.76). Over the last four decades, several such policy initiatives have extinguished some particularly effective norms and social networks. These two elements, together with social trust, create social capital which, in turn, predicates a civic and civil society. Because a civil society is, Putnam believes, a precondition for democracy, researchers need to orient their attention to social capital within public settings, as a contribution toward retrieving trust and connectedness within the community.

### *Social Capital in Australia*

Cox (1995) wrote that in a civil society, we need to recognise the supreme importance of social connections which include plenty of robust goodwill to sustain difference and debate" (p.1). Moreover, Cox considered that social capital in Australia needs to be increased. Social capital is defined by Cox as "...the processes between people which establish networks, norms and social trust and facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit" (p.15). Social capital, Cox argued, can be accumulated by providing opportunities within communities which develop trust and cooperation, such as through engagement in voluntary organisations, political and social groups, and

in the workplace. Families, Cox suggested, also can be influential with respect to social capital although she cautions against calls that seek a return to a mythologised and romantic framing of family, as a means of achieving robust communities.

For Cox (1995), an undue emphasis on the family as a means of increasing social capital represents a privatising response, which, in itself, is part of the problem. Vibrant communities, in her view, are those which have a robust public sector—as evidenced by open spaces and service provision, particularly in the spheres of health and education. As well, in drawing upon Putnam's research into social capital, Cox claimed her concerns about the limited capacity of families to influence social capital have been confirmed. The nature of the trust which is needed for social capital, and the social skills which come from achieving relations of trust within public arenas, are not of the same dimension as trust and relations which exist in many families.

Trust in the public sphere was located by Cox as being more collegial in nature than intense. However the dimension of trust required for social capital does not diminish its potential value to individuals, families or communities. Further, within public arenas various engagements by individuals need to be characterised by differential trust—some greater in depth than others. This is unproblematic to Cox, who has convinced that diversity and difference should characterise engagements in the public sphere. Such features encourage communal tolerance and respect, and may dampen the prospect of marginalisation of 'others' (whether they be assigned on the basis of race,

religion or other factors).

Based on her observations for the Boyer lectures (1995), Cox argued that "communities which reduce social capital share certain characteristics. They turn inwards, form cliques, resist change and exclude those who criticise" (p.33). Such communities, she also claims, are vulnerable to abuses of patronage, problems brought about by too much compliance and distrust. Studies by Gambetta (1988) and Putnam (1993) provided support for these arguments. Cox also drew attention to affluent sections of the United States which, she claimed, fund via local taxes, public schools for children of affluent parents. That is able to occur, in part because affluent cohorts take no responsibility for individuals or areas with fewer resources. She showed concern for similar developments taking further hold in Australia.

The notion of providing for those who are close is much easier than doing so with persons whom we do not know or may never see, Cox argued, because developing such an ethic of care is based on a recognition of entitlement. Cox also located interventionist government—flawed as she noted it often is—as being a preferred style of governance. According to Cox, the post-war period has shown that those governments which had sound welfare systems in place enjoyed relative peace and cohesion amongst their publics.

In recognising advancements made by governments in respect of women, social security recipients and Aborigines, Cox (1995) further argued that government is best-placed to develop inclusive strategies on a societal basis. She also stated "the demonising of state and public power ignores the

possibilities of using these powers to mediate and control the powerful" (p.49). Economic rationalism, she argued, threatens the well-being of society generally and depleting social capital in particular. Trust, reciprocity, and mutuality are ignored by the use of economic frameworks which are anchored in individualism and deregulation.

Cox (1995) echoed the views of Arendt (1958) in suggesting that there are three key spheres in the lives of adults—family, paid work, and public life. To satisfy these spheres of adults' lives, means such concerns as the way time is now used and who shoulders particular private and public responsibilities, needs to be critically considered by society. A continuing failure to address time use and other factors which ultimately contribute to a "civil society" (Cox, p.5), will, in turn, erode the standing of trust in society. In linking trust to social well-being and cooperation, Cox's views echoed those of Putnam (1993). Environments characterised by trust enable critical thinkers to develop ideas and potential benefits to be gained from considered risk-taking. These are features of society that Australia is presently short of—despite being a privileged country.

In sum, Cox (1995) argued that Australian society presently has considerable—but diminishing—social capital. Her advocacy for social capital generally coalesces with Putnam's (1993), yet it is additionally informed by a feminist perspective. As with Putnam, Cox acknowledged the complexities of comprehending, as well as responding to issues of social capital. Possible solutions represent challenges to the interests of some, she noted. Social

dislocation and disenfranchisement—which social capital can mediate—ultimately affect community. Cox's views stressed the importance of continuing to comprehend the place of social capital—because of its manifold beneficent effects to community and individual well-being. Cox also rejected policy perspectives that strictly counted only the immediate, fiscal concerns. These she believes now are inconsistent and, on their own, insufficient. By encouraging her examination to be a catalyst to further inquiry, Cox (1995) placed her work symbolically, noting "without hope, we are discouraged from trying" (p.7).

### *Summary of Integrative Perspective*

An integrative perspective relies on data and viewpoints from a variety of sources, including disparate disciplines, as a basis for inquiry and claims-making. Macro and micro communities, and the connections between them are usually a focus for those who adopt an integrative perspective, particularly when social capital is being examined.

Unlike other disciplines which have emphasised either a macro or micro-based context for their inquiries, the integrative perspective usually avoid such boundaries. Like many recent sociological and feminist perspectives, integrative perspectives recognise individual agency. They refuse to view individuals as being incapable of reflection or initiation. Instead, individuals are perceived as being capable of action that extends beyond their own direct interests. Also, there is an acceptance that individuals and institutions mutually shape each other.

Trust was perceived by Coleman (1988; 1990), Cox (1995), Inglehart

1990), and Putnam (1993) as being linked to, and vital for, the better functioning of macro and micro communities. At the national or inter-country level, Inglehart and Putnam argued that trust amongst communities is developed, or eroded, over long periods. Both argued that investigations over decades, rather than years, provided highly effective depictions of change in trust in communities. Inglehart and Putnam argued that the cultures within many Western countries are changing. Nonetheless, Inglehart's view, which depicts a world which is slowly moving toward a postmaterialist state, was effectively qualified by recent claims from Cox (1995) and Putnam (1995).

The high-trust nations, which Inglehart believed are increasingly evident, are having their citizens' trust tested by countervailing influences. As Cox (1995) and Putnam (1995) respectively wrote, deep and widespread tensions between public and private interests are evident in post-materialist countries, such as Australia and the United States. These tensions appear to be affect the individual and collective trust of many citizens and it is these social markers of trust that Cox and Putnam have investigated through a framework of social capital. Social capital is a means of linking social *and* economic concerns (Coleman, 1996). It is thus, as Coleman suggested, a useful vehicle through which trust can be depicted as well as being an end in itself.

In the next section, literature which examines matters of trust between principals and teachers in school settings is considered.



## **Trust Within Schools**

### ***Shared Governance Requires Trust***

Principals in eight schools which were members of the American League of Professional Schools, formed the participants in a study by Blase, Blase, Anderson, and Dungan (1995). The League of Professional Schools exists, in essence, to foster the development of shared governance in schools. As a means of accessing participants Blase et al., relied upon recommendations from the League and Georgia State Department of Education. An initial list of forty-five principals resulted from these recommendations. Following a first-stage collection of demographic data from these principals, an analysis was conducted which resulted in eight principals being selected who, together, comprised a profile of male, female, urban, suburban, rural primary and post primary principals.

For this study, Blase et al. (1995), were keen to portray the challenges faced by principals and practical responses by them in relation to democratic leadership. Common to each of the eight principals was a commitment to the principle of shared governance. In relation to school location, gender, and category of school, the principals differed from one another. The researchers were also eager to pinpoint the meanings that the eight principals assigned to their work, as well as to consider what they did in schools. Strategies consistent with the tenets of symbolic interactionist theory were employed in order to cameo the principals.

This qualitative study sought to provide answers to a guiding question which asked "What are principals' perspectives on democratic leadership in schools?" (Blase et al., 1995, p.154). Using an open-ended technique, each principal was interviewed for a total of between three and six hours, spread over two occasions. Responses provided in the first (face-to-face) interview session were used to frame many of the questions asked in the subsequent (telephone) interview.

Using audio tape recordings from both interviews, data were analysed in accordance with the grounded theory principles of Glaser & Strauss (1967), which ultimately resulted in a number of categories and themes being identified from the principals' perceptions. Blase et al. (1995), noted that the participants' traced some of their leadership philosophies and practices to personal influences. Important familial, friendship, or professional values and ways had subsequently been incorporated into the daily lives of these principals.

Nine strategies were evident in principals' perceptions of how they promoted empowerment and shared-governance. The first of these, building trust, was regarded by almost all principals as central. This finding complements a claim by Mitchell (1995) and Mulford (1997), that, in order for teachers and principals to engage effectively in organisational learning, there has to be a bedrock of trust between them. In other words, for schools to know whether and how to adapt effectively to changing community needs, principals and teachers have to be able to discuss educational issues critically. Thus, in order to have open and frank discussions, a substantial foundation of trust is a

prerequisite.

Despite the foundational nature of trust, the need for principals to build trust with teachers is not recognised as an organisational priority in Victoria, the state that formed the setting for the current study. Apart from there being only scant references to 'trust' matters in official Department of Education documents, it appears that school authorities believe that the success of shared governance for Victorian schools relies on other factors. Since the introduction of '*Schools of the Future*', a major reform program oriented towards giving schools, and in particular principals, greater decision-making autonomy, the Department of Education has measured the success of the initiative through sources other than teachers.

One of the most significant sources of advice concerning the successful implementation of the *Schools of the Future* has been provided by those organisations engaged in a Co-operative Research Project with the University of Melbourne. Other parties to the Project are the Victorian Primary Principals Association, the Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals and the Directorate of School Education (*Bright Future for Schools*, 1996). No organisation which represents teachers is included in the co-operative venture. Moreover, in the annual surveys conducted by the Co-operative Research Project, teachers' views about shared governance, and other aspects of local school autonomy and the initiative, have not been sought.

Instead, principals' views have been used as the basis upon which to report the success of the *Schools of the Future* program. So great has been the

confidence in principals' views as a yearly measure, that the Minister for Education, Phil Gude observed "The survey reveals strong support from principals for the *Schools of the Future* program ... it shows that already there have been major benefits for students, teachers, principals and school communities ..." (*Bright Future for Schools*, 1996). The Minister's comments were endorsed by the then president of the Victorian Primary Principals' Association, Mr. Peter Paul, who claimed the survey results were "positive news for our schools" (*Bright Future for Schools*, 1996).

The support from the then Victorian Primary Principals' Association was consistent with that organisation's views of many key initiatives which were launched following election of a new Victorian Government in October 1992. Indeed, a publicly supportive relationship between the Victorian Government and principals' organisations was evident in 1993: An analysis of all of the then Minister for Education, Mr. Don Hayward's 69 media releases between June 1993 and July 1994 showed that the agreement of the principals variously sought and was valued by the State Government. By contrast, of the few references made to teacher organisations in those press releases, none sought their support and all were criticisms of them. Hence, it can be argued that, in Victoria, shared governance has effectively involved two of the key organisational players in education. To date, shared governance may not have as effectively included relationships between school-based teachers and principals. Further, as Bishop's (1995) study showed, the courting of principals—through, for example, large salary increases—by the government-

of-the-day, left some principals and many teachers uneasy about the type of school governance that was being shared.

In the study by Blase et al. (1995), some principals sought to build trust through altering the school climate, others encouraged more active roles for teachers and embraced of their capacities to make efficacious decisions. The principals' trust-building strategy was accompanied by up to eight additional strategies such as encouraging teacher opinion, supporting teachers in confrontations, and promoting the group development of the teaching staff.

Principals in this North American study acknowledged that shared governance had difficult and problematic dimensions. However, they also identified several benefits accruing from it which they had witnessed in their own schools during, and following, the transition to shared governance arrangements. For teachers, shared governance strategies (including trust building) had led to leadership opportunities, improved morale, motivation, and senses of community. Further, communication, problem solving, and risk taking had been favourably altered. Benefits to teachers had been matched by benefits to principals, participants reported, they included gains with respect to motivation, satisfaction, risk taking, commitment, and senses of community. Most principals agreed that students were also beneficiaries of more satisfied teachers in the shared governance arrangement. but, they were unclear about how satisfied teachers affected student outcomes.

Amongst four factors which principals identified—self, time, teachers and, central administration—as potential or actual barriers to shared

governance, two had particular implications for trust, according to Blase et al. (1995). Shortages of time in which to implement many of the altered arrangements threatened the well-being of many of the active teachers in these schools. In addition, discernment on the part of teachers especially, but also principals, that edicts from central office reflected unrealistic understandings of any needed time frames and restricted notions of teacher authority, were poorly received at the school level. Blase et al. drew attention to the possibility of such circumstances threatening relations of trust and staff goodwill.

In Australian schools, an additional consequence of insufficient job time in which to undertake teacher duties, is more men than women leaving the teaching profession (ABS, 1997). Australia-wide data (which, although not sex specific) show that, in 1995, 50% of secondary school teachers were working 45 or more hours per week. In Victoria, teachers' usual hours of work at the school are from 8.15a.m. to 4.36p.m. (School Operations Manual, 1991). On this basis, Victorian teachers are paid for a 40 hour week, yet at least half do 5 or more hours unpaid work each week as part of their actual hours of work (ABS, 1997, p. 77). A combination of salary levels, relative to those in other professions, and the paid and unpaid hours of work appear to have influenced many men's decisions to exit teaching (ABS, 1997).

Blase et al. (1995) found from their interviews with principals that a key problem in respect to school democracy and empowerment, when played out through the dynamics of shared governance, was the motivation of those who were promoting teacher involvement. Motives that were not linked to achieving

genuinely shared governance were problematic to the achieving of greater teacher-principal collaboration, the researchers claimed. As to where this shared governance initiative will lead, Blase et al. (1995) are not clear.

### ***Collaboration Requires Trust***

Blase and Blase (1994) conducted an investigation into teachers' perceptions of principals' characteristics which influence their sense of empowerment. The qualitative study required participants to complete an open-ended questionnaire. The researchers chose not to define any of the terms used in the questionnaire which sought—from a symbolic interactionist standpoint—understandings about successful leadership and empowerment. Blase and Blase (1994) took the view, earlier advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) that to define terms would limit teachers' views of what these descriptors implied in light of their experiences. The study also was aimed at identifying why teachers found particular principals to be empowering and what effects that such practices created.

Two hundred and eighty five teachers from 11 schools in the United States of which had a four year tradition of shared governance structures, took part in the study. The 11 schools were members of the League of Professional Schools. Mention was made, by the researchers, of the purpose of the League of Professional Schools, being to " ... to establish representative, democratic decision making structures to promote teacher collaboration and involvement in school-wide instructional and curricular decisions.... This was expected to achieve ... improved learning and teaching" (Blase & Blase, 1994, p.11).

The information provided to Blase and Blase (1994) by teachers enabled the development of a database of empowering leadership strategies. From those schools which had principals who were regarded as highly successful, Blase and Blase asked teachers to describe either one, or two, of their leaders' characteristics which contributed to their feelings of empowerment. Teachers were also asked to explain why those characteristics felt empowering, what a sense of empowerment felt like, and what it resulted in.

In all, the teachers' contributions elicited 367 examples of principals' characteristics which were considered pivotal in contributing to senses of empowerment. Because the questions were open-ended and allowed for an entire page in which each teacher's answer could be written, the researchers claimed to have a substantial data base from which to develop inductive analyses. The key results from this stage of the research then were reported by Blase and Blase (1994), in a separate chapter. Following an elaboration in favour of shared governance, Blase and Blase reported in the introduction to chapter two, that "our study data suggest that trust is the foundation for shared governance and teacher empowerment" (p.18). Trust, therefore, became the focus of their second chapter.

Blase and Blase (1994) argued that, by communicating a sense of trust in and to teachers, highly effective principals' trust-building efforts contributed to increased teacher motivation, self-esteem, commitment, and ownership. The principals' efforts were achieved by both direct and indirect means. Effective trust-building occurred when principals recognised the interdependence of



teachers and principals. Blase and Blase noted amongst teachers' responses, a desire to protect trusting relationships. Regrettably, despite the promise contained in the aims of the study, the researchers did not report how teachers showed that desire.

Openness in principals' interactions with teachers plus a down-playing by principals of status differentials amongst teachers, (and between principals and teachers) also contributed to trust-building. An additional mark of these principals was active, collaborative problem-solving. They derived satisfaction from, and were challenged (not threatened) by jointly-derived (teachers and principal) solutions. Teachers noted, and appreciated that their principals knew teachers greatly valued having the freedom to act. Principals often encouraged teachers to trust their own classroom judgements and to actively engage in staff meetings. As the teachers reported, staff meetings were not simply venues for critical thinking—staff were often provided with professional development opportunities which were designed to develop group and individual process skills, thereby endeavouring to enable teachers to make appropriate decisions. The importance of developing teachers' skills, so as to avoid overwhelming any who were well-intentioned but ill-equipped for the task of decision making, was reported by McLaughlin et al. (1986).

In the study by Blase and Blase (1994) it was noted that principals who were highly trusted by teachers were often prepared to risk the consequences of short-term conflict for the possible long term benefits of better decision-making. Unfortunately the researchers did not expand on this point by offering data of

teachers' depictions of such conflict situations. Empowering, trusting principals also consistently modelled an open, accepting style of communication which was premised upon an acceptance that teachers were often the best-placed professionals to make decisions and that principals in such contexts were supporters and facilitators.

Active in the on-going practices of these principals was a drive to ensure that school 'climates' were free from fear, intimidation, coercion and criticism. The significance which teachers and principals attached to climates which were free from fear and intimidation is particularly noteworthy when contrasted with recent developments in Victorian public schools. As a result of legislative change, public servants (including school personnel), are not permitted to publicly criticise government policy. Brett (1997), claimed that several principals who had done so had been called into a meeting with their regional manager, warned about the breach of their employment contract and the prospect of disciplinary action.

As well, Brett suggested that teachers who, for example, spoke critically about public education were vulnerable to being similarly treated via their principal. Brett's comments echoed those of the Federation of Victorian School Administrators which, had previously claimed that "the Government ... had created a climate of fear and intimidation against principals making public statements" (Bruce, 1993). In the investigation by Blase and Blase (1994), principals who created an environment of openness and trust by the way they operated, as well as in what they said, were principals with whom teachers

developed a deep attachment to, enabling many to pursue more effectively their teaching interests (in the classroom). The importance teachers place on being able to pursue their teaching role has been noted elsewhere (Lortie 1975; McLaughlin et al., 1986; Rosenholtz, 1985).

The study by Blase and Blase (1994) provided convincing data to show that principals' trust-building practices contribute to improved teachers' job commitment. As might be predicted, given the type of study conducted by Blase and Blase, no attempt was made to isolate further links between particular principal trust-building practices and specific teacher effects (e.g. self-esteem, motivation). By conducting and reporting the research in the way they did, Blase and Blase have acknowledged the need for practical or meaningful accounts of research to be developed as a means of better gaining teachers' readership. Perhaps implicit in the need to plainly communicate studies is a recognition of a long-standing resistance of teachers toward clinical depictions of school-based research, which teachers may have located as remote 'ivory-tower' stories.

In a qualitative study which involved eight primary school principals and sixteen teachers, Harcher and Hyle (1996) developed a theory of collaborative power. As a result of interviewing each principal and two teachers from his or her school, theory was developed which showed trust, respect, and collegiality to be fundamental to the achievement of both an effective work environment and successful instructional leadership. The theory, which took as its bedrock a multidimensional view of power inequalities between administrators and

teachers in schools, points to the need to balance those inequalities when providing instructional leadership.

Creating a school-wide vision, Harcher and Hyle (1996) argued, is an essential factor involved in the principal's role. It is also required by those involved in preparing the instructional program. The means by which principals took account of varying dimensions of power, whilst providing instructional leadership therefore, was to develop a common vision which was then pursued in a setting grounded in egalitarian relations of trust, respect and collegiality.

Harcher and Hyle (1996) were keen to probe understandings and beliefs that underscored perceptions of leadership practices. They sought to achieve that through a qualitative design so as "...to elicit richer empirical data" (Harcher & Hyle, 1996, p.15). What the researchers saw was triangulation between what a principal and his or her (two) colleagues pinpointed, they regarded as compelling. However, in instances where triangulation was not the case, for example when the teachers' impressions were at odds with those of the principal, the data were still treated as noteworthy. After conducting a series of analyses on the data, Harcher and Hyle concluded that disparities between teachers' views and their principals' views often pertained to some principals having stated beliefs that were not congruent with their daily practices.

In relation to matters of trust, the findings showed that all eight principals engaged teachers in decision-making about instruction. Most believed teachers to be well-placed, and sufficiently skilled, to decide about instruction with positive effect. The study noted however, two differing ways in

which teacher involvement in decision making was achieved. Again by listening to principals' and teachers' descriptions of how things were done in their schools, Harcher and Hyle categorised the differential approaches. One stream of principals opted for empowering strategies whilst the others were inclined to employ controlling strategies. In a related study, Lieberman (1988) also found such a distinction amongst principals, linking the former strategy with effectiveness and the latter with paternalism and superficial teacher involvement.

In their study Harcher and Hyle (1996) found that women principals more readily adopted empowering strategies as a means of involving staff. This finding resonated with data collected by Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1990, which showed that women principals were more inclined than their male counterparts to value the role of instructional leader ahead of other managerial aspects of the principalship.

Prior to either the empowerment or control strategy being enacted, Harcher and Hyle's (1996) study showed that there was a perception on the part of principals that teachers were able and entitled to be trusted. In Harcher and Hyle's discussion of the two differing leadership strategies (which were employed to involve teachers) is an implication that principals require a comprehensive knowledge of what is to be done in order to effectively 'lead' teachers in classroom instruction.

Theoretically and ideally, a sound knowledge and experiential base would augur well for a principal's instructional leadership capacities. But as Hallinger (1992) noted, in reality, principals rarely possess such knowledge and

experience. In relation to the issues of trust and empowerment, such expansive instructional knowledge may not be pivotal if the principal identifies his or her role as facilitator and is truly open to trusting the advice and experiences of teachers who daily, are temporally and contextually closest to where instruction occurs. There is no reason to doubt the integrity of this study by Harcher and Hyle (1996). However, in respect of their contention that principals' roles are the vital element in determining whether or not a school will have an excellent instructional program, their emphasis on the capacity of one employee to be responsible for wholesale success (or otherwise), is questionable.

Such caution emanates from several stances. First, is it realistic to demand principals be proficient instructional leaders? Hallinger (1992) suspects not. Second, what are the practical consequences for insisting on placing principals at centre-stage in respect of responsibility for instructional leadership? Indeed, others note the primacy of teachers' place in instructional leadership (Louis, Kruse, & Raywid, 1996; McLaughlin, Pfeifer, Swanson-Owens, & Yee, 1986; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Mulford, 1983). Thirdly, if a principal's location is only to be central, and studies (Harcher & Hyle, 1996; Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1990) raise doubt about the ability of many male principals to perform with efficiency in this domain, what is to be done? Professional development prospects are likely to bode poorly as a remediation solution, if success is largely predicated upon a successful classroom teaching record.

Clearly there are many benefits to having a principal who is proficient in the area of instructional leadership. Yet a significant degree of trust between

principals and teachers, plus the respecting of the place, and need for differential abilities on occasions, empowering and facilitating leadership may suffice. It can be argued that one indication of leadership finesse is evident when a principal knows enough to know that he or she does know enough, and is sufficiently role confident to locate those within the organisation who can contribute to the achievement of a joint solution. This is akin to "facilitative power" (Leithwood, 1992, p.9).

In all, Harcher and Hyle (1996) have shown teachers want to be trusted, empowered and respected by all school-based colleagues. They also have shown that teachers appreciate those leaders who attempt to develop more substantial strategies for involving them in instructional decisions. The study showed the importance of collegial, rather than authoritarian forms of leadership engagement. In an otherwise illuminating study, what remains problematic is the insistence that principals must take—or re-take in many instances—centre stage on matters of instructional leadership. For some principals this would be an extremely difficult impost. If teamwork is cohesive and leadership is available for facilitation, such a requirement could be seen to be unnecessarily universal and exclusive.

### ***Supportive Leadership Draws Trust***

In response to literature concerning the importance of trust to organisational life, Tarter, Bliss, and Hoy (1992) undertook a quantitative study in 72 secondary schools in one state in the United States. The representative sample of schools provided a total of 1,083 teachers who completed a

questionnaire and two scales. The purpose of the study was to identify key contributors to faculty trust in the principal and in colleagues.

The questionnaire employed in this study was a 34-item instrument designed to measure school climate, and required teachers to respond on a four-point Likert-style scale in terms of the frequency in which given statements occurred. The use of the Organisational Climate Description Questionnaire, Rutgers Secondary (OCDQ-RS) was justified in terms of a claim that the instrument was highly reliable. The two trust scales completed by teachers were developed by one of the authors (Hoy & Kupersmith, 1985) for a previous study. Each of these contained seven items to be responded to by selecting one descriptor from the six-point scale. The mean scores from the questionnaire and scales were used in testing hypotheses, whilst the concepts within the instruments which were identified by the 72 groups of teachers were used to build up a picture of each school.

The hypotheses put forward by Tarter et al. (1992) were supported by the responses of teachers. In brief, the authors noted a correlation between a principal's supportive behaviour and teachers' trust of the principal. It was also clear from the data that inflexible and overbearing behaviour by the principal did not elicit trust from teachers. Tarter et al. also indicated that neither of these findings was influential in faculty members' trust of each other. Further, the data confirmed that (work) engaged teachers had greater trust in faculty colleagues. Finally, where teacher frustration was brought about by a principal or other teachers, there was an effect of diminished levels of intra-faculty trust.



This study provided organisational principles or concepts for the field to note when broadly considering issues of trust in schools. Domineering and frequently interrupting practices threaten trust, whilst open, supportive and focussed practices are allied with the generation of trust. In addition, in their report Tarter et al. (1992) defined—and perhaps this was also provided to the participants—what they meant by trust. The failure to define 'trust' in studies has been criticised by Barber (1983).

There are however, some additional points to be made in relation to the study by Tarter et al.(1992). The study provides a view of an aspect of school-based trust without reference to the wider social context, or the influence of history. To include context and history would have clearly required significant design changes and, in view of the considerable sample involved, extended time frames. As well, one limitation brought about by the selection of a correlational design is that it leaves readers with another study which continues a tradition of context-stripping (Lincoln, 1993).

In addition, resorting to—as the design did—descriptions which are made oppositional (such as supportive versus directive, and engaged or frustrated), runs the risk of producing a limited portrait. It seems possible that many engaged teachers are frustrated and that many directive principals are supportive. Forced-choice methods of ascertaining information based on binary associations may miss some of the complexities that are at play in schools. As well, such binary selections often lead to is attribute lists. Attribute lists, when used as a means of understanding organisations, often fall short in achieving the

desired purpose, namely to assist organisational improvements (Bryk, 1988; Leonard, 1996). The failure by Tarter et al. to acknowledge the capacity of particular circumstances, history and other structural influences to impinge on trust in schools, implies that they think those potential influences are not vital factors. Yet research undertaken in Victoria (Busfield, 1995) highlighted the importance, to Victorian teachers, of history and circumstances. Although Busfield's study did not specifically address the issue of trust in schools, the random survey of 1,000 Victorian public school teachers found that 61% believed the education system had deteriorated over the previous 5 years (Busfield, 1995). The survey also found that 90% of teachers believed schools had suffered enough resource cuts.

Hoy, Tarter, and Witkoskie (1992) conducted a study into faculty trust in colleagues and the link between principals and school effectiveness. For the former two authors, the study continued a long-standing interest in quantitative studies of collegial trust in schools. As with an earlier study (Tarter, Bliss, & Hoy, 1989), trust was taken to mean "...a generalised expectancy held by teachers that the word, action, and written or oral statement of others can be relied upon"(p.39).

Hoy et al. (1992) examined the influences of a number of variables upon the effectiveness of schools. Traditionally, these authors argued, educational administration had been preoccupied with developing understandings from bivariate relationships—analyses of single independent and dependent variables. The interest of the researchers was directed toward answering three questions

which were designed to identify leadership that engendered trust between principals and teachers, clarify these how these aspects of trust were linked to effectiveness and show the way in which leadership, trust and effectiveness were connected.

The sample of 44 primary schools in Hoy et al.'s (1992) study were from the same state in the United States that an earlier study had taken its secondary sample from, offering the prospect of inter-sector checks. Hoy et al.'s sample from the primary schools comprised 842 teachers. They completed a shortened, 17 item version of the Organisational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ - RE), which, in order to measure supportive leadership and faculty collegiality, asked them to select one (from four given) frequency descriptor (e.g. rarely, very frequently) to respond to provided statements such as "Teachers respect the professional competence of their colleagues" and "The principal uses constructive criticism" (p.40). The statistical checks performed by the authors on the modified OCDQ-RE, showed the instrument to be highly reliable. Faculty trust in the principal and colleagues were measured by using two trust scales (Hoy & Kupersmith, 1985). The authors expressed confidence in the reliability of both scales. A further untitled, 8-item instrument which had the authors' confidence, sought responses via a 5-point Likert scale to questions such as "How many people in your school readily accept and adjust to changes?" and "How efficiently do people in your school do their work?"(p.40). This instrument was intended to provide evidence of school effectiveness.

Amongst their findings Hoy et al. (1992) concluded that "supportive

leadership was related both to faculty trust in colleagues and effectiveness"(p.40). The researcher also concluded that more supportive principals were linked with greater intra-faculty trust and teachers' perceptions of enhanced school effectiveness. Moreover, it was a strong link found between school effectiveness, faculty collegial trust, and collegial behaviour. This particular result appeared to have perplexed the authors. In their conclusion Hoy et al. (1992) noted that there is a division of opinion within the education field, with one stream suggesting the role of principals in school effectiveness is pivotal whilst the findings of others regard it as indirect. Hoy et al.'s findings tend to suggest the latter. The authors' surprise and apparent unease with identifying principals indirectly with the achievement of school effectiveness is not fully explained in their report.

As the authors note, this study identified teachers as pivotal to effectiveness. The almost abashed reporting of this point may be taken by some as the elevation of one sector (teachers) over an allied sector (principals). Another way of viewing the result is to take it as evidence that principals can't be expected to, and don't, influence school performances so directly. Such a finding also does not necessarily denigrate the importance of concerns about trust being actively pursued by principals and teachers.

Importantly Hoy et al. (1992) acknowledged the need for an atmosphere that encouraged risk-taking by teachers—which they believe is made more likely when teachers trust their principal and their colleagues. They noted also that the failure to create trust resulted in reduced creativity and initiative. Their

conclusions finished on a tentative note, suggesting that the findings "...point to the development of a culture of trust as a necessary if not sufficient condition for effective schooling" (p.44).

The research by Hoy et al. (1992) provided convincing evidence about the importance of relations of trust amongst educators in schools. It also recognised the vital placement of teachers in the achievement of school outcomes. The findings identified principals as playing an indirect role in school outcomes. Finally, the study is somewhat limited by, for example, the refusal to take account of broader contexts within which schools are operating. Indeed, Mannion (1998), who acknowledged Hoy's contribution in clarifying aspects of school-based trust, argued that such future research needed to be interview based, so as to learn more from school personnel.

### *Trusting in Affirming Cultures*

In a study designed to further understand how school culture influences student learning outcomes, Heck and Marcoulides (1996) conducted an investigation which involved 156 teachers from 26 secondary schools in Singapore. The research sought to develop a theoretical framework "...to unify the conceptual components of school factors into a theory that explains outcomes"(p.77).

Heck and Marcoulides (1996) defined organisational culture as "...patterns of shared values and beliefs that over time produce behavioural norms (e.g. processes, policies) adopted in solving problems"(p.77). As an outcome of their study they believe that culture is pivotal in introducing

teachers to ways of thinking and being in schools. Their view echoes that of Timar (1989) who argued that restructuring initiatives—to be effective—have to take account of school cultures. Rossman, Corbett, and Firestone (1988) also share the view that school culture is important for understanding how change takes place in schools..

As a result of their examination of culture in three secondary schools in the United States, Rossman et al.(1988), argued that teachers' shared norms, values, and beliefs need to be better comprehended. According to Rossman et al., too often externally-driven restructuring efforts contravene teachers' prized or "sacred" norms. When this occurs, the prospects for successful implementation of the initiative are minimal. Sacred norms are deeply-held principles which guide teachers' behaviour, and provide meaning to their work. Embedded in these norms are the purposes behind teachers work at their particular school.

While many teacher-held norms are alterable and less profound than sacred norms, Rossman et al. (1988), claimed that restructuring efforts should not underestimate the extent to which norms, as well as values, and beliefs need to be accommodated strategically. School culture, is "the set of shared expectations about what is or out to be, derives from both the more distant external environment common to most schools and the local setting" (Rossman et al., p.122), and it is multidimensional. Not only did these authors contend that culture is site-based, they also argued there are within-site discrepancies in the extent to which individual teachers and faculties adhere to, or identify with,

key aspects of culture. In addition, such culture is evident more universally, across the school system and teaching profession.

Too often restructuring efforts aim for universal, system-wide implementation without recognising that particular teachers and principals may not be convinced of the need for restructuring. Rossman et al. (1988), argued that system-wide initiatives for change need to consider the multiple features of local school culture. It is not sufficient for the externally-based initiators of broad restructuring programs merely to know what they want. An Australian case study of four schools which examined the relationship between organisational culture and restructuring showed that restructuring efforts were more effective when corresponding attention was given to the school's culture (Peters, Dobbins, & Johnson, 1996). Heck and Marcoulides (1996) also noted the need to comprehend the multidimensionality of culture and, in so doing, move away from focussing on single cultural variables. Drawing on a theoretical model which they had developed in a previous study Marcoulides and Heck (1993) applied their model to ascertain "...how visible aspects of organisational culture may affect performance within an educational environment"(p.78). Conceding the absence of a grand theory to do this task, the researchers implied that any such (imperfect) theory that could be used, would need to be framed in a research design which included hypotheses.

Hence, the study was pursued using an *a priori* model which, along the way, was to be checked for goodness of fit. The research itself was not specifically aimed at investigating school-based matters of trust. Nonetheless

the findings did offer support for some of conclusions reached in other investigations concerning the beneficent effects of trust (Blase & Blase, 1994; Blase et al., 1995; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993).

A study by Grady (1993) also recognised at the outset that schools are sites where multiple, as well as common, perspectives are held by principals and teachers. Like Rossman, Corbett, and Firestone (1988), Grady believed that there was a link between the way teachers work and their perceptions of their school. Three hundred and three teachers from 48 Tasmanian primary and post primary schools responded to two questionnaires from Grady. The questionnaires, 'Images of school through metaphor-actual' and 'Images of school through metaphor-ideal', employed a 5-point scale. The questionnaires asked teachers to identify the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that their school was, or ought to be, like the metaphors that were outlined.

Grady's (1993) questionnaires did not directly provide perceptions of school trust. Nonetheless, in a similar vein to Heck and Marcoulides (1996), Grady's study was oriented toward uncovering teachers' values and beliefs with a view to informing practice. Moreover, Grady's questionnaires have the potential to provide insights indirectly into teachers' perceptions of workplace trust. Teachers who, for example, identify with Grady's metaphor of the 'school as family' hold perceptions which are suggestive of greater workplace trust than colleagues who identify with Grady's metaphor of 'school as prison'.

Three findings in particular "...support the belief that where positive social and professional relations are developed are environments where more



learning takes place" (Grady, 1993, p.91). A clear link between positive interpersonal relations amongst principals and teachers and student outcomes was shown in the study. As well, the involvement of norms and values in contributing to enhanced student outcomes was noted as being significant, but indirect, in influence. Further, teacher attitudes were identified as being directly and significantly associated with student outcomes.

What these findings also have in common with other studies (Bishop, 1995; Bishop & Mulford, 1996; Louis, et al. 1996) is the interpretation they give to the teachers' place in school settings. They regard the relation and location of teachers in respect of student progress as primary. As the highly successful principals in the study by Blase et al. (1994) recognised, and as the study by Hoy et al., (1992) showed, principal influences were secondary in the achievement of student outcomes. As both Blase and Blase (1994) and Louis et al. (1994) suggested, in environments where teachers were encouraged to pursue their competencies through student engagement, overall benefits to students were evident.

In the study by Hoy et al. (1992) it was evident that a cohesive faculty in a secondary school was an important means by which collegial support and motivation was harnessed to achieve improved student learning. Blase et al. (1994) reported that openness amongst staff and a regard for risk-taking, when further aided by a non-coercive environment, resulted in heightened teacher effort and commitment.

### *Trust and Expectations*

In a quantitative study of preferred aspects of principals' leadership, Chui, Sharpe, and McCormick (1996), asked teachers from sixty secondary schools to complete a questionnaire. A total of 548 teachers from 48 schools completed the questionnaire which contained a series of statements about leadership characteristics. The statements were provided to give teachers an opportunity to select those descriptions which indicated their most preferred leadership practices (of principals).

The choices from which to select were grouped into one of six categories. The categories had been selected by the researchers following consideration of relevant literature and local (Hong Kong) contexts. The literature reviewed by Chui et al., for this study related to transformational leadership. The concept of transformational leadership was developed by Burns (1978), and referred to leaders who sought to understand and influence the beliefs and values of followers. Unlike transactional leadership, which was based on an exchange relationship between leaders and followers, Burns contended that transforming leadership could unite leaders and followers around a purpose. Burns claimed transforming leadership " ... occurs when one or more persons *engage* with others in such way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (p. 20). As well, Burns argued that one "result of transforming leadership is a relationship ... that converts followers into leaders and leaders into moral agents" (p. 4). Although Chui et al. (1996) endorsed the view of others, such as Leithwood (1994), that

transformational leadership was multidimensional, they concluded that categorisation of the devised statements could be satisfactorily represented by six groups. Five groups provided a measure of leadership behaviour and one group provided a measure of vision.

As Chui et al. (1996) expected, vision was identified by teachers as being the key feature of transformational principals. Associated with the need to develop and communicate a vision, was the importance of principal-held values, which were related to actions on the part of principals which teachers most desired. Amongst seven examples of how principals could demonstrate what they valued, teachers identified the need for trust-building and an openness in principals' manners with teachers, as being important.

Chui et al. (1996) reported that the weighting given by teachers, to communication of values by principals, endorses an earlier finding by Bennis and Nanus (1985) to the effect that it was a prime feature of transformational leadership. Also of note in this study, from the standpoint of trust within principal-teacher relations in schools, "was the importance teachers associated to principal behaviours which were grouped under the heading of empowerment of teachers"(p.37). Such a finding resonates with the benefits and importance Victorian school principals and teachers assigned to empowerment (Bishop, 1995). When teachers perceived there was considerable teacher empowerment, trust underscored relations between themselves and their principal.

As the theoretical framework in the study by Chui et al. (1996), related to transformational leadership, there was (understandably) no effort to develop

further links between the questionnaire statements. However, by considering the principal behaviours which respondents identified as important in terms of empowering teachers, it can be argued that elements of trust are involved in four of the five selected choices. Actions on the part of principals that provide teachers with flexible boundaries (in which to develop their roles), share power and leadership, create approachable personas as well as allow for collaborative working arrangements to prevail, require dimensions of trust. For these actions to occur, it is argued that principals would first need to be reasonably confident that their investment of trust in the capacities of teachers (to undertake work that is not heavily supervised, and which allows for individual and group decisions concerning implementation) is justified.

With the compulsory imposition on Victorian public schools in 1995 of the Curriculum and Standards Framework, the statements of two key advocates were suggestive of such a lack of confidence in teachers. The Victorian Board of Studies chairman, Mr. Howard Kelly, suggested that the CSF would " ... assist us to raise the standards in Victorian schools ... and make it clear to parents and teachers the types of expectations that are appropriate for children ... " (Painter, 1994). The president of the Victorian Primary Principals Association also applauded the distribution of CSF documents to public schools. He noted "it strengthens the system by assuring what is taught in one school is taught across all state schools" (Painter, 1995, p. 8).

Whilst the State Government received support for this initiative from principals' organisations, none was forthcoming from teachers' organisations

(Painter, 1994). The Federated Teachers Union deputy president, Ms Jude Cazaly, asserted that the initiative would create " ... further cynicism within the teaching body ... about the way in which kids are expected to be taught. The policy direction of this Government will be seen as being superficial " (Painter, 1994, p.4).

Opposing views were taken by the principals' and teachers' organisations in response to the State Government's announcement that Victoria's public schools would take part in statewide literacy and maths student testing (Painter, 1995, p. 3). Support for the initiative and the information it would provide, came from the principals whereas teacher representatives argued for a more complex policy response to the issue of teaching and learning standards.

The pattern of the principals' organisations endorsing State Government education initiatives lost strength during 1996. By 1997, principals' concerns about public education, and in particular its resourcing, coalesced with many teacher organisation views. In a survey of 520 primary and post-primary principals 71% indicated that the State Government's education reforms had reduced, or made no difference to, education standards (Rollins, 1997, p. 3). Other reported indications that principals' key views were not necessarily those of the State Government were evident when three principal organisations referred to a climate of distrust having developed between principals and the State Government on education decision-making. Principals claimed that they were left out of decision-making and that, as a consequence, their job satisfaction had never been lower. The increasing disaffection amongst

principals was briefly demonstrated through a series of meeting boycotts. The State Government's response to the boycotts was to resume negotiations with the Victorian Principals' Federation, a move which resulted in a lifting of boycotts.

Barber (1983) argued that assessments about competencies are closely linked to decisions about whether or not to trust an individual. In the case of principals, such a view would be adjudged in the hope that teachers would—having recognised that their principal is an approachable leader—communicate concerns to administration. In return, taking account of the selections made by teachers in the study by Chui et al. (1996), there was a reciprocity of trust implied in what teachers believed to be important.

Teachers, for example, regarded being able to approach principals over problems as a valuable workplace opportunity. In so doing, the results of the Hong Kong study by Chui et al. (1996) showed that they wanted to trust in the capacities and integrity of the principal on occasions when they feel a need to approach administrators in such a way. Teachers sought ethical standards of professional behaviour, support from administration and an ability to be able to rely on the administration once problems arose. These were, respectively, organised on the questionnaire under the headings of communication of values, professional development of teachers and people orientation.

Many of the in-principle statements in the questionnaire were regarded by respondents as generalised ways of being for principals. Thus, in respect of trust, the study by Chui et al. (1996) provided current—if not local—evidence

of what teachers value. By turning to the implications of their choices, in respect of relations of trust amongst principals and teachers, it is clear that the preferences of teachers require an investment of trust on the part of principals. This in turn, implies a form of reciprocity (in the form of honouring that trust—and delivering in effort) on the part of teachers.

Thus, if the study is noted purely as presented by Chui et al. (1996), there is evidence to suggest that teachers value and want interactions with principals to be characterised by openness and trust. If the descriptive groupings nominated by Chui et al. are temporarily bracketed, and the practical implications of other principal behaviours (noted as important) are considered, trust becomes particularly valuable as a means of achieving additional ends. Thus, in the investigation by Chui et al. teachers identified trusting relations as being ends in themselves. They also showed that matters of trust were implicated in the achievement of other desired ends, and hence, operated as an enabling factor.

In a study of 53 primary teachers and 4 principals from a middle-class, inner urban sector of Melbourne, Bishop (1995) found that teachers valued being trusted by, and being able to trust, their principal. Teachers claimed that they wanted interactions with principals to be characterised by recognition, respect, support, and reliability. For most teachers, trust undergirded these characteristics.

When teachers perceived mutual trust between themselves and their principal, teachers' feelings of empowerment were enhanced. Situations of

mutual trust were those where both principal and teacher perceived that each acted in the best interests of students and colleagues. In situations where teachers were unconvinced of the merits of an externally-imposed initiative, having trust in their principal was often influential in teachers' decision to assist with implementation.

Moreover, whilst the participants in this Australian study claimed that the central authority—their employer—should trust teachers, few perceived this to be so in reality. Teachers perceived their employer as being critical and unsupportive of their profession. Bishop's (1995) analysis of 69 Press Releases issued by the then Minister of Education over a thirteen month time frame, added weight to the teachers' perceptions. No Press Release referred to teachers in congratulatory terms. As well, from the standpoint of teachers, the extent and timing of mandated change implied that teachers' recent efforts had been inadequate. Yet, so far as teachers and their principals were concerned, teachers at these schools had been successful in their efforts.

Furthermore, in Bishop's (1995) study, both teachers and principals expressed concern about key systemic changes which schools were required to implement. Few teachers were confident that, overall, the changes would be in the best interests of students or teachers. Almost all of these principals and teachers assigned negative interpretations to the employer's motives for implementing such changes. These interpretations frequently referred to economic rationalism plus a lack of care for public education and teachers being the core purpose behind changes.



According to Bishop and Mulford (1996), the 53 inner-urban primary teachers' and their principals' perceptions highlighted the importance of school-based stakeholders being involved in key teaching and learning decision-making. In other words, if changes were intended to affect the classroom in a positive way, teachers needed to be consulted during both the planning, and implementation phases. The teachers in Bishop's (1995) study indicated that they not only expected to be active participants in school and statewide changes, they were confident that they had the professional acumen to do so effectively. Furthermore, the principals in her study were confident of teachers' capacity to contribute collaboratively beyond the classroom level. In effect, those principals held a more expansive view of teachers' identities than did the employer—and one which more closely coalesced with that held by teachers. Nonetheless, the study found that, overall, principals in Victorian public schools had been coopted by the central authority soon after there was a change of government in the State. The net effect of this cooption for the new Government was that it could rely on the support of most principals for the Schools of the Future initiative. For principals it resulted in an increase in their school-based powers, higher salaries, and improved negotiating opportunities with the Department of Education.

Findings from a recent survey (Morgan Poll, 1997, June 10) of public opinion suggested that, so far as parents and other lay Victorians are concerned, there is considerable community support for the efforts of teachers. As part of an Australia-wide survey, participating Victorians rated their State's teachers as

being the fourth highest profession when it came to displaying honesty and ethics. Sixty-four per cent of Victorians rated teachers as " ... maintaining high or very high standards of honesty and ethics ... " (Morgan Poll, June 10, p.1). As teachers have achieved a similarly high ranking in all Morgan Polls for the past two decades (Morgan Poll, 1997, June 10) it can be argued that there is evidence of longstanding confidence in the efforts of the profession.

Further, it appears that the evidence of support for Victorian teachers is not a unique phenomenon. In Tasmania, for example, there is substantial satisfaction with the core efforts of public schools and the quality of teaching personnel (Mulford, Myhill, a'Court, & Harrison, 1997). Two in three of the 200 Tasmanians surveyed rated teacher quality in public schools as being either 'A' or 'B' on a 5-point scale which, at its highest rank, went from A to B, C, D, or FAIL. As well, 92% of respondents identified teacher quality as "very important". Taken together, the Tasmanian results echo the confidence Victorians have in teachers. Viewed on a state-by-state basis, they are an important reminder for school communities to engage in public discourse about schools. A failure, by a range of citizens who are knowledgeable and able to do so, in effect, can leave the lay public with unrepresentative or damaging views about schools.

One example of teachers' integrity being challenged recently involved the Victorian Minister for Education. In an address to State Parliament he referred to 'excess' or overentitlement teachers. Excess teachers are employees who have been transferred from one school (that no longer has the student numbers

to justify keeping the teacher/s), to another school, to fill a short term vacancy. Of these teachers, the Minister claimed " ... last year it cost the taxpayers of Victoria \$26 million for no work, no return, not one iota of effort for the people in our schools" (Farouque, 1996).

By and large, the defence of teachers on this matter was dominated by the Australian Education Union and the State Opposition, the latter of which focused on the Minister's subsequent attempt at amending the Hansard (Parliament's official) record. Whilst the teachers' organisation drew on official Department of Education data to defend the statistics quoted by the Minister (Messina, 1996) the president of the Victorian State Secondary Principals Association commented that he was "greatly surprised" by the claim (Farouque, 1996). The absence of challenges from school communities to such strong criticisms of teachers risks leaving an impression with the public that the claim is reasonable or that authoritative public debate is the province of only politicians and peak professional bodies. As happened in the Victorian situation, the content of discourse then ends up being narrow, oppositional, and closely linked to interest group or party lines.

Although not a study specifically designed to explore an aspect of relations of trust amongst educators, Bredeson's (1993) examination of the professional identities of principals in restructured schools in the United States provided some worthwhile insights. Because the study was not primarily oriented toward trust, only fleeting attention will be given to various features of the study. Bredeson's qualitative study of twenty principals was designed to

focus on their role transition and role strain which resulted from the restructuring process in four American school districts. Bredeson's view was that role strain was associated with role transition, and that knowledge was lacking for authorities and school communities which were keen to minimise the taxing nature of principals' role transitions.

Using structured interviews (which lasted between 45 and 90 minutes) to gain the perceptions from (5 female, 6 male) principals, Bredeson was able to identify what commonly preceded principals' need to change roles, what these antecedents triggered in role changes and how these resulted in anxieties of varying dimensions. Bredeson further found that personal and environmental moderators operated to alter (mostly for the better) the strains brought about by role transitions. Four personally-held characteristics were identified as being helpful to the study's participants. Three environmental moderators were regarded as being valuable in dealing with the demands of transitions. The prominent environment moderator, according to Bredeson (1993), was identified as being a history or tradition of trust. Regrettably Bredeson provided no detail as to the precise number of principals who regarded aspects of trust to be of prime concern. Placed as the key environmental moderator ahead of only two others, a reader is left with an incomplete impression as to how powerful a factor it was.

Nonetheless Bredeson (1993) relayed participants' contributions which are noteworthy. Principals were assisted in the knowledge that the purposes of the restructuring were premised upon student needs and potential benefits to

them, plus the organisation in general. Participants noted that they had enjoyed high levels of collegial trust with teachers and other administrators for, in some cases years. Principals considered these relations had helped them take risks, divulge frustrations, adjust their ways of being within the job, particularly once they were required to make formal changes to their roles.

In Bredeson's view, the stories provided by the principals traced high levels of trust to "...ongoing professional dialogues among principals and their staffs. Trust helped to build confidence in evolving processes, to suspend premature judgements, and to sustain enthusiasm for change, even when things went wrong" (1993, p.52).

Drawing from the responses made in relation to trust, Bredeson (1993) concluded that for trust to be soundly located, it needed to be in evidence throughout the school system, not merely at particular schools. This he linked to the another side of role transitions—concerns of loss for some (principals) were often marked by concerns at concomitant gains of others (teachers, other professionals). These too, Bredeson's data evidenced, suggested the need for system-wide trust in order for such concerns to be taken seriously with a view to further responses being developed.

In Bredeson's (1993) study, the participants did not face losses of position or job. Nonetheless, some of the principals were recorded as having found the transitions to be extremely challenging of the identities, senses of control, and many other aspects of the professional roles that had been created during much of their work lives. Many of these professional dimensions were

valued by those who possessed them and, in some cases, were relinquished with resentment. According to Bredeson, the transition experiences of the women principals—whilst also problematic—were not as harrowing as for many men principals. Bredeson's analysis of responses suggested that a preparedness to identify and act as a collaborative leader prior to imposed transition, predisposed principals to less traumatic role changes.

The findings from Bredeson's (1993) study also emphasised the importance of more being learnt about social networks, norms and work patterns in relation to role changes being required of school personnel. In echoing Huberman (1987), Bredeson (1993) indicated that further such insights needed to be developed "from local knowledge perspectives" (p.61). As well, Bredeson argued that more remained to be understood about how such rule changes can affect other domains of organisational life. Ideally, in Bredeson's view, a longitudinal study would assist with the development of such understandings. Bredeson's study is valuable in respect of providing some evidence about the capacity of trust to, in effect, mediate particular work problems. It also suggests that dialogue between principals and teachers is often helpful in contributing to relations of trust as well as persisting with communication as a means of weathering difficult times.

Aspects of the study (not detailed here), when combined with Bredeson's revelations about trust, emphasise the need to comprehend the impact that identities and expectations—built up and rehearsed over possibly decades—have. It is also apparent that they are unable to be dislodged from

'heads and hearts' as quickly as they may be verbally rejected.

### ***Summary of Trust Within Schools***

At present, schools have only a limited number of principal-teacher trust studies to draw upon and inform their work. The available studies have employed a variety of methods in the course of data collection. Yet, common to the researchers of these disparate studies is a confidence about the potential of principal-teacher trust to assist schools. As well, a common feature amongst these trust-focussed studies is the acknowledgement given to the primacy of teachers' place in the educational enterprise.

The study by Blase et al. (1995) highlighted the need for trust to exist between a school's principal and teachers, if shared governance is to be developed. Similarly, Mitchell (1995) and Mulford (1997) argued that trust is needed between school-based personnel for organisational learning to be effective. Indeed, Mulford (1997), Blase et al. (1994), and Harcher and Hyle (1996) all asserted that trust is necessary for in-depth collaboration.

Supportive principals, as studies by Bishop (1995), Tarter et al. (1992), and Hoy et al. (1992) showed, attract the trust of teachers. As several studies, including those by Bishop (1995), Bishop and Mulford (1996) and Harcher and Hyle (1996) noted, teachers value both being trusted by, and being able to trust in, their principal.

The importance, to teachers, of principals and other reformers identifying and affirming organisational cultures was underscored by Heck and Marcoulides (1996) and Rossman et al. (1988). These researchers showed that

a failure by reformers to comprehend teachers' shared values, beliefs and school norms risked the longevity of reform agendas in schools. Findings from one Australian study (Petters et al., 1996) lent weight to the interpretations provided by Heck et al. and Rossman et al.. Grady's (1993) investigation of school images and organisational climates found a link between positive interpersonal relations amongst principals and teachers, and student outcomes. Grady's study provides a positive reason for relations between principals and teachers to be favourable—and achieving favourable relations invariably implicates the need for trust. Blase and Blase (1994) and Blase et al. (1995) strongly asserted that principal-teacher trust is linked to improved teacher morale and motivation.

Teachers expect their interactions with principals to be characterised by openness and trust (Bishop, 1995; Bishop & Mulford, 1996; Chui et al., 1996). That teachers expect to be trusted implies that they believe such trust would be appropriately placed. Although some Australian teachers did not believe their employer trusted them or their profession (Bishop; Bishop & Mulford), there is evidence that the Australian public does (Morgan Poll, 1997, June 10).

### **Summary**

In overviewing the literature a number of points can be made concerning trust. Although the underlying assumptions and subsequent treatments of trust vary across the disciplines, there is consensus on the importance of trust. Some emphasise trust in relation to the individual and others highlight particular settings in which trust is grounded. Increasingly sectors within the disciplines are moving beyond their traditional boundaries to embrace a concept of trust as



it influences broad areas within society. The functional and beneficent capacities of trust are more frequently being represented in light of their distinct, yet connected locations and relationships. These span, rather than separate the public and private spheres of life.

Trust is a multi-dimensional concept both in, and beyond the workplace: What may be a catalyst to trust, may or may not be what maintains trust. It may be an intuitive impression (Kramer, 1993) or a belief influenced by a host of considerations. The cumulative way in which employee trust can be developed is not the way in which it can be destroyed. What is often slowly-developed interpersonal trust can be dramatically reduced on the basis of perception (Poole, 1996). Trust is potentially volatile in collective settings—the importance that particular employees place on trust and the meanings which they give to actions which strengthen and challenge such relations, vary (Kramer, Brewer, & Hanna, 1996).

Understanding more about whether and how employees identify with their organisations (Bellah et al., 1996), together with matters of gender, place, personal and institutional histories, may further illuminate understandings. Norms and networks also appear to provide insightful accounts about the transmission of trust from an individual basis across to larger, community-wide settings (Putnam, 1993). These and other means by which trust can be better understood are needed. Many of the substantial accounts of trust from the first half of this century have been rendered inadequate because of the altered contexts that have accrued in the interim, particularly throughout the

democratic world.

Although the way in which trust both matters and inheres may be dynamic, there is a consistency within much of the recent literature. Trust is a catalyst to action and often enables on-going action to occur, either on an individual or group basis. It usually occurs through engagements with others in culturally, temporally and situationally-bound settings. Common settings are communities, workplaces and homes. When there is a substantial base of trust between individuals in and beyond the workplace, productivity and civic-ness within society are enhanced (Coleman, 1988; Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 1993). Disengaged communities are uncivic places which are comprised of significant proportions of an untrusting citizenry (Putnam, 1993).

Given what is known, how then might another examination of trust within schools assist their endeavours? Findings from those studies which were not conducted in school-based settings may not have direct relevance to school situations. However, there are sufficiently repetitive patterns from the non-school studies to suggest that some recognition of the conclusions is warranted. On this basis, and in concert with the scant collection of school-based studies of trust, it is clear that relations of trust between principals and teachers are required for the healthy functioning of schools. However, it is not possible *a priori*, to posit that substantial trust will always be preferable (Gambetta, 1988; Schelling, 1984). At times the link between trust and competence (Bennis & Townsend, 1995) will arise in a different way to, for example, the more common instance of the principal trusting teachers' classroom competencies.

Principals will often need to have confidence in their own decisions or actions ahead of those of valued colleagues (Mulford, 1983). Theory (from non-education fields) plus (the writer's) experience would suggest that such an action might destabilise some relations of trust. Yet the school-based literature—at present—provides insufficient clarity about what happens in such circumstances which, in reality, may be commonplace events in schools.

It also seems that employees' perceptions—which result in changes to relations of trust—are cumulative rather than sequential. If this is the case in schools, then it may also underscore the need for leaders particularly to develop a long-term approach to harnessing trust. In such an instance it would also indicate the need for those who develop policies which emanate beyond schools to have considered the extent to which such initiatives may influence (fundamental) relations of trust between principals and teachers.

At this point, comparatively little evidence has emerged from studies concerning such aspects school-based trust. But what little there is, when paired with the legacy of failed school effectiveness initiatives, provides a reminder of the need to rely on school-based personnel. With rare exception, principals and especially teachers, are located in occupations that are, in many respects, private (Kruse & Louis, 1995; Little, 1990; Lortie, 1975) and territorial (Lieberman, 1988; Lortie, 1975). On a collective or system-wide basis their autonomy has enabled teachers to quietly dispatch many promising program innovations, literally by the closing of a classroom door.

It is this significant power which teachers as a group, and individually,

hold that demands respect. Yet it is a relationship that is all too infrequently acknowledged, particularly by central planners. Nonetheless it is noticed by several researchers (Louis et al. 1996; Mulford, 1986; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1995). It is a power relationship that has cogency with respect to the efforts of principals and others who wish to strengthen trust. If trust can act as an antecedent to cooperation, principals' trust-building efforts, for example, are more likely to succeed in contexts which affirm public education and the teaching profession. To achieve such contexts may not necessarily require extra monies. However, there are likely implications for the ways in which central planners engage and interact with school personnel. Arguably, most implicated would be the time needed by all stakeholders to implement change effectively.

The power position of teachers matters most seriously because it is they with whom students spend so much of their lives. It is also one of the key places where students' life-chances can be influenced. Given that teachers' roles are often pivotal in the quality of students' school lives (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1995), trust relations thus become one of the crucial school-based concerns which deserve examination. The significance of trust is further underscored by studies which have emphasised the value to schools of intrinsic rewards (Ashton, 1985; Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1985).

In sum, schools need to be workplaces where associations between principals and teachers can be collegial and trusting. Such relations should undergird the needed critical, and at times oppositional thinking. Trust is a

needed ingredient as a gesture of mutual respect and dependency between principals and teachers. Of the implications of inadequate relations of trust between principals and teachers, (and other finer details), too little is known. There is sufficient literature (Carnevale, 1995; Coleman, 1988; Greene, 1988; Putnam, 1993) to suggest changes to civiness, senses of community, and organisational trust are problematic. There is little evidence to suggest schools operate unaffected and cocoon-like in response to such changing worlds. If students' quality of life and life chances matter, more needs to be understood about how schools can improve in a context of increased performance expectations and decreased funding. Trust is part of that shift.

In the following chapter the research methods and procedures which were used in this study to examine aspects of principal-teacher trust in four Australian public post-primary schools are detailed.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

This chapter describes the research design which was employed in this study. An interpretive, multiple-case study framed this investigation with principals and teachers at each of the participating schools comprising the primary unit of analysis.

The case study method was employed because it is difficult to separate the concept of 'trust' from the context or site. An holistic approach to a particular context in each of the four case study sites serves to provide a saturation of data concerning the concept trust. The purpose of this methods chapter is to elaborate a logic that links data collection and conclusions with the study's initial questions (Yin, 1994). This logic seeks to establish a good 'fit' between purpose, approach, and theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The design components are discussed in the following sequence:

1. The Study's Questions
2. Participants
3. Researcher as Instrument
  - Instrument flexibility
  - Site-based instrument responsiveness
  - Instrument 'depth' and sensitivity
  - Validity through triangulation
4. Procedures
  - Authorisations and briefings

- Gaining entry
- Comprehensive briefings for organisational learning and participant control
- Orientation: Toward understanding
- Processes involved in observations, interviews, and document analysis
- Emphasising principals' member-checking and control
- On-going context sensitivity
- Emphasising teachers' options and control
- Teachers' member-checking sessions
- Place and content of interviews
- Principals' interview schedule
- Teachers' interview schedule

## 5. Data analysis

The chapter then concludes with a summary.

### **The Study's Questions**

As discussed in Chapter One, the questions which guided this study were:

1. What do principals do to engender and maintain trust with teachers?
2. How does what principals are required to implement with teachers affect mutual trust?
3. How does trustworthy leadership contribute to school culture?

These questions were developed prior to the beginning of fieldwork.

The impetus for these questions arose as an outcome of an earlier investigation

(Bishop, 1995; Bishop & Mulford, 1996) in which trust between principals and teachers was shown to be important.

Because of the way in which the questions were shaped, the contemporary nature of the questions, and the lack of researcher control over the research setting, a nonexperimental design was deemed appropriate (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1994). More specifically, a case study was selected because 'how' type questions (two and three) are well-suited to such a design (Bailey, 1991; Yin). In addition, the intention behind asking the 'what' type question (number one) was to obtain from participants details of those practices on the part of principals which engendered and maintained trust with teachers. In the course of obtaining this information, it was expected that then trust-related understandings of teachers and principals would be revealed. In effect then, the obtaining of the 'what' practices of principals represented both a 'how' type and 'why' type question. Bailey and Yin believe 'why' type questions are particularly appropriate for case studies.

Although case studies can be either quantitative or qualitative (Merriam 1988; Yin, 1994), qualitative methods were regarded as clearly preferable in this instance. Many reasons made a qualitative paradigm suitable, including the following: the study was to be based at the site (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and in its natural setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); it was expected that understandings would be developed as an outcome of the data, rather than located with any preconceived theories (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Fetterman, 1989; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984); a bracketing of the researcher's preconceptions



in favour of capturing the perception of participants was to be applied (Bogdan & Biklen; Miles & Huberman; Taylor & Bogdan); and, the data which were expected to emerge from the field were in word form rather than in number form. Bogdan and Biklen consider this final feature to be fundamental to qualitative research.

### **Participants**

The key participants in this study were four principals and 112 teachers from four Victorian secondary colleges. Respectively, the numbers of teachers at the four sites were 25, 28, 36, and 23. Students, parents, cleaners, and allied school personnel were not directly involved in the study. Purposive sampling was the basis by which the secondary colleges were selected. Purposive sampling is a form of nonprobability sampling. Fawcett and Downs (1992) have argued non-probability sampling is appropriate for theory-generating qualitative studies. According to Merriam (1988), "nonprobability is the method of choice in *qualitative* case studies" (p.47). Purposive sampling usually accompanies research that employs analytic induction because particular participants are expected to ultimately "...facilitate the expansion of the developing theory" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, pp.71-72).

Patton (1990) noted that there are many types of purposive samples which may assist with such theory development. In this study it can be argued that, the schools in which participants worked represented both extreme, sensitive, and politically important cases. That is, the geographical region in which the schools were located had, at the time of the study, the highest rates of

unemployment in Victoria (ABS, 1997a). Further, the ethnic and racial profiles which attached to the four schools suggested that many of the students were from either first-generation Australian households, or war-torn countries. In turn, these features of students' lives rendered many of them, on the basis of demographic data (ABS, 1996b), likely to be living in low-income circumstances. Issues of family wealth and intergenerational transfers of wealth play a central role in the life chances of young people (Spilerman, Lewin-Epstein, & Semyonov, 1993). In view of these considerations it can be argued that, schooling represents an especially vital place and means by which the life chances of less materially privileged students may be enhanced.

It was also considered important to investigate trust between principals and teachers at a point when principals and teachers were engaged in considerable organisational change. Although it was accepted that school-based educators had increasingly experienced change-related initiatives in the second half of the twentieth century (Blackmore, 1993; Pogrow, 1995; Sarason, 1995), it can be argued that the recent change-initiatives have differed in some respects to earlier efforts.

The dramatic reduction in centrally-provided school support services, together with a sizeable increase in the managerial responsibilities of principals (Fuhrman & Moore Johnson, 1994) and substantial reductions in the numbers of teachers employed in Victorian public schools (Colebatch, 1997) have represented a different nature of change, rather than mere calibration. Moreover, recent legislative and policy changes have altered ways in which

those (teachers and principals) on the 'inside' can engage in dialogue with those on the 'outside' who develop key initiatives (Brett, 1997).

Given that these changes, at least in part, have been underpinned by economic motives and unaccompanied by commensurate fiscal support at the school level (Watkins, 1995), they may have created implications for the way in which principals and teachers relate to each other. In this sense the study's purposive sample can be further seen as assisting the study by potentially illuminating a politically important concern (Patton, 1990), namely, the matter of principals and teachers both working effectively together and being in adequately resourced schools.

### **Researcher as Instrument**

I was the primary instrument in this study. The decision to rely on myself supports the view that I was the most appropriate instrument in a naturalistic setting when a researcher seeks to comprehend how participants see themselves, their world, and current aspects of their lives (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). The use of a human instrument enables the instrument to be adapted to circumstances in the setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988). During fieldwork in this investigation my adaptability proved to be of practical assistance.

### ***Instrument Flexibility***

Because of the differing capacities of participants to allocate time for interview purposes, the researcher usually was required to make the most of any

time or interview opportunity which presented itself. Sometimes this resulted in a shorter interview than I would have preferred. At other times cancellations and reschedulings enabled lengthier interviews to later take place. Unsolicited feedback from teachers clearly favoured interviews as a means of tapping teachers' views. Some comments made in respect of this were set against a comparison with written surveys, whilst other participants spoke of being pleased to have their opinions canvassed. For many participants it appeared that a prime motivator in agreeing to be interviewed was either to assist the researcher or to let their personal story be heard.

#### ***Site-based Instrument Responsiveness***

Direct observation and documentary analysis were also made possible in this investigation by the use of myself as instrument. The researcher is able to experience more closely the interactions of the site's phenomena of interest and practical functioning through direct observation (Yin, 1994). An observation protocol was prepared for this purpose (see Appendix A). Reference to site-based or site-related documents for analytical purposes provides contextually grounded and rich information (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). A checklist for document analysis was prepared for this task (see Appendix B).

The use of a human instrument so as to observe and interview participants was viewed as appropriate because of the intended emphasis on gaining principals' and teachers' perceptions about aspects of their trust relations. Guba and Lincoln (1989) claim that with a naturalistic inquiry which seeks a multiplicity of views and has no solely etic construction, the "...human is

the instrument of choice...the *only possible* choice during the early stages of an inquiry" (p.175). In these circumstances Guba and Lincoln eschew questions about instrument subjectivity or bias because of their view that there is no other choice. Of relevance, they acknowledge, is the need for the human instrument to be thoroughly 'prepared' for fieldwork.

### ***Instrument 'Depth' and Sensitivity***

In this instance my prior twenty-year work history in both schools and centralised education settings provided a conceptual grounding in terms of the likely nature of school routines and procedures. Wolcott (1994) argued that such lengthy prior experiences are helpful for researchers. I also benefited from having conducted a previous multiple case study (Bishop, 1995). This earlier case study provided me with the experience of dealing with considerable ambiguity - an aspect of research which Merriam (1988) believed case study researchers in particular, must be able to tolerate. In effect, Merriam argued that a tolerance is part of the researcher's preparation for case study research.

At the outset of this study the need for sensitivity to temporal and physical contexts as well as the verbal and nonverbal behaviour of people in them (Guba & Lincoln; Merriam) was noted. A steeping of myself in anthropological and sociological literature plus earlier experiences resulted in the fieldwork being particularly productive. Being attentive to the responses of participants (and non participants) plus being prepared to outline and feedback aspects of the study to school-based personnel appear to have contributed to the success of the fieldwork.

Principals, for example, appeared to have a clear grasp of the study, due to their prior briefings, when I initially addressed each of the staffs. In turn, most teachers appeared to have an accurate impression of the procedures which subsequently would be followed by me. Each of the staffs also knew, as a result of their briefing session, that feedback sessions would be provided to them. The need for me to have effective communication skills was emphasised by Guba & Lincoln (1989), Lincoln & Guba (1985), and Merriam (1988).

### ***Validity Through Triangulation***

Construct validity is enhanced through the use of multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1994). In this investigation I extended an open invitation to every teacher (in the participating schools) to take part in an interview. In so doing, the maximum potential for participation was sought, rather than only a selective site sample being obtained. The casting of the widest possible net in order to capture such evidence left the decision about local involvement to the 'researched' rather than the researcher, and avoided any unnecessary bounding or exclusion of potential participants.

The use of direct observation and document analysis also provided additional sources of evidence. Although Yin (1994) agreed that both direct observation and document analysis are open to a challenge of selectivity, he also noted that their potential strengths can greatly assist with construct validity. Indeed, when performed well, Yin argued that any shortcomings are outweighed by their advantages. Documentary evidence in this study was largely used to corroborate other evidence. In some instances documentation

was found which countered other evidence. This then was further explored and evaluated prior to being either qualified, discounted or noted as countervailing evidence.

Corroborative evidence from multiple sources often proved useful for data triangulation. The use of direct observation, interview, and document analysis strengthened the study because it made possible the achievement of methodological triangulation (Patton, 1987), which involves the use of multiple data collection methods "... as corroborative evidence for ... validity ..." (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 773).

Member-checking of transcripts and my initial analyses of each school's 'contribution' added to the construct validity of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 1994). Checks of transcripts by participants were also beneficial in terms of my 'grasp' of each particular site. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued, it is also vital that multiple constructions are adequately represented.

In a similar vein, Guba and Lincoln (1989) have noted the importance of feedback sessions in enabling researchers to develop participants' key thematic contributions. By the researcher developing themes when feeding back findings, participants are given an opportunity to expand their knowledge. A study in which feedback expands participants' understandings is regarded by Guba and Lincoln as having ontological authenticity. The criterion refers to "the extent to which individual respondents' own emic constructions are improved, matured, expanded, and elaborated, in that they now possess more information and have become more sophisticated in its use" (Guba & Lincoln, p. 248).

If, as happened in this study, the feedback inspired new activities or practices amongst 'the researched', Guba and Lincoln further suggested that the study evidences 'catalytic authenticity' (p. 249). In one school, for example, the increased interest in the demographics which I outlined to participants led the principal to obtain additional demographic data and projections so as to assist with the school's forward planning. In another school, the principal accelerated her efforts to get teachers who needed to take leave for health reasons, to do so. Many had not been taking leave for health reasons (due to their commitment to the school and colleagues).

Those forms of member-checking enabled participants to adjudge the analyses for credibility and representativeness. The need for credibility, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued, must come through participant approval. Essentially their view underscores Walker's (1980) claim that "the case study worker constantly attempts to capture and portray the world as it appears to the people in it. In a sense for the case study worker what seems true is more important than what is true" (p.45).

## **Procedures**

### ***Authorisations and Briefings***

In order for initial approval to be given to me to approach eligible schools, a letter of request was sent to the (then) North/West Metropolitan Region of the Directorate of School Education. This letter provided the detail required by the Directorate of School Education to enable approval to be given



to conduct research in schools. These requirements are itemised in the school *Information Manual: School Operations* (Ministry of Education, 1991). A copy of the letter (with the names of five nominated schools deleted due to confidentiality provisions) is provided in Appendix C. A copy of the subsequent letter of approval from the Directorate of School Education is provided in Appendix D.

### ***Gaining Entry***

Following receipt of permission to visit the schools, I made an appointment with principals from the chosen schools. In subsequent meetings with each of the principals detailed descriptions of the nature and requirements of the study were provided. Principals were also encouraged to raise any possible requirements which they had concerning the granting of permission to conduct the study in their schools. In all instances principals were personally supportive and gave their approval to the researcher either outright, or subject to staff approval. Nonetheless, one school subsequently was unable to participate in the study due to the principal's unexpected out-of-school commitments. The withdrawal of this school occurred late in the fieldwork timetable. Although disappointing, the loss was, in part offset by the cooperation of principals and teachers from the four schools which participated.

In one school I briefed and obtained the in-principle support of teachers to conduct the study at a meeting prior to beginning fieldwork in the school formally. In remaining schools, briefings were conducted at the first convenient (to the school) staff meeting after fieldwork had begun.

### ***Comprehensive Briefings for Organisational Learning and Participant Control***

In briefings with principals and staffs I provided a general overview of what the research involved, why the topic was considered worthy of investigation, and the importance of school-based participation. As part of the overview, for example, I explained that the case study involved conducting interviews. Potential participants were also informed of the sampling criteria, the respective time commitments required of principals and teachers, and the potential benefit to educators of such research. For example, I pointed out that interview data, could ultimately be used in school improvement initiatives. An offer was made to feedback the results of the investigation to the principals and, subject to each principal's approval, to participating staffs. Confidentiality and anonymity provisions surrounding the investigation and the voluntary nature of any participation were emphasised.

The means by which any potential participant could contact the sponsoring university was indicated. In particular, contact details were provided in relation to the researcher's Supervisor and the Ethics Committee at the University of Tasmania. In staff briefings, teachers' attention was drawn to an Information Sheet for Teachers (see Appendix E) which had been placed on the staff room noticeboard. Several copies of this document were placed on staff room tables. A copy of the Information Sheet for Teachers (together with other relevant documentation) had previously been provided to each principal. The Information Sheet for Teachers detailed the points covered in the briefing.

Finally, the tentative dates during which teacher interviews would be sought were nominated by me together with an invitation to teachers to ask questions or make comments.

During all briefings particular teachers availed themselves of the opportunity to ask further questions and/or make comments. In each of the schools teachers indicated (either by vote or absence of dissension), to their principals, that they agreed I could approach individual teachers concerning the prospect of obtaining an interview with them. Thus, from the earliest stages of fieldwork all teaching staffs were approving and supportive of the research.

Principals were also provided with an Information Sheet for Principals (see Appendix F). The contents of the Information Sheet for Principals were verbally detailed by me with each principal at his or her initial briefing. Principals were provided with two copies of a Consent Form (see Appendix G). One of these copies, having subsequently been signed by the respective principal, was returned to me (prior to formal commencement of fieldwork) and the other copy was retained by each principal. The signed form was sent to my Supervisor via registered (or equivalent security-style) post. Principals were also provided with courtesy copies of the Consent Form which to be used with teachers (see Appendix H).

### ***Orientation: Toward Understanding***

One point that was not on either of the information sheets but nonetheless was made by me in briefings with all principals and teachers, concerned the feedback of results. It was made clear that the study was

oriented toward uncovering interpretations and understandings rather than depicting any one participant or cohort of participants as 'better' than others. A case for this way of operating has been made by expert qualitative researchers (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Taylor & Bogdan 1984).

***Processes Involved in Observations, Interviews, and Document Analysis***

For four days in the first week of the field study at each school I shadowed the respective principal. Shadowing of each principal entailed following and observing them throughout each school day. A protocol was observed by me during the shadowing process (see Appendix I). Observations were also guided by a protocol. Interviews were also conducted with principals during the first week of fieldwork in each school. Generally these semi-structured interviews were held during 'school hours' and lasted for up to two hours per session. An interview schedule was developed for use with each principal. This schedule is outlined in the forthcoming section, "Content of Interviews".

In the main, interviews were conducted in the principals' offices. All interviews with principals were audio-taped. During a few shadowing activities the audio-tape recorder was also used. In the study's design, these interviews were to be augmented by up to eight further one-hour interviews with each principal. Due to the generosity of the participating principals during the fieldwork stages, subsequent interviews (in-person) were not necessary. Instead, any matters which required further clarification were dealt with through telephone contact between myself and the principal. This arrangement better

suited principals due to the increasing demands on their time.

### ***Emphasising Principals' Member-checking and Control***

Principals were given transcripts of their interviews which I was keen to incorporate in the thesis. These typed transcripts were up to 35 pages in length. The purpose in doing this was to provide for a member-check (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 1994) and to ensure that each principal was comfortable with the transcript's content. Although principals clearly understood that they or their school would not be named in this study, the opportunity to veto or approve quotes was regarded as appropriate by the researcher. Principals seemed to appreciate the chance to review their extracts. Principals were also later shown a draft copy of their school's case. This provided an opportunity for a further member-check by each principal. At the outset of each of these occasions, principals were informed that the researcher was, at that stage, not obliged to change the case at their behest. Nonetheless, I explained to principals that there was a preparedness to consider any criticisms levelled at each case, with a view to possibly making amendments. It was further explained to principals that the case was, in fact, my interpretation, whereas the transcripts were the principal's views. Lightfoot (1983) and Stake (1995) have argued for researchers to make this distinction clear to participants so as to not unduly raise their expectations about the prospect of case amendments. All four principals variously indicated that the respective case depiction was "very accurate".

### ***On-going Context Sensitivity***

Two considerations required that the opportunity to censor their

transcripts and view the draft case should be available to each principal. Firstly, there were only four principals involved directly in the study. With such a small cohort, it can be argued that they are, theoretically, more vulnerable to any concerns about their comments or perceived work practices—given that the Department of Education has on file, the list of participating schools. Subsequent press clippings suggested that principals are becoming increasingly cautious about making some public statements (Messina, 1997). Secondly, over the course of time, principals' views on a particular subject may have altered and therefore require modification. This prospect is tenable with the spirit of organisational learning. It is also reasonable given that the study was seeking interpretations and understandings, rather than fixed and predominantly quantifiable data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In effect this position endorses the view that qualitative research is "...holistic...ever-changing...not a single, fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered..." (Merriam, 1988, p.167).

Interviews with all but one principal took place in the first week of fieldwork. Because of other commitments, one principal was available for interview in the second week of fieldwork only. In that school teachers were interviewed in the preceding week. With principals, an interview schedule was used which contained questions which were asked of all four participants. The commonly-asked questions were framed following a review of relevant literature. In addition, unique follow-up questions that were pertinent to some of the answers provided by principals were asked. Individual principals were also asked questions about distinct or observed (by the researcher) aspects of

school milieu that may have been relevant to the study's questions. In the course of these semi-structured interviews, my orientation was directed at illuminating interpretations and understandings.

With each interview, principals were reminded of their right to not answer a question, to request subsequently that a response be deleted from the audio-tape, and to have final veto over the quotes which they provided. My demeanour during each interview was oriented toward active listening (Yin, 1994) and a respectful disposition (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Usually each principal and I were seated in comfortable couch-style chairs and had a coffee table nearby. I endeavoured to sit at a right angle to, rather than opposite, each principal. The audio-cassette recorder was usually placed nearby on a coffee table or chair. The purpose behind planning this element of each interview was to subtly reinforce that the interview, so far as I could influence the event, was to be relaxed and conversational.

### ***Emphasising Teachers' Options and Control***

During the second week at each school interviews with participating teachers were conducted. Teachers were approached individually by me and their preparedness to participate was canvassed. Those who declined were responded to in a courteous manner that was consistent with how participating teachers were spoken with, both during these interactions and for the remainder of my fieldwork. It was considered important to show consistency in one's dealings throughout the school.

In some instances teachers who, for whatever privately-held views, had

decided not to participate, spoke to me of their regret at their resolve. A few teachers were very brief in their (negative) responses to an interview request, and a couple were very assertive when declining.

Overwhelmingly teachers agreed to being interviewed, with fewer than 10% declining to be interviewed. The facilities which were available at each of the sites to enable a private, one-to-one interview with a teacher, varied. Across the four sites—with allowances on the part of many—adequate facilities were found. When facilities, and particularly space permitted, I sat at a right angle to the (teacher) participant. At the outset of each interview the participants' key rights (which had been outlined at briefings and on the notice-board display) were again outlined. Participants were asked to read, with a view to signing, a Consent Form.

All but one participant signed in-situ and returned the Consent Form to the researcher. One teacher indicated a preference to not sign a Consent Form but a willingness to be interviewed. I complied with this arrangement, having previously been briefed by the Ethics Committee of the University to acquiesce to such a circumstance on up to five occasions.

Participants were then shown how to identify when the audio-tape recorder was operating. I invited participants to, if necessary, request an instant replay of the tape. In a couple of instances replays were done. Sometimes participants lost their train of thought or asked that identifying aspects of the replayed segment not be used due to concerns about being identifiable.

A 'demographics' sheet (see Appendix J) was used at each teacher



interview. I first explained that I was wanting to gain a 'snapshot' profile of teachers at each school. Subject to each participant's approval, I next read out each question and filled in the sheet as the participant verbally responded.

The audio-tape was then turned on and teachers were asked pre-set and unique questions. Two sets of pre-set questions were devised, as outlined in the forthcoming section, "Content of Interviews". Each participating teacher was asked at least some questions from one of the two sets. In ideal circumstances where teachers had lengthy time to spend in an interview, questions from both sets were asked. In most circumstances I did not consider it was reasonable, because of participants' time constraints, to do so. Even with the use of one set of questions many interviews extended—by mutual agreement—beyond the originally requested 15 minutes. Many interviews took a half hour. Some—at the instigation of the participant—extended to an hour and three quarters. A couple of those had to be done in more than one 'sitting', due usually to participants' timetable commitments.

In interviews with teachers, unique follow-up questions were often asked as an outcome of a participants' previous response. Because of the number of teachers who participated and matters of time and resources, teachers did not receive an individual transcript of their interview. I did not regard their vulnerability—due to the sheer number of teacher participants—as having the same standing as four (principal) participants. No criticism was raised by any participant concerning that procedure.

### *Teachers' Member-checking Sessions*

So as to provide some opportunity for member-checking by teachers, I provided each whole school staff with at least two feedback sessions. Usually the first one took place at a staff meeting a couple of weeks after the teachers' interviews.

These feedback sessions were taped, following a request by me to the respective audience to do so. The purpose of the taping was two-fold, as I indicated to teachers. First, it provided me with an accurate record of the initial feedback provided to each school. In the likely event that a general feedback session was again provided to staff at a much later point during the study, I would be able to affirm or discount accurately the initial analyses. The second purpose was to provide an opportunity for my supervisor to hear first-hand, some initial interpretations of teachers' responses by me. This recording also usually contained comments or questions which audience members made in relation to the researcher's analyses. In only one school were the initial analyses challenged. One teacher argued that I had underestimated the extent to which personnel in schools resented the actions of those responsible for the current changes being imposed on public education. In the other schools' feedback sessions, no-one took issue with the tentative interpretations.

When necessary, further member-checking was also done once the researcher's initial site work had been completed. This occurred with the assistance of individual teachers and was done either at school or a site nominated by the participant. Some preferred to, for example, meet in a coffee

shop on their way home. Although less potent than having the benefit of more whole staff member-checks, they nevertheless served to provide clarification and detailed insights.

### ***Place and Content of Interviews***

As had been intended, the interviews with principals and teachers formed a vital part of this study. Several considerations influenced the decision to emphasise these participants' interviews.

First, an earlier investigation (Bishop, 1995), which was the precursor to the present investigation, had identified the need for, and value of, principal-teacher trust. As that study was primarily oriented toward illuminating teacher empowerment, its finding on trust served to uncover—rather than provide considerable detail about—principal-teacher trust.

Second, by then turning to the literature, in order to increase understandings of this earlier finding, it became apparent to me that there was a shortfall of research on trust in schools. Whilst private enterprises had been the sites for many organisational studies on trust, only a limited number of investigations had considered trust in school settings. Further, no study on trust in schools had been conducted in Australia.

Third, given the extent of change which schools have experienced in recent years, plus the changing labour market conditions (for school educationists), teachers and principals were identified as, potentially, an excellent source of local, contextual, and current knowledge on matters of workplace trust.

Fourth, given the limited (school-sourced) understandings about this topic, I deemed it preferable to seek the perceptions of school participants rather than, for example, to circumscribe participants' contributions through, for example, the use of a survey which provided limited-choice responses. No criticism is made of force-choice or open-ended questionnaires. However, in this instance, they were passed over for what was expected to be a more illuminating means of both building understandings and achieving the purposes of this study. The reliance on participants' perceptions through interviews enabled, to a large extent, the words of principals and teachers to shape the theory which ultimately emerged.

The use of a common set of questions, in addition to asking follow-up and situationally-specific questions, enables comparative and contrasting cases to be identified (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This also assists with any claims-making (Yin, 1994) because, as Miles and Huberman noted, the researcher, in effect, can hear the same instances repeated by different participants. As well, contributions from outliers, or those with unique or extreme perspectives, may elicit exceptional cases (Miles & Huberman).

Upon first reading of the interview schedules, it may appear that some questions are unrelated to matters of trust. However, questions which were devised for use in interviews with principals and teachers arose from an appraisal of the literature. That is, by conceptually drawing on the findings of other studies, I then applied a concept, in question form, to the interview.

For the purpose of enhancing reader's understanding of this background

to the interview schedules, two examples, using questions asked of principals, will be outlined. The subject matter in the second question on the principals' interview schedule referred to illiteracy (being, in fact, a follow-on question from number one, which was also about illiteracy). The question asked 'What does this (illiteracy) picture lead to, in terms of how you manage the school?' The question was aimed at illuminating principals' knowledge of instructional leadership, strategic management, core learning issues, and vision.

Harcher and Hyle (1996), claimed that trust of principals was developed when they were highly skilled in instructional leadership and creating a school-wide vision. Shaw (1997), argued that leaders must have a vision and be able to deliver results that relate to the organisation's core priorities. To be trusted, Shaw contended, leaders must be seen by colleagues to get results.

Given the working class, high non-English speaking and refugee student profile in the sample schools, I expected literacy issues would be key concerns at all sites, and, in particular, for teachers, because of the implications for classroom work. Moreover, literacy had been identified by the State Government as a key issue to be addressed by schools. In effect, school-based responses to the challenge of low literacy had the potential to provide information about leader competencies. Barber (1983) noted that trust was often gained when individuals were perceived as competent. However, Barber's study was not based in or about schools. Hence, how many important school matters were dealt with contributed to a 'picture' of each principal (and was complemented by competency-related questions about each principal, which

were asked of teachers).

Another question, upon initial glance, which may not appear to be about trust, was number 23, which asked 'What prominent values (concerning education) are important?' . The question was aimed at illuminating principals' key held-values about students, teachers, and the education system. Bennis and Nanus (1985) emphasised the need for leaders to communicate their values to staff about the organisation: Such value-sharing was common to transformational leaders. Bennis and Nanus found that the act of articulating values contributed to employee-leader trust.

As well, Chui et al. (1996) indicated that principals' held-values needed to be demonstrated to teachers. Teachers valued and sought trust-building, openness, vision, communication from and with a principal. Question 23 thus provided a means of uncovering key values. I was keen to identify any congruence between each principal's values and those of his or her teacher colleagues. Several of the questions which were put to teachers enabled me to, in broad terms, identify each staff's key values, and subsequently compare teachers' values with those of their principals.

The interview schedules are included below so that readers gain a fuller picture of their 'particulars'.

### **Principals' Interview Schedule**

1. When you reflect on the illiteracy, or poor English skills, of many students here, how do you explain it?
2. What does this picture lead to, in terms of how you manage this school?
3. When the prospects of marked success, in say, remediating the skills of a 14 year old who is regarded as having the reading age of a prep. student

are so poor, why do you continue such active intervention?

4. What more could successive politicians and central or regional (education) offices do to assist those schools who are persisting against all sorts of odds (cultural, class, economic, etc.)?
5. What local/broader consequences do you see from adopting a less inclusive approach toward students who are in significant ways "at risk" (e.g. socially and economically on the margins; illiterate; angry ...)?
6. What place should schools play in the lives of young students (e.g. your students)?
7. Why have you chosen to work in a school setting such as ...?
8. For many of your colleagues it is possible that they might not remain here long if other opportunities were to arise. Yet for other teachers there seems to be a deliberate view/plan about being here (at this school). Would you comment on that?
9. Thinking as we are about you and your (teacher) colleagues, what "things" create barriers to trust?
  - principal⇒ teacher
  - teacher⇒ principal
  - mutual⇒ interactiveAre there any work practices that impair an ability to engender trust?
10. What are some aspects of your leadership that others might interpret as evidence of trust?
11. What messages might be sent to teachers generally from someone (a principal) who cannot capture the trust of staff?
12. How do you maintain a sense of trustworthiness when:
  - Your reward (dollar extrinsics) system is insufficient, ie. some professional, proficient, deserving practitioners miss out?
  - You override someone or some committee on an issue?
13. How do you explain yourself on these above points?
14. Do you ever reflect on any issue/concern and conclude that, apart from the decision that you took being arguable, you relied too heavily on your position, ie., that your veto role perhaps should not have been invoked?
15. What ideally is one "type" of teacher whom you would like to see more of in schools such as this?

16. What are some examples of unethical practices that you personally eschew between:
  - principal⇒ teacher
  - teacher⇒ principal
  - teacher⇒ teacher
  - teacher⇒ student
17. Of teachers whom you tend to trust highly, what are some of their trustworthy features?
18. When/are you sometimes surprised a lack of reciprocity by one or more than one teacher?
19. How do you make your way through the multiplicity of contesting (teacher) voices?
20. Where do these decisions fit with:
  - your priorities for the school?
  - your way of leading?
21. What are the differences between principals per se and secondary teachers per se in this region?
22. What moral beliefs/commitments do you hold concerning education in Australia at present?
23. What prominent values are important?
24. How should schools play their role in society?
25. What, if any, link can schools have in the life of community? ...in the life of kids?
26. What life privileges are on offer for students in this suburb/school?
27. What constructive feedback do you offer staff/individual teachers?
28. Have you ever (whilst at this school as principal) given advice that was taken, or reacted to, as destructive feedback?
29. What can you say about:
  - Time to do the job?
  - Space/equipment?
  - Workload?
  - Expectations... from the point of view of teachers and principals?



30. What are four key things that, in an ideal moment, you could access to develop this school in line with your vision of how it should be?
31. What might it be about how you present, that suggests to some that you are authentic—irrespective of whether others sometimes disagree with you?
32. What appeals to you as principal about the integrity of a hypothetical principal?
33. Where are your important sources of respect for your efforts?
34. So what sense of trust do you have overall for staff here at this point in time?
35. What is ideal in a high trust (school) work environment?
36. What events trigger your temper/frustration or have temporarily discouraged you?
37. Do you think teachers can generally predict your manner? ...position?
38. When can't they?
39. At the end of this term when you reflect on the past months what might some conversations be like?
40. If you had the time and could control for all responses what story would you like to tell staff about the term?
41. What key things create healthy interpersonal relationships between you and teachers?
42. What key things have momentarily or enduringly soured things with teachers?
43. Why bother putting in so much effort for students here?
44. What are some key things students might learn from being here?
45. What things about your principalship might teachers have learnt since working with you?
46. Describe this school in terms of its local context and the broader Victorian community at present?

47. Can you think of any moral/ethical conflicts you have had with a teacher?
48. You have a conscience about social justice—why so?
49. How should privilege within Australian community be shared?
50. Which/do any official demands on you impinge on your relations of trust with teachers?
51. How much of your administering is understood by teachers?

The interview schedule which consisted of two lists of questions for teachers, is outlined below. As previously indicated, the development of two sets of questions arose out of a weighting of teachers' time constraints, so far as interviews were concerned, and a desire to canvass a range of issues.

Thus, by and large, half of the teachers in each school were asked one set of questions, namely Set 'A' and the other half were asked questions from Set 'B'. Where teachers' responses to a specific question were particularly revealing, as occurred with, for example, questions 'B9a' and 'B9b', these were also sometimes asked of teachers who were responding to Set A questions.

Both sets of questions were devised as an outcome of findings from trust-based or trust-related studies. The use of the same two sets of questions, in addition to asking follow-up and site-specific questions, across the four schools enabled site contrasts and comparisons to be made.

#### **Teachers' Interview Schedule**

- A1 What is your impression of a principal's job these days?
- A2 Overall, how hard-working is your principal?
- A3 Overall, how open is your principal?

- A4 Generally, how do you find working with the principal?
- A5 What is working with members of your faculty like?
- A6 Do you think the principal has an accurate impression of the competencies of your faculty colleagues?
- A7 If so/If not what/how do you get that impression?
- A8 Schools have a fair amount of outside pressures put on them these days—when this happens, how does the principal usually deal with them?
- A9 Do you have sufficient opportunities to be involved in key decisions made at the school? Please explain.
- A10 What rights do you believe you have as a secondary school teacher?
- A11 What do you believe are your key responsibilities as a teacher?
- A12 If, at a staff meeting you said EXACTLY what you thought about how things were at this school, what do you think would be the reactions of:
- the principal
  - your faculty colleagues
  - other teachers
- What possible consequences would concern you about doing this?
- A13 What do principals do to engender trust with teachers?
- A14 In what circumstances do you feel you are able to rely on the principal's word and know she/he is acting in your best interest?
- A15 Do you see others not trusting situations they find themselves in?
- What are these about?
  - How do they seem to react?
- B1 To what extent do you believe that your principal trusts your capacity to do the job of teaching? Please explain.
- B2 To what extent do you trust your principal's capacity to do the job (principalship)? Please explain.
- B3 What if any aspects of his/her principalship cause you concern? Please explain.

- B4     What, if anything, is the principal required to do by the DoE that you are unsure whether it is in your best interests/ students' best interests/faculty's best interests?
  
- B5     Overall, what is the morale of teaching staff at this school, on a scale of 1 to 10? Please explain.
  
- B6     Generally, what would you say the morale of Victorian secondary (government school) teachers is at present, on a scale of 1 to 10?
  
- B7     Are you a member of a professional or an industrial association? If so, which one/s? Which, if any, of your organisation/s are effectively listened to by the DoE?
  
- B8     Could the limited rewards that this school has to give teachers be better distributed? If yes, how? If no, what is appropriate in the present arrangement?
  
- B9a    When you think about public education in 1996/97 what is particularly encouraging about it?
- 9b    What is particularly concerning about it?
  
- B10    What is your impression of teachers in government schools?
  
- B11    What do you think the impression of the general public is toward government school teachers?

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis in this study was recursive, and occurred during the period of data collection and once data collection had finished. The difference between the two periods is captured by Merriam's (1988) comment "analysis becomes more intensive once all data are in, even though analysis has been an ongoing activity" (p.123). A modified form of the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was employed in this investigation. The method of constant comparison is commonly used by case study researchers (Merriam,

1988). It is also an excellent choice of method when the processing and collection of data are occurring simultaneously (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The essence of the constant comparative method entails "...comparing incidents applicable to each category...integrating categories and their properties...delimiting the theory, and...writing the theory" (Glaser & Strauss, p.105). Despite their enthusiasm for the constant comparison method, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that it is more demanding and complex than Glaser and Strauss suggest. In nominating possible modifications to the constant comparative method, Lincoln and Guba particularly took issue with notions of 'theory'. Lincoln and Guba preferred to "...substitute 'construction' for 'theory'..." (p.343).

In this interpretive case study it was accepted at the outset that the contributions of participants were to comprise predominantly their perceptions (and hence their constructions) but that these, when subjected to analysis and interpretation, would possibly lead to explanation and the development of theory. I therefore did not regard the prospect of theory development - as an outcome from a sociological study - in problematic terms. However, the caution felt by Lincoln and Guba in respect of making cause-effect claims was shared by the researcher. Even with a positivist framework Gay (1992) argued that great care, and distinct requirements, are necessary in order to suggest such causal links. Thus, Lincoln and Guba's more modest "mutual shaping" concept was preferred. The concept of mutual shaping accepts that "x is shaped by Y and vice versa" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.340).

Notes from each field site, selected documentary evidence, and transcripts provided the basis of data to which a form of constant comparative method was applied. Notes from each site were made by me and not shown to participants. Documentary evidence comprised materials which were either located at the site or from elsewhere. Materials which were gathered at the site included annual reports, personnel lists, year 12 results, timetables, staff notice-sheets, meeting agendas, and minutes from meetings. Official correspondence from the Department of Education was also sampled, copied or noted. These included Department of Education memos, faxes, newspapers, and curriculum documents. A checklist was developed to assist with the analysis of these site-sourced documents. Materials which were gained from outside of the school were, in the main, found in libraries, DoE (Department of Education) offices, the sponsoring university, and my own files. These materials, by and large, comprised newspaper and professional journal articles, demographic data and conference papers.

Interviews which were conducted with school-based participants were transcribed. An additional photocopy of these was made as part of the constant comparative procedures. All interviews with teachers were audio-taped. All interviews that were designated between the researcher and each principal as such, were audio-taped. Conversations which were held 'on the run' with principals, due usually to an interview being interrupted, were rarely taped. In place of the audio-tape I made physical or 'mental' notes about relevant exchanges.

Various codings were applied to these data as they were amassed so that their source could be located ultimately in the later stages of data analysis. Typically the data were assigned to the school from which they were drawn. Different codes were used to identify teachers and principals. Teachers' subject or faculty areas were identified, the date of interview, and a participant number was assigned to interview transcript. The names of individual contributors were not located with these data. A separate tally sheet which detailed the number of participants from each school and their individual demographic 'profile' was also developed. This information ultimately combined to form a 'snapshot' view of each school's (teaching) personnel. This datum was also referred to by me when other aspects of data analysis were being performed. Once data were initially sorted and coded, they were 'unitised' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This effectively is a preliminary step in what Glaser and Strauss (1967) identified as their first, comparing stage of the constant comparative method. Unitising involved extracting a word, sentence, paragraph, or concept from each unit of information. In the instance of transcripts, multiples of the same-code were located next to the comments from a participant. This enabled the entire text of a participant to be divided by, for example, however many responses they had provided. Put simply, individual transcripts could be cut into separate sections, enabling those specific responses to be used in a variety of ways without ultimately becoming totally divorced from or untraceable to the contributing source.

Once each unit had been read and labelled, comparisons were made

between units and various categories were developed. Categories initially were sorted by similarities and relationships, loosely based on Spradley's (1979) list of "domain analysis", as cited in Lincoln & Guba (1985). In effect, where one participant's response to a question represented the essence of another participant's response, the responses were sorted into the same separate (pile) category. Similarly where observation notes or documentation 'corroborated' (Yin, 1994) a selection of transcript, they were unitised (or sorted) into the same category.

Thus, each school's data were successively sorted. In the course of sorting each data set, a series of lists were developed by me. Goetz and Le Compte (1984) argued that these can help to integrate and synthesise data. The lists later also contained across-site patterns and regularities. Regularities are what Merriam (1988) described as "...things that happen frequently with groups of people" (p.131).

More specific dimensions or properties of sorted sets were then considered. That procedure involved considering, for example, a unit from within the set from the standpoint of a series of questions (put by me to myself). By asking who-what-when-where questions of the set and probing for within-set themes and concepts, the researcher was able to add tentative findings to the list. Each school's data set was then considered on a unit by unit basis to see whether links or 'relationships' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.349) could be established between them. This is, in effect, an example of within-set constant comparison.



Tentative propositions next were made about the categories (of units) and their properties. The propositions were then put, in the form of a series of questions, to one or several of the following—one or more of the participating principals, teachers at the next school, or a member-checking teacher. Their responses usually provided guidance for me in terms of further developing the proposition or relegating it for further or lesser consideration. Incomplete or unsorted data were kept in the course of performing the constant comparison method. As time went on additional calls were able to be made on data that previously could not be unitised (due to the unit not being able to stand-alone and thus be sorted, or my failure to identify cogency within the unit). Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that as many units as possible should be unitised.

As a separate, but complementary strategy, 'whole' copies of transcripts were analysed according to their content. The content analysis involved placing concepts (which emerged from reading the transcript) beside a dot-point down the right-hand column of the transcript. That analysis also served to illuminate patterns and regularities, many of which were further collapsed and added to my lists. Such collapsing is evidence of a legitimate deductive process which Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Merriam (1988) claimed happens in qualitative studies, despite that paradigm's emphasis on inductive processes. This deductive strategy ultimately helped in the shaping of ongoing member-checks and the development of more specific questions.

As the data analysis was proceeding, several patterns, regularities, themes and categories began to emerge. They usually pertained to common or

valued within-site and across-site aspects of principal-teacher trust relations. In effect, those points represented the essences of what participants interpreted as being of importance to principal-teacher trust relations. Those data ultimately provided a basis for discontinuing the collection and processing of data—saturation point had been reached by category development (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Further, a sense of coherence with the analysed data was felt by me together with a conclusion that in the third and fourth schools, some of what was unearthed was not adding relevant and new information. The perception on the part of the researcher that the study is integrated and that further data do not usefully inform the study provide further appropriate bases for discontinuing inquiries (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Finally, the integration and refinement of categories, properties and propositions enabled me to develop a theory which both explained and was grounded in, the participants' perceptions.

### **Summary**

In summary, this chapter has outlined the methods and procedures of the study. Key design components—the study's questions, participants, research instrument, procedures, and data analysis—were elaborated. In providing this detail readers are able to " ... see the logic of a study and judge the adequacy of a method" (Van Wageningen, 1991, pp. 66-67).

The chapter has emphasised the utility of the decision to employ myself as the study's instrument. Given the nature of the topic of trust, the involvement of large numbers of teachers, four principals, the site-specific nature of the data

gathered, and the reporting-back processes, the instrument proved to be effective. The use of researcher-as-instrument provided an acute degree of responsiveness and sensitivity.

As well, the chapter has highlighted the importance attached to briefing comprehensively and feeding-back data to principals and teachers (including interested non-participants) at the four schools. These researcher initiatives were oriented toward providing school educators with a detailed picture of the researcher's planned site investigations and their subsequent execution. Such initiatives also were further complemented in individual interviews by me underscoring the rights and options of participants.

The use of observation and document analysis in addition to the 116 interviews added to the study's validity. Member-checking at each of the schools further strengthened validity. Transcribing all interview audio-tapes provided a substantial and particularly illuminating data base from which to compare, corroborate, and further probe—until data-saturation was reached in the final stages of analysis. The mechanical coding given to each teacher's response to an interview question enabled multiple within- and across-site comparison checks to be performed. The use of a modified form of the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was an effective data analysis strategy. Thus, the study's key design components both complemented each other and established a logic which linked the study's questions, data collection, and conclusions.

In the chapter which follows, the results of the study are presented.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

In this chapter the presentation of results begins with a table which shows a career chronology of the study's typical teacher participant. That table is then followed by another which depicts teacher participants' common networks. Both tables are provided to give readers a snapshot of participants' associational links, particularly those which are school-based. They are followed by each respective school's case. Other data analyses will be discussed in Chapter 5.

#### **Cohort Depiction**

##### ***A Caution***

One male and three female principals took part in this study. In the case depictions, all principals appear as females. The decision to make the gender across the cases 'consistent' was taken in concert with, and at the request of, the male principal. It was considered that the existence of only one male principal made his identification inevitable, particularly in view of the relatively small number of schools in the sample district. In altering this detail the study lost the opportunity for gender-based analysis. This loss however, had to be accommodated to protect confidentiality and to safeguard the often precarious environment in which some principals believe they now work (Messina, 1997). Messina claimed that many Victorian principals now fear repercussions from their employer, in relation to making critical comments

about public education. Because of this perception, some principals do not wish to be identified as the source of comment which might be interpreted by their employer as criticism.

### **Career and Contextual Markers for a Typical Teacher Participant**

Amongst the 112 teacher participants in this study there were, not surprisingly, a range of ages. However, across the four sites there was only 6 years difference between the school which had the youngest staff and the school which had the oldest staff. Respectively, these mean ages were 37 years and 43 years. Because of the closeness of ages amongst staff across the sites, and so as to avoid unnecessary repetition, 40 years was selected as the age of a typical teacher participant in this study to illustrate some career and contextual markers that have often accompanied such employment.

Table 1, which illustrates these career and contextual markers, has in large measure, relied upon government-sourced data for its information.

In relation to Table 1, several points are noteworthy. Firstly, a 40 year old teacher who has been employed full-time since graduating from teacher training, started a three year qualification in 1975. He or she began a teacher training qualification in 1978. In both 1975 and 1978 the Victorian public school system was expanding. It was during this time that there was considerable growth in the size of the teaching profession. It was, as far as Ministers of Education in Victoria are concerned, the most stable period of

Ministerial appointment. The Honourable Lindsay Thompson, MLA served as Minister of Education for longer than any of his successors. Indeed, as Table 1 shows, at a 40 year old teacher's mid-career point, he or she has experienced eight Ministers of Education.

Although each Minister of Education has his or her particular reform agenda, Table 1 shows that the Honourable Robert Fordham, MLA, continued a trend of increasing school-based decision-making which was underway when Lindsay Thompson was Minister of Education. In fact, Minister Fordham placed such priority on increasing school collaboration in decision-making that he commissioned and subsequently distributed to all schools, a Ministerial Papers on the issue. During this Fordham period of appointment, the teaching profession was continuing to grow in number.

By the time that this study's typical teacher participant was eligible for long-service leave, a standardised curriculum had been developed for use by all public school teachers. The, by now, decade long trend of increased school-based curriculum autonomy was calibrated by the introduction of standardised curriculum. When the typical teacher participant returned from long service leave the profession was comprised of 43,876 educationists—more than ever before, or since.

In 1992, at a time when the typical teacher participant was 35 years old, the public school system 'downsized' its teaching force by offering the first in a series of Voluntary Departure Packages. Within 3 years, nearly

8,000 members of the profession had sought, and been granted, these 'exit' packages. In 1995, a new series of standardised curriculum documents was distributed.

As Table 1 evidences, in 1996, when the typical teacher participant became eligible for a second period of long service leave, there were fewer members in the teaching profession than there had been in 1975. That is, in 1996, there were fewer members in the teaching profession than at any other point in this teacher's career.

These career and contextual markers give an indication of some key trends and countervailing influences which many of this study's 112 teacher participants have experienced in the course of their employment. It is against these career and contextual markers that many participant perceptions have been shaped. Many such perceptions are included in the four case depictions. Thematically, these refer to manifold issues, including an inadequate career structure, losses to the teaching profession, changes being the same as earlier changes—just packaged differently, and externally-imposed school curricula.

Whilst these individual themes are not directly linked to the study's questions, they provide needed contextual information. For example, one common theme across three schools was the matter of externally-imposed school curricula. In itself, it is not directly linked to principal-teacher trust. Yet, as three case depictions show, when principals endeavour to implement such a key initiative, issues of trust come to the fore. It is through these themes and contexts that school-based understandings about 'trust' are revealed.

Table 1  
*Career and Contextual Markers for a Typical Teacher Participant*

Year	Teachers' Typical Career Progress	Noteworthy Curriculum & Other Developments	Numbers of Teachers in the Victorian Public School System	Victorian Minister for Education
1975	Enrolled full-time in a 3 year Bachelor degree course at age 18.	Increase in autonomy given to schools to determine curriculum. <sup>a</sup>  'Full' employment for teachers employed in Victorian public schools. <sup>b</sup>	37,728 <sup>c</sup>	Lindsay Thompson.
1978	Enrolled full-time in a 1 year Diploma of Education course—21 years old.	—	42,981 <sup>c</sup>	Lindsay Thompson.
1979	First full-time school appointment received—22 years old.	'Full' employment period for teachers.	42,763 <sup>c</sup>	Lindsay Thompson/ Alan Hunt.
1983	Annual automatic salary incremental units— fourth year and continuing to accrue—26 years old.	First of a series of Ministerial Papers released. Two key themes pursued in the series: i) Participative, collaborative decision-making involving the	42,895 <sup>c</sup>	Robert Fordham.

(table continues)



Table 1 (continued)

*Career and Contextual Markers for a Typical Teacher Participant*

Year	Teachers' Typical Career Progress	Noteworthy Curriculum Developments	Numbers of Teachers in the Victorian Public School System	Victorian Minister for Education
		school community, and ii) The redressing of student disadvantage and discrimination so as to make success possible.		
1985	Former studentship holder is eligible for 3 months long service leave—28 years old.	Standardised curriculum ("Frameworks") distributed to schools to implement	43,876 <sup>c</sup>	Ian Cathie.
1987	Annual automatic salary increment ends; salary plateau reached (unless promotion achieved)—30 years old.		42,686 <sup>c</sup>	Carolyn Hogg
1988	Awarded a Higher Duties Allowance (approx. \$2,000) for the year—31 years old.		41,164 <sup>c</sup>	Joan Kirner.
1992	Second school appointment,	First in a series of Voluntary	41,795 <sup>c</sup>	Don Hayward.

(table continues)

Table 1 (continued)

*Career and Contextual Markers for a Typical Teacher Participant*

Year	Teachers' Typical Career Progress	Noteworthy Curriculum Developments	Numbers of Teachers in the Victorian Public School System	Victorian Minister for Education
	gained through transfer—35 years old.	Departure Packages offered to teachers in Victorian public schools.		
1995	Second period of long service leave entitlements fall due—38 years old.	Standardised curriculum ("Curriculum and Standards Framework" [CSFs]) distributed to schools to implement.	34,106 <sup>d</sup>	Don Hayward
1996	Long Service Leave granted/taken for one term—39 years old.		34,045 <sup>e</sup>	Phillip Gude

<sup>a</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (1976). *Victorian Year Book 1976* (No. 90) p.631. Melbourne: Author.

<sup>b</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (1978). *Victorian Year Book 1978* (No. 92) p.614. Melbourne: Author.

<sup>c</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (1996). *Victorian Year Book 1996* (No. 108) p.289. Melbourne: Author.

<sup>d</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (1997a). *Victorian Year Book 1997* (No. 109) p.68. Melbourne: Author.

<sup>e</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (1997b). *Schools Australia 1996* (No. 4221.0) p.7. Canberra: Author.

**Cross-site Teachers' Networks: Features and Trends**

In Table 2 the features and trends of teachers' networks at the four sites

are displayed. In effect, the table summarises the data. Because of the similarity across the four schools concerning teachers' networks, one table only is shown. The first section of Table 2, shaded light grey, focuses on teachers' school-based networks. The second section of Table 2, shaded dark grey, concentrates on teachers' beyond-school networks.

Taken as a whole, Table 2 indicates that teachers' school-based and beyond-school networks have changed. Overall, teachers engage less in networks. The key reasons teachers provided when explaining their changed associational, or network engagements are listed in Table 2. The time frame in which these changes had taken place varied considerably amongst teachers. Thus, the changes are more reliably viewed as having cumulatively developed.

The changed nature of teachers' networks which has variously contributed to a diminution in affiliation, professional discourse and collegial support, are column listed on the basis of being a lost opportunity. As the four cases show, teachers regarded these events as negative developments. As well, the way in which teachers' changed networks was evident to teachers is column listed in Table 2. Teachers remaining for lengthy periods in one school plus union and subject associations being less influential were two of several indicators of teachers' changed networks.

These network features alert readers to aspects of networks and, work life, that are valued by teachers. Thus, networks, like career histories, provide important contextual data.

**Table 2**  
*Cross-site Teachers' Networks: Features and Trends*

School Based Network	Nature of Engagement	Change in Engagement Due to	Lost Opportunity for	Manifest by
Formal – faculty	Reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortage of time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collegial support</li> <li>• Professional discourse</li> <li>• Affiliation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer meetings or meetings where agenda is taken up with 'other' agenda items</li> </ul>
Informal – social get-together at end of each week or fortnight	Reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortage of time</li> <li>• Low morale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Camaraderie</li> <li>• Affiliation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer 'relaxed' gatherings or celebrations</li> </ul>
Informal – principal as curriculum leader	Reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal's focus (on management and money)</li> <li>• Principal being deskilled in curriculum programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional discourse</li> <li>• Individual and organisational learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principals having power but either no time and/or insufficient expertise to offer specific, current guidance</li> </ul>
Formal curriculum committee	Reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role being advisory only</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional discourse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee being perceived as having limited power. Can 'achieve' only if it successfully persuades the principal (rather than making independent decisions)</li> </ul>
Formal – teacher union branch	Reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having fewer members</li> <li>• Reduced capacity to 'achieve' as there is a reduced negotiating 'place'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affiliation</li> <li>• Professional discourse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer in 'the club'</li> <li>• Branch being perceived as having limited power. Can 'achieve' only if it successfully persuades the principal on an issue</li> </ul>
Informal collegial –	Reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resignation of 'good' teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collegial support</li> <li>• Professional discourse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers relying on themselves or fewer colleagues for classroom or curriculum guidance</li> </ul>

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

*Cross-site Teachers' Networks: Features and Trends*

Beyond School Network	Nature of Engagement	Change in Engagement Due to	Lost Opportunity for	Manifest by
Formal - transfer	Reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structure of Victoria-wide appointments policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breadth and diversity of career experience.</li> <li>Individual revitalisation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers staying in one school for a lengthy period.</li> </ul>
Formal - subject association.	Reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diminished support and recognition by the DoE.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional discourse, profession being 'heard' by key employer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject association being perceived as having less influence in curriculum change.</li> </ul>
Formal - teacher union, regional gathering	Reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diminished recognition by the DoE.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional discourse.</li> <li>Affiliation.</li> <li>Significant element of profession being 'heard' by employer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Union being perceived as having less influence in the teaching profession.</li> </ul>
Formal - post-graduate studies	Reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low morale.</li> <li>Alienation toward tertiary institution courses</li> <li>Level of subsequent reward from the DoE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional discourse.</li> <li>Individual and organisational learning.</li> <li>Membership to additional learning community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutions being perceived as offering courses of dubious relevance and benefit (due to employer's reward system).</li> </ul>
Formal - charities, fraternal organisations	Reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortage of time.</li> <li>Shortage of energy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership to communities which have broad interests and diverse member population.</li> <li>Affiliation (beyond school).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A small minority of teachers joining such organisations.</li> </ul>
Formal - school support centres	Reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortage of time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collegial support.</li> <li>Professional discourse.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers infrequently or rarely visiting resource centres for classroom or curriculum support.</li> </ul>

## **CASE STUDY 1: KANDOS**

### **The Setting**

In 1993 Kandos Secondary College was closed in accordance with the wishes of the Department of Education (DoE). Kandos had become "unviable" because of its small Year 7 enrolment, unfavourable forecasts of student intakes, and projected school maintenance costs. After a long battle by supporters of the College, the school reopened nearly 24 months later. It was one of only a handful of Victorian schools to reopen following closure. Prior to its closure, Kandos Secondary College had 460 students. It now has 240 students (many of whom were formerly at the school).

As a result of the closure, some students exited to other schools whilst others exited to the streets. Several students tried a combination of time-out (on the streets) and time-in (a new school). The results varied. Overall, the education system lost many students.

As an outcome of the closure, the DoE relocated Kandos teachers and the principal, Anita Edgley, to other schools. Despite the daily obligations at their new schools, most staff and Anita Edgley remained, in thought and action, committed to the reopening of Kandos Secondary College. Their commitment and after-hours actions in support of Kandos were underpinned by the initiatives of other Kandos stakeholders who were also determined to reopen the school. A few Kandos stakeholders devoted themselves full-time to the initiative.

Some of the stakeholders who were employees of the DoE

campaigned to reopen the school believed, at the same time that they were being subjected to additional pressure to desist. Anita Edgley was seen by many stakeholders as having been subjected to unrelenting and extraordinary pressures in an effort to dissuade her further involvement in the campaign. The pressures were ineffective.

A relentless campaign in support of Kandos eventually succeeded. The school opened for enrolments early in 1995. By the time the school reopened, 15 of its 45 (pre-closure) staff had resigned from the teaching service. Anita Edgley resumed her principalship at Kandos Secondary College together with almost half of her original staff. Including new and part-time appointments, the school has a teaching staff of 27. The mean age of the 25 teachers who participated in this study was 37 years. The field work for this case was conducted within a year of the school's reopening.

### **Demographic Data**

A demographic profile of Kandos Secondary College teachers is presented in Table 3. The profile provides information which teachers supplied when interviewed. Due to time constraints in two interviews, data were not collected from two participants. The profile includes information about teachers' ages, salaries, beyond-school organisation memberships, typical hours worked per week, anticipated age at retirement or resignation, and job satisfaction.



Table 3  
Demographic Profile of Kandos Secondary College<sup>a</sup>

Age of Staff		Gross Annual Salary		Age Expect to Retire or Resign		
Age Groups	Number	Salary Groups	Number	Age	Retire	Resign
20 - 24	3	\$20,001 - \$25,000	—	20 - 34	—	2
25 - 29	1	\$25,001 - \$30,000	4	35 - 39	—	1
30 - 34	6	\$30,001 - \$35,000	3	40 - 44	—	3
35 - 39	4	\$35,001 - \$40,000	5	45 - 49	—	—
40 - 44	5	\$40,001 - \$45,000	9	50 - 54	—	2
45 - 49	1	\$45,001 - \$50,000	1	55 - 59	5	—
50 - 54	3	\$50,001 - \$60,000	1	60 - 64	4	—
55 - 59	—	\$60,001 - \$70,000	—	65+	1	—
60 - 64	—	\$70,001 - \$80,000	—	Do not know	5	—
Years of Service Left Prior to Retirement or Resignation by Age						
Age Groups		Years				
31 - 40		1				
21 - 30		2				
11 - 20		4				
1 - 10		8				
< 1		3				
Do not know		5				
Beyond-school Organisation Memberships						
Membership		Number				
Church related		1				
Parent-teacher		3				
Sports or hobby		9				
Charity		0				
Fraternal		2				
Mean self-rated job satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10						
On a really bad day		3				
On a really good day		9				
On a typical day		6				
Other temporal variables		Number				
Teachers' combined years of service as of January 1996		211				
Years of postgraduate study leave yielded across the staff		0				
Typical hours worked per week		46				

Note. <sup>a</sup> Missing data: While there were 25 participants, these data were collected from 23 participants.



### Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions

In Table 4, the left-hand column lists the issues which were put to teachers in the form of interview questions. In the right-hand column of Table 4, the key themes which emerged from the teachers' responses are listed.

Table 4

*Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions at Kandos Secondary College*

Interview Issues	Key Themes
A principal's job.	Complex, unappealing job. Too much public relations and marketing required. Can, theoretically, be too removed from students and teachers.
How hard-working the principal is.	Very hard-working. Actively supports teachers with discipline concerns, good at paperwork and dealings with the DoE. Works long hours.
The openness of the principal	Very open.
Working relationship with the principal.	Positive.
Relations within faculty	Positive.
The accuracy of the principal's view of faculty colleagues' competencies.	Overall yes, although principal not in classrooms much because of new role.
How the principal deals with outside requests of the school.	Disparate understandings of what principal does. However, satisfaction with procedures adopted by principal.
The adequacy of opportunities available to the teachers to be involved in key decision-making at school.	Yes. Limited only by time or personal choice.

(table continues)

Table 4 (continued)  
*Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions at Kandos Secondary College*

Interview Issues	Key Themes
The rights of secondary teachers.	Very few. To respect at school level and ideally, from DoE. To have some classroom autonomy.
Secondary teacher's key responsibilities.	Student development and classroom competency.
The reactions of others (principals, teachers) to being forthright about aspects of school life.	Not problematic with principal. But may upset valued colleagues who are trying to comprehend the 'new' Kandos, so sensitivity prevails.
How principals engender trust.	They have the interests of the school at heart. They have the interests of the teachers at heart. They are: open, respectful, communicative, follow through, consultative, genuine, caring, collaborative, fair-minded, and honour word/commitment, listen, hold no grudges, have integrity.
The occasions when teachers appear to not trust the principal.	When the volume of what is being dealt with appears to be too great to implement effectively or when teachers' 'turf' is entered.
Principals trust of their teaching capacity.	Most feel trusted. Principal complements teachers individually about class work or extra responsibilities.
Trust in the principal's capacity.	Overall, trusted. Administrative work, leader qualities highly trusted. Sometimes too 'hands on' or too much being dealt with which can alienate teachers.
Any concerning aspects of her principalship.	Burn out (because of her dedication). Boundary issues ('turf') with teachers. Volume of initiatives Kandos is grappling with simultaneously.
What the DoE requires of the principal which may not be in the best interests of teachers.	Cuts to, and shortages of, resources.
The morale of teaching staff.	Mid to low, due to recovering from reorganisation and coming to terms with the 'new' Kandos. Student learning culture is a concern. Culture of support evident but re-establishment effort considerable.

(table continues)

Table 4 (continued)

*Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions at Kandos Secondary College*

Interview Issues	Key Themes
Morale of other Victorian public school teachers.	Lower than at Kandos. Teachers unhappy with DoE, feel unappreciated, poor career path and transfer prospects, increased workload and stressed.
Of the organisations that represent them, which is 'heard' by the DOE?	The union is not heard.
The distribution of rewards to teachers at school.	Perhaps, teachers as a profession need to be recognised more, paid more.
Encouraging aspects of public education.	Not much. Efforts of teachers. That it still exists. The students.
Concerning aspects of public education.	Extent of cuts. Shortage of resources. Emphasis on money (as justification for what can and cannot occur). Loss of equity goal regarding disadvantaged students.
Teachers in public schools.	Most are hardworking, caring professionals. Short of support, and stressed. Overcommit still, but less than previously.
Teachers' perceptions of the general public's view of teachers in public schools.	Overall poor. Short hours, long holidays, overpaid.

**At Kandos: Where Courage and Credibility Count**

"I'm sick of seeing her car here of a weekend" said one exasperated teacher of the principal, Anita Edgley. "It worries me, she is so dedicated" she added. At Kandos Secondary College there is unanimity amongst teachers about the dedication and hard work of Anita Edgley. Andrew, a maths teacher who had worked with Anita prior to the school's 'reorganisation,' summed up a widely-held view when he noted "basically I don't think she does anything else except work."

Anita Edgley, a 39-year-old principal who was originally promoted to her position from within the school, is passionate about life, and in particular, schools like Kandos:

Schools are still one of the most important places for young people. They should be placed at a school where they want to go to and be. They should be in schools where, for example, they can learn about the culture, how to be independent, where to go when they've got problems, how to get on with each other, how to get information, how to deal with daily problems. As well as academic, personal, and people skills, they need to find out about who they are and what they want to do. They also need to be thinking about their future, about their society, and being empowered. Our kids just don't have that sense that they can control their lives. And it is absolutely critical. Schools can help with that.

For Anita, Kandos Secondary College is a "place where things are *really* happening, where people are trying out new things." Anita considers herself fortunate to be working with Kandos teachers:

I trust staff implicitly. I know that to the best of their ability they'll go in the right direction, they'll care about kids, and they'll do their best for the kids. In a sense I couldn't have asked for a better bunch of teachers. You look at each one of them, at how much they have to offer and their commitment! I can say each one has already contributed so much, it's wonderful. They're so committed—I'm very lucky to be their principal.

My observations of interactions between Anita and teachers on day one of my stay at Kandos Secondary College suggested that considerable trust was invested in Anita by most of her colleagues. Comments which teachers subsequently shared in interviews supported my initial hunch. Kandos Secondary College teachers trust their principal:

Anita is someone I trust fully. She has a full-on approach, lives the role, and is genuine. If she wasn't genuine, she wouldn't have done what she has done [in fighting to reopen the school]. I think she is dedicated perhaps to her own detriment, so far as a life goes. But as a professional, you've got to have full confidence in what she does—it is

entirely her, completely genuine.

I have a lot of faith in her. When she got the job, she was the best person for the job. She does an excellent job. The job is a bit fractured at the moment. She is having to do things at the moment—public relations, student management, and so on that, ideally, she wouldn't have to do. The reason why she has to do all of this extra work is due to the reorganisation. We lost many staff in the reorganisation.

One hundred per cent. There is absolutely no doubt of her capability and she is a woman of incredible integrity. Her loyalty and commitment to the school, the community, teachers, and students were unwavering during the reorganisation. She is probably the bravest person I've ever worked with, given the circumstances. She was put under immense pressure. There were many underhanded strategies employed to crack her ... yet she withstood it.

I trust her a lot [laugh]. The principalship is now an absolute pig of a job and yet she has the energy and commitment to do the job. And the school needs that. The job is very draining on her [laugh] which she doesn't realise, she just charges in [laugh], full speed at everything she does.

I'm very happy with her. Whenever I am unable to achieve something for my faculty or students and I approach the principal, she steps in. Somehow she always manages to fix the situation, to get the resources or whatever it is that is required. Whether it is by authority or knowing channels to pursue, she gets what we need.

I trust her to quite a degree. She has impressed me with her courage as a leader during the reorganisation and her support of staff.

I trust Anita. She is very head strong. She is the sort of person who is going to get something done. You know if she says something will be done, she will follow through.

I trust my principal, definitely. I believe she works for the best interests of the school. I respect her efforts, her personal integrity, and the choices she makes. I share pretty much the same values as her, and so I can relate to her on that level. Her role in the reorganisation—that built on the trust I had for her. In a lot of instances her confidentiality was required. Also, having someone in authority whom we knew we could

work through was needed. Knowing that someone was in there trying to get the result we were after was important.

Teachers at Kandos find Anita to be very approachable. Her open manner enables many staff to communicate effectively with her:

I find her very approachable. Any problems or ideas that I have, I am able to take to her. She then provides some very good responses and we then toss things around further. She is more hands-on in what she does, compared to other principals I've worked with.

She is very open. I've never seen her say one thing and do another. Sometimes she'll sound me out on an issue, and I believe she is being very genuine and straightforward when she does that.

She is, relatively speaking and in comparison to other principals, very open. I find it easy to be open with her, to say what I think. I trust her although sometimes I believe she races through her decisions. There aren't many things she has knocked me back on. When she has, she has had good reasons.

Anita is usually an open person. When she isn't it is because she has forgotten to tell you something that is happening. It isn't ever a case of withholding deliberately or constructing incomplete stories. Rather it is that she leaves the most extraordinary things unsaid. It is great working with her. It is just that the way principals have to operate tends to be difficult. Principals are being asked to run schools with too little money, with too many constraints—so they're really not self-governing.

Anita is pretty open ... you can say things without fearing that the hackles will end up being raised or that there will be a penalty. So people can be pretty open with what they say—it is seen as an opinion and not held against you. In a lot of schools people are afraid to say things for fear of what may or may not happen to them. Whereas here Anita is very open to people asking, questioning whatever and she doesn't feel that, in the course of that, her authority is being challenged.

Other teachers also told me that they are able to express their views honestly to Anita. They believe no negative consequences will result from

differences of opinion or frankness:

With Anita, she respects your decisions or views and she doesn't hold those against you, if you happen to disagree.

At least with Anita you can tell her that you disagree with something. Sometimes she doesn't like it but because of her integrity there are no repercussions.

I don't fear the consequences of being forthright with the principal here, I trust her greatly.

With Anita perhaps the biggest thing is that you can go to her and broach almost anything with her. Sometimes the issues I have raised are really delicate issues. Other times I have personally criticised decisions she has made—I've then had to argue my case fairly confidently [laugh] but it has been listened to. And there was no consequence for having challenged her decision-making. There seems to be a fairly clear delineation between what is professional and what is personal. Usually the principal has a sound rationale behind her decisions. Even when I have disagreed and nothing has convinced the principal to alter course I have been prepared to buy into the trust of that decision. If there has been a good argument or justification, despite not agreeing overall, I have been prepared to run with it. That comes from a combination of a logical response, a feeling response, and trusting in her vision of where things should be going.

Being free to express critical or challenging comment adds to the trust which many teachers have of Anita. After watching several teachers openly disagree with Anita on different issues, I commented to her about the practice. She responded: "I don't want a teacher to agree with me all the time. I want someone with ideas—dynamic teachers. People who can really commit to kids ... be self-motivated and bring a perspective that will add to my way of thinking and add to the school".

At Kandos Secondary College most teachers welcomed the trust their

principal extended to them:

She trusts me totally. Her almost total acceptance of everything I suggest and do tells me that.

I'm very comfortable with her. We've worked together for a long time. She's seen me handle difficult situations, easy situations and a range of subject areas. On one occasion I was unable to handle a situation. I had no hesitation in calling on the principal for assistance, which she gave, and the situation was attended to. Because of my past credits, if you like, I felt confident the principal wouldn't hold that one situation against me. And she didn't.

A very high degree of trust. She consults me on a lot of issues and, by and large, listens to my opinion. Sometimes we disagree but we are able to talk things through. She often has to take account of more issues and be more wholistic in her approach to problems.

High. She leaves me to my own devices. She doesn't interfere, sees that I have what I require and if something goes wrong, she'll come and see me about it.

She trusts me a lot. I don't have to answer to her, overall. It is only when I go to her regarding something, that she might question me, either in terms of my work position or role. Her trust in my ability makes my job easier. I can plan, I don't feel I have to hold back and can get on with doing my work, initiating. Sometimes I have to make on-the-spot decisions which—due to the principal's faith in my efforts—means that I don't have to hold off, or refer back to her about them.

For a few teachers who doubted the extent of Anita's trust in them, the importance of being trusted was nonetheless clear:

It oscillates—there seem to be times when the principal is quite comfortable with my ability to do a job and other times when she is not. I get the impression of her doubting when we strike up a conversation and the principal begins her sentences with 'don't you think ...'. As the area we are usually discussing is my specialty area I often feel 'no I don't think...'.  
  
In some aspects of my job I believe she trusts me. In other aspects I'm



not sure. She sometimes seems to be quick to take on the views that other teachers may hold. Also, she may sometimes check up herself on the tasks that I do. In teaching and handling parents I feel she trusts me. In dealings with other staff members she may not have so much trust in my ability. When I feel that is happening I get annoyed and rail against the situation. She sometimes acts on incomplete information.

Being trusted by teachers is important to Anita, particularly on a professional level:

It means that when there are issues, I can discuss them openly with people and get feedback. I think they realise I really listen to them, that I don't just ignore—they have a say, and that I trust them to do things. In a school like this, to make sure things get done, people do above and beyond what they have to do. And so trust helps. Also in the bonding, so that there is a real sense that they own the school and are part of it—that is what is so critical about trust and being able to rely on them. So I do feel we are a team... it's the staff who make things happen in a school. It's their commitment and hard work—if you [principal] haven't got them, then you haven't got a school, no matter how wonderful you are.

Many teachers at Kandos Secondary College echoed Anita's observation about the amount of 'above and beyond' work that they do. A number of teachers however, further explained to me that the amount of additional work that they do is less than what they once did. Experiences associated with the reorganisation and, in particular, new circumstances at Kandos Secondary College largely explained these altered contributions.

### **Vivid Memories of Recent Pasts**

Although a year had elapsed since the school re-opened, teachers' memories of the reorganisation remained vivid. Teachers remained convinced that the DoE initiative of closing the school was against the interests of its students. Many argued that prior to its closure Kandos Secondary College had

achieved successes with students which many schools, for a variety of reasons, could not. "This school wasn't a specific culture school. It was a broad-based school where a range of kids could be successful. It was an inclusive school" said Anna, who was in her seventh year of teaching. Several teachers mentioned that the closure was especially difficult for some students to contend with. "A minority of students found satisfactory alternative schools once they were forced to shift" claimed one teacher.

All of the teachers who mentioned their 2 year posting to another school described the experience as negative, particularly in terms of trust:

In a school where I was briefly, the principal didn't trust staff and staff didn't trust the principal. It was a difficult place to work in.

The staff meeting at the other school had no discussion, no arguments, no reporting [by teachers], no nothing. The trust for the principal was non-existent. Plus, I found the principal's word could not be relied upon in a one-to-one situation.

In the other school it was a case of being told one thing and discovering that another thing would happen. Plus often being told things to simply appease that situation. That was very discouraging. At times I felt intimidated. That was probably felt via fear which was related to job security and the implication for my family responsibilities. The excess possibilities that were raised resulted in me feeling anger. You felt like you had been cheated, that you hadn't been told of this at the outset.

I didn't trust the principal [at the other school]. He was very hard to communicate with. It was also partly due to the way he ran the school. It was very different to how Kandos runs. I was unhappy there.

I'm much happier now than I was at the other school. When I was there you would hear stories about the principal and about matters that you knew were being distorted. Sometimes stories were back to front—in reverse if you like. So you learnt to not be fully frank with most people. You knew not to trust the principal. Everyone was very negative for 2 years. It was as if we couldn't move beyond a certain stage in the

grieving process. We were still able to be creative, but in a very different way.

"Some of us survived the reorganisation better than others" said Ian, who went on to tell me "more than one in three Kandos Secondary College teachers resigned during the reorganisation". A later check that I made of the school's records showed that Ian's claim was accurate. Ellen, who was aged 36, informed me "the people who were my support network have left ... I feel quite isolated now by comparison". Other teachers referred to the heightened cohesion amongst colleagues that in part, was an outcome of the reorganisation. According to one teacher the cohesion is one of very few benefits to come from the experience:

It's not easy to find positives in an experience like that. Drawing people together—was amazing. It wouldn't have happened otherwise. And without having [Kandos] leadership and administration like we had it. It forced us to become extremely cohesive. We had to be strong together, to exist against a common enemy. Out of it came more resilience, a bit more scepticism, and the loss of naivete.

For one senior staff member the reorganisation was understood to be part of a wider realm of systemic change. As a result, he now has a new work routine which he claimed is increasingly common in the teaching profession:

In the past, people [teachers] were prepared to overcommit ... Now people say 'no its time for me to go' [at the end of a day] and they try to fit their school work in school [time] rather than outside as well. For government school teachers it is called 'okay you want us to toe the line, we'll toe the line. You want us to produce the beans, we'll produce the beans. However, we're not going to enjoy it, and in the end neither will the kids'.

### **Picking Up (Some of) the Pieces ... Post Reorganisation**

Teaching at Kandos Secondary College, as numerous staff mentioned, was never straightforward. "We've always had our share of strugglers and kids with difficult home lives," remarked one teacher who was in his ninth year at the school. Since reopening, the number of students who need additional support has increased, as a proportion of the student population. Paul, a teacher who has been at Kandos Secondary College for 6 years observed:

Since reorganisation, this school has become a dumping ground for problem students. Prior to the reorganisation it was not.

Many teachers' comments supported Paul's view, including Sandra, who is in her twenty-second year of teaching:

With this group of Year 7 students we seem to have the most difficult two or three of each feeder primary school's exit students, all in one class. We don't have many kids who come to us with problem-free track records. That makes for difficult class times because what you have ended up with is a large group of students who have not experienced success. Some principals [from 'feeder' schools] see this school as a place which deals with behavioural and academic problems. Academic matters can be handled here. When the class comprises virtually all behavioural problems, that can be very, very stressful.

School records which I checked at Kandos Secondary College showed that 45 per cent of students in Years 7 to 10 had been refused enrolment at other secondary schools. Ange, who began his teaching career at Kandos Secondary College 7 years ago, commented to me "We really are a victim of our own success. Other schools think we can handle anything."

Anita is aware of the changed student population at Kandos Secondary College. Like many of her colleagues at Kandos Secondary College, she is keen

to attract a range of students to the school:

A lot of our students have missed out on primary school... We've got Year 9 students who have missed out on up to four years of schooling. There are literacy problems throughout the student population. Some schools send their weaker students here... this is something we are trying to attend to... we're not getting students who are really representative of the whole community and it is one of the problems that we'll have to address.

One strategy which Anita had already put in place was to have a senior staff member establish regular contact with the local feeder primary schools.

The purpose of this initiative was to promote an understanding that Kandos Secondary College could adequately address the needs of mainstream students.

Another strategy was also in operation, as I saw several times during my visit.

Anita took prospective students and other visitors on tours of the school. She also addressed two groups of university students about the school's achievements and its immediate and long term plans.

On different days of the week afternoon teas were provided for several local business people who hire school leavers from Kandos Secondary College, and a film crew from a local university. The crew were making a documentary about women leaders. "Anita was an obvious choice" the director told me over refreshments. In each of these settings Anita demonstrated that she was, as teachers had claimed, an articulate ambassador for the school. Also during that week, several members of staff, in consultation with Anita, were putting the finishing touches to a series of public-relations brochures. When printed, these would outline the facilities and benefits on offer to students at Kandos Secondary College.

As a means of responding to existing students' poor literacy and learning skills, a teacher's aide works full-time in a literacy remediation program. Anita told me that she was pleased that the school had secured the aide. The aide's wage was sponsored by a philanthropic organisation which Anita had successfully lobbied. Ideally, according to Anita, Kandos Secondary College could use more financial assistance. For the moment it wasn't forthcoming from any other benevolent sources. However, negotiations were taking place with other philanthropic organisations and Anita indicated that she expected to gain further funds for the school.

I asked Anita why, for example, such active literacy intervention was pursued when the prospects of achieving marked success were poor. A rapid-fire response was immediately launched in my direction:

What are we meant to do? It's our responsibility to make a difference for these kids and they're not going to experience success until they actually get some of those basic skills. One of my biggest fears is that notion of someone going to school for a year and at the end of the year you feel like it's been a waste. Also, you want to stop kids dropping out and the absenteeism. So that's why we try so hard to find something that they are successful with initially—it may have nothing to do with that...I don't see how morally and educationally you can accept not trying to do something for the kids. At that rate you may as well pack it up and go home.

When I inquired about teachers' response to the needs of Kandos Secondary College students, Anita commented:

I think everyone here really wants to make a difference. And everyone here does tries really hard. I know there is an incredible level of frustration but little achievements by kids are really rewarding. They get so much pleasure out of kids who really have difficulties but are able to make progress. It is incredibly frustrating—it means more work for the teachers. More preparation, more work in the classroom, the kids may play up in the classroom and the rate of progress is sometimes so slow.

Teachers often have to really change their thinking strategies.

In response to difficult classes, teachers told me they had changed their expectations of success, either for themselves or their students:

In this school the kids are so difficult. It is stressful and the stress is related to not coping in the classroom. And after many years [in other schools] of always being able to cope and not having discipline problems, to have that fall apart has been very frightening. So the overriding stress has been to do with riot management.

Sometimes I ask myself 'what are we trying to achieve here?' The answer to that is really hard to define. At least half the answer has got to be keeping the kids in school and out of Pentridge [gaol].

... the problem here isn't with the teachers. There are very good, dedicated teachers here. But the underlying ethos of arriving late, not attending, not doing homework, not working in class suggests an attitude of 'she'll be right'. The standards [of student work] in some classes are very low and when students act up or riot in the classroom, they say 'what's the matter?'.

I don't like what the DoE has done to schools in terms of what it means for illiterate or inarticulate kids or kids who haven't experienced much success in their lives. What teachers used to pride ourselves on was finding different alternatives and horizons to look for—to build on that, move with that, to give them success. As a result of what the DoE has done, we have removed, for example, manual arts. And so those kids are no longer experiencing success.

Although many teachers had modified their expectations, they believed the volume of work that was necessary to achieve student progress had increased. For some of the teachers who had returned to Kandos Secondary College following reorganisation, the school's altered circumstances were an ongoing concern.

### **Can the Jigsaw be Reassembled?**

"I'm back here basically because I'm a man of my word," Tony commented. "When the place closed, most of us made a pact to the effect that if it reopened, we'd return. We believed in what we were doing. But what we've come back to, isn't what we left" he added. Tony's comments were supported by similar stories from many of his colleagues. Amongst other things, Kandos Secondary College staff came back to a physical environment that had not been maintained for more than 2 years. Angela, who had just applied for long-service leave when we spoke, remarked:

The outside physical environment is very lacking here. A few months ago when I was out in the yard, some people who were walking by asked me if the school was open because, they said, it didn't look like the school was open. And, until recently, it was a fairly depressing place to be inside the buildings.

The impression of the passers-by was not unlike mine the first time I visited the school. The grounds at that time were without signs (to direct visitors) and almost all of the external doors in the buildings were locked.

The realisation by many staff that they had returned to a school which was, at least initially, different to what they had fought for, contributed to the low morale which I observed at Kandos Secondary College. Difficulties associated with the student population, the changed nature of the job, the reorganisation, and the dilapidated physical surroundings frequently figured in teachers' explanations about morale:

The staff morale here is low and influenced by the circumstances of the school. It is to do with recovering from the reorganisation and the state of the buildings.



Morale here isn't high. It is partly dependent on the kids—some have serious problems. It is hard to get kids motivated here.

Not very high—overall staff here feel they are struggling to survive.

Mid-way and dwindling. In recent times morale hasn't been high. It started to drop from the time we reopened and has continued to move downward. At the moment it is going down quite rapidly. This place isn't what it was [prior to reorganisation].

When it comes to looking at morale you need to look at teachers' expectations and how realistic those expectations are ... in larger student populations you are more likely to have a spread of students—some nice kids as well as the hard-nut cases, the street kids. Now we have a smaller school, and we have mostly lost the nice kids. Initially that change in the student mix meant that if you had a good day, it was a high, a real high. But because you had so many low days, the holidays looked good.

About mid-way. Teachers are spending far less time teaching. I became a teacher in order to teach. And that teaching time has been whittled down and down and down. Your time is taken up with so many other things. You simply wish you could teach. That's the dilemma for most of us. We went into the profession because we wanted to teach. That was our expectation and how it was when I began. And it has changed so much in such a short time. Not all of the developments have been bad—there have been some terrific changes. But it is difficult to just be a teacher.

At a mid point. Secondary teacher's jobs have changed so much since 1992, that most of us haven't recovered. We have been thrown into a business-type situation—cut throat—and that has changed the job completely. It has taken a lot of the enjoyment out of what used to be there and also a lot of friendship. Teachers are stressed, more than anything. And when you don't feel you are doing the job, you're not as happy. And so you don't relate or have the time to do things that we used to do. I used to do a lot more talking with colleagues, have lunches with them, hang around after school and just talk with them. But now, I can leave here at 5 or 6 o'clock and I've still got unfinished work. If I stop to talk with them, I've got to take more work home.

During my time at the school, Anita and a few teachers spent several

hours working on a plan to rejuvenate the school buildings and grounds. This initiative was described as a "valiant effort" by one teacher who added:

But an enormous amount will need to be done if we are to succeed in getting the local suburban people to believe this is a good school ... yet it is in lots of ways because it still has a sense of community.

Other teachers' offered similar comments about the enormity of the tasks involved in restoring the buildings and grounds to a satisfactory standard.

Judith, who had been based at Kandos Secondary College for 11 years, also agreed the buildings and grounds needed improvement and staff morale was low. But she saw an irony in the situation:

The irony is that at this school, what happens in here is fantastic but our 'outside' image isn't that good, whereas at that school [temporary posting during Kandos Secondary College closure] it is the exact opposite. That school had an excellent public image, but it was a shambles to be in.

Despite teachers' perceptions about their physical work environment and morale, most teachers found that working with faculty members was either a "good" or "great" experience. One faculty was particularly supportive of its members. These members variously described faculty colleagues as "a very cohesive group," "very committed," and "a group who have their act together professionally." This faculty taught only Year 11 and 12 students. Most of these students transferred to Kandos Secondary College in their last years of schooling to take the course. By statewide standards, Year 12 students from this faculty achieved outstanding results.

One of the few faculties where members reported having "internal difficulties" claimed their problems were due to "role confusion" and

"disagreements over direction". These conditions, several members commented, led to "a lack of cohesion". Despite these tensions, most members believed the difficulties were "slowly being worked through". Although this faculty was concerned by its rate of progress and differences of philosophy, it was, in one way, more advanced than several faculties. Irrespective of the internal friction, the faculty had, in a relatively short time, begun considering its Year 7-12 curriculum.

Teachers from disparate faculties expressed concern about the school-wide curriculum at Kandos Secondary College. Frequently teachers commented "the direction is not clear". A shortage of time to address curriculum issues, loss of personnel who had curriculum expertise, and the difficulties involved in capturing students' interest were common amongst teachers' concerns:

The students here are like a curriculum hot-pot. If you were to look at 'the curriculum' and simply teach to that, you'd have a disaster. You have to look at your students and what they can do, and work out what is an appropriate way to negotiate the journey ... I tend to look for things they *might* have an interest in.

... we've been too busy doing our own individual things to focus ... we don't have the time release that we had in the past, plus we're dealing with discipline problems much more frequently now and forever trying to find material that will suit the students better.

I see such an enormous difference between how things were in the school and how things now are. That impacts on my morale. ... we've lost crucial personnel ... we use to have clear goals ... teaching now is just an endless battle, shoving an unsuitable curriculum down some throats that are not all that receptive.

Most teachers and the principal here are always busy. Yet if people are continuously busy, they are denying themselves reflection, planning, and new ideas.

## **The Business of Time**

The competing demands on teachers' and Anita's time were noted by almost everyone at Kandos Secondary College. Many teachers disagreed with some of the ways in which they and Anita were required to use their time:

There is a lot of administrative work tied up with the principal that previously was done centrally ... that is a very tedious and time-consuming element of her work without any benefit for it other than the DoE has been able to relieve itself of so many office workers at the Rialto and overload people at the school level.

The welfare worker here is outstanding. But 5 years ago there was a full time welfare person and a school nurse. Now there is no nurse and to fund our existing welfare person we have to scratch around to get funds to pay for his position. This school scratches around to get funds from other sources to do things that should basically be supplied by the DoE.

These days we are too busy writing school charters and so on, to write curriculum.

Most of the time I trust Anita because she is dynamic. Philosophically I disagree with some of the things she does or the way she does them. Many things require time and here often she does things in a rush. Also, sometimes it seems many things require care. The whole notion of care is being eroded in schools. And I think most principals are succumbing to that. So whereas I believe time should be given to weighing up issues, too often action is taken expeditiously. Cut backs and the paper push are a terrible pressure for any principal—quite horrific, yet that is what it is all about.

The extent of demands on their time and energies worried several longstanding Kandos Secondary College teachers:

Some of us are not really producing. We're almost in a day by day, week by week survival mode.

It is clear to me that the principal and teachers are now run ragged.

I used to think more about school when I was at home than I now do ... people here largely come in, do their job and get out, for personal survival reasons.

In the course of shadowing Anita I came across conflicts between teachers and students that suggested some teachers were being worn down by their work. On this matter Anita commented:

Because people often work at the edge, they can become a little frail... often they are working flat-out, too much sometimes. Giving, giving, giving so much. Some teachers have been reluctant—when they get really run-down, to signal that they're stretched, out of loyalty to the school. In those situations I try to get the teacher to back off a bit and take some time off.

Reference to school documents supported Anita's claim that teachers at Kandos typically took 2 days sick leave annually. Anita claimed that teachers' sense of obligation to each other in this 'rebuilding' period was a factor in the low rate of absence. Several teachers remarked about Anita's response to those who take job-related sick leave:

If I go to Anita and say I need a break for a couple of days, I'm not put through the third-degree.

Anita accepts teachers here are sometimes under so much pressure that it impacts on their health. She doesn't hold that against you. She understands.

Teachers also told me they feared Anita's health might suffer. The pace at which she works, together with the volume she shoulders and the time she devotes to the job were noticed by staff:

Damage to her health is what bothers me. She puts in an enormous effort. You couldn't expect anyone to put in more, couldn't expect anyone to put in as much. That is my only concern about her leadership.

Anita is incredibly hardworking. I don't think I could find a more committed principal or person, for that matter. It is astounding. But it concerns me that she might burn out.

Anita gives a huge percentage of her life to this school ... in terms of commitment, it's all there. What you get is very admirable. But I worry about burn out because she gives so much.

Anita told me the prospect of her burning out was not one she seriously entertained:

No, if I ever get down—and there have been times—I read or reflect on things and come back to the situation from a different perspective. [For renewal] I read, travel, go to films and art exhibitions, and lose myself in music.

Despite reservations about Anita's health, witnessing some aspects of Anita's time use was particularly inspiring to those who had worked in other school settings:

There was a definite difference in terms of putting in and ownership when I came here. I immediately felt like I was part of the place. At my previous school I even had a principal who wanted to be addressed as 'Mr' all of the time.

I find Anita is fantastic to work with. She inspires me ... her approach is dramatically different to my principal at my previous school. He, for example, at our first meeting, told me that staff meetings were situations for him to present information and not places for staff to raise issues or challenge the principal. Here, at staff meetings, it is so pleasing to know that you can raise issues and that Anita] takes seriously what you have to say.

The first day Anita let me in the door I got the biggest welcome ... She said so enthusiastically and warmly 'I'm so glad you're here'. That was a shock ... very unusual—and a refreshing change ... I was thrilled. That was the year before reorganisation. It was my best year of teaching—entirely enjoyable and I was really motivated.

I'm much more willing to put in here. If Anita comes along and asks you

to put in 100 per cent, you are embarrassed if you say no, because every day she gives 150 per cent. And she does that, getting her hands dirty every day and almost every night of the week. In my other school the principal was more office bound—when he was at school—and placed considerable emphasis on getting his picture in the paper. As principals, they are totally different.

### **Maintaining Sovereignty**

While numerous aspects of what once was Kandos Secondary College have changed, together with the roles teachers and principals now occupy, several features of the school remain. As one teacher who had been at Kandos Secondary College for less than a year told me:

There is a commitment to the school and a caring, on the part of the teachers here. It seems that no matter how much the kids push the teachers, there is a commitment to the kids, which is what I believe all schools had years ago—but I don't feel that as much any more ...

Other teachers spoke of continuing to provide support for all students despite the [post reorganisation] difficulties associated with the priority:

Our philosophy here has been, and is, that students can make mistakes ... and it can be difficult if a teacher is experiencing behavioural problems in class, and the teacher needs support, ... the answer isn't simply to get rid of the student ... it is very difficult. Here staff are very supportive of each other.

Where we have the option, we tend to look at any initiatives and consider them from the standpoint of what is best for the students. We have a history of creativity and a culture whereby we don't interpret literally. But there are some students who have insoluble problems and it is getting tougher and tougher for teachers. However, this school looks after its staff better than most schools.

We can't take in kids who are disruptive and homeless ... without sacrificing order and curriculum within a class and the school. Yet we do that. And then we wonder why we aren't teaching the kids as much as we want.

In contrast to these achievements, all teachers at Kandos Secondary College had difficulty in pinpointing positive features of public education. In response to being asked 'when you think of public education now, what is particularly encouraging about it?' teachers initially paused for between 2 and 18 seconds prior to answering. Many then responded "nothing". Some teachers pointed to (positive) specific contributions. A few referred to encouraging features that were widespread. For several teachers the practice at Kandos Secondary College of continually attempting to provide students with meaningful educational experiences was the only positive aspect of public education they could identify:

[14 seconds pause] An encouraging side—I guess it is the little extras here and there. Someone develops a special aspect to their program or puts a twist on it that makes it just a bit more interesting for kids ... that sort of thing. Here, we try to work with the kids more.

[8 seconds pause] That we are trying to relate more of what students learn to their everyday lives. Trying to give them skills to think with and to cope with living in the real world. People [teachers], for example, pick up on daily newspaper items and run with that in class—that flexibility is encouraging.

[2 seconds pause] That your mode of delivery is able to be flexible, so that you can structure programs and curriculum to suit the particular needs of your students.

[7 seconds pause] Kids have more of a say over what is taught and how things are taught—at least at this school they are, and that is good.

Linked to the efforts of many teachers to provide a responsive learning environment was a longer-term expectation concerning the school's curriculum. Many longstanding Kandos teachers believed the persistent—if fractured and



slow—attempt to address school-wide curriculum would eventually succeed:

We are getting to a point where we know where we are going with curriculum. It is an on-going process ...

In terms of the curriculum, we are still working towards a right direction.

I can see where Anita wants to head with the curriculum. It will just take a bit longer to get there.

A new direction is not going to happen overnight, but I believe it will happen. We have a direction that we want to take. However, we are still dealing with the after-effects of reorganisation where everything had to be established and, at the same time, we had to teach the kids.

When I raised the status of whole-school curriculum with Anita she told me she was confident that any interim difficulties would eventually dissipate.

"Staff here are caring, committed, and extremely hardworking. They want things to work." Such difficulties also have to be understood, Anita observed, in the context of other factors and achievements at Kandos Secondary College:

Students' immediate needs and circumstances have had to be responded to ... many of our students haven't even got a table at home to sit at, a place of their own to do homework or a computer ... they're fighting all the way. And yet we manage to get kids aspiring to a better life. What we offer here is a real opportunity for students to find their interests and to have every possible support the school can give in terms of helping them to achieve their goals. Sometimes we have to search and clarify what their goals are but I don't think we leave any stone unturned in terms of trying to assist that ...

Sue, a Year 12 coordinator also told me that much had been achieved at Kandos Secondary College, irrespective of any curriculum shortcomings.

According to Sue, the period of 1 year which had elapsed since reorganisation

was insufficient for judging all of the progress that had been achieved.

In places like this you need to be around for 3 or 4 years in order to be able to see student success in some sort of perspective. A longer perspective helps to remind teachers, particularly when they are despairing somewhat, of just what they have achieved.

Sue was optimistic about the longer term future of Kandos Secondary College. "It isn't a shortage of goodwill on the part of teachers or Anita that accounts for any particular hold ups. We are contributing as much as we can."

Anita also remained confident about some of the benefits for students and society which flow from various efforts at Kandos Secondary College:

We can make a difference. I really believe we can. You won't always see that difference now. You might see it in 2, 3, 4 or 10 years. You will. When you have a relationship with a person, I believe you can have an impact that is good. I feel these kids are already better as a result of our efforts. They deserve and benefit from our caring. Sometimes they don't have anyone. They don't have parents or their parents can't be there for them. Somebody has to look after them. I want these kids to make it as human beings.

To Anita, Kandos Secondary College was again proving it could make an effective contribution within public education.

What is happening here is positive. Kids here feel they are part of a family. And teachers too—working with like-minded people who are working hard to the same ends.

Anita's enthusiasm for ongoing developments at Kandos was momentarily extinguished when I asked about her perceptions of public education in general.

The system is not going in the right direction, it really worries me ... teachers are very undervalued and yet schools are being asked to do more now.

As with Anita, all Kandos Secondary College teachers identified particular concerns about public education. Just over half of the staff paused for between 3 and 11 seconds prior to responding. A variety of concerns were indicated. Emphasis on money, resource shortages, and the failure to meet adequately some students' learning needs were prominent concerns. There was considerable concern for the post-school futures of many Kandos students. Teachers were also concerned for the future of public education.

Despite believing that their efforts are unappreciated by the general public and having their concerns with public education, two-thirds of the staff said they were intent on remaining in the profession and, more specifically in the next few years, at Kandos Secondary College.

During several lunchtimes at Kandos Secondary College I accompanied a number of teachers who had been at the school prior to reorganisation, as they did yard duty. One such teacher was Nicki, a 40 year old health teacher. "Irrespective of the frustration which accompanied the reorganisation, most of us believe this place is doing the right thing, helping, where others might not," commented Nicki. Based on my conversations with Kandos Secondary College staff, Nicki's view was, in fact, widely shared.

### **Kandos Into the Future: A New Picture?**

At my last morning break at Kandos Secondary College one staff member asked me "so how many people have told you Anita is manic? Lots I bet [laughter]. She is just amazing. Most of us trust her totally ... it's not her,

it's the system." The essence of this senior teacher's comment about 'the system' had earlier been made by others in their interviews. In addition, it had been made clear to me by almost everyone that Kandos Secondary College teachers continued to be appreciative of Anita's leadership. However, many teachers identified either one of two shortcomings in Anita's principalship. Teachers were keen to have the shortcomings rectified.

One concern related to "turf" or boundary issues. Anita was perceived as engaging too actively in initiatives which others identified as being their responsibilities:

Anita jumps into things when she may not be fully briefed or equipped to do so. She then wants to [laughter] take over, because as principal she wants to have that overview, and have, if you like, her tentacles everywhere. It is also her enthusiasm and energy. It occasionally irritates me if it happens to something I'm involved in. And I know it annoys other people too. Her good intentions sometimes risk leaving others, who thought they were handling the situation well, feeling inadequate.

My only concern with Anita is the boundary issue—she needs to refrain from doing jobs that belong to others.

Anita is a person who has great capacity in herself to do things, so she tends to always add on or slightly alter everything that comes her way ... I'm not really comfortable with that. Thus, I can't say with clarity that she trusts me.

Greg, who had worked with Anita for 8 years, shared the perception that Anita frequently encroached on the turf of others. However, he told me he understood the reason for Anita's practice. He also believed that Anita was attempting to refrain from the practice:

With the changes and loss of staff, the principal, I believe, felt compelled

to take on more of the day-to-day non-classroom tasks. Initially that created problems because it sometimes appeared that the principal was stepping on the toes of people who were responsible for specific tasks. The principal seems to have since backed off a bit from that, and people are feeling a lot more comfortable with the current arrangement. That is better but you can see her fighting the desire to jump in and do something herself.

Anita indicated to me she understood the need to refrain from involving herself heavily in the projects of others, and she added:

Sometimes I bowl into things that people are already into and I've really got to learn to back off more. Is it because I don't trust them? No it's not that, it's because I really enjoy taking an interest in and want to know what's going on. I really pride myself on knowing exactly what's going on in the school. I've been thinking about why I don't back off more—maybe it's an insecurity, I just don't know.

The other concern related to a staff perception that the school appeared to be implementing too many initiatives at the one time:

She takes on too much and in a sense disempowers people because of that.

Only one thing concerns me about Anita and it is not unique to her, it applies to many other teachers here. We are trying to do too much.

Anita told me she was aware of teachers' concern about the school adopting multiple initiatives:

There is an awful lot happening. I do understand that we are asking teachers to do a lot more than is wise—we're heading off in so many directions. But in a sense I don't think we can stop that. It's hard and really difficult, but that's the name of the game.

Anita also explained that the need to compete for students, so as to rebuild the student population, meant the school had to develop initiatives

simultaneously. While Anita's perceived shortcomings were a concern to many Kandos Secondary College teachers, their disparate pictures of the future at Kandos invariably included Anita as principal. Jim, whom other staff frequently nominated to me as "having a good understanding of the reorganisation business" spoke at length about Kandos. On the future at Kandos he reflected:

We will consolidate. There will be a reduction of staff pressures through specific changes that are already in place. But it won't ever be easy or how it was. When we reopened, Anita and a few of us realised things would never, could never, be the same. It's really a case of hanging in there, and hanging on to the essentials. And it's also about waiting for others [teachers] to come on board and to realise that things at Kandos will never be exactly like they were.

## **CASE STUDY 2: SARINA NORTH**

### **The Setting**

Sarina North is an inner suburb of Melbourne with a population of 13,000. Nearly 70 per cent of Sarina North residents were born in Australia. Lebanese and Turkish immigrants respectively make up another 7 and 6 per cent of the population. Situated within greater Sarina, it is the only geographical subdivision of the city which is experiencing a population increase. Although the net increase is less than 1 per cent, demographic projections show that secondary student numbers in the district are likely to increase over the next 4 years. By 2001, Sarina North is expected to experience a total growth in the secondary student population of 47 per cent. Part of the expected increase in

students is based on recent and future arrivals of individuals from war-torn nations.

Amongst existing Sarina North residents aged 15 or more, 13 per cent have a tertiary qualification, including an elite 1 per cent who hold a Bachelor degree. Seventy-three per cent of the residents in this age cohort have no formal qualifications. Labourers (23%), clerks (16%), and tradespersons (15%) are the main occupational groups of those who are employed. The key industries within Sarina North are manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade.

Sarina North is part of the North West region of Melbourne. It is the region of Victoria with the highest unemployment rate. At present 13.2 per cent of Sarina North's labour force are without employment. Twenty-five per cent of Sarina North's 15 to 24 year old labour force are unemployed. The median weekly income of a Sarina North resident aged 15 or more is \$247. On an annual basis, 44 per cent of residents have an income of less than \$12,000.

In the main, housing in Sarina North is externally clad with brick veneer, weatherboard or stucco material. A large amount of housing stock in the area was constructed during the 1950s and 1960s. One in four dwellings is rented. Dwellings which are fully owned, comprise 40 per cent of the area's stock, and a further 30 per cent are being purchased. The median price for a house in Sarina North in 1996 was \$79,000. The Christian and Islamic faiths have the greatest number of followers amongst Sarina North residents. English is the dominant language spoken in Sarina North homes. Arabic/Lebanese and Turkish are the

other major languages spoken at home.

Unlike many inner suburbs, Sarina North has not suffered an exodus of families to outlying areas of Melbourne. Nonetheless, large intakes of refugees have buoyed the area's population size, compensating for losses of young adults who have left the area for employment purposes.

Sarina North Secondary College is a dual campus school with a total student population of 500. The main site, which is twice the area of the second site, is where a majority of teachers and the principal are based. It is also where mainstream classes are located. Sarina North Secondary College has a large number of part-time teachers, many of whom are involved in specialist language support roles. The school has an equivalent full-time staff of 58 teachers. The mean age of the 28 teachers who took part in this study was 39 years.

### **Demographic Data**

A demographic profile of Sarina North Secondary College teachers, detailed in Table 5, provides information which 26 teachers supplied when interviewed. Due to time constraints, demographic data were not collected from two of the participants. The profile includes information about teachers' ages, salaries, beyond-school organisation memberships, typical hours worked per week, anticipated age at retirement or resignation, and job satisfaction.



Table 5

*Demographic Profile of Sarina North Secondary College<sup>a</sup>*

Age of Staff		Gross Annual Salary		Age Expect to Retire or Resign		
Age Groups	Number	Salary Groups	Number	Age	Retire	Resign
20 - 24	—	\$20,001 - \$25,000	—	20 - 34	—	—
25 - 29	1	\$25,001 - \$30,000	—	35 - 39	—	2
30 - 34	6	\$30,001 - \$35,000	1	40 - 44	—	—
35 - 39	7	\$35,001 - \$40,000	6	45 - 49	—	—
40 - 44	6	\$40,001 - \$45,000	14	50 - 54	1	1
45 - 49	4	\$45,001 - \$50,000	3	55 - 59	13	—
50 - 54	2	\$50,001 - \$60,000	2	60 - 64	2	—
55 - 59	—	\$60,001 - \$70,000	—	65+	3	—
60 - 64	—	\$70,001 - \$80,000	—	Do not know	4	—
Years of Service Left Prior to Retirement or Resignation by Age						
Age Groups		Years				
31 - 40		—				
21 - 30		4				
11 - 20		11				
1 - 10		7				
< 1		—				
Do not know		4				
Beyond-school Organisation Memberships						
Membership		Number				
Church related		—				
Parent-teacher		1				
Sports or hobby		10				
Charity		5				
Fraternal		—				
Mean self-rated job satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10						
On a really bad day		4				
On a really good day		9				
On a typical day		7				
Other temporal variables		Number				
Teachers' combined years of service as of January 1996		373				
Years of postgraduate study leave yielded across the staff		1				
Typical hours worked per week		47				

Note. <sup>a</sup>Missing data: While there were 28 participants, these data were collected from 26 participants.

### Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions

In Table 6 the left-hand column lists the issues which were explored with interview questions for Sarina North teachers. In the right-hand column of Table 6, the key themes which emerged from the responses of teachers, are listed.

Table 6

*Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions at Sarina North Secondary College*

Interview Issues	Key Themes
Nature of a principal's job.	Meetings and money emphasis; complex; less about students and teachers.
How hard-working the principal is.	Very hard-working. Good at paperwork and dealings with DoE. Attends too many meetings. Works long hours.
The openness of the principal	Very open.
Working relationship with the principal.	Positive.
Relations within faculty	Positive.
The accuracy of the principal's view of faculty colleagues' competencies.	Overall, yes. Absences and new role seen as limiting chances to see teachers in action.
How the principal deals with outside requests of the school.	[Disparate understandings of what principal does.] However, satisfaction with procedures adopted by principal.
The adequacy of opportunities available to the teachers to be involved in key decision-making at school.	Overall yes. However, principal's capacity to veto committees is widely regarded as a limiting factor. Also, teachers' time restricts fuller involvement.

(table continues)

Table 6 (continued)

*Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions at Sarina North Secondary College*

Interview Issues	Key Themes
The rights of secondary teachers are ...	Very few. To respect from students and colleagues. Ideally, to respect from the DoE for professional knowledge and efforts. To be listened to and part of school's decision-making processes—especially on curriculum matters.
A secondary teacher's key responsibilities are ...	Student development and in particular, classroom competency. Also, to support colleagues.
The reactions of others (principals, teachers) to being forthright about aspects of school life.	More likely problematic than not. Fear possible repercussions from offending others.
How principals engender trust.	They have the interests of the school at heart. They have the interests of the teachers at heart. They are: open, approachable, supportive, knowledgeable, straightforward, collaborative, respectful, consistent across staff, sensitive, confidential, caring, and have integrity.
The occasions when teachers appear to not trust the principal.	When conditions or 'rules of the game' change, for example, curriculum matters. When there is a communication and/or interpretation problem.
Principal's trust of their teaching capacity.	All feel trusted in terms of classroom. Principal rarely interferes. Some do not feel trusted on budgetary issues.
Trust in the principal's capacity.	Overall, trusted. On administrative work or in dealings with the DoE, principal is highly trusted. Regarding confidentiality, it trusted. People skills sometimes can alienate. On curriculum veto capacity and knowledge, not trusted (relative to teachers' knowledge).
Any concerning aspects of her principalship.	Attendances at out-of-school meetings. Sometimes people skills inadequate. Aspects of role eg veto capacity on curriculum matters.

(table continues)

Table 6 (continued)

*Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions at Sarina North Secondary College*

Interview Issues	Key Themes
What the DoE requires of the principal which may not be in the best interests of teachers.	Cuts to resources; changes in principal's role.
The morale of teaching staff at Sarina North.	Mid point. Higher if classroom or colleague elated. Low in terms of DoE or their policies: workload up, stress up. Preparation time down. Students get less support than what they need.
Morale of other Victorian public school teachers.	Lower than at Sarina North. Attitude of DoE to teachers and the response of teachers to changes have contributed to increased alienation and low morale.
Of the organisations that represent them, which is 'heard' by the DoE?	The union and subject associations not heard, thus none..
The distribution of rewards to teachers at school.	Perhaps. Time allotment to do what is needed or requested would be a major improvement.
Encouraging aspects of public education.	Teachers' commitment, dedication, and tenacity; otherwise not much.
Concerning aspects of public education.	Extent of cuts. Shortage of resources. Implications of these for students' opportunities and teachers' work lives.
Teachers in public schools.	Most are dedicated, hardworking, and professional. Very frustrated.
Teachers' perceptions of the general public's view of teachers in public schools.	Overall poor. Easy job, short hours, long holidays. Teachers are undeserving and complainers. Local and/or non-Anglo view more supportive of teachers.

### **Altered Principals, Fixed Principles**

"I can't promise but if I can get away I will ... 9 o'clock, yes," said Cheryl Hewitt, into the telephone, as she issued a warm wave to me while I stood outside her office. "I'll have to go, I've got somebody waiting ... yes, if I can," she added calmly before hanging up. After some initial 'first day' greetings, Sarina North Secondary College's 50 year old principal stated "You're just in time. There's a mentors meeting at 8 o'clock, staff briefing at 8:30 and, hopefully, I'll be able to make an unexpected appointment at 9 o'clock."

The mentors meeting was part of an ongoing teacher review initiated by middle and senior ranking Sarina North staff. "This is an outcome of one of the latest things that's been foisted on us ... and I decided I would delegate the responsibility for the assessment of Level 1 teachers" Cheryl remarked. The purpose of the mentors' meeting was to brief the principal on some professional-development proposals which the group believed could assist staff who would ultimately be assessed.

Amongst the seven mentors who attended, there was, as they told me afterwards, unanimity about the success of the initiative. "It has been a good opportunity for many of us to look at what performance benchmarks are reasonable" said one mentor. "It also has forced us to reflect on what sorts of documentation and presentations are reasonable, so that has been positive" argued a senior mentor. When Cheryl handed the process over to these teachers, amongst other comments, she told them. "I trust you to do this". In the main, she informed me, the initiative had been "very successful". The

investment of trust she hoped, would have been recognised by staff as a whole. "I have trouble delegating but once I have delegated, I try not to interfere" she reflected.

By the time Cheryl and I had made it to the staffroom, the site of the school's morning briefings, about 40 teachers were already seated. Most were laughing or sharing in conversation over coffee. Ken MacIntyre, the assistant principal, called "okay people can we have your attention?" and promptly detailed teacher absences, introduced visitors, and reminded teachers about that morning's general assembly. Throughout Ken's delivery there were whispers and quips from a few teachers, some of which were exchanged in good humour with the assistant principal.

At 8.50 the briefing ended. Many teachers remained, it seemed, to continue conversations that had been interrupted by the briefing. "There is a culture of inclusion here" Cheryl said as we made our way to her next meeting. "Staff are very supportive of each other and, as a group, they are very cohesive" she noted. As we drove to the school's second site to meet a builder who was renovating one of the rooms, Cheryl explained that an inclusive approach to 'at risk' students was also pursued at Sarina North Secondary College. The commitment affected the management at Sarina North Secondary College:

There are overriding literacy and English language problems that consume a lot of our time, attention, and funds ... we have a very large English as a Second Language program and other specific programs ... whatever we can afford to do, we do.

These initiatives, Cheryl believed, were "very successful". Lack of

resources explained why the school couldn't do anything more than what was being done. "We've got an excellent staff who are very committed to the students". When I asked Cheryl why she persisted with such active student intervention when the prospects for marked success in remediation were very poor, she replied:

Because if we don't there's no future for them. We see this school as being absolutely critical. I think staff share that view, they do because I don't think they'd stay here if they didn't share that view. We are all these kids have got, in lots of ways. In many ways we're the only sane and sensible part of some of their lives. We may be strict in their view but we are predictable. They know what to expect. If we don't make an effort to improve their basic literacy, no-one else is going to.

In Cheryl's view, being literate was vital for students' self esteem and their initiative particularly in later life:

If we can't make an improvement, we're not going to help their self esteem and that means their initiative will also be very low and, particularly once they leave school, they're not going to go out looking for themselves. So it's up to us, and I see that as an overriding responsibility.

The meeting between the builder and Sarina North's principal was uneventful until about an hour into proceedings. Three students who had been shifting furniture nearby, dropped a fully-laden filing cabinet as they passed by their principal. The cabinet clipped Cheryl's left ankle as it crashed to the floor. The accident quickly brought to an end any further conversations with the builder. Three upset Year 11 boys were promptly reassured by their principal that the accident was simply that and "to be forgotten".

By the time we had returned to Cheryl's office and obtained an ice-pack

for her ankle, the swelling was considerable. The perspiration on the principal's face betrayed her efforts to downplay the injury. Efforts by office staff to get Cheryl to go home or seek medical advice nonetheless proved futile.

Nevertheless she filled out the appropriate accident report forms. At 10.45 Cheryl and I slowly made our way over to the school's gymnasium, the venue for their weekly general assembly.

In the foyer of the gym, repeated offers to Cheryl by Ken to take morning assembly instead of her were ineffective. Instead, the increasingly white-faced principal asked him to provide "a chair because I'm a little unsteady ...". Seated, Cheryl Hewitt then addressed Sarina North students in a manner which one nearby teacher indicated to me was "like usual". As students were leaving the hall at the finish of assembly, one teacher told me "I'm actually not surprised [that Cheryl led the assembly], she is incredibly committed and tenacious".

Once the hall had emptied, I joined Cheryl as she hobbled back in the direction of her office. Various offers of assistance from colleagues along the way were graciously declined by Cheryl. As we approached the administration block, we passed several classrooms. Cheryl looked in each of them fleetingly as she remarked:

At-risk students may become a long-term problem for society, if they don't get some equity in education. We've got kids here who are just locked in. I mean, we can look at a student and say 'there is very little we can do to change the direction you're going'. And I think we've got a

danger with illiterate people having increasing difficulties finding jobs. There is a lot of anger that won't dissipate and we'll increasingly have



disgruntled sections of society.

In terms of the nation, Cheryl indicated, Australia faced the prospect of "a pool of permanent unemployed ... I just don't want to see a whole generation or section thereof, who are never going to be employed". The poor English skills of many Sarina North students were understood by Cheryl in terms of opportunity and access, rather than individual inadequacy:

I often look at the non-English speaking background kids and compare what our children had when they were going through school. And not just the fact that they had two teachers [as parents] but the fact that they were surrounded by books from the beginning. If we didn't have something on tap, we knew how to get it ... so that's a big factor ... it's not because parents here aren't interested in the children's education. It's simply that they don't know how to help. In any case, it isn't children's fault—in terms of where they were born and to whom they were born. Every kid has a right to the best we can give them, irrespective to their background, family circumstance, and nationality.

Once seated in her office with an ice pack on her injured ankle, Cheryl turned in her chair and pointed to a classroom which could be seen through her office window, "I look in so many classrooms, like that one, and am constantly amazed and impressed by what's going on." She indicated that, by and large, she was confident of teachers' efforts at the school:

I guess there are still people in the eastern suburbs whose depiction of this school must be mayhem. But you can walk down the corridor almost any time of day and it's quiet and productive—look in the classrooms and you see a high level of cooperation. Then I look in other classrooms and think 'there is a really terrific relationship between that teacher and that group of kids'. So yes, I'm confident, because of what I observe. I'm really impressed sometimes when I see what teachers do.

What Cheryl Hewitt had observed during her 6 years as principal of the school, and in other interactions with teachers, enabled her to "trust Sarina

North staff". Every teacher who was subsequently interviewed told me that they believed Cheryl trusted their classroom competence:

As a teacher in the classroom—100 per cent. You're given authority to do what you want to do in the classroom, to develop curriculum, as long as it goes through Curriculum Committee first. Also, you are given autonomy to plan your budgets.

My capacity to teach I think she trusts because she doesn't have any part directly in the classroom. Never had any direct contact with her concerning what I teach so I assume she trusts me.

I've been here for so long and generally feel that I am accepted and given some responsibilities, so I feel trusted by Cheryl.

I think she does trust my capacity to teach very well. That is reflected in the reports that she has written. She thinks I teach exceptionally well. I believe the students' results prove that as well [laugh].

She has a great deal of trust in my ability as a teacher. She doesn't interfere in any way. Cheryl leaves me free to do what I think I need to do.

I'd say to a high extent. Cheryl often comments on how impressed she is with the work that the students I teach produce, and the work I do around the school.

When Cheryl has checked my class she has never been too critical—just browsed instead. So I think she trusts me highly.

I think Cheryl trusts me entirely because I never get asked about what I'm doing or about my course content. She's asked me if I can pick up another class in my area and so obviously she believes I've got no trouble in doing that extra task.

A few teachers believed that the trust in their teaching capacities did not extend to or include, trust in relation to their handling of budgetary matters:

Cheryl trusts me in relation to teaching students. If there is an issue of money or budget maybe not. I feel I'm doing a good job in both respects but that doesn't seem to be the principal's view. Money is her big thing ... her lack of understanding of the finances needed [for this subject] is frustrating. You get the message that you're incompetent because of money issues.

I think she does trust me to do my job as far as teaching in the classroom and some coordination goes, but only up to a point so far as finances go ... on that I don't think she trusts me. That is, trusting my judgement as to what needs to be expended above and beyond existing budgets. When it comes to expending very large amounts of money, I don't think she trusts my judgement.

If Cheryl is away, I can't order certain things until she returns. That is very frustrating.

When I asked Cheryl about the issue of teachers handling budgets she confirmed that there were members of staff in whom she was unable to trust. Staying within given limits rather than matters of individual honesty was at the core of the problem she explained.

All teachers indicated that, in the main, they trusted their principal:

More or less absolutely. Cheryl is a knowledgeable, caring leader. She has a lot of integrity.

I think Cheryl is an efficient bureaucrat. She likes to cross the t's and dot the i's.

Cheryl is a very fair and considerate woman. She can look very serious but she is very approachable and caring. You can talk with her. She is highly confidential when she needs to be. I trust her.

Certainly I trust Cheryl. She is very approachable, empathetic and knowledgeable. Also, she is very straightforward and sticks to any agreements that she makes with you.

I have a very high opinion of her, she has been great. Cheryl has been

very supportive and I find her to be very good overall. I don't have any concerns with the way she operates.

Oh yes, I trust her. I've got great respect for her and I believe she is doing the job correctly. For example, at one stage I wasn't receiving the correct payment for the job I was doing. While I didn't realise that, she had picked up on it and came to me about it. She then made sure that it was obtained.

Cheryl treats teachers with respect and shares information with staff. Also, there is no intrusion on your privacy with Cheryl, which engenders trust. You can rely on her as a person and a principal in terms of that.

One hundred per cent.

I trust her very highly. I think she, like most of the teachers in the school, is finding the extent of changes a bit difficult. There's a lot more responsibility dumped on her now. Because of that—and this isn't a criticism of her—she isn't as approachable as she used to be because she's locked away in her office more than in the past. But underneath all of that, I still have faith in her and trust her.

To a fairly high extent. She is a very capable leader. Cheryl can be relied upon to keep private matters confidential and she is very fair.

As an administrator, I think Cheryl does quite well. In terms of running the school I think she does it exceptionally well. Her people skills could be improved a lot. Just as an example, if you pass each other in the corridor and say good morning, the good morning is not reciprocated. It is totally ignored. That is an area that I think Cheryl needs to work on.

I do trust her implicitly to do certain aspects of her principalship, like the financial running of the school. She does that very well and I have no problem. The problems arise where we have conflicts of interest. Sometimes I don't trust Cheryl as fully as I should or could because I don't know whose interests come first—whether its hers, the schools, the Departments, the students or the teachers. Sometimes there's a blurring of whose interests are being served. And we [teachers] always feel threatened by anything that could detract from our interests or the quality of our teaching.

Almost every teacher who provided an impression of a principal's job told me that the role had changed. Nearly all teachers believed the role changes were not in the interests of schools. The focus of a principal's job, they observed, had shifted to administration and money management. Principals were perceived as having shifted away from the educational involvement which they once had:

These days principals are more concerned with the financial control of the school and implementing the ever-changing Department of Education's (DoE) policies. I see them having not as close a relationship with the staff as they previously did, since this government came in. I think that is unfortunate. But it is due to the external demands placed upon them in terms of attending a lot of things outside of school. Also, because the system is decentralised, principals spend much more time doing administrative jobs.

A principal's job is to be a manager of an organisation, a manager who is more financially responsible than educationally responsible.

Now in 1996, under this political regime? A business person, a marketing man or woman, a person who will look after a community of people and children.

Principals have a multi-task job. It really is a very different job to what it has been in the past. Principals were previously very much involved in curriculum development and management. Whereas today its pretty much numbers in books, balance the books and those sort of things. It goes a lot further than that but you find their tasks are being broadened all the time. It does get to the stage when teachers think 'well what are they there for? Is it really to be educational leaders of a school or to be managers of a school?'. At the moment I think it is leaning toward the latter.

Extremely arduous. I think they've got to be multi-skilled. More and more is expected of them—organisationally, the money aspect of things. It's a lot more responsibility. I think they're really up against it actually. And then also being called up for meetings frequently by the DoE. That's a strain in one regard [for principals] just in having to be there.

But also then coming back to the work place and, at times, maybe feeling a bit of resentment from the rest of the staff. Staff have seen that principals have been wined and dined and fed the latest propaganda. I think it has been a deliberate attempt to create a chasm between administration and staff.

It's impossible. These days they're always having to go to meetings. And they're so concerned with the money issue because that's been lumped onto schools. Everything has been thrown onto schools and that just takes the principal's, and a fair bit of the vice-principal's time. So they don't have a chance to see what we're doing, which is teaching.

Well, it's changed since Schools of the Future [was introduced]. The principal became more an administrative, rather than an educational, leader. I believe they've got to make choices about that rather than do both. I don't think it is possible to do both. More and more they are being dragged into the day-to-day administration and financial side of school. But I don't think they can keep their fingers on that side of the school and the pulse of what is happening in the classroom.

Incredibly complex. It's a job where if you're not careful you can become alienated from staff and the education process rather than the management process. I don't think it's understood by many of the staff or [laugh] by many of the principals.

"These days the dialogue [between principal and teacher] is about money rather than the effectiveness of a program" claimed one teacher who added "Cheryl knows the job. She is knowledgeable and I find she shares information with me. She's also very good about keeping confidences. That is reassuring. As well, she can be very good at dealing with individuals".

Cheryl told me she was conscious of teachers' perceptions about the changed nature of a principal's job:

I've tried to say to them my two key responsibilities are personnel and finance. But, I don't think they have a clue about how long it takes me to put on a contract teacher, what's involved or how long it takes to do the budget. I'm not so sure they really understand why principals get called away so often. Why we do is because what is being asked of us is

something we've never had to do before... we get a 3 hour session and suddenly we're the experts.

Teachers' lack of understanding about much of the work principals now do was, Cheryl indicated, understandable. "In spite of all the changes [in education], the essential nature of teachers' work hasn't changed at all." Moreover, the dramatically changed nature of principals' work had not been communicated effectively to the teaching profession. The Department of Education's policy "to expose principals to an extraordinary amount of information, a lot of training and to give teachers virtually none" argued Cheryl, presented problems for principals.

Information dissemination at the school level then became a much weightier task for principals, as Cheryl observed "it's hard, for example, to get that enormous volume of information out to staff. I know quite well that even if I do photocopy every memo that comes in, it won't be read". Such information dissemination also operated in a context of principals and teachers having increased demands on their time. "Just doing the figures shows that obviously teachers have to teach more ... and the workload increase for principals has been enormous".

Cheryl's comments about teachers' increased workloads were shared by most Sarina North teachers. Teachers' workloads were identified in problematic terms when teachers were asked 'when you think of public education now, what is particularly encouraging about it?'. Despite the opportunity to identify particularly encouraging aspects of public education, almost all teachers had

difficulty providing positive responses. Indeed, only one teacher responded immediately and pointed to several positive aspects of public education. All other teachers paused for between 2 and 25 seconds prior to responding. Apart from concerns about teachers' workloads, several teachers believed that the ongoing efforts of teachers stood out as particularly encouraging:

[pause 4 seconds] To me, I have to say the people who do it. Our greatest resource is our teachers, not how much money we get or how big our offices are. There are just some exceptional people working in the field—just exceptional.

[pause 20 seconds] Encouraging? Encouraging. There are lots of things that are discouraging [laugh]. That's a very difficult question. I'm not sure [laugh]. There's very little because of the way we're heading. I can see the downslide [laugh]. The amount of schools, students and available teacher motivation is reducing. So in the end, what are we offering? What is increasing, is the number of tasks. In the end, all of that produces is frustrated teachers. Overall the motivation is going down. Yet the DoE argues that morale is going up. And I would have thought morale and motivation were pretty closely linked. You go and ask any principal 'What are you doing to motivate your staff?' They say 'we haven't got a strategy'.

[pause 3 seconds] Sorry, it's going to take a while for this one [pause] I think it's degenerated in the last decade, since the late 80s. Oh heck [6 seconds] got to think of something here [pause 3 seconds]. Firstly, I'm happy teaching and I think a lot of teachers like myself have come to the viewpoint that, in spite of what the Education Department is doing, in spite of popular perceptions, we do enjoy teaching and we'll go on and do it. A lot of the stuff that is being driven on top, we're paying lipservice to but not actually doing it because it is simply not appropriate. A lot of administrators have their heads in the sand and either don't see it, or don't want to see it, I'm not sure how much of either it is. I think the economic circumstances have forced it through, I don't blame anyone in particular. When you drive a system economically, particularly in an area like this, you're going to have problems.

[pause 2 seconds] Oh, [pause 2 seconds] Lately I've spoken to a lot of people—not necessarily in the education field—there isn't a lot that is encouraging, or that I could put my finger on especially with the



changes like the LAP tests and new CSFs. How can we be contributing in a positive way with so much change? It's just shaking everything. Suddenly people fear change and trying to get kids through change isn't easy, so I would say there are not many positives going on.

For some teachers the efforts of themselves and their colleagues or other particularly encouraging developments were not apparent:

[pause 8 seconds] Oh, I can't think of anything.

[Laughter] [pause 5 seconds] Well, not much really. And that's terrible—I don't see a totally bleak view of education. But I don't see anything that is encouraging either.

[pause 12 seconds] Encouraging—gosh it is hard to think of anything at the moment.

By contrast, teachers experienced less difficulty in responding to the question 'when you think about public education now, what is particularly concerning about it?'. Whilst most paused prior to responding, all but one teacher did so within 5 seconds. The negative impact of teachers' workloads, shortages of resources and the diminished place of public education were common amongst responses:

[no pause] The funding cuts and lack of resources. It's really going to start impacting. We're already going back 20 years.

[no pause] What I'm concerned about are the class sizes and lack of resources.

[pause 5 seconds] Resources, finances.

[no pause] It's become very much a business. It's economics, you balance budgets, tick boxes on curriculum ... it alters what students get, the time they get, the relationship with teachers is deteriorating. There's a group of student now coming up who are very hardened and who are

very anti-school. In the past we had students who weren't academically very motivated but they were cooperative, they worked with the school they didn't wag school. This year we've got a group who don't like school and go out of their way to make life difficult for their peers and the teachers.

[pause 5 seconds] That we are being asked to do more and more and more and more with the same amount of time. So we are being stretched thinner and thinner and thinner and thinner. A lot of administrative stuff now. That some of our valuable programs have to go. Because it's a disadvantaged school, we've got kids with serious literacy problems, welfare problems all those sorts of things and students are just not going to get the support they need, because nobody has got the time and nobody has the expertise. They have been taken away.

[pause 3 seconds] The change in the working conditions that we are going through at the moment. The constant pressure that you need to give a little bit more, pick up this little job, but you still have to do your job—and do it well. 'We'll give you this extra job and see how you go.' It seems to be ongoing, that every year you're told 'just do this or pick up that, because we need to cover it' [laugh] but ... you still start and finish at the same time, still have troublesome kids in your classroom but ... 'just do that little bit more'. In comparison to when I started, we're really, really flogging it at the moment in terms of my subjects. The little extras that we used to do, like excursions, which the kids loved, we don't do anymore. It's too much hassle to organise and you know when you get back to school, you're straight on again. A lot of people are cutting out things like that.

[no pause] I think it's been devalued. The role public education is supposed to play in our society has been devalued for some reason. I can't understand why that has happened, but it has. It's a resource that is different from the public transport system where you can save time and balance the books [as a result] but there are some instances where you think 'well, you invest now and reap the rewards later', and that's what should happen in education. But it's not. It's a very short-term view.

### **Boundary Spanning Tests the Bounds of Tolerance**

Like Cheryl, teachers believed they were hardworking. In addition, Sarina North Secondary College teachers perceived their principal to be very

hardworking. However, the nature of some of her work was believed to be of insufficient benefit to the school:

Oh, I'd say about 120 per cent actually. She's always flat-out. But a lot of it is outside the school and it's not constructive for the students here. They don't actually get any benefit from it.

I think Cheryl is extremely hardworking. I've never seen her sit in the staffroom and not do anything. She's always there for a reason—to talk to somebody or to distribute papers. It's not a case of her sitting around having a casual chat—I've never seen that.

In terms of the job she has to do, quite hardworking. In terms of what she could be doing, I think that's a different matter. Principals are working hard in terms of what they are asked to do. But I don't necessarily think they have to do everything to the extent of what they do. There certainly shouldn't be as many meetings as there are. They could spend a bit more time looking at what happens in school. At what they do.

She seems to always be in meetings. I wouldn't like her job. To me meetings are hard work, having to sit, concentrate and listen to the drivel that I would assume a lot of politicians say. She always gives us feedback—it seems to be pretty hard listening, what she has to go through.

Cheryl is hardworking in terms of her external role. She does a lot in terms of getting on committees and making the name of the school known in the area. Does all the paperwork and finances and if you've got a problem in that area with the DoE, she'll quickly track it down for you and in that respect she is also very hardworking. However, Cheryl isn't prepared to give up the educational leadership side yet she doesn't have a grasp of the pulse of the school.

Whilst many teachers regarded the volume of meetings which Cheryl attended as too great, one senior staff member told me "Cheryl's efforts in terms of those sorts of meetings are outstanding". Anne, who had worked with Cheryl for 5 years, claimed "I've known of evenings when Cheryl has had as

many as three meetings on—and she has attended them". Anne sometimes also shared other teachers' frustration about Cheryl's absences but stated "it is important that the Department hear from principals of schools like this, not just privileged ones. On that score, Cheryl is an impressive representative".

Several teachers variously reported that "the school works better when Cheryl is here" and "people shape up when Cheryl is around". A few teachers claimed that staff work practices were consistent irrespective of their principal's presence. "However, in terms of trust and Cheryl's absences, staff feel we're not very important and that the meetings [elsewhere] are regarded as more important than what we are doing" remarked one such teacher.

At one of the much criticised regional meetings which I attended with Cheryl, we arrived a few minutes early. While waiting for proceedings to begin, Cheryl told me she suspected that most staff "wouldn't have a clue about—most of them—about how actively I work outside the school to promote this school". However, she was convinced of the benefits which flowed from it. Contacts which had been developed at meetings had sometimes visited Sarina North Secondary College for professional development purposes. As well, the school's standing in the eyes of many DoE personnel had improved due to the outside representations made by Cheryl. The interactions between senior regional officers and Cheryl which I subsequently witnessed at the meeting supported her claim. Senior personnel appeared to be acutely interested in Cheryl's counsel, even when it included criticism. In addition, during the two hour meeting, other principals frequently sought Cheryl's guidance on particular

matters.

Prominent amongst the items introduced at the meeting were reductions of school support personnel and possible closures of schools. Once raised, the two items appeared to dominate the thoughts of many principals (as reflected by them returning to the issues throughout the meeting). Amidst the fears and frustrations raised by some principals, Cheryl's demeanour was as it had been at Sarina North Secondary College earlier that day. Other senior personnel who were distressed at the prospect of redundancy appeared grateful for strategic advice and individual support which Cheryl quietly offered.

Early the next morning, when reflecting on the previous afternoon's meeting, Cheryl referred to the "collegiality which exists there". Principals were an important source of respect for Cheryl's efforts, as she noted "it is important for me to know, as a principal, that other principals think I do my job pretty well.". As we made our way to the morning briefing Cheryl added "it is really important that teachers get the message that, as administrators, we appreciate and value what they're doing". Cheryl's swollen ankle resulted in a late arrival at the briefing. When we entered the staffroom, friendly banter was being exchanged between several staff and Ken as he proceeded to outline some end-of-term excursions for students. The assistant principal then quickly introduced Cheryl.

Following a friendly but quick "good morning everyone" Cheryl announced that she had been supplied with, and would read out, a list of local schools which were earmarked for possible closure. As she did so, a silence

descended on the room, which remained until she had finished listing the targeted schools. After indicating a hope that the named schools might survive, Cheryl then referred to an additional matter about a nearby school. The school, through its public relations leaflet distribution and via comments from its principal, was now prepared to enrol students who currently were at, or lived in, Sarina North. " ... irrespective of that I want you to know that we will stand on our reputation to attract students ... this is a good school ... we have excellent teachers here ... and even in this climate we will not retaliate ... " stated Cheryl.

As the bell to mark the day's first class rang and teachers exited the staffroom, none of the lightheartedness that had prevailed at the outset of the briefing remained. By the time Cheryl and I left the staffroom, some 5 minutes into first period, the corridor which led back to her office was quiet and empty. Nearby classes received a passing glance from Cheryl as she shared some views about trust, teachers, and principals:

By far the greatest majority of teachers are committed to kids and when they go into the classroom, they are doing the best they can. Which is often much better than a lot of other people do. Not just the best in terms of the lesson either, also in terms of their underlying motives. They're pretty good motives.

At the core of a successful teacher was an enormous commitment "to the welfare of the kids." In a matter-of-fact tone Cheryl also observed that several of her most trusted teachers also happened to hold strong views about unionism. Their commitment to others, and in particular to students, impressed Cheryl:

Several of our most passionate and proactive union members ... will sit

and fight tooth and nail for the rights of other staff and yet they never place any personal limitations on what they're prepared to do for their job or their kids. They just don't put a limit on what they are prepared to do.

During recent times, Cheryl believed their trustworthiness had been tested:

It's been really sad to see that the climate that is developing or the current climate of mistrust I guess, which means that some of those people are beginning to say I won't do it. But when the crunch comes and you need an offer in some way they always come through.

Cheryl also told me the essence "of a successful principal was the maintenance of a real interest in children ... a feel for what is best for the kids".

Remaining clear about "what you personally believe is right ... and is in students' or the school's best interests" were key operating principles which characterised Cheryl's leadership. These principles were also valuable when Cheryl needed to decide between contesting teacher voices. In those situations Cheryl believed it was important to:

Not be unduly swayed by people with the loudest voices or by the people who have great credibility and whom you respect a great deal. As long as you can convince yourself that the decision is in the school's best interests or fits in best with the school's overall philosophy or program, then you can make it.

### **Schools as Buffer Zones**

Just as we reached Cheryl's office her secretary discretely mentioned that a parent was waiting nearby "about an item of clothing". After a brief word to the parent Cheryl retrieved a neatly pressed, second-hand school uniform from one of her cupboards. She handed the uniform to an appreciative mother who

quickly left. Once seated at her desk, Cheryl explained that the second-hand uniform "... arrangement was important so that no student misses out, particularly if money is a problem". The trade in second-hand uniforms was "time-consuming" and something Cheryl handled. "It would be unreasonable to expect a teacher to do that ... so I do it." The second-hand uniform scheme had earlier been drawn to my attention by a teacher who was grateful that staff did not have to operate it, but pleased that the arrangement existed. She commented:

It is a part of Cheryl that some people miss, for a start because she usually does the uniform work quietly after hours ... but there is a very caring element to her leadership ... she is also a humble person so you probably won't find out about a lot of what she does.

When I asked Cheryl why she expended the extent of effort she did for Sarina North Secondary College students, Cheryl replied "these students deserve to get the best they can—they deserve a good school, good teachers, and a school that is being run for them, not for anything else". What needed to be remembered was that Sarina North Secondary College was an area of "great need ... and I'd rather offer anything I had to a place where it was really needed" she added.

In Cheryl's view it was also important that students developed a sense of belonging with the school and the suburb: "The students here can be proud of themselves, the school and their community ... it is a good area, a good school, and students can do well here." Irrespective of where students exited to, from Sarina North Secondary College, Cheryl believed it was "important that they be



able to look back at their roots and regard them fondly".

Despite any temporal frustrations and impediments, working at Sarina North was satisfying for Cheryl because she had "impressive colleagues ... and kids who are very open and friendly ... you feel you're doing something useful and maybe making a difference". Making a difference with students was what several teachers told me added to their job satisfaction.

Teachers commented about the importance of what they and Sarina North Secondary College colleagues did to assist students. "Many of these students are really up against it and so we try to make up for that as best we can" remarked one art teacher who had been at school for 6 years. Alison, a year level coordinator observed:

a lot of what we do here is effectively social moderation, given the background of our students ... we often role model ways of conversing with people and problem-solving through conversation ... so that students can see that there are alternatives to confrontation. It is essential that our students get opportunities to see and develop those skills ...

Jane, a teacher who was nominated by several Sarina North Secondary College teachers as an outstanding role model for teachers, spoke of the school providing students with more than 'catch up' learning:

I'd like to think that we strive to engender in kids some questioning of things, in a thoughtful and responsible way. To show them that you don't have to just take it all the time, that there are avenues for exploring in terms of questioning things and not just your peers, but questioning systems and organisations. That there are ways of accessing space within a newspaper or radio program or even within a school itself, so as to debate certain topics.

Jane's view of her colleagues as "excellent in terms of professionalism

and collegiality" was a commonly-held view at Sarina North Secondary College. The dedication of staff, Jane believed, had enabled teachers to "create a buffer zone so that some of the recent changes to schools don't affect kids in a terribly negative way". Despite their best efforts, she noted, "it is increasingly difficult to run all the programs we have in the past ... it is getting to a stage where we are having to drop some initiatives and persist with the essential programs". Jane claimed that her colleagues still continued to put extra effort into their work despite time and personnel shortages. "There are some things that we all still do to try to maintain the tone within the school so that the kids don't miss out."

Like many of her colleagues Jane considered that it was a difficult period for schools:

In my head I guess I say 'well I've seen the wheel go around a few times [laugh]. I suppose the pain will stop at some stage'. I don't know when. I almost have to step back from it, because I do get upset about it and I have to look at the wider picture. Hopefully the community will realise what is actually happening in the government school system, but I don't hold my breath over that one.

Part of her response to this predicament involved an on-going attempt to:

maximise the potential that we've got here ... and to touch base with colleagues here so that we don't lose sight of each other and drift off in individual directions. In effect, trying to maintain our energy levels by actually supporting each other.

Overwhelmingly, other teachers also referred to their "supportive and cooperative colleagues" and the satisfaction they gained from continuing to

"move in the same direction" or "to be working towards the same ends."

The cohesion which most teachers believed characterised the staff overall was particularly evident at a faculty level. Most teachers considered their working relationship with faculty colleagues to be a positive:

Good, pretty supportive.

Fabulous, lots of support, lots of ideas.

Very good. Everybody is very supportive in this place. My colleagues are terrific—a fantastic support.

Really good. Really, really helpful and supportive. They're always willing to help.

I think it's a good faculty. There are a lot of strong people in it. There's a balance between long-standing and newly-appointed personnel.

Great. Very, very dedicated teachers. Very much caring in terms of what happens to the faculty and the direction the faculty takes. Extremely caring educators. I'm probably biased, but I doubt that you'd find a faculty that is more in tune—in terms of the student needs. One of the great benefits of this school is that a majority of the teachers here are great teachers. Caring—they care about what happens to the students.

Time pressures and the primacy of other priorities were the reasons a few teachers gave to explain less productive (than desired) faculty associations.

It's not good and it hasn't been so for a few years because learning areas have been downgraded with the administrative structure of the school. It has been pretty bad for many faculties. In my faculty the reason why we have avoided some disasters—and we've come close—is because of the quality of the people in the faculty. They are constantly patching up things. But you can't just pick up all sorts when you've already got so much to do.

My faculty colleagues are very dedicated. But it's been really difficult in the last few years. We used to have regular faculty meetings. They were very productive. But we rarely have the time these days ... what used to be done in those meetings either doesn't get done, gets done on the run or people miss out ... it's a bit sad actually particularly for new colleagues. I love the subject and sometimes when I hear what goes on [in a classroom], I despair. It's sad because I can hear things not working ... yet there isn't sufficient time to assist or to sometimes even reassure teachers now.

Two teachers each claimed that they had faculty colleagues who were "incompetent". The claims referred to teachers in two separate learning areas. The perception of incompetence was responded to by, in effect, "just getting on with the job". Both teachers also told me that a further effect was that the faculty was less unified. One teacher observed:

When you can't, or aren't able to do what you think you should be doing, it is personally pretty soul-destroying. But when a colleague hasn't got a clue about the subject, that is also extremely frustrating. Either way, the kids aren't getting what they should ... and that matters.

### **The Shadow of Veto**

"Cheryl is a principal I trust enormously except perhaps in one area, namely curriculum" Peter stated as he proceeded to clarify his comment. As his explanation unfolded it became increasingly clear that Peter's doubt, so far as his trust for Cheryl was concerned, was shared by many staff. His story, I had variously heard, in other interviews.

About 3 years ago a key curriculum committee at Sarina North Secondary College had, as per usual, made a decision. For the first time in the committee's history, the decision was not accepted by Cheryl. For the first time

in her principalship, Cheryl used her power of veto. Both Cheryl's veto and the impact from it remained vivid in the minds of most staff members currently at Sarina North Secondary College:

Historically we [staff] used to make a lot of decisions. When Cheryl vetoed the committee we were all upset. We had spent an enormous amount of time on this issue and done considerable work. It was as if the principal had made up her mind at the outset and yet we hadn't been told.

We put a lot of work into preparing what we thought was a comprehensive and balanced curriculum, only to have it overturned in times of resource and budget cuts to the timetable. That's when it became absolutely clear to me that not only did Cheryl have the power, she was prepared to use it. Staff were really upset by her decision ... the principal didn't recognise the thoroughness of our effort ... It seemed like collaborative decision-making had become a sham.

My trust in Cheryl was diminished when I, as a committee member, was given the responsibility to do a job and I believed, as did my colleagues, that it had been adequately done yet the decision was overturned. It made me wonder why and wonder what the agenda was. Then I wondered whether or not I had the full agenda. So I now am more cautious.

I'll never forget it—Cheryl said 'I am the boss and what I say goes' ... most of the staff found that hard to accept because we've always been a democratic staff. So that's why she has lost some trust in the sense that, when it comes to the crunch, Cheryl will go with the official viewpoint and she won't care about the staff's view.

The use of the veto "damaged relationships enormously. The staff respected a principal's right to make the final decision but perhaps not me for making the decision—it was so unpopular" remarked Cheryl. Despite having only used her power of veto once, and the time that had since elapsed, "even now there are people who aren't happy about that," she observed. Sympathetic as she was to

having a relationship with staff "that was based on the principles or the Agreement which existed before 1992," Cheryl believed it was no longer possible. "We've now got to the stage where the axe is starting to fall and you simply can't do that any longer, and that is changing the nature of the relationship."

In so far as curriculum issues were concerned, Cheryl expected that similar conditions to those which prevailed 3 years ago and resulted in a veto being applied, may soon emerge. Although she was not entirely committed to a specific response should conditions repeat themselves, Cheryl anticipated that she would not provide an opportunity for staff to advise her. Instead, she would determine the response because "we'll get nowhere and the changes have to be implemented". What surprised Cheryl most about the "shock" reaction of staff to her veto was the "inability of largely very experienced teachers, to see the broader picture".

The staff's (then) incomplete appreciation of the changed nature of a principal's job still remained at the school, Cheryl indicated. Implementation of the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSFs) was a case in point for Cheryl. Principals had been informed by the DoE that they had to ensure the CSFs were implemented schoolwide. It wasn't a task Cheryl would trust staff to handle on their own. The lack of trust pertained not to a shortage of ability but rather, to Sarina North teachers' resistance:

... if the CSFs were left totally up to teachers—without pushing—nothing would happen. So, we've got to have the mechanism for ensuring it is happening...I don't think teachers realise, although we are supposed to be self-managing schools, the rigorousness of the auditing

process and the ways in which the DoE checks on what we do. Sometimes I think teachers are a bit happy-go-lucky, and have that attitude of if you ignore it, it will go away. But it won't.

Cheryl claimed that the potentially sensitive situation was another example of teachers not doing something for personal benefit so much as for what they believed in or valued. "There's no doubt that teachers generally are very protective of their own world and they will fight tooth and nail—not for themselves—but for their learning areas".

Kaye, a senior teacher at Sarina North Secondary College, told me that in all respects other than on curriculum matters, she trusted her principal. Cheryl was a "fine, supportive, and trustworthy principal". Kaye found working with Cheryl to be "excellent". She indicated that occasionally there were disagreements between teachers and her principal. Disagreements as such did not particularly concern Kaye. In her view, many disagreements stemmed from:

How we perceive education, the direction it is taking, and the importance of various learning areas within the curriculum. Teachers are basically saying 'enough is enough, let us get on with what we are supposed to be doing which is teaching rather than trying to develop new programs every 6 months or make changes to what we have been doing'.

The seemingly relentless changes, Kaye argued, meant "there is just no continuity at the moment". Similar views to those expressed by Kaye were shared by many Sarina North teachers:

As far as curriculum is concerned, it is a fundamental right [of teachers] to do what we believe is relevant to what we are teaching and relevant to what we think the community wants from schools ... teachers are the classroom professionals and experts ... Mostly I trust Cheryl but not on curriculum issues like the veto 3 years ago ... it got people really offside. She hasn't done that again. I think she learnt.

In the past couple of years teachers have been locked out of key decision-making in terms of curriculum. Yet we are the ones in the classrooms, teaching ... so in terms of trust of Cheryl recently, it has been pretty low.

Fewer teachers trust Cheryl professionally on curriculum matters. But on a personal issue they do because she is very good. Staff can make that distinction.

Most people who teach are not doing it for a high payment or ego trip. They're doing it because of their compassion and feelings about social justice. There is also a desire to impart knowledge and share what they have .... So when you start pushing people around [as with the curriculum demarcation] and trying to divorce them from their actual work to a point where they can't actually do their job to their own satisfaction, you really are destroying teachers.

Most teachers believed that their knowledge of what constituted appropriate curricula was vital for any school-based decision-making. Indeed, some teachers saw being actively involved in curriculum decision-making as a professional or employment right. Teachers who viewed decision making involvement as a right, acknowledged that the right was not recognised by either Cheryl or the DoE. When I explored what teachers regarded as their key responsibilities, it was clear that they talked about matters which pertained to the classroom as crucial:

It's reasonable to expect that teachers will teach to the best of their ability, that they'll keep up-to-date with curriculum change, and participate in other activities around the community. Also, that they will participate in the organisational decision-making processes within the school.

Most importantly to be able to offer an education that is in keeping with what the community wants.

Basically to do my best. I can lead a kid to water but I can't make him



drink. To be as well-prepared and as professional as possible. Even if it drives you mad, to be fresh next lesson. To not carry on grudges and so on. To make sure what we are teaching is effective and appropriate for the kids. And to help the teachers with any preparation so that they can be as well prepared and professional as possible.

My key responsibility should be the classroom. But you are judged by your administrative responsibilities and how you do them, so that is what I tend to put a bit more effort into.

My first responsibility I would see as being to the kids I teach. To be able to give them a curriculum that is accessible yet challenging. Also, I need to communicate to the parents about how they respond [in class].

To impart knowledge and give kids something to aim for. Certainly it is not to be an administrator and implement changes and those sort of things. I became a teacher because I thought I had something to offer. I still think that, but it's becoming difficult to do that.

Cheryl explained to me that she was conscious of teachers' deep-seated view that they should be more involved in curriculum decision-making than they were. The need for a principal to take account of issues beyond what teachers believed should happen with the curriculum meant that Cheryl's standpoint invariably was different to that of staff:

It is difficult with the level of accountability that principals are being required to have. It is difficult to let things go when you know you're accountable for the results and if it goes badly wrong then you're accountable. I guess the only thing I say with staff on this is that probably the only time I'll ever not accept a decision is if I'm not prepared to be held accountable for it, if I don't feel I could stand up and justify it, so that's the way I operate.

Cheryl was also cognisant of the discouragement many staff felt in situations where curriculum issues were determined on the basis of imposed constraints rather than on their intrinsic merits. "The sorts of things that

discourage me are usually generated by the Department" she observed. Cheryl indicated that staff trust was often tested in any such subsequent implementation phases which she proceeded with. "It is very difficult..." she commented on my last day of shadowing at the school.

One strategy which Cheryl employed "with mixed success because there is never enough time" was to address staff "about things that I have had to do" or changes that were taking place elsewhere within the education system. She did that in an effort to encourage staff to "get a more distant perspective". On one such occasion about 18 months ago, Cheryl was surprised by the response she felt during her address. "There was still a break in my voice" she commented. The first of two events which she described to staff had taken place about 3 years earlier:

One of these happened in November 1992 when we [principals in area] were all called to a meeting. We knew we were going to be told schools would close, but we didn't know which schools, and it wasn't until we'd been at the meeting for a half an hour that we began to realise some people weren't there. So after half an hour we still didn't know how the axe was going to fall. And then it turned out that the absent principals [principals of schools which would close] had been rung the night before and called to another meeting. That was a horrible process.

The second event, Cheryl told me, occurred not long after the first and was, in some ways, worse for those who took part:

The next time was the Quality Provision farce, where principals were ... taken to a meeting ... and we were each given an envelope. If you got a thin envelope you survived [as a principal], and if you got a thick envelope, you didn't.

These experiences provided Cheryl with powerful reminders of how

school education had changed in recent times. She was glad teachers had not been treated in that way. Nonetheless the imperative to continue to implement DoE policies remained, she indicated. "We work really hard to make the staff comfortable and to feel valued, but that has its problems when you don't agree with what they want [laugh]." Teachers were less influential than they were once in respect to issues including curriculum decision-making. But, Cheryl argued, Sarina North teachers needed to remember their successes during the present period:

We're in the top 2 or 3 per cent in Victoria in terms of the multiplicity of factors of disadvantage that apply in schools. And there is no doubt that those factors affect kids' learning and make the teaching process more challenging ... yet we have many successes amongst our students ... we make a very big difference in some kids' lives.

As Cheryl sorted her papers for that afternoon's gathering of nearby principals, she quickly scanned the meeting's agenda. "They are usually very practical and productive sessions" she remarked. And, as I discovered when I joined Cheryl at the function, it was a place where no envelopes were distributed.

### **CASE STUDY 3: SARINA EAST**

#### **The Setting**

'Sarina East' is an inner suburb of Melbourne, with a population of 15,000. Half of Sarina East's citizens were born overseas in a non-English speaking country. Many of the Italian and Greek immigrants who settled in Sarina East during the 1950s still remain. Many of them still remain. One in three of Sarina East's residents is aged 50 or more years, and the suburb has been undergoing a net loss of population for the last three years. The negative

population shift is expected to continue for at least a decade and is symbolised by working class families with young children moving to outer suburban locations and a trend by married professionals (without children) moving into Sarina East.

Two-thirds of Sarina East residents aged 15 years and over, have no formal qualifications. Only 65 per cent of Sarina East's teenagers complete Year 12. Slightly fewer than 12 per cent of Sarina East citizens aged between 20 and 24 years have a tertiary qualification. Clerks, labourers and related workers currently form the largest occupational groups of this suburb's residents. Manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade comprise the major industries within Sarina East. Two-thirds of the businesses in Sarina East employ between one and four persons each. About 5 per cent of businesses have 20 or more employees.

Sarina East is the region with the highest unemployment rate in Victoria. At present 13.2 per cent of Sarina East's labour force are without employment. Twenty-five per cent of Sarina East's 15 to 24 year old labour force are unemployed. Unemployed males aged between 15 and 19 years are typically without paid work for 5 months. The duration of unemployment for females of the same age is 6 months. For 20 to 24 year old unemployed Sarina East citizens, the period without work is usually longer—11 months for males and 8 months for females. The median weekly income of an adult in Sarina East is \$270.

Housing in Sarina East is a mixture of Victorian, and more

contemporary stock, with much of the latter being brick veneer constructions from the 1960s. In addition, large multi-storey flats, which were also built about thirty-five years ago, are scattered throughout the area. The median price paid for a house in Sarina East in 1996 was \$130,000. About 55 per cent of the homes in Sarina East are fully paid for, and a further 20 per cent are being purchased. In 25 per cent of the homes people are renting their accommodation. Sarina East has a high number of residents who are Christians and an increasing number of new citizens who follow the Islamic faith. Many of the recent family arrivals in Sarina East are refugees from war-torn countries. Apart from English, the main languages spoken at home by school students are Italian, Greek, Arabic, and Turkish.

Sarina East's changing demographic profile has been a factor in several amalgamations and closures of public institutions, including schools. Indeed, Sarina Secondary College is an outcome of reorganisation in 1994 that resulted in the closing of two local post-primary schools. As a result of the amalgamation, Sarina Secondary College is currently based at two locations (one site being for 300 junior students and the other for 340 seniors), approximately one kilometre apart. The school has 55 full-time, and several part-time, teachers. The mean age of the 36 teachers who took part in this study at Sarina East Secondary College was 43 years.

### **Demographic Data**

A demographic profile of Sarina East Secondary College, detailed in Table 7, outlines information about teachers including their ages, salaries, and hours worked.

Table 7

*Demographic Profile of Sarina East Secondary College<sup>a</sup>*

Age of Staff		Gross Annual Salary		Age Expect to Retire or Resign		
Age Groups	Number	Salary Groups	Number	Age	Retire	Resign
20 - 24	—	\$20,001 - \$25,000	—	20 - 34	—	—
25 - 29	1	\$25,001 - \$30,000	2	35 - 39	—	1
30 - 34	3	\$30,001 - \$35,000	1	40 - 44	—	—
35 - 39	5	\$35,001 - \$40,000	3	45 - 49	—	2
40 - 44	11	\$40,001 - \$45,000	16	50 - 54	4	—
45 - 49	3	\$45,001 - \$50,000	9	55 - 59	16	—
50 - 54	8	\$50,001 - \$60,000	2	60 - 64	8	—
55 - 59	2	\$60,001 - \$70,000	—	65+	1	—
60 - 64	—	\$70,001 - \$80,000	—	Do not know	—	—
Years of Service Left Prior to Retirement or Resignation by Age						
Age Groups		Years				
31 - 40		—				
21 - 30		2				
11 - 20		14				
1 - 10		17				
< 1		—				
Do not know		—				
Beyond-school Organisation Memberships						
Membership		Number				
Church related		3				
Parent-teacher		1				
Sports or hobby		8				
Charity		1				
Fraternal		3				
Mean self-rated job satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10						
On a really bad day		3				
On a really good day		9				
On a typical day		7				
Other temporal variables			Number			
Teachers' combined years of service as of January 1996			602			
Years of postgraduate study leave yielded across the staff			1 (but offer was declined)			
Typical hours worked per week			50			

Note. <sup>a</sup> Missing data: While there were 36 participants, these data were collected from 33 participants.

### Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions

In Table 8 the left-hand column lists the issues which were explored in interviews with Sarina East Secondary College teachers. These issues were put to teachers in the form of questions. In the right-hand column of Table 8, the key themes which emerged from the responses of teachers, are listed.

Table 8  
*Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions at Sarina East Secondary College*

Interview Issues	Key Themes
Nature of a principal's job.	Complex, money and management emphasis; less about education, students or teachers.
How hard-working the principal is.	Very hard-working. Good at paperwork and dealings with DoE. Very good under pressure with DoE. Works long hours.
The openness of the principal.	Very open.
Working relationship with the principal.	Positive.
Relations within faculty.	Positive.
The accuracy of the principal's view of faculty colleagues' competencies.	Probably, but does not see teachers in class because of new role.
How the principal deals with outside requests of the school.	[Disparate understandings of what principal does.] However, satisfaction with procedures adopted by principal.

(table continues)

Table 8 (continued)

*Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions at Sarina East Secondary College*

Interview Issues	Key Themes
The adequacy of opportunities available to the teachers to be involved in key decision-making at school.	Yes. Limited by time.
The rights of secondary teachers are ...	Very few. To some classroom autonomy.
A secondary teacher's key responsibilities are	Student development and in particular, classroom competency. Also, to support colleagues.
The reactions of others (principals, teachers) to being forthright about aspects of school life.	More likely problematic than not. Fear possible repercussions from offending others.
How principals engender trust	They have the interests of the school at heart. They have the interests of the teachers at heart. They are: honest, approachable, sympathetic, understanding, knowledgeable, collaborative, consistent across staff, confidential, caring and have integrity.
The occasions when teachers appear to not trust the principal.	When a key issue is being put forward and it is clear that if it is accepted <i>or</i> rejected, there will be costs (to Sarina East stakeholders).
Principal's trust of their teaching capacity.	Most feel trusted in classroom and with extra responsibilities. Principal rarely interferes. Some complimented by principal.
Trust in the principal's capacity.	Overall, trusted. On administrative work or in dealings with the DoE, principal is highly trusted. Regarding preparedness to collaborate extensively, trusted.

(table continues)



Table 8 (continued)

*Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions at Sarina East Secondary College*

Interview Issues	Key Themes
Any concerning aspects of her principalship.	Sometimes the initial reaction to an individual teacher's problem. Sometimes confidentiality. Aspects of role e.g. teachers' classroom performances not seen.
What the DoE requires of the principal which may not be in the best interests of teachers.	Over-entitlement (of teachers). Other cuts to, and shortages of resources.
The morale of teaching staff at Sarina East.	Mid to low, due to reorganisation prospect and DoE changes: workload up, stress up. Transfer prospects reduced. Paperwork emphasis in teachers' work. Teachers unappreciated. Students' needs greater now, learning culture is a concern. Teacher and student supports reduced. Morale helped by school's culture of support.
Morale of other Victorian public school teachers.	Few friends in other schools now. Of those known, they experience low morale. Lack of resources and little sense of ownership are key problems.
Of the organisations that represent them, which is 'heard' by the DoE?	Union and subject associations not heard, thus none.
The distribution of rewards to teachers at school.	Perhaps, but principal not given sufficient funds. Insufficient recognition is a source of alienation amongst some teachers.
Encouraging aspects of public education.	Not much. Dedication and hard work of teachers. That it still exists, despite the attacks. Future is bleak.
Concerning aspects of public education.	Extent of cuts. Shortage of resources. Loss of capacity as an equaliser (social mobility for students). Emphasis on money (as justification for what can and cannot occur). Increased workload of teachers.
Teachers in public schools.	Most are caring, hardworking, and creative. A blamed profession. Overcommit still, but less than previously.

(table continues)

Table 8 (continued)

*Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions at Sarina East Secondary College*

Interview Issues	Key Themes
(Teachers' perceptions of) the general public's view of teachers in public schools.	Overall poor. Easy job, short hours, long holidays. However, this snapshot is changing. Reduced resources in schools and increasing problems (e.g. drugs) have diminished criticism by media and public. Local parent view better than distant view.

### Working for the Whole Organisation

Jane Reid was a surprise appointment as principal of the amalgamated Sarina East Secondary College. Reid, then 35, had beaten the (site-based) incumbent and other principals and assistant principals for the job. "I couldn't believe it when I was first told," said one teacher at the senior campus. "I'd never thought of Jane as a principal, to me she was just another teacher," he added. A similar view was expressed by others, including Dianne, a Year 10 coordinator, who observed "one minute Jane was working along side us and the next she was in charge of everything, including 65 teachers!" Alan, a teacher for 20 years, summed up his view of the event when he said "Reid just burst through the pack from nowhere".

From the outset Jane Reid was conscious of the notoriety which accompanied her appointment. Reid's view was that time and experience would assist her standing amongst staff. Three years later she remains convinced: "the experience of my decisions, and of me, over the longer term, will lead teachers to make decisions about how I behave and whether I'm authentic or not". Since her appointment to the principalship, staff have noticed Reid's efforts to

minimise the losses brought about by a combination of stagnating enrolments, reorganisation, and reduced government outlays to public schools. These efforts have contributed to the trust which a majority of staff have for Jane:

If a principal is seen to be working with staff on changes that are initiated from outside the school, by 'the system', then they can still maintain the trust of staff. And their own integrity remains elevated. Jane is a teacher at heart. And she is perhaps more so than a lot of principals. She is a different sort of principal to most that I have encountered.

Jane tries to absorb some of the blows of the Department of Education (DoE), in respect of the way they are delivered and the effect on the school. That is seen by many within the school and I believe those actions help her integrity.

I trust Jane because she doesn't pursue some of the extreme opportunities that are now available to principals like hiring two exit students for the price of one experienced teacher.

I trust Jane very much to do the job she sees as being her role. She seems to see her role in more progressive terms than the Department might see her role. Certainly she is more sympathetic to staff than more traditional principals might be.

Jane seems to be coping quite well with the Schools of the Future business and the negotiations that go on with the DoE. On things like that where I trust her, I can speak with her honestly, confide in her and am able to expect reasonable success with the interaction.

I believe Jane has a lot of integrity. That view is based on observation and working with her. She is a person of integrity—she is very honest. She has a depth of feeling about these kids and this school. If there is something that is not in the best interests of the school, Jane works really hard at manoeuvring the situation so that something good will come out of it for the school. She is a very good negotiator.

... on a professional judgment issue or in respect of her going into bat with the DoE, or saying she'll take the rap, I trust her. She has a long way to go, but I think she has outstanding potential.

I trust Jane's capacity to deal with the DoE. People think we are doing well here because we still have some of the old conditions operating. But we've also had a fair bit of disruption—new classes, changed allotments and so on. And that may be why we've managed to hang on to some conditions. So it is at a price.

Jane's negotiations with the DoE have resulted in fewer losses of resources in a number of areas of the school. In addition, the principal has used the school's reserves to pay for outlays that the DoE would not sponsor. In the last 3 years \$20,000 of school funds has been spent in hiring additional Relief [emergency] teachers, which has also enabled teachers with curriculum expertise to be released from class duties to develop faculty or school-wide initiatives. "Curriculum is not my area of expertise, but it is vital and must be supported" commented Jane during one of our interviews.

One specific aspect of leadership that is important to Jane "is standing on your record for honesty and integrity". Because of her earlier role as a teacher who advocated unity and collaboration at Sarina East Secondary College, Jane knew staff would, as a matter of priority, expect to be collaborated with on key issues. In any case, it was something teachers at Sarina East Secondary College were used to—"this place has had a history of that sort of thing," said a teacher from the junior campus. Jane routinely consults with teachers and shares information with them. Although she is based at the junior site, Jane frequently visits the senior site. In addition, staff and other meetings are alternated between each site. By and large, this collaboration is greatly valued by staff, as the following comments suggest:

This is a reasonably cohesive staff. Overall we work really hard to preserve what we can of collaboration. We know Jane well, we

understand her and pretty much accept those instances where she claims she has no choice but to implement particular policies. We are fortunate to have her.

I trust her very much as a manager and I trust that she has the interests of the school at heart. Her and my priorities are different so I sometimes become suspicious or angry because her concerns don't match with mine. But she is confident and believes in democratic decision-making.... she does make an effort to involve people in decisions.

We've got a long history of unionism and participatory decision-making in the school and, pleasingly, any major differences of opinion between the union branch and the principal are usually openly debated. Overall that seems to be healthy organisationally.

I wouldn't be working for her if I didn't like working for her. Our styles are different but I really trust her. She is incredibly honest with staff. She doesn't pretend that she'll do things one way and then do them another. If she is unable to do things a certain way she'll say 'well I can't promise that but I'll get as near as possible to it'. This is an atypical school—one that is difficult to be a leader in because it isn't a school that accepts leadership. The traditional Schools of the Future model principal just can't operate here at all. So in some ways she's ideal because she understands that and tries to work with it and use the strengths of the situation.

Jane has a lot of critics, but she also has a lot of things in her favour. She is very consensus oriented. She listens a lot. She believes in consultation and doing the best for the school.

We've been very lucky here. Staff have played a large part in their destiny—the decision-making processes have been participatory. The principal has never tried to take that involvement away from staff. I trust Jane and I believe most people [teachers] do. If we were to get a principal who was less consultative, staff would resist. How they would do that, I don't know. But they would. There would be a drop in morale as a result of being consulted less because such a stance is a reflection on staff. Effectively is saying that staff are not capable of making decisions, therefore staff won't be allowed to. There would be a lot less cooperation. Staff would put in less of their own time—they put in extra time of their own to do things. It would have a dramatic effect overall.

People here don't know how good they have got it, in comparison to schools that I've worked in. That is so due to the administration here constantly trying to achieve common ground with teachers. The principal here is always endeavouring to achieve that. In other schools principals are indifferent to that.

However, a few teachers questioned the value of the collaboration that takes place:

Sometimes I wonder whether it is necessary for the principal to pass on the information that is being relayed to staff. The [teaching] job is difficult enough as it is and people may want to only be focussed on their area. Yet it seems that everything, everything has to be passed on ... people are aware of the basic structure of things and how staffing works, how people can be moved around and how we need enrolments and so on.

The DoE is always inventing new forms to fill out, new ways for us to articulate what we are doing, new reports and policies. When you've been around as long as I have you feel 'oh here we go again. We're going through another hoop, some new change'. And then, a few years down the track, you get something else. You always have to fine tune curriculum or other aspects of your work in any case. But at this school they like to do things promptly, often before other schools have absorbed the [new] policies ... the Frameworks, then Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and now Curriculum Standards Frameworks (CSFs). The CSFs are causing a bit of a problem. They are unwieldy and I doubt that they will achieve what they are intended to. So there has been that stress on just working through government policies; of dealing with the ramifications of budgetary cuts at the school level plus the nature of the school population: Integration students, refugees, people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds—and we don't really have the resources to properly cope.

Jane is doing a good job but staff make it exceptionally difficult for her to do the job, because of their expectations. They expect her to do as they see fit which is not what she does, so it's an impossible position.

One teacher's appreciation of the collaboration was accompanied by a concern. He believes that with school education the way it is currently, collaboration with staff is difficult for a principal:

Whilst Jane, in particular, is careful to continue to communicate with staff, it has become a much more onerous role than it used to be. Principals are much more accountable than they used to be. It is a real two-edged sword, what is happening with the Minister and principals. On the one hand they are expected to take complete responsibility for what happens in schools and on the other hand, in order to get promotion from the Department, there's got to be 'no trouble'. As Zig and Zag used to say 'no trouble is a very different thing' [laugh]. That means that principals have to find a way of communicating the change that they and the Minister want, with the minimum possible disturbance and rancour amongst the staff. And that is very difficult ... as soon as the principal tries to say to staff they must do something this way because the DoE says so, they're in trouble, real trouble. Because what you've then got is an unhappy staff.

Jane Reid is cognisant of the potential difficulties which can come from sharing information and involving staff in decision-making. She is aware that some principals are reluctant to collaborate with staff as they once did. She fears the process getting out-of-hand:

But I feel it is the best way to do things. Bravery is about confronting what it is that you are afraid of ... I see that here I have to be brave. Because I am arrogant and self-sufficient, I feel under certain conditions I [alone] would make a better decision. But I believe that usually a group decision is better than a single person's decision. In some cases staff are not equipped to make a decision. But I know I should involve them because it is good for them and good for the school. There isn't anything particularly noble or wonderful about my position on this. It is quite a pragmatic view—if you treat people okay and it will be returned. Treat them like garbage and you'll get garbage in return. Being okay is good for me, you and them. You can't force people to do something—they may pretend to do it, but they won't really do it. You've got to get them to do it themselves.

Collaborative processes at Sarina East Secondary College are demanding in terms of the time they require. Reductions in teaching personnel and time allocated for school-based planning have left little opportunity for group collaboration to occur during the school day. From Monday to Thursday

"there are only 15 days in the school year when we don't have after-school meetings scheduled—teachers here are very committed" stated Jane. Other teachers and the school's annual Events Calender, which I found pinned up in the staffroom, supported Jane's claim. The preparedness of staff to collaborate regularly out-of-hours contributes to the 50 hour week that most teachers work.

The staff's commitment to collaboration is supported by the attendance of the principal or other Sarina East Secondary College administrators at most meetings. According to Jane, the priority given to such collaboration means that delegation of work to class teachers has to be tempered, a view that is echoed by a senior woman who was frequently nominated (in interviews) by teachers as being "extraordinarily hardworking". During our interview she remarked:

... look at my desk. These are all the things that haven't been done and things just keep happening. You could say a good administrator would delegate. But who is sitting in the staff room these days to delegate to? Not a soul, they're all busy. So you can't delegate really, you just work harder.

Despite the trade-off against individual delegation to class teachers, Jane believes collaboration is necessary at Sarina East Secondary College. Jane argued that maintenance of this priority is very important:

Because we are in the school we are in—and this is a central belief of mine—we are confronting bigger odds. We don't have adequate resources and therefore, in order to maximise the resources we've got, we've really got to maximise on the people, the performance of the people. The people whom I've got here are really good and, in maximising their performance, I've got to get as much out of them as possible. One way to do that is to create fully functioning relationships with people where they trust you and you trust them. I really try to do the best I can for them and for the whole organisation. I try to not put myself above them and listen to what they say.



Many teachers linked collaboration with ongoing connectedness, as the comments below suggest:

Certainly we know of schools where the principals have resorted to the old-style dictatorial leadership, but it isn't likely to happen here. That would destroy morale. Things would collapse and fall apart. Knowing that it won't happen keeps people going. Plus people here do support one another. It is a harmonious staff. There is a fundamental culture of support. The social cohesion of the staff plus the leadership has helped. People know that, if things go wrong, it's not because the principal and others who are responsible haven't tried. There is a preparedness to try to correct mistakes, to do things better.

The staff here are great. Here we don't tend to look at the principal class as an upward thing or that we are fighting with that class [of educator]. If another principal came in and bulldozed staff, they wouldn't get very far. We wouldn't let that happen. I think they would find that their life wasn't worth living [laugh]. But that is part of why a school can work. You're not actually battling each other. Certainly we have disagreements trying to fight for the greater good—sooner or later.

### **Maintaining a Paradox: Inclusion**

At Sarina East Secondary College the range of working parties and committees is considerable. Some are long-standing whilst others may exist for a year or less. Most teachers are members of at least three committees. Two prominent issues are occupying several committees currently. One is the need to create a more effective student learning culture at Sarina East Secondary College, and the other is to deal with the prospect of reorganisation. My conversations with teachers indicated that many regarded the two issues as interlinked despite a recognition that both needed independent consideration.

There is agreement between principal and staff that the learning culture needs to improve "In 1996, 3 per cent of the year 12 students at Sarina East Secondary College received Tertiary Entrance Ranking (TER) scores over 40,"

noted Jane as we made our way to her Year 9 Social Studies class one morning.

"We can't say to students if you come here you're all going to get fantastic jobs". Jane's comments were reinforced later that day at a staff meeting.

Robert, a science teacher, took 50 of his colleagues through a presentation that showed severe literacy problems in Year 12 students. Robert's understanding of the difficulties some non-English speaking background (NESB) students experience with the English language was effectively communicated to those present. The normally noisy staffroom was silent throughout the presentation. Using extracts from students' work, Robert showed why many intelligent students will graduate from Sarina East Secondary College without being functional in English. Robert's explanation, in essence, gave support to a widely-held view that the staff needs to grapple with its learning culture.

Improving students' learning culture was regarded by Jane and most teachers as being an extraordinarily difficult challenge. No teacher spoke of the school being able to achieve any marked progress within the next few years. Several factors were identified by teachers as important when attempting to improve the learning culture. Students, resources, teachers, curriculum, and the principal were prominent amongst those identified.

Almost all teachers' referred to the low socio-economic family background that characterised Sarina East students. Yet students' 'circumstances' were, for many teachers, an important reason for teaching at Sarina East Secondary College:

Obviously I could have moved years ago if I'd wanted to. But because these kids have been hit so hard and because often their parents are not well educated and don't have political friends, I feel I have to be here, to

give them as good an education as I can ... if we don't take an attitude of supporting these kids and advocating for them, what sort of an education will they get?

I've almost always worked with underprivileged kids. I have a social conscience and for a lot of kids school is the only thing that is structured, caring, and predictable in their lives. I had a childhood like that myself and it is good for me to feel that school is something that helps them a little bit ...

Most students' parents, as several teachers mentioned, had not remained at school until Year 12. Indeed, as one teacher observed of his time at Sarina East Secondary College, "a lot of the students I've taught are the first members of their families to ever have completed secondary school". Many students come from homes where adults do not have paid employment. A check of relevant school documentation verified the teachers' observations. Some classes had 80 per cent of students from households which received an Education Maintenance Allowance from the Government. Ben, who has taught at the school for eight years, indicated that in terms of social skills, many students are making progress. He commented:

I've been around long enough in education to know the bottom line is not us in schools, it's what happens at home. And daily in my teaching I am astounded that some kids behave as well as they do, and are as good as they are, considering the home backgrounds that I know about.

Nonetheless, Ben like many teachers, pointed to the often stressful and frustrating aspect of being unable to engage the interests of many students. "It is difficult here, sometimes progress in the classroom can involve so much to achieve so little" he remarked.

Many teachers spoke of their concern that the school was unable to

meet adequately the educational needs of the diverse student population:

... the students here, unlike in some wealthier schools, don't get the amount of support they need to be, and do, their best. Language needs, resource needs, you could go on and on. It isn't necessarily the case that these kids are not intelligent enough to become doctors or lawyers, it is that they require enormous support so that they can do their best.

If we had more resources, we could do a better job for the kids. So the kids are paying a price. There are real burning human needs that we wish to meet. We, for example, have kids who two years ago lived in societies that had disintegrated. No government, no law, no education, nothing! They are now keen to succeed ... but they don't really understand how difficult it is to succeed ... and they are struggling ... kids like that need extra support.

Schools of the Future won't help our kids. If we could resource the school as we saw as appropriate to the type of students we have, it would make a difference. We haven't got the money to do that.

Personally I'm fearful for many students—the lack of support for them, where they are going, the fact that there are no resources, that they have appalling home lives. Schools are about the best they get and yet how much can we do? We've been cut off at the knees regarding giving support to many kids, there's nothing out there, and nobody else can give any support.

One teacher's frustration over resource difficulties operating at Sarina East Secondary College was encapsulated in an observation he shared just prior to ending our interview:

In our school, for our soccer team, we have 3 soccer balls to share around between 25 students. My son attends [elite private school] and he is in the soccer team. Each student is given access to a soccer ball.

A similar concern for some teachers was the inability of school-wide resources to cater adequately to students' needs. Two commented:

The library budget here is about \$15,000. My partner is a teacher at a small parish school which has 200 fewer students. Their library budget

is \$25,000. At [elite private school] the budget is more than \$4 million. How can our students compete with that?

We need to regularly outlay school-raised funds on technology purchases, but we remain under-resourced... the only money the DoE has ever provided us with for computers is \$5,000.

No teacher expressed concern about his or her own competency levels in relation to their subject specialties. When I asked about their assessment of faculty and other colleagues, most teachers indicated they were part of a faculty that was performing well. In addition, teachers frequently expressed regard for the efforts of most colleagues:

At this school we have many dedicated teachers.

Generally the teachers here are committed, hardworking, extremely professional, caring—I can't speak too highly of them.

My impression of teachers here is that we all work really hard and there is incredible diversity amongst us.

There are some fine, dedicated teachers here. I don't think there are many at this school who don't commit themselves fully to their classroom responsibilities. A few don't—for some of them, and I'm speculating, it may be to do with surviving. Or perhaps they were always like that.

When I asked teachers "to what extent do you believe Jane trusts your capacity to do the job of teaching?" most were in no doubt:

I believe she trusts me. She doesn't come into my class or interfere with my other duties.

She has a lot of trust in what I do. I know that from the comments she has made. She used to make them more often than she does now, because she has less time, but whenever she has time and we talk, her comments indicate she trusts my ability. It's nice to have those

comments more often though [laugh] . She also makes some comments about other people so I guess in that sense she trusts me to not be indiscrete.

I believe she definitely trusts me because of the way she values what I say, supports my work and concerns I raise with her. She's predictable, good humoured and turns some things back on to me and so I feel we have a good working relationship.

She has told me how much confidence she has in me and the way I do my job—she actually mentioned that recently.

I believe Jane trusts me. If I have matters which I need to approach her about I find that I can be honest and I feel she is honest in what she says about the situation. I get feedback from her and if she were concerned about anything I feel she would say so.

I think she probably has a reasonably high degree of trust in me. She wouldn't always agree with what I do or the way that I do things. She sees me as quite dedicated and capable.

It is clear to me that Jane trusts my ability to do the job completely. She often watches me at work and sometimes assists me and compliments my efforts.

So far as I am concerned, Jane trusts me. I judge that on the basis of the jobs she gives me.

I believe she trusts me—she has indicated to me that she believes I am a good teacher and I was very pleased to know that she has faith in me.

She has given me a free hand in respect of my responsibilities and in relation to teaching my students, so I believe she trusts me.

A small number of teachers were unable to discern whether Jane trusted their capacity to do the job.

Being unable to focus on teaching tasks which were recognised as being

clearly valuable to their students was a frustration to a number of teachers:

... going on the teachers I talk with, the actual teaching and learning with the students is what is suffering. And they're saying this isn't the way it ought to be, I'm here for students, for students to learn, to teach...

You feel like you're always at meetings and so you feel you never actually get any work done, so that you don't get to a conclusion with your work. Plus when the principal doesn't see what you're doing, it is easy to get that undervalued feeling.

In recent years some Sarina East Secondary College teachers have been required to teach in learning areas where they were unqualified and/or unskilled. Based on some teachers' comments during the interviews, the development was not seen to be beneficial:

In our area we have been forced to give up some of what we were trained for, and what we are experts in, to teach in areas where we are not experts. The priority is to have bodies in front of classrooms. The priority is not with our learning area.

There have been tensions between staff and principal here due to many teachers having to teach outside of their expertise.

There are some people [teachers] who are not able to give fully in the classroom. Partly that is because they have been thrown into a situation by having to teach a class for which they are not trained...

The number one Charter priority at this school is to implement the Curriculum Standards Framework (CSFs). The CSFs represent the DoE's most current statewide curriculum initiative. They are intended to ensure that every student in the public system has access to a minimum amount of common curriculum. Faculties and various committees at Sarina East Secondary College regularly meet as one of several strategies oriented toward implementation of

the CSFs. Several teachers indicated that they doubted whether the CSFs would be suitable for all students at the school. Their comments were typified by one senior teacher's perception:

There needs to be more attention given to meeting the needs of the ESL students and the issue of their low literacy. We need more resources for that area. Forget the eight learning areas, if necessary. Get assistance for the kids who need increased literacy skills, is what I believe should happen. There's little point pursuing the learning areas if the kids can't read or write ... there's no benefit to be gained by merely exhorting kids to do better, we have to help them to be prepared for taking on subsequent learning opportunities .... thus fitting the curriculum to the needs of the kids and not expecting the kids to fit the curriculum...

Elements of the CSFs were also a challenge for some competent students "because they can't relate to a lot of it" said Janey, who is in her 14th year of teaching. Translating theory to the practical situation continues to be dealt with by individual teachers. Janey added "our philosophy has been to cater for the kids varied backgrounds. It is an extremely difficult task." Other teachers who were implementing the CSFs reported having difficulty engaging the interests of many students.

Many teachers believed a principal could make an effective contribution to any learning culture. The two most commonly suggested ways in which a principal could do this were through instructional leadership and more frequently observing teachers, particularly in classrooms, as typified below:

It is important to know what people do in their job, and to do that you need to see teachers first-hand; teaching kids, running around and operating between classes. I don't feel she sees that side of teachers' work ... so I trust her a lot less than she trusts me ...

I miss having a person at the top who is available for consultation on



curriculum or organisational management. Jane is fairly detached from those sorts of areas, she seems to prefer it that way.

Although many teachers prefer Jane to take a more 'hands-on' role in changing the learning culture at Sarina East Secondary College, few believed it would happen. All teachers whom I asked "what is your impression of a principal's job these days?" told me that it was increasingly an administrative rather than educational role. Teachers variously regarded the principalship as 'complex', more and more focussed on money', and 'less supportive of teachers'. Teachers regarded the altered role of principals as being DoE inspired, rather than being a change which principals had created. Many teachers mentioned that the changed role principals now have to play holds few advantages for students, particularly because of principals reduced role in curriculum leadership.

### **Taking Teachers' Troubles Seriously**

At Sarina East Secondary College, another reason teachers believe the learning culture is important to change is because it is often linked to conflict between teachers and students. Several teachers spoke of being stressed following a 'serious' classroom conflict. Often, by the time they saw Jane, (in an effort to do something about the classroom conflict), their stress had not subsided. In outlining the problem to her, these teachers felt Jane's initial response reflected a light-heartedness or pragmatism which they could not accept. On many such occasions teachers left Jane's office more frustrated than they had been prior to entering it.

During my first week at Sarina East Secondary College, as part of my shadowing of Jane, I happened to be in her office when one such event took place. What bothered many teachers about Jane's behavior had also attracted my attention when I saw it. When I asked Jane about these situations she explained to me that often her initial response "was a means of gaining time while I worked out a possible solution to the problem". Some of the problems that teachers raised when they were upset, Jane indicated, were frequently indicative of complex issues that couldn't easily be resolved. The inability to be able to respond immediately to a problem raised in such circumstances was a source of frustration to Jane. So powerful were these events for some teachers, or teachers who observed them, that they qualified their responses when I explored teachers' perceptions of their trust in their principal:

I trust Jane a great deal in some respects ...but I'm not so comfortable with her flippancy. When I say to Jane there is a problem, it is because I believe it needs to be addressed openly and honestly ... so to a limited extent I trust her on that level.

I find her attitude is such that she treats things more lightly than people [teachers] who are approaching her over something. And that can create problems for everyone—for her own perceptions and for other people. Probably more so for other people. Almost being cavalier over something that others regard as really important is a concern.

In terms of trusting the principal, if a teacher is very distressed and goes to Jane you need to know that her response will be respectful ... that hasn't been the case in recent years.

Overall I don't trust Jane. For me to trust her she would need to be more accessible and better in terms of her feedback ...

To be trusted highly a principal has to acknowledge what you say or feel and deal with that. If someone complains about someone on staff, the

comment should be taken seriously. That a complaint has been made shouldn't mean the one making the complaint is seen as the problem, or subsequently disadvantaged. I feel I can do that with Jane, but I know a lot of other teachers don't feel they can do that.

There are various aspects to trusting the principal ... the most important for me is to believe that Jane will look after the welfare of teachers as much as possible, when the occasion calls. It might be evidenced through the response to a teacher needing sick leave ... or related to conflict with their class. If teachers can't rely on that, they feel undermined by the principal. Some women teachers here have felt that Jane doesn't show them much concern ...

... schools are still about people reaching children to deliver effective learning programs. And that is the staff who do that, and it is best done in atmosphere of trust. Trust is built on a whole lot of things, like a principal demonstrating concern for teachers ... and trying to improve people's conditions ... people [teachers] won't take things so stressfully if they think there is trust ...

Based on interview conversations, Sarina East Secondary College currently has many staff who are feeling stressed by, and on the job. One teacher observed:

There is an increasing number of people [teachers] who are not managing, who are taking extended periods of time off ... some of the people who are here, I believe, need some breaks, won't make it through.

The difficulties facing teachers at Sarina East Secondary College heightened the need felt by many for two additional forms of support from Jane. With such support, many said their trust of Jane would increase. The form most identified by teachers was praise. Some teachers told me that they had received little or none from Jane:

She has never said to me "you're doing a good job".

... the good things we do aren't acknowledged enough by Jane.

Some teachers' contributions are not recognised by Jane and that effects trust.

I trust Jane in some respects—more her ability rather than her integrity. She isn't an open caring-sharing sort of person, which I think is important.

She's not one to praise you very much for what you do ...

Jane often seems to be blinded by the high-fliers on staff, so much so that she doesn't notice the quiet achievers who are here everyday working extraordinarily hard. The principal is impressed by the high-fliers. She is perceived as playing favourites.

Perhaps due to [senior woman's] influence, Jane has only recently realised how important it is to recognise staff, even if that can only be done in small, symbolic ways.

When I raised this staff perception (concerning too little praise) with Jane she agreed:

Yes, I think that's probably right. I know it's a failing. It's part of my character. I am self-sufficient, I don't expect them to tell me I'm doing a good job. But I am conscious of not praising teachers sufficiently. When I'm talking to them I try to praise them and say that something is good. But, I actually find in giving praise, some people think it is insincere. I've been caught doing that lots of times. [Senior staff member] is a classic in that I'll say something is good and she'll say [in a doubting voice] "oh yeah?". And then I'll say "yeah, I mean it ...". But I think it is a personal failing, a limitation of my personality, in that I find praise difficult to accept or give. It's an example of a smallness within me—something that is not happening.

Despite this practice Jane made clear to me her regard for teachers when she stated:

Teachers are the hub of any school—they do the hardest jobs in schools. It's not the principals who run schools—I can't go and teach however

many classes there are, I rely on each teacher to do a good job. I have a good sense of trust in them. There is a large cohort of teachers whom I trust ... There are a few whom I don't trust or have much regard for. Amongst many of the trusted teachers, I'd love to have some of them teach my children. They would be great. Most teachers are very honest, straightforward, caring, gentle, loving people.

The other form of support sought by some teachers was confidentiality.

Several teachers indicated they could not, on a one-to-one basis, rely on Jane to keep matters confidential. Their judgments usually were, as with other perceptions about Jane, formed on the basis of observation, and conversation. Some teachers referred to comments Jane had made (to themselves or others) which led them to doubt her capacity for discretion. Others were formed, in part, from conversations between colleagues where teachers shared their impressions or experiences of Jane's confidentiality. For those who doubted they could rely on her confidentiality, it meant they usually did not enter into such conversations with Jane. This lack of confidentiality was regarded as a shortcoming of Jane's character:

Jane is someone I could not be sure could keep a confidence, because she enjoys talking so much ... so there are levels of trust.

There are many things which Jane does well. But she is sometimes indiscrete about particular teachers in the presence of other teachers.

Jane is very hardworking, very competent. But she also sometimes says things about individuals that shouldn't be aired.

I trust Jane. But if you feel the administration is not up-front, that they're not fulfilling their professional ethic so far as confidentiality goes or even acknowledging you as a worthwhile staff member, then job satisfaction goes way down. Self-image and self esteem can go way down too and stress will be really high. I know of some people here who experience [all of] that and they are desperate to get out of school,

and teaching completely.

It is important for Jane to respect confidences ... and not see the informant as the problem.

Many teachers were sure of Jane's capacity to be confidential, and this aspect of their association aided trust. Some judgments about Jane's confidentiality were informed by specific experience. Others were estimations based on a range of work-based experiences with the principal.

I feel quite comfortable in my working relationship with Jane I am able to approach her and communicate with her effectively whether it is a personal issue or a professional issue. I believe she keeps her confidences, which is important.

Jane keeps confidences, which is necessary in terms of a teacher.

If I had a problem that required confidentiality I'd have no doubt about her—I trust her in that respect.

While teachers indicated that their trusted principal could have provided additional support to them in recent years, many hope Jane will endeavour to do so in future. Reorganisation issues that Jane and her staff are starting to address may provide opportunities for teachers' hopes to be realised.

### **Facing Reorganisation: Teachers for Kids**

All Sarina East Secondary College teachers understand that there is a significant prospect that the school may have to undergo a reorganisation within the next 2 years. The DoE is prepared to provide extra monies and resources to the school if an agreement to reorganise can be achieved. For its part, in order

to satisfy the DoE, the school will need to relinquish one of its 2 sites. During my time at the school discussions about site loss referred only to the senior site. Therefore, any reorganisation is likely to result in the junior site becoming the school's Years 7 - 12 location.

In the event that the senior site were put on the (real estate) market, Jane suggested, "there would be many prospective purchasers, mainly developers. Townhouses were one likely outcome of that, to cater to professionals who are moving to the district". Jane and the School Council are investigating the matter of reorganisation. Teachers told me that reorganisation was a "hot item" of conversation amongst themselves.

As teachers perceived it, the current move toward reorganisation was an initiative of the DoE, in concert with the government. Intentions behind the DoE's reorganisation were regarded as being against the overall interests of Sarina East Secondary College. The current DoE and State government were perceived by teachers as having diminished life chances of many students at Sarina East Secondary College:

... Just seeing what they have done to education in working class, high ethnic areas like this—it is tantamount to plundering .... For the first time in more than 15 years kids, in the past couple of years at this school, have been expelled. That is because we haven't got the resources to support those kids. The teachers haven't got the energy to put into tolerating those kids in the classroom, because of the large class sizes. There are not the resources to underpin the welfare structure within the school. And there isn't the support outside ...

In addition, teachers indicated that there currently are few positive aspects to Victorian public education. More than three-quarters of teachers

whom I asked "When you think about public education in 1997, what is particularly encouraging about it?" were unable to respond without pausing. At this school it was possible for almost everyone to respond to my interview questions in less than two seconds on all but this and the question which followed. The length of time teachers paused ranged between 2 and 10 seconds, but the typical length of pause was 6 seconds. In addition, the responses frequently began by suggesting 'not much' ...

Huh! [7 seconds pause] One thing I am pleased about is the re-emphasis on literacy. In a school like this it is the core problem. No one has ever grappled with it properly. The school has now made an attempt to deal with it and I am glad of that. But I don't see anything else really.

[4 seconds pause] Not much at all except the fact that a few schools have tried to maintain the students as their priority.

[5 seconds pause] Actually [laughter], not much. I am worried, worried about a lot of services. It is a concern in terms of the big picture and public education. Yet here, there are so many positives, so many good things happening.

[2 seconds pause] Encouraging [4 seconds pause] I can't see anything encouraging about it. If my child were starting school now I would send her to private school, from Prep to Year 12. And I would have no qualms about doing so. That is despite believing that many teachers in the public system are quite brilliant—I see some here—the way they interact with students, the preparation they put in, how their effects can really inspire some students. But the conditions are so difficult. And the teachers are so stressed, I couldn't consider it now for a child of mine.

[10 seconds pause] The commitment of the teachers.

[6 seconds pause] Oh that's a tough one. I guess I'm looking more at the negatives rather than the positives. I find it really hard at the moment with all the cuts and the extra pressure and stress ... I sent my kids to the local public school but I've taken them out and they now go to a private school so I have to say that there isn't a lot that I can see as



positive at the moment.

[no pause] That it still exists despite all of the attacks upon it. That there are still so many dedicated teachers who give so much. That there are so many dedicated principals who are trying to get the best out of what they have to work with.

[no pause] Oh God [laughter], particularly encouraging [3 seconds pause] that it is alive, it survives. It survives and what is a good part of that is the goodwill from teachers and their endless efforts—that is encouraging.

[3 seconds pause] That it still exists. It is encouraging when I look in my classroom and what happens in this school. But it doesn't go much further than that.

[3 seconds pause] [laughter] [2 seconds pause] I can't really think of anything encouraging. It is pretty depressing, actually. You look at the facilities you get in public education, the students, the discipline problems and what the students' job opportunities are like when they complete secondary schooling—it isn't a series of rosy pictures. In terms of teachers, we are asked to do so many things, CSFs, VCE, Schools of the Future—so many things. We realise we have to upgrade, such as in terms of LOTE students, but we just haven't got the time often. We realise what we have to do but the DoE isn't giving us sufficient resources.

When asked "When you think about public education in 1997 what is particularly concerning about it?" teachers referred to a range of concerns. Less than half of those interviewed paused prior to responding. The length of pause usually taken was 3 seconds.

[2 seconds pause] Oh a whole stack of things, like the rhetoric attached to the curriculum changes such as the CSFs, and testing. Being gagged from saying anything. Counting beans [money] and the rhetoric that says we are becoming more self-determining whilst at the same time tightening things up to such a degree that there is nothing left to determine.

[no pause] Kids leaving school early. Teachers leaving the profession

because they've had enough—they are mostly the very good teachers.

[3 seconds pause] The fact that it is a numbers game, the emphasis on money, the lies and the [nonsense].

[no pause] The sense of government interference. It is quite an irony that you've got Schools of the Future and schools so-called controlling their own destinies when in fact they have nil. It's a bit like you [schools] can have your flexibility but they [DoE] are determining flexibility.

[no pause] It is the feeling that we are much less important than the casino. And yet it is the future of the State that is tied up in education. It is the feeling that we don't get Victoria-wide community support. So somehow that translates into State schools getting less money.

[no pause] Everything [laugh] really. The lack of funding, lack of resources, the decrease in the numbers of staff and therefore what flows from that in terms of the kids, teachers not having the time to do what they want to do and therefore the kids miss out—there is just so much that is discouraging.

[no pause] The inequalities. You look at the allocation of funds to [elite government girl's school] of \$4 million for an upgrade. We've been applying for funds for the last 3 years. When we amalgamated they [DoE] promised us the land next door. That didn't eventuate. They promised us funds for the costs involved in shifting the furniture. In the end, we had to pay for it ourselves [the school paid]. I suppose a lot of things are politically motivated.

[no pause] The amount of money available, the shortage of resources.

[no pause] That we no longer have any ideals about education being some sort of leveller. There is no equality of outcomes in our philosophy anymore. But that reflects the philosophy of the government and the government will eventually change ... there will eventually be a backlash. But it may be later rather than sooner. There'll be a swing back to some sort of 'we've got to rebuild society' because it is so fragmented what is happening now. People don't see that when they vote, do they? They don't see that it is actually about polarising society.

In the past with other principals I've worked with, if you've had a curriculum idea and gone to them as an initial sounding board, the good principals would support you and follow the idea through. But these days firstly the principal hasn't got the time to do that and secondly will then simply ask you how much the initiative will cost.

At Sarina East Secondary College, the employer's move toward reorganisation was greeted with caution by many teachers:

School reorganisations that have been entered into [by schools] simply so as to access the monetary incentives from the DoE for doing so, concern me. I see that as a problem particularly in terms of what it usually means for staff relations. In our instance here it has become a bit of a problem. Some think the principal is running DoE propaganda. I tend to believe her view [about issues pertinent to reorganisation]. My experience with her is that she considers DoE materials critically and tries to adapt whatever isn't ideal, tries to make it better for the school. I trust her on that level.

There is probably a trust that Jane will try to do the reorganisation in the right way. Obviously she has an opinion on what should happen, but obviously not everyone agrees with her. I guess it is her job and within her ability to bring everyone onside. I would trust her in normal circumstances to do that, but there are time pressures, a whole lot of pressures that may make it difficult for her to do it.

Memories of earlier reorganisations were clear and unpleasant for most teachers. Morale was then an early casualty, many teachers stated. For many teachers at Sarina East Secondary College now, the prospect of reorganisation is a factor in the morale of staff, as typified by these comments:

At the moment morale is pretty low. That is because of a reorganisation matter—it is a huge concern, particularly in respect of staff losses. Teachers may have to be transferred, others may have to teach in areas that they currently do not and do not wish to. I'd say this school's morale is about 5 or 6 if the State average were, say 7 out of 10. I think we're just lower than the average because of the sort of school we are, with all the difficulties that we have, and the reorganisation.

Generally the morale seems to be quite good. It's a great school on that level, people are very supportive. There is a lot of pressure and stress here, particularly with the reorganisation. Given the stressors it is pleasing that people are still doing a good job and not falling apart. The morale could be better.

[Threats to] continuity of employment is a big thing in terms of fear. Especially if you are in an inner-urban school which has been hit hard by a lot of the cut-backs and reorganisations. It means you end up like now, not knowing how secure our jobs are or where we will end up. That then makes it difficult to focus on performing well as a teacher. I realise there is uncertainty in all work areas these days, but education has been hit hard .... the possibility of excess teachers gets people anxious and scared ... and sometimes causes friction.

Sarina East Secondary College teachers identified the loss of colleagues due to reorganisation as being problematic in several ways. Apart from affecting teacher morale and the personal upset (those declared) felt, many teachers indicated that the net effect was that students had fewer teachers. From the standpoint of teachers, structurally that translated into larger class sizes. Nonetheless, the incentives which the DoE is prepared to provide the school, if it agrees to reorganise, are attractive to many teachers. Part of the benefits which are on offer to Sarina East Secondary College include \$200,000 for technology equipment.

Many teachers informed me that a significant proportion of the student population do not have computers at home. The reorganisation could, in that sense, produce a considerable benefit for students, several teachers argued. One curriculum coordinator who told me he also was keen for the school to have additional computers, was clear about how he saw the DoE initiative:

If we want money from the DoE for computers, we have to ... cut the grounds by half ... and cut our own throats.

Such a sizeable technology acquisition, Jane agreed, could not be accessed otherwise. The loss of space—because over 600 students would be based on a site where there are now 300—is not regarded by Jane or some teachers as being a stumbling block in any reorganisation. Architectural and landscaping works at the junior site, which are part of the package, are expected to, in part, compensate for loss of area.

For Jane and her staff, the DoE-initiated reorganisation was being grappled with at the same time the school was considering its longer term future. Jane believed the school required the same number of students in each of the next few years. Steady student numbers should enable Sarina East Secondary College to maintain existing staffing levels and offer a diverse curriculum. Jane was also aware of the 'gentrification' of Sarina East Secondary College:

What we really need here are two hundred middle class kids. Not because of numbers but for the middle classness of it. You can always use extra resources but I think we need to educate [others] in terms of the school's image. We've got a working class, migrant student population. And on our doorstep we've got the rising middle class, the gentry. And this gentrification of the area is where the future is. In five, six or ten years time, many people who currently live in this area won't be able to pay for houses here.

Jane had already begun a program of consultation with staff concerning the school's longer term 'positioning' in the educational marketplace. Like many teachers at Sarina East Secondary College, Jane indicated that she had mixed views about the school shifting away from its current student population.

Attracting a sufficient number of middle class students may eventually alter the school's external image and learning culture. But it may also hold dangers for some working class students.

She told me:

At the moment, in this climate of diminished resources, we are realising that it is harder, harder to serve these clients. I sometimes wonder whether I have the skill to make that transformation [of the school's position] in a relatively harmonious way. It could be done easily—I could do it easily. All I would need to do is introduce uniforms and use graded assessments, both of which are arbitrary and unnecessary ... meaningless.

Jane understood that many teachers would be reluctant to jeopardise disadvantaged students' educational prospects at Sarina East Secondary College so as to adopt a middle class student cohort. But all the implications of positioning needed to be considered, as Jane further argued:

There is further danger in not considering the school's future. To attract middle class students we may have to stream (segregate) the students academically.

Jane, too was uneasy about what might ultimately eventuate. In an earlier conversation she told me that:

The goal of education is still be an equalising influence within society. To be a harmonising influence. To create individuals who have sound morals and coherent values and a range of skills which makes them useful citizens. That, of course, is what is or should be special about public education—it should be available to everyone .... the failure to achieve these ideals isn't the fault of the education system but rather that of the current social context—we're in economic decline. In order to survive in this period we've decided to create an underclass, a group of people who don't have the same access that others have. One of the

things they don't have access to is education. So it's a depressing and sad thing that ultimately we will all pay for. Education is caught up in the broader economic and social problems of the moment. It's been decided that in order to maintain our economic viability we can do with less public education.

Nonetheless, as several teachers mentioned, Phillipa was optimistic about the future and determined to design a strategy that secured the school's survival. She expected that any plan would involve compromises on all sides. In concert with the School Council and staff, she was keen to explore options in-depth. She believed the school's present successes need to be kept in mind:

We are doing a lot of good. There are too many kids whose futures are condemned. But not by schools or the teachers. There are a lot of kids whom we do wonderful things for.

During my time at Sarina East Secondary College teachers indicated that they were relying on Phillipa to brief them fully about future options for the school and projected DoE requirements. Because of her role and largely office-based work situation, most teachers agreed she was better placed to develop such research. At a time when only a few teachers professed any trust in the DoE, teachers told me they were keen to receive a plan that minimised losses (of working class students particularly). Teachers also wanted to see evidence that established the viability of any plan. Several teachers mentioned that, for any plan to be implemented successfully, it would require a "whole-school approach".

Most teachers believed that Phillipa understood the value they placed on working "as one" on important concerns. Others, who remained unconvinced and uneasy about future 'positioning' of the school, hoped their doubts would be

unfounded. By and large, teachers were confident about Phillipa's ability to position the school successfully. They were less confident about Phillipa's being unhampered by DoE constraints in the course of dealing with the issues. What disturbed many teachers was that their expectations about Sarina East Secondary College's future had been biased by their recent experiences of schooling. On this point, Phillipa also was keenly aware.

## **CASE STUDY 4: RUTHVEN**

### **The Setting**

Ruthven Secondary College is located in the south-western corner of inner suburban Ruthven. Unlike many localities which are close to the central business district of Melbourne, Ruthven has not been 'gentrified'. Forty per cent of the 12,000 working class residents of Ruthven were born in a non-English speaking country. One in five of these residents migrated to Australia from Italy.

Many of these immigrants settled in Ruthven as young adults during the 1960s. Homes were built or purchased and, for a majority of these immigrants, it was the location where they subsequently raised their families. By the mid 1980s, many of these immigrants' children had completed their schooling and left the area. The departure of young adults to other areas for living or employment purposes has resulted in Ruthven having an increasingly aged population. For every six Ruthven residents, one is aged 65 or more years. Just over 70 per cent of residents who are aged 15 or more, have no formal



qualifications. Three per cent of this population have a Bachelor degree.

Amongst those aged 15 and over who are employed, 18 per cent are tradespersons. A further 18 per cent are labourers and related workers. Fifteen per cent are clerks. Currently 10 per cent of the labour force in Ruthven is unemployed. For those who are unemployed and aged between 15 and 19 years, the length of time spent 'between jobs' is usually between 6 and 9 months.

The annual income for 45 per cent of residents aged 15 and over is less than \$12,000. The median price paid for a house in 1996 was \$95,000.

Approximately 55 per cent of dwellings in the south west sector of Ruthven are fully owned. An additional 20 per cent are being purchased. Housing in this part of Ruthven is dominated by brick veneer buildings (situated on quarter acre blocks) which were constructed within the past 40 years.

Seven years ago there were two large post primary schools in this corner of Ruthven. Now only Ruthven Secondary College remains. The school has gone from having a large enrolment of 900 to its current intake of 400 students. Ruthven has 32 full-time teachers. The mean age of the 23 teachers who participated in this study was 41 years.

### **Demographic Data**

A demographic profile of Ruthven Secondary College teachers, detailed in Table 9, provides information which teachers supplied when interviewed. The profile includes information about teachers' ages, salaries, beyond-school organisation memberships, typical hours worked per week, anticipated age at retirement or resignation, and job satisfaction.

Table 9  
Demographic Profile of Ruthven Secondary College\*

Age of Staff		Gross Annual Salary		Age Expect to Retire or Resign		
Age Groups	Number	Salary Groups	Number	Age	Retire	Resign
20 - 24	—	\$20,001 - \$25,000	—	20 - 34	—	—
25 - 29	—	\$25,001 - \$30,000	—	35 - 39	—	—
30 - 34	5	\$30,001 - \$35,000	2	40 - 44	—	3
35 - 39	4	\$35,001 - \$40,000	5	45 - 49	—	—
40 - 44	8	\$40,001 - \$45,000	11	50 - 54	—	—
45 - 49	5	\$45,001 - \$50,000	4	55 - 59	14	—
50 - 54	—	\$50,001 - \$60,000	—	60 - 64	4	—
55 - 59	1	\$60,001 - \$70,000	1	65+	1	1
60 - 64	—	\$70,001 - \$80,000	—	Do not know	4	—
Years of Service Left Prior to Retirement or Resignation by Age						
Age Groups		Years				
31 - 40		1				
21 - 30		2				
11 - 20		4				
1 - 10		8				
< 1		3				
Do not know		5				
Beyond-school Organisation Memberships						
Membership		Number				
Church related		1				
Parent-teacher		2				
Sports or hobby		15				
Charity		5				
Fraternal		4				
Mean self-rated job satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10						
On a really bad day		3				
On a really good day		9				
On a typical day		6				
Other temporal variables			Number			
Teachers' combined years of service as of January 1996			352			
Years of postgraduate study leave yielded across the staff			2.5			
Typical hours worked per week			46			

### Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions

In Table 10 the left-hand column lists the issues which were explored with interview questions of Ruthven teachers. In the right-hand column of Table 10, the key themes which emerged from the responses of teachers, are listed.

Table 10

*Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions at Ruthven Secondary College*

Interview Issues	Key Themes
Nature of a principal's job.	Complex, unappealing job. Management and money emphasis; less about educational priorities.
How hard-working the principal is.	Very hard-working.
The openness of the principal.	Very open.
Working relationship with the principal.	Positive.
Relations within faculty.	Positive.
The accuracy of the principal's view of faculty colleagues' competencies.	Probably but does not see teachers in class because of new role.
How the principal deals with outside requests of the school.	[Disparate understandings of what principal does.] However, satisfaction with procedures adopted by principal.
The adequacy of opportunities available to the teachers to be involved in key decision-making at school.	Overall, yes. However principal's capacity to veto committees is a limiting factor for a few teachers. Also, teachers' time restricts fuller involvement.

(table continues)

Table 10 (continued)

*Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions at Ruthven Secondary College*

Interview Issues	Key Themes
The rights of secondary teachers are	Very few. Ideally, members of the profession should be free to express an opinion plus have career and transfer prospects.
A secondary teacher's key responsibilities are ...	Student development and classroom competency.
The reactions of others (principals, teachers) to being forthright about aspects of school life.	More likely problematic than not. Fear possible repercussions from offending others.
How principals engender trust.	They have the interests of the school at heart. They have the interests of the teachers at heart. They are: open, approachable, sympathetic, fair-minded, supportive, genuine, reliable, collaborative, honour their word/commitment, consistent across staff, confidential, caring, lead by example, listen, and have integrity.
The occasions when teachers appear to not trust the principal	When a key non-negotiable issue is being put forward and it is clear that the 'cost' (to Ruthven) of the ensuing change will outweigh the benefits.
Principal's trust of their teaching capacity.	Most feel trusted. Principal rarely interferes. Principal compliments teachers individually about class work or extra responsibilities.
Trust in the principal's capacity	Overall, trusted. On administrative work or in dealings with the DoE, principal is highly trusted. Regarding confidentiality, is trusted.
Any concerning aspects of her principalship.	Several key reforms that principal is required by DoE to implement. Other aspects of role e.g. veto capacity, curriculum implementation.
What the DoE requires of the principal which may not be in the best interests of teachers	Over-entitlement (of teachers). Other cuts to, and shortages of resources, e.g. teaching allotments up.

(table continues)

Table 10 (continued)

*Key Themes of Teachers' Perceptions at Ruthven Secondary College*

Interview Issues	Key Themes
The morale of teaching staff at Ruthven.	Mid to low, due to reorganisation and DoE changes. School-based effort to support students has increased but support from DoE has reduced, particularly for staff. Teachers workload up, stress up. Preparation time down. Teachers unappreciated.
Morale of other Victorian public school teachers.	Low. Teachers fear more cuts. Unhappy with DoE, feel unappreciated; increased workload and stressed. Poor transfer prospects.
Of the organisations that represent them, which is 'heard' by the DoE?	The union is not heard, thus none.
The distribution of rewards to teachers at school.	Perhaps, but principal not given sufficient funds. Insufficient recognition is a source of alienation amongst many teachers.
Encouraging aspects of public education.	Not much. That it still exists.
Concerning aspects of public education.	Extent of cuts. Direction of public education. Money emphasis. Filtering of students' opportunities.
Teachers in public schools.	Most are hardworking, caring professionals. Frustrated, fearful. Short of support.
Teachers' perceptions of the general public's view of teachers in public schools.	Overall poor. Too many holidays.

**An Appointment to Teach 'Old Dogs New Tricks'**

"Getting signs put up at school and on nearby access routes to direct people was one of the first things I did when I became principal here" said Liz Recinos. This 42 year old former assistant principal was responding to a

comment I had made concerning the helpful nature of the clear signage which had made finding the school and the principal's office a straightforward matter. "It is only a minor part of what we've got planned for Ruthven Secondary College, but it is important. Clear signs help to make the school more accessible for everyone."

Within a few minutes of my 7.30 a.m. arrival at Ruthven Secondary College (on day one) to shadow Liz Recinos, she produced a school refurbishment plan and enthusiastically detailed the changes which she hoped would occur within the year. "We want to landscape the grounds and, in particular, provide students with improved outdoor facilities" she commented. "Of course, like everything else, money is a constraining factor, but we have a talented sub-committee from School Council proceeding with the plan" she added. Liz Recinos was confident these improvements to the school would be well received by students and staff.

In the 18 months since the appointment of Liz Recinos to the principalship at Ruthven Secondary College, much change had been initiated inside the school. Some of the initiatives, she acknowledged, had not been favourably received by staff. As we made our way to the staffroom for the daily briefing at 8.20 a.m. she remarked:

Some teachers may think that this school is difficult at the moment but there are difficulties with any school—that is a reality of dealing with young adolescents. My view is if we work on problems together it will make our lives together, easier, ... I try to get staff to see possible ways in which the school can go... to have some enthusiasm for things that could be done, can be done.

Ted Grant, a 37 year old assistant principal and recent appointment to Ruthven Secondary College, convened the week's first briefing. The 5 minute briefing consisted of a series of announcements by Ted. These included the introduction of visitors, notifications of the day's teacher absences and consequent 'extras', plus the schedule for afternoon meetings. As Ted introduced visitors, about a third of the teachers read their morning newspaper or whispered to nearby colleagues. When he announced teacher absences and the extra classes resulting from the absences, most eyes briefly focussed on him. The whispering gave way to sighs and glares as several teachers heard that that they had one or two extra classes to teach that day. As we left the briefing and headed for the principal's extra class, Liz commented to me:

In respect of teachers—it's a hard job. You don't get to see some positive outcome at the end of every day. At the moment teachers are a bit embattled. Understandably. They don't need to be vacuously happy but I think they need to remain a bit enthusiastic about what the possibilities are, and generally be a bit more positive. They need to recognise what they do, that things here are not so bad, and they are doing a good job.

Later in my stay at Ruthven Secondary College I discovered that most teachers also believed they were doing a good job. Nonetheless many admitted to me that their enthusiasm for school was limited. "I don't see many people [teachers] who are happy in the job at the moment, either here or in other schools" remarked one teacher. His comments were supported by other teachers' explanations about the level of morale at Ruthven and in other secondary schools (see also table x).

Ruthven Secondary College surveys of staff morale which I checked

also showed that most teachers perceived it as low. "We are aware that morale needs to improve and we are pursuing a number of strategies toward that end" stated Liz when I asked about morale. "But the issue is complex and has to be understood in relation to a number of factors." Liz expressed confidence that over time, staff morale would improve. "Certainly there are some wonderful, wonderful teachers in this school. Very professional, extremely dedicated, and hard-working people, who are far better teachers than I would ever be." She also indicated that trust between a principal and teachers was important:

Trust is necessary, for example, so that you can have debate, open debate. Teachers historically have felt as though 'oh well it doesn't matter, the principal is going to override me anyway and so I'd better be careful with what I say in terms of the school'. I personally don't think that way. I think it is important that people speak, but the ideal is that people really feel okay about standing up; fleshing out issues and discussing, and that they actually have an opinion.

In the course of joining Liz on yard duty at lunchtime, she returned to her earlier comments about teachers' views. "Teachers don't have to agree with me about everything ... the teachers I trust are the ones who actually practice what they preach. They are the workers who get on with things, and therefore I can trust them because I know that they are putting in ...". In between picking up rubbish, respectfully talking with students, and walking around the 5 acres of school grounds, Liz told me that she trusted most Ruthven Secondary College teachers. Many of the interactions which I subsequently observed between Liz and teachers supported her claim. Successive interviews with teachers at Ruthven Secondary College showed that almost everyone believed they were, on an individual basis, trusted by their principal:



I believe she trusts me ... even if I have boisterous groups to begin with she trusts the process that we go through, knowing that in the end things—as they do—work out. I trust the principal to trust me.

To a very high degree. It's just a feeling that you get, that she trusts you. I've been given difficult kids to handle and my handling of them has never been challenged. As well, I've been given additional responsibilities to take on and that work hasn't been questioned.

I believe she has quite a high degree of trust in me. She doesn't look over my shoulder or question my teaching.

One hundred per cent. Perhaps that impression stems from my faith in my capacity to do the job. Also, in terms of the allotment I've got ... that suggests that I'm capable in the eyes of the principal. In addition, there are extra responsibilities which I am given, which suggest there is a belief in my capacities.

The impression I've got is that she does have a lot of trust in me. She has given me informal feedback a couple of times to the effect that I have been helpful and effective in the job. I would be comfortable if she were to guide me in terms of doing a job differently than how I do it.

Despite feeling trusted by their principal, there was a widely-shared view that the principal's job had changed for the worse, in recent years:

The workload is complex and has blown out incredibly. I doubt that the workload can be managed in the course of a reasonable week. The amount of work which principals are now expected to do means that it has to encroach on their personal and private time to a phenomenal extent.

It's almost getting too far away from the ordinariness of school life, that is students, curriculum, and planning. Now it's more about management and money. They've always had to think about money but now it's tendering and penny-pinching and promoting ourselves, we have to get sponsorship. I think that is taking it too far.

Most of the teachers who were interviewed at Ruthven Secondary College indicated that they trusted their principal:

Liz is extraordinarily capable and exceptionally hardworking. I trust her entirely. She is very easy to work with.

Liz is excellent. I haven't come across a principal who has shown so much interest in the school. I see her on yard duty, teaching in class, talking with students. She seems to be everywhere! If I have a problem she listens and responds positively.

I have a lot of respect for what she has achieved here. She has done a very effective job here, particularly in view of the lack of support from some staff. She has a lot of drive and energy.

Very much so. I see her as a very capable person. She gets things done, she's interested in kids, and she takes classes herself. So from what I've seen of other principals, she is stunning.

A great deal. I have had some student control problems and she supported me ... in the classes and in terms of my health ... she kept the matter private and doesn't look down on me over it.

Liz is very approachable and dedicated. I can see what she is doing ... I trust that she will do her job. In another way I can't see everything she does and nor she me, so there has to be mutual trust.

Although I sometimes disagree with her views, I trust her judgement on school-wide matters. With initiatives which I approach her about, Liz is very open, forthcoming, and helpful. I think she has integrity.

You can trust her. She is committed to kids particularly, and puts in the hours. Liz can be very good with teachers over sensitive or controversial issues. She is pretty professional in her approach.

She's a good principal, a political animal. I have faith in her leadership so I pretty much go along with whatever she says.

There is a high degree of trust for her. She often has to do things that are unpleasant so far as staff are concerned, and also unpleasant for her at times. But you realise she has been asked to do this by higher authorities.

Pretty much. She's introduced a climate of change. I believe she has an agenda. With her agenda, I get that impression not so much in my conversations with her, but in observing her. Her decisions sort of fit a pattern. The school was somewhat moribund prior to Liz's appointment. She's tried to professionalise the staff. She's initiated changes. People then started to leave. I guess that meant she was ruffling a few feathers, that she wasn't going to back down, and was willing to engage in conflict in committees.

In terms of trusting Liz as a principal, some Ruthven Secondary College teachers qualified their responses:

I have a healthy level of trust for her as far as her having to do the job of principal and my responsibilities as a teacher go. But as a strong unionist, I also have a reservation. The reservation, an element of doubt, is there at times, but not often.

I'm not necessarily convinced that the principal acts in the teachers' best interests. Often I think there is a hidden agenda, so that when we are sometimes asked to discuss an issue, I feel that the result is basically predetermined. I think its often a case of the Rialto [head office of the Department of Education] wanting something a certain way and the principal then having to manipulate enough staff in order to achieve that.

Tom, a 38 year old teacher who was in his sixth year at Ruthven Secondary College, told me that Liz was "hardworking, open in her dealings with me and ... much better than most principals to work with". Nonetheless, he had little trust in his principal:

Liz plays it straight down the Department of Education line. Staff have had agreements about conditions with her that have been broken without explanation, because circumstances have changed. So I don't trust her much—I wouldn't trust any principal in her position. Our interests aren't the same. Her interests are the interests of the Minister for Education. She'll break her agreement with staff before she'd break a commitment to the Minister, so we are a fair way down on her list of priorities.

Like Tom, Craig indicated that he had little trust in his principal. "Liz is different to Dave. Dave Whelan was our old boss. I really liked him. I trusted

Dave. This was a great place then," said the 40 year old science coordinator. He continued "but Dave ill-health retired a couple of years early ... we didn't expect we'd get Liz. And we certainly expected our old assistant principal would retain his job when the position came up last year. So two shocks really. Some of us would love to leave, but these days you can't get a transfer". Craig went on to explain that he hadn't transferred during the 15 years in which he worked with Dave:

Because things were good. Dave would give you your jobs and rewards. Dave recognised your efforts. We're not recognised now. Liz has to have a look at where [amongst staff] she is allocating the money for extra responsibilities. That is a source of dissatisfaction here .... In the past, in the government system, some of the best teachers became principals. That is not the case now.

Craig's dissatisfaction with his position at Ruthven Secondary College was made worse for him because of " ... flagging student numbers which have also taken their toll".

In schools like Ruthven Secondary College which have recently experienced diminishing student enrolments, corresponding (downward) adjustments to the number of teachers on staff have often had to be made. Liz informed me that while many instructions which the DoE required principals to implement impaired an ability to engender principal-teacher trust, responding to 'over entitlement' situations was particularly damaging in its impact. "There is a real fear [by teachers] of being named due to over entitlement. That is very destructive of trust and a real barrier". Ruthven Secondary College teachers expressed similar views to Liz on the matter. Over entitlement situations had, in

recent years, worsened due to altered statewide personnel policies. One such consequence enabled the DoE to put 'excess' teachers who could not be placed elsewhere, on leave without pay. Although this was rarely enacted, Ruthven teachers were aware of this 'worse case scenario'.

Since arriving at Ruthven Secondary College, Liz had named particular teachers on a couple of occasions, due to new system-wide staff-student ratios and reduced school enrolments. Liz believed that declaring as excess, one or more teachers, usually produced a noticeable effect upon staff:

When someone is named there is a mixture of relief—'thank God it wasn't me'— and grief, with people gathering round to nurture and support the person/s. I accept there is a degree of rallying around against me, to the effect that 'how could she do it, she doesn't appreciate you'. That's part of the process and that's fine. I try to move on from that, to put yesterday behind me. I still look that person in the eye, once I've named them, as I did previously. The big thing is to be open with staff and the individual staff member.

The openness which Liz and many teachers believed she displayed in over entitlement situations was noted only in part, by some teachers:

There are certain things Liz is more open on than others. Sometimes I feel we are not fully informed, for example on matters of over entitlement—how many are in excess, how whoever has been chosen came to be ... it leaves you feeling uneasy and untrusting. You don't know if what you are being told is accurate. So you don't know if what you are being told can be trusted. It does tend to build friction between staff and the principal .... we've seen inconsistencies in the way people are approached or reacted to by Liz.

In terms of excess staff, Liz has said to particular staff 'it's your turn to transfer'. Then the teacher has come back [following the transfer] and in the next excess situation, been told 'it's your turn to transfer again', when the teacher had been under the impression that that wouldn't be the case. In that sort of scenario staff don't know to what extent the principal's hands have been tied. Teachers might see things from our point of view whereas she might have a longer term plan, more to consider. But in

those situations staff don't tend to accept what they are told by Liz in meetings.

No teacher at Ruthven Secondary College identified any merits in the over entitlement process. Many believed, like Mary, a 35 year old senior teacher and newcomer to Ruthven Secondary College, that the process was unwelcomed by staff and unpleasant for the principal:

The annual process of naming people in 'excess' isn't in teachers best interests. The principal doesn't enjoy it any more than we do. It is just something she is forced to do. I don't think staff would be prepared to name personnel in excess.

By and large, teachers regarded the stigma which accompanied being 'named' as especially negative in its effect. Alice, who held a middle-ranking position of responsibility in the school, encapsulated the views of many colleagues when she told me:

For a person who is named in excess there is a stigma attached—suggesting that you're not a very good or competent teacher, compared to the rest of staff. For those who are not named, I guess they're left wondering 'will I be next?'. And so then they become concerned with how they present and the views which others have of them. So there's a lot of looking over the shoulder so-to-speak.

The perception by Liz that many DoE initiatives impaired principal-teacher trust was widely supported by Ruthven Secondary College teachers. During interviews many teachers referred to such initiatives having triggered displays of negative staff reaction toward their principal. "Often I have felt an undercurrent at staff meetings when Liz was out the front [announcing a non-negotiable DoE initiative], and the rest of staff were reacting as though it was not really happening", commented one longstanding Ruthven teacher. Other

teachers reported similar impressions:

Staff are very direct in demanding from the principal answers to their questions in staff meetings. Often they know the issue is a directive from the DoE. But they want to take their frustrations out at the local level, so Liz gets that. Because of the culture of people being here for a long time and the change in the workplace agreements, there is a reluctance to do anything extra unless you are paid for it. That is a response to how teachers believe they are now valued and paid.

Having to teach more classes with greater student numbers and do more paper work has created resentment. Liz has had to cop some of the resentment caused by those changes, yet she has no say in them.

Liz, like all principals, has a middle-man's role. She is stuck in the middle. She gets trouble from both above and below. Here that means a bit of verbal abuse from teachers.

In staff meetings when people have been unhappy about a DoE initiative, they have often exchanged glances with each other. Then once the meetings have finished and the principal has left, people have got together and talked. It's terrible isn't it?

Vic, a Year 10 coordinator and longstanding Ruthven Secondary

College teacher, spoke highly of his principal. "... Where our aims converge, and that is in most situations, I trust Liz fully". But he also sympathised with staff responses to some DoE initiatives. When the DoE required an initiative to be implemented regardless of any local school view, Vic believed it added to division between teachers and their principal:

... the conflict is between what the Government wants done and what people [teachers] feel they are capable of doing or think should be done. There is a divergence there. In lots of cases teachers have seen it before. It's been flown under a different name and hasn't worked. So you say 'well why do this?'. They [principals] say 'this is what you're supposed to be doing' and so we say 'why?'.

Some teachers' perceptions underscored Vic's view about edicts:

The CSF's are mainly a load of garbage as far as I'm concerned ... so far as the content goes and Frameworks [superseded statewide curricula] and the CSFs go, nothing really changes, just the names and titles. We're still using the same text we used 10 years ago ... what we teach hasn't changed at all. But there is no acknowledgment for good work anymore ... a principal doesn't know what happens in classes now. They're just doing the bidding of the DoE.

Liz is pretty good to work with. But it is difficult in terms of the context of the current Government. I always see her as the face of the DoE rather than as herself. I feel there are many hidden agendas, be they to do with Government initiatives, running the school, or personalities. Basically the agendas are about making choices that teachers often disagree with.

The CSF's have caused a lot of work for a lot of people [teachers]. The good teachers have done a thorough job of implementing them. And others haven't. So there is resentment from the good teachers who have put in the extra work ... but many of them won't raise the issue with Liz. They don't trust her enough. They can't guess how she would react. And so then what flows from that is back-chat about administration—'us and them' stuff.

In the course of noting some teachers' antipathy towards DoE initiatives, one of Ruthven's recently appointed senior teachers explained to me that "the teachers here are pretty good but there is an attitude that 'you can't teach an old dog new tricks'". This teacher later added "even the CSFs can be useful, but people are saying 'I'm not going to look at them because they are simply bad and they will eventually go away'".

### **Kids First ... Maybe**

When Liz was appointed principal at Ruthven Secondary College teachers were unsure of what impact her leadership would have on the school



and, in particular, staff. Mark, who was in his ninth year at Ruthven Secondary College, remarked:

People were uncertain about the principal because she was new, female, and politically astute. People were unsure of what agendas she would bring to the job.

Mark also told me that a teacher's key responsibility was "to teach well, that's the bottom line". In his view, staff at Ruthven Secondary College were unequally divided into two categories. The smaller category consisted of "a group of teachers who do walk-in/walk-out classroom teaching only and rely on materials they've used for years". The other category consisted of "classroom teachers who teach plus develop curriculum materials, peer programs, and subject networks". Mark was a senior member of the larger group. He indicated that in relation to his new principal:

We work very well together. I'm perfectly comfortable with her leadership. It is now clear that she puts the interests of the school first. Liz has shown she is prepared to put individuals at a disadvantage for the betterment of the school.

Similar observations were made by other teachers who enjoyed a positive relationship with their principal:

I think the principal always tries to do what is best for the school. I feel very satisfied here ... it's great.

Liz has been a wonderful support to me whenever I've asked. She's very generous with her time. I think she attempts to balance things but puts the best interests of the school, and students, first.

I believe Liz works tirelessly for this school and does what she thinks is best for Ruthven. Some teachers don't agree with that. But I think her efforts deserve extra support because she considers the bigger picture and cares. She's trying to ensure that we survive, that we don't get

closed down.

Liz is very committed to improving this school. She was a good choice as principal. The kids are the focus but she also cares about staff. Plus I think she is very professional in her dealings with parents. It is an extremely difficult job and I think she balances the different elements well.

The school has improved since Liz arrived. She seems to have a clear vision of where the school could go. And to do that she has addressed a range of difficult issues at the same time. Her efforts have to go to a range of concerns whereas some teachers focus largely on their own interests and expect her to do so as well. That isn't realistic.

During lunchtime one day while shadowing Liz she was met in her office by Alex Ramsden, a regional office-holder with a fraternal organisation. After some brief introductions and being joined by Ted Grant, we all headed off to a disused (double) classroom. Alex Ramsden, a former Education Department administrator, was keen to ascertain whether Ruthven Secondary College would be prepared to let the classroom be used for a program to assist "some very marginalised kids." Liz and Ted Grant had earlier told me that they were hopeful of assisting the local initiative. "We can't offer much financially to the project but we could help out with space and a few amenities" remarked Liz as she checked her notes from an earlier discussion with Alex Ramsden.

An inspection of the room showed that, shortcomings aside, it would be a suitable place for two (externally-provided) welfare teachers to work with 12 teenage boys. As we left the room, Alex Ramsden made it clear that other school staffs had already indicated an unwillingness to assist with the project. With a hesitant expression on his face, the retired administrator commented

"there isn't any money in it for the host school". Liz and her assistant principal, who formerly was a welfare teacher, both chuckled, keen it seemed, to pursue that matter further. "We'll put it up at the staff meeting this afternoon, and see how we go," Liz commented and added "we'll need their support, especially given the difficulties that they could face on yard duty with some of these kids". As they parted, Liz agreed to promptly notify Alex of the staff's reaction.

Two hours later at the staff meeting, after the 'housework items' had been dispensed with, Liz outlined the proposal which Alex Ramsden had put forward. She invited comment. Within 5 minutes, a succession of seven teachers against the proposition had spoken. "These students would be bad for the school's image," and "the DoE should be dealing with the problem, not us" plus "they'd be bad for enrolments" were the themes marshalled. An increasingly heated discourse between Ted Grant and the five teachers who had just spoken against the project then developed. This was brought to a sudden end 25 minutes later. One teacher who had passionately argued against the initiative to protect enrolment prospects, called for a staff vote. The (by then) visibly frustrated assistant principal initially hesitated at the call but agreed to a vote. Two-thirds of the staff voted in favour of the project being based at Ruthven Secondary College.

In a subsequent and lengthy interview with one of the (few) opponents of the project who agreed to be interviewed, it was explained that "people [teachers] are worried about job security ... it isn't that we are against those kids being cared for. Our staff is less than half the size it was 10 years ago—

from 82 to 32—and student numbers are important". Disagreement over supporting troubled youth was but one of many differences between some staff and Ruthven Secondary College administration, this teacher informed me. "Liz has made a mistake—she embraced a couple of trusted people and then stuck with their advice and that's a problem because we don't know what their agenda is."

Despite any staff misgivings about the sources of Liz's advice within Ruthven Secondary College, and her plans for the school, Liz indicated she was confident with her standpoint:

Ultimately, schools are for kids and those of us [adults] who have grown up in a golden era have to keep in mind that some kids won't get many opportunities in life unless we put enormous effort into supporting and educating them.

The teachers Liz was drawn to, she added, "are the people who *really* try, *do* put in, *even* if they say I don't agree with you, they put in." Liz was aware of the alienated feelings which several staff held during the time of her principalship. "But again I have to come back to priorities and purposes—and hope teachers will also remember that." Having job-satisfied teachers was important, Liz acknowledged, but it needed to be accounted for in the context of other pressing issues:

Many of our students come from non-English speaking backgrounds and many are recent arrivals. We have a very high number of (nationalities) at the school. Most of our parents have not finished secondary school themselves. That has a massive impact. You've got to coach them. Even though there is a respect and recognition that education is important, they don't know how to put it in place. Often they haven't got the money to buy books and there isn't necessarily the understanding in the home about the importance of, or how you go about achieving, that broader literacy.

The fundamental challenge for Liz was to respond to the considerable needs of Ruthven Secondary College students. In terms of managing the school she indicated:

It means you have to do a lot of filling in the gaps, and broadening kids' access to things of interest, to the larger world. Many kids can't place Australia on a map of the world. They know the shape of the country but can't place us, so it means that a lot of things that have to be done are oriented to trying to broaden their perspective. In turn, that means allocation of resources is perhaps different. A lot more resources go to so-called 'basics' in order to extend kids.

Liz wanted teachers who were prepared to contribute actively to the development of a school which variously offered "more choices for students". The 'life chances' or opportunities for many Ruthven Secondary College students, their principal conceded " ... were poor ... that's not to do so much with this school but the climate [overall]". Knowing that many Ruthven Secondary College students were from economically underprivileged homes was "to understand where this school's typical kid is coming from".

For Liz Recinos, an understanding of Ruthven Secondary College students' backgrounds provided the motive for both herself and, she hoped, her teachers "to try that bit harder". In line with her plan to expand students' choices, considerable effort in the previous 18 months had been put into English remediation. I asked Liz why such active intervention had continued when the prospects of marked success (amongst adolescents) were very poor. She replied firmly:

Because the way we do it is successful. If you don't do that you may as well go out of business. You are dooming a child to a total lack of control and sense of failure. Such a prospect could impact on all aspects of their life and, although they could survive, there is a stigma to it,

about being a failure. That could lead to a kid thinking 'I'm no good and it doesn't matter what I do and ... it won't matter if I go and do something that is illegal' .... If we don't continue active intervention initiatives those kids will go down the tube.

Many Ruthven Secondary College teachers spoke favourably about this element of progress which had occurred in the last year and a half. Teachers referred to the effectiveness of Liz's leadership in this matter:

To her credit, Liz has tried to do something about helping students who have serious language difficulties.

With the assistance of a few teachers, Liz has tried to improve things for some of our slower learners and that's good.

Here we have a principal who is concerned enough to do something about getting the curriculum to fit the strugglers. That is a change for Ruthven.

A lot of things have been done for students, especially the weaker students. But not enough has been done for teachers.

### **Teachers' New Work Environments**

The allocation of resources to teachers (higher salaries or extra time release) had changed since Liz became principal—many of those who previously received higher duties allowances, no longer did. A perception that teachers' interests needed to be given additional consideration by Liz was expressed by many teachers, including several who expressed support for the school's new direction:

Teachers are frustrated .... It is a fact that there is a lot more than classroom teaching [to the job]. Plus the kids here come to school with additional problems. And you want to do a lot more, but none of what we face is acknowledged. The DoE doesn't acknowledge the extent of

the workload. And I can't let the kids down. Yet I fear burn out because, under these conditions, you can't look after yourself. You are expected to do the maximum and then more ... Liz needs to support teachers more.

Teachers now work really hard for little reward and, in many instances, they are not recognised by their own administration.

Liz has a very strong student welfare direction, which is great. But we haven't been able to support many of the young, inexperienced teachers as well as we could have. There has been too much time spent on the problem kids. And everyone is miserable because our allotments have gone up. On that, Liz had no choice—it's the system ... but people feel so overworked. Quantity is being pursued ahead of quality.

We do the best we can. I think everybody has different capacities but people do their best. For years there was leadership vacuum here, now we don't have that. People are concerned to do what they can, but sometimes they can't produce endlessly. At different times we need different direction, encouragement, and support.

Whilst differences in the level of support teachers wanted from Liz existed, there was unanimity when I explored with teachers the matter of their profession being 'heard' by their employer. Teachers identified subject and employee associations as the networks which, historically, had commonly made representations on teachers' behalf. These networks, teachers claimed, were no longer recognised by their employer for policy advice. Despite the perception that associations which had teacher memberships were "shunned" most Ruthven Secondary College staff belonged to at least one such organisation.

By and large, staff also believed the general public's impression of government school teachers was negative:

The public thinks that we are lazy sods, perhaps because of the trail of poor media reports about teachers and also because of one or two bad [publicly-reported] teachers.

Next to the police [laugh] teachers are the second most hated group [laugh]. I think there's a lot of resentment there from their own education experiences. But when they get to know teachers, as people, they see teachers are not so bad after all.

The public don't really know beyond stereotypes. They think teachers are bludgers because they have too many holidays supposedly.

Very low impression. Teachers and the union have done a lot to knock the image of teachers around. They are out of step in a lot of cases. Also, I believe government has a vested interest in keeping the image of teachers low.

[laugh] Quite a range of opinion. ... but many think teachers have generous holidays *and* work hard. So I suspect they think the perks balance out with the hard aspects of the job. They see it as an honourable profession. I think the negative impression is giving way to a more mature understanding of the extent of teachers workloads and stresses. That is a development in terms of the public.

Unless they know someone close, or have a teacher in the family, they virtually think teachers have few work-related problems ... holidays and short work hours. But it is changing. The public is starting to realise teenagers are not the easiest of groups to teach. So occasionally you get people who ask you 'how do you cope?'. And you yourself wonder how you cope.

Ruthven Secondary College teachers also experienced difficulty in identifying any particularly encouraging aspects of Victorian public education at present. When asked to do so, all but one paused for between 2 and 18 seconds prior to providing a response. Most teachers indicated that there was little which could be nominated:

[no pause] Encouraging? Yes. [immediate response] Nothing. There is nothing encouraging, absolutely nothing to look forward to in government schools. Absolutely nothing.

[pause 18 seconds] Well, it still keeps continuing. Education is energy and human relationships, and the classroom and so on, so that is



encouraging and to be marvelled at. I guess [laugh] I'm scratching around a bit [for an answer].

[pause 6 seconds] Encouraging [pause 2 seconds] the fact that it's still there and that it's still available to the lower income groups in our community. Because there is nothing going for it at the moment. So the fact that it's still there and its free.

[pause 15 seconds] Encouraging [pause 2 seconds] encouraging [pause 2 seconds] Well at the moment it's not looking very encouraging.

[pause 7 seconds] The new VCE. It is much better than its equivalent, the HSC which was in during the 1970s. Now it is possible for almost—almost—all kids to complete Years 11 and 12. And in terms of employment, it is so much better if the kids can persist and finish Year 12. It has been a great improvement

[pause 6 seconds] Well not a lot. Perhaps you could say things like the initiative for [disadvantaged and marginalised] students here. It seems like the government is abandoning or lessening its commitment and so at least there are still regional or local initiatives, such as from the retired principals. That's something to celebrate, although, as you saw last night, there are still many people here who are sceptical of it, and think the responsibility for the initiative should go back to the DoE. Individuals still care—teachers and administrators still care, but the funding isn't available.

Few teachers paused before they identified many particularly concerning aspects of Victorian public education [at present]. In other words, teachers had little trouble in identifying systemic problems in public schools. Perceived directions of Victorian public education, resource shortages, and students' learning problems were frequently mentioned:

[pause 4 seconds] I don't feel that the people at the top who are making the decisions have got any idea about what is going on in schools. I also don't believe they care about the individual. We're just a number. If we quit, so what? I don't think there are adequate resources, especially for kids who have any sort of learning difficulties.

[no pause] Insufficient resources—it just isn't adequately resourced. Teachers are under constant stress ...the pressure gets a bit annoying after a while.

[pause 2 seconds] That children are learning a lot less. That children are just not learning what is required. It almost seems like their ability to learn is not there. I don't know what is happening in primary schools—I have no idea. But the rate at which children are learning is simply horrendous.

[pause 2 seconds] The direction. This retention of numbers seems to be a key belief coming through. But at a school like ours we really need to have a look at literacy and whether we really have the staff to take on those remedial classes. If you're going to look at literacy, you've got to have the key staff to take it on.

[pause 7 seconds] The alienation and disaffection of some bright school students here. At any point in time here, at a socio-economically disadvantaged school, 30 per cent of the student population are not captivated by the classroom. Their teachers are unable to provide learning activities that appeal to these kids.

[no pause] The way it is heading. It's a concern to me that it has been so slashed and so touched that it's turning away kids indirectly in the sense that parents no longer trust the system. Therefore parents are opting to send their kids to private schools or somewhere that has a better reputation. I'm not saying anything about this school's reputation—which is good—but if schools are not delivering quality and the results are not there, slowly there will be a mass exodus.

Ruthven Secondary College staff told me that, by and large, they refrained from being forthright with their views in committee or staff meetings. Several staff mentioned fear of possible consequences from Liz as their reason: "Ten years ago you weren't afraid of losing your job, now you are" commented one former coordinator. Another suggested "There is a fear that you could end up being named [as over-entitlement]". "Liz would probably invite me to join a committee and I wouldn't want that" said Tom. He added, "they're a waste of

time because the principal can still veto any decisions".

The risk of alienating colleagues was another reason which some staff offered to explain their restraint. "Some staff wouldn't like to hear what I really think. Liz would probably agree with the content but she would see it as unhelpful" remarked a longstanding Ruthven Secondary College teacher.

"Some staff don't know how lucky they are here, but they wouldn't want to take that on board. There would be snubbing as a result if I said that" said Karen, a year level coordinator. "But there would be no consequences from administration for saying that" she added. Jill, who had recently been appointed to a senior Ruthven position, commented "I think Liz has the right approach. She is patient and usually tries to enlist support rather than be too direct. My views might add to any divisions that are already there".

Other teachers said that being forthright in meetings would not lead to change, [from those to whom the comments were directed] and thus was "pointless" or "a waste of time". A few staff members believed the views they shared publicly at Ruthven Secondary College were forthright. They claimed that their straightforwardness produced no negative consequences from, or surprises for, any colleague, and that their comments were not controversial.

Liz indicated to me that she was aware many teachers refrained from being fully frank. She nominated fear of upsetting colleagues as one likely explanation. Fear of change and the influence of the wider political culture were factors which Liz believed also influenced some teachers' ways of interacting in staff meetings. "It has been a difficult time for teachers ... there are differences

in the power base [between principals and teachers] ... when there is a recession people are more concerned about their jobs and a bit less ready to rock the boat."

One counter to such limited engagement had been built into the new structure at Ruthven Secondary College. Liz pointed to an expanded consultative and committee structure which she had helped to put in place over the past year and a half. One of the aims of the new structure was to encourage small groups to work together to gain contributions from teachers who rarely spoke up in larger staff gatherings. It was also a means by which Liz could make her way through a multiplicity of contesting teacher voices. Inviting staff "to pull something apart and put it back together again" or develop other initiatives provided "everyone with the chance to contribute, even if they are not totally happy with the end result". Liz considered that this was an imperfect but preferable way to proceed:

Certainly I have a point of view and certainly I don't always get my way! If there is something that I feel really passionate about, something which I feel is great for the school, I work very hard at getting it through—work at changing minds. Sometimes that takes a long time... I don't want to override people.

Nonetheless, once a decision had been agreed upon or where there was a non-negotiable directive from the DoE, Liz considered that both she and staff needed to proceed with implementation. However, as both she and many teachers told me, sometimes that was not what actually occurred. In those instances, Liz was tempted to say to teachers who continued to not implement decisions "okay guys, it's a reality, let's get on with it and not waste our energy

continuing to debate it". Instead, she said she used strategies such as leadership and skill development (through in-services) to promote team work and school-wide progress. Overall, Liz claimed that she was pleased with the outcome of the teamwork. However, she observed, for some teachers, extra evidence of their collegiality would soon be required:

One example [of a non-negotiable initiative] is the CSFs. People are sick of curriculum change. They don't want to rewrite or redo the curriculum in the form of the CSFs. And they are baulking at it. But unfortunately it has to be done, despite criticisms of the CSFs. They're beside the point. It has to be done.

In terms of her job, Liz argued:

I'm supporting the curriculum coordinator and the group that is responsible for getting it done. In fact I will be talking with some of the resisters and saying 'what do you think you're doing?' In some respects I'm saying 'look, I'm sorry, it's tough, but it's got to be done.' But I will back people who are trying ....

### **Just Another Day in Paradise**

"Jean is one of our outstanding teachers," Liz told me. "In a few minutes she will be in here to discuss the progress of one of our students who needs extra support at the moment." She said that Ted Grant would also be joining the meeting. Liz informed me that the purpose of the meeting was two-fold. "I'm concerned about Jean's well-being. She has given so much energy and time in the course of assisting this young boy." 'Harry', Liz indicated, was a 15 year old student who, 2 months ago, told his sister about having suicidal thoughts constantly. Harry's sister had confided in Jean which eventuated in "a raft of school and after-hours interventions to support Harry." Harry had been

buoyed by the support Jean had provided. But he still frequently suffered from depression and regularly sought Jean's support. "In other parts of Harry's life, things are not working out as he would like them to" Liz observed.

The second purpose for the meeting was for Liz and Jean to speak with Harry about future ways of "keeping in touch with us." Liz was hoping to expand Harry's support networks to reduce his reliance on Jean. Several meetings between Harry and Jean had been required in order for Jean to convince Harry that he should "speak with Ms. Recinos." Ruthven staff had been informed about Harry's circumstance on a "need to know basis," and thus "only a handful of teachers know ... the core problem isn't related to school ... " Liz remarked.

"We're ready if you are" Ted told Liz as he and Jean stood in the doorway of the principal's office. This closed-door lunchtime meeting lasted 45 minutes and was dominated by the efforts of Liz and Ted to convince Jean to reduce the amount of time she was giving to Harry. "We have to support Harry, and we will, but we can't jeopardise you in the process" Liz told Jean. "Liz is right, we can't have you dealing with this at 9.30 p.m., like what happened the other night" added Ted. It was agreed that Ted would make further inquiries with a social worker who was involved with Harry. "When there are disturbances at home at that hour, the social worker should be called. Not you Jean." For Jean there was a reluctance to reduce her support for Harry. "But I thought this would happen, I thought you'd say something eventually, ... " Jean commented to Liz and Ted. "It is just such a sad case ...

it is hard to say 'no'," Jean noted as she quickly left the principal's office. Jean left to locate Harry before he went into the first class for the afternoon.

The meeting with Liz and Harry began with a warm handshake between the principal and student as Jean closed the office door. Ted had by then gone to take an extra class, and I sat in a chair just outside the principal's office. A succession of student and teacher knocks at the principal's door went unanswered until, one and a half hours later, the door was opened. The meeting had ended with the final bell for the day. Five minutes later, Harry slowly emerged from the office. He seemed to be deeply in thought and unaware that he had almost collided with Angela Tomkins, the Year 8 English teacher who commented "just another day in paradise eh Harry."

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

Results of the data analysis from the four case studies are presented in this chapter. Initially, the participating school is addressed separately in a discussion which responds to the three research questions. A particular advantage of providing an individual site analysis is that it can more fully respond to each school's contexts and histories. The resultant extra chapter length has variously been offset, for the sake of brevity, by linking, rather than repeating, case study evidence. The site-based analysis is followed by a cross-site analysis, a summary of the study's principal findings, and a comparison with the finding from relevant literature is detailed. Finally, a summary of the chapter is outlined.

**Kandos Secondary College**

**Principal: Ms. Anita Edgley**

#### **Question 1: What do principal's do to engender and maintain trust with teachers?**

Teachers found the reorganisation of Kandos to be a powerful life experience. It was an experience which most teachers were able to recall vividly nearly a year later. Yet it was one which, on balance, few would have wished for despite the added collegial cohesion and insights gained. Indeed, for most teachers the reorganisation provided a crisis in their careers. For some the crisis was a trigger for serious career reflection and reconceptualisation. The subsequent resignation of one in three of the 'pre-closure' Kandos staff was a



high exodus rate. The employer's role in the reorganisation influenced the decisions of some 'returned' or post-reorganisation teachers to do less 'above and beyond' work. In relation to Anita Edgely, the reorganisation provided teachers with compelling and enduring grounds for trusting her. Most who worked with Anita beforehand trusted her but the reorganisation added to and cemented that trust.

The principal's unwavering view that the school had a legitimate role and should continue was a view shared by staff. For both principal and staff this strongly held view, in effect, was a prized norm which stood at the operational heart of Kandos. Because this norm was underpinned by deeply embedded assumptions and beliefs about why and for whom schools exist, it was not one which the principal or staff were prepared to relinquish. To have put these beliefs to the side would have enabled Kandos to be reorganised without major resistance from staff. Whilst the degree of resistance from teachers toward their employer over the outcome of the reorganisation was considerable, the principal's stand was perceived by staff as remarkable. She was seen as being a courageous leader with integrity.

Anita Edgley's continued support for the school occurred at a time when principals were clearly expected by their employer to remain loyal and to advance the Department of Education's (DoE's) policies. Principal Edgley's unflagging support of Kandos signalled a departure from the DoE's expectation of her. The stance was seen by Kandos teachers as courageous and risky in terms of her personal interests and, in particular, her career. Her risky action

engendered trust for her amongst staff.

Of greater note to teachers was Anita's preparedness to remain committed to the school throughout two subsequent and turbulent years. Her steadfastness showed an enduring preparedness to 'live the job' in keeping with, or according to, fundamentally-held beliefs. Her actions both effectively endorsed and supported the teachers' beliefs. The memories of Anita time and again demonstrating her commitment to the reopening of the school later (once reopened) formed a benchmark for many staff judgements. Present-day explanations from Anita about why the school operated the way it did were not regarded by teachers as mere rhetoric. Anita's views and ways of leading were seen as authentic. In their eyes, Anita had endeavoured to put prized school-based theory into practice in the immediate and difficult year following reorganisation.

Anita's efforts, in concert with those of many of the current Kandos staff, were perceived by many teachers as having been a vital factor in the eventual success of the campaign to reopen the school. Unity of purpose was interpreted as having contributed to an extraordinary result (the school's resumption). Achieving results was a feature which remained in Anita's current work practices. Her energetic efforts were interpreted by teachers as being particularly beneficial to students. Moreover, teachers believed they could trust in their principal's ability to achieve.

Staff who returned to Kandos Secondary College continued to be consulted frequently by Anita. Often her request for their consultation was

perceived as evidence of respect for teachers' place and expertise. Because consultation was valued and perceived as being a genuine attempt at collaboration, it also added to teachers' trust of Anita. What the teachers especially valued (in the course of collaborating with their principal) was the chance to express a different view to Anita. No repercussion was expected from Anita by anyone. This situation of agreeing to disagree engendered considerable trust in the principal, especially amongst teachers who had not previously experienced such open leadership, enabling more critical and forthright dialogue to occur between administration and staff. This opportunity to appraise critically was not new at Kandos.

By continuing, the practice of legitimate controversy Kandos was perceived as having both regained, and again benefited from, a culture of critique. It meant that once again teachers did not need to fear the consequences of honestly expressing their beliefs and values. Teachers appreciated being able to evaluate and offer different views rather than uncritically adopting the principal's policy. This suggested to them that their opinions were genuinely valued and able to be trusted. Anita's recognition of teachers' knowledge and place in decision-making conveyed to teachers that she genuinely cared about contributions which could advance Kandos. Her openness to their contributions reinforced the impression that ideas from across the staff were vital to the school's progress. The primacy Anita gave to the content of contributions rather than their source also was recognised as further evidence of Anita's actions being consistent with her claims. Teachers

perceived the act of accepting critical controversy in the school to be in students' best interests.

That teachers were surprised and disappointed by what they found when they returned to Kandos did not detract from the trust teachers had for their principal because the new circumstances were interpreted as not being of the principal's making. Teachers linked their post reorganisation circumstances to the DoE's earlier, and unsatisfactory, closure decision. Indeed, teachers regarded the school's closure as overwhelmingly negative, particularly for students' life chances and well-being. They viewed the DoE and Government as responsible for the attempt to close the school permanently.

**Question 2: How does what principals are required to implement with teachers affect mutual trust?**

Most of the administrative procedures which the DoE required Anita to implement appeared to have little impact on trust between principal and teachers at Kandos. One area of Anita's principalship, however, that did lead some teachers to question their trust of Anita's judgement pertained to the multiple initiatives which were being handled by teachers and principal simultaneously. The complexity concerned teachers because they were not convinced that so many initiatives occurring simultaneously could be effective. The need to implement multiple changes at once was not perceived by some teachers in the way it was for the principal.

For Anita launching out on multiple endeavours was a necessary part of recapturing some of the momentum lost during the reorganisation. The school

needed, she believed, to compete for students and try to attract a more diverse student population. Becoming involved in multiple endeavours at the one time was therefore perceived by Anita to be part of what was required to secure the school's future and to benefit the students. For many teachers, the demands of existing students dominated much of their time, energies, and priorities. Thus, the attention which they could, or felt should, be directed to attending to other endeavours was less than that being provided by Anita.

One outcome from the reorganisation was a strong bond of mutual trust between Anita and the teachers who had been involved. That level of trust remained between Anita and those teachers and the issue of implementing multiple endeavours appeared to have only a minor effect on the trust of those 'original' staff toward Anita. For those new to Kandos, however, their trust might have been challenged to a greater extent. So far as Anita was concerned, that some teachers questioned multiple endeavours did not alter her level of trust for teachers.

At the time of fieldwork at Kandos, the school had not begun to grapple seriously with the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSFs). As with all public schools, Kandos will eventually have to do that and the responsibility for ensuring that a new curriculum is implemented, of course, ultimately rests with Anita Edgley. In the brief time during which Kandos had re-established itself, curriculum and student needs had to come first, and thus little can be reported as to whether, or how, the implementation of the CSFs influenced the trust between teachers and their principal.

In any case, the CSFs were not mentioned by teachers when their perceptions of particularly encouraging aspects of public education in Victoria were sought. Indeed, while teachers had difficulty in identifying any encouraging system-wide developments, efforts by teachers to provide situationally-responsive teaching and learning were nominated by several participants. Whereas teachers at Kandos had difficulty locating particularly positive aspects of public education, and hence, most paused for up to 18 seconds prior to responding, they had less difficulty identifying particularly concerning aspects of public education. The request of teachers to indicate particularly positive aspects of public education perplexed most and contrasted markedly with their responses to other questions. Usually responses to questions were provided within 2 seconds, that is, in effect, 'upon hearing' the question, teachers began to respond. Moreover, by and large, teachers provided detail—characteristically they did not need to 'search' for content in order to respond.

**Question 3: How does trustworthy leadership contribute to school culture?**

Kandos staff widely and strongly shared the view that Anita was a trustworthy leader. Teachers referred to Anita's past and present roles as principal when they explained why and in what respects they trusted her. Of greatest significance to the 'original' (pre-reorganisation) staff was her leadership courage, tenacity, and integrity during reorganisation. Anita's actions at the time effectively affirmed the prized beliefs of those teachers concerning the legitimacy of their efforts in saving the school. Her current actions and

beliefs were, by and large, viewed as being consistent with those of the past.

The school still had a strong culture of inclusion.

The more narrowly stratified student population which they had was problematic in terms of the learning culture, as was the stereotyping of Kandos students by other feeder schools, and parts of the local community. However, Anita was seen to be responding to that in a way which was consistent with teachers' values on the matter—she was attempting to expand the 'mix' of students. Like Kandos classroom teachers, Anita's strategic response to the often difficult student population was to continue to include them. The drive for more 'mainstream' students was not going to be pursued at the expense or exclusion of existing students.

Anita's genuine acceptance of criticism contributed to the culture of critique which many Kandos teachers valued. Critical evaluation was not restricted to curriculum, but was a form of dialogue that took account of a wide range of school features. The widespread perception that a sharing of critical views to benefit the school would not produce a negative consequence for a teacher, buoyed the practice of information exchange and a culture of constructive improvement.

The staff's perception that classroom management difficulties were not inevitably or simply an indicator of a teacher's inadequacy was underpinned by Anita's instructional leadership. Teachers who were facing such difficulties were encouraged by Anita and other colleagues not to give up on themselves or the troublesome students. Staff commitments to problem-solving and caring

which had been hallmarks of the school's early successes were in evidence again following reorganisation.

A culture of caring was particularly important to Kandos teachers. The value they assigned it was inextricably attached to their professional identities and their decision to go to Kandos in the first place. The caring culture at Kandos however, was often not sufficient, in itself to achieve success. Still it sometimes made frustrations, inadequacies, and failings easier to accept.

Teachers noted the accepting and open leadership style of the principal. The genuine commitment to others which teachers perceived in their principal coalesced with staff values. Anita's acknowledging of an individual's sovereignty and intrinsic worth, be they student or teacher, was consistent with how many teachers attempted to act in their classes. This deeply-held commitment was also linked to beliefs about social justice and entitlement. The priority Anita gave to bettering the facilities and opportunities for students was widely regarded by staff as appropriate and effective. Implicit in the collective action and its wide acclaim was the theme of deservingness. Kandos students were deemed, at Kandos, to be deserving, not merely needy.

A recognition by the DoE of deservingness had, in recent times, not been apparent to Kandos personnel. System-wide developments such as the policy to close schools on economic, rather than qualitative criteria, had effectively made some children less deserving than others. Within this rationalist context for public education, teachers and Anita remained clear that they could and were making positive, if often modest, contributions in the lives



of students. The affirmation of students per se by the principal and staff at Kandos was, for many, part of the profession's *raison d'être*. The leader's and teachers' behaviours effectively modelled what some sections of the school system had lost, namely an ongoing commitment to responding to all students. Further, teachers pointed to manifold examples of Anita's leadership practices which buoyed key norms of school life at Kandos. For example, her dedication to the job and her tolerance were highly valued aspects of Anita's leadership. There was agreement between Anita and staff over what were the important aspects of Kandos school life. Thus both Anita and staff worked hard to keep what they most valued. The trustworthiness which teachers perceived in the principal's leadership contributed in a positive way to what many teachers experienced at this challenging school.

**Sarina North Secondary College**  
**Principal: Ms. Cheryl Hewitt**

**Question 1: What do principal's do to engender and maintain trust with teachers?**

Cheryl effectively conveyed to teachers that she trusted them as classroom practitioners. In the main, she used two strategies to express her trust of them, namely non interference and positive feedback. Both strategies were favoured by teachers. Cheryl's considerable trust in the classroom competencies of Sarina North's teachers was underscored by her out-of-school commitments. Although those involvements on her part were not recognised by teachers, Cheryl's confidence in the effectiveness and consistency of teacher performances meant that no compensatory action needed to be taken by the

principal upon her return to the school. By contrast, it was clear to some teachers that Cheryl did not have full confidence in their handling of budgetary matters. Cheryl's lack of trust in their handling of their budgets was particularly obvious when she was out of the school—no major expenditure could occur.

The trust which Cheryl displayed in classroom teachers was important to Sarina North staff. There was general agreement amongst staff that their colleagues were competent and supportive. Overall, internal faculty cohesion was good and faculty concerns were linked to systemic deficiencies such as inadequate teaching resources rather than, for example, inappropriate teacher practices. Moreover, since teachers focussed their professional effort primarily in the classroom, trust that related to their teaching was especially valued. Cheryl's trust of classroom teachers thus effectively endorsed what teachers believed to be fundamental to their role, namely competency in teaching and learning in the classroom. Cheryl's readiness to entrust in middle-ranking and senior teachers' efforts included involving several of them in a review of junior teachers' performances. Those involved were pleased to have had the opportunity to review colleagues' work performances, and to have the chance to evaluate elements of the profession's reward system. Their involvement represented a measure of Cheryl's trust in their ability as decision makers.

Teachers identified a few of Cheryl's personal and professional qualities which they believed explained their trust in her. Being knowledgeable, hardworking and competent with office duties were, for example, characteristics that teachers linked with their trusted principal. Her displaying confidentiality,

integrity, and concern for teachers also engendered trust in Cheryl's leadership. Cheryl's sharing of information which teachers perceived as relevant to their interests also enhanced their trust in her. Occasional addresses from Cheryl on a school position, such as on student 'poaching', served to remind teachers of some of Cheryl's values. In the main, her values were in concert with those of her teachers. Her addresses also served to remind teachers of codified school positions. In that way teachers were able to see links with past decisions and with all of their shared values.

**Question 2: How does what principals are required to implement with teachers affect mutual trust?**

Cheryl's need to attend a large number of out-of-school meetings often was not accepted by staff. Some teachers not convinced of how the school or students benefited from her being gone so frequently. The teachers also perceived the volume of DoE centrally- or regionally-linked meetings as unnecessary and thus unhelpful to the school's operations. This pattern of Cheryl's behaviour reduced the trust which many teachers had in her.

The DoE-imposed change in what was required of the principal job was perceived by staff as running counter to the interests of the school or any of its key stakeholders. Indeed, the shift in Cheryl's work toward budgetary and bureaucratic activities and away from instructional leadership was perceived as offering more disadvantages than advantages. This change in the principal's work affected the staff's trust of Cheryl in several respects. Since instructional leadership was seen by teachers as a more important focus for a principal,

Cheryl's extensive efforts in dealing with budgetary and other 'bureaucratic' matters effectively meant that she was regularly engaged in work not perceived by teachers as a high school priority. The DoE-imposed demands on Cheryl to attend to fiscal and allied concerns left her with less time to attend to classroom-linked concerns. In turn, the staff perceived a deskilling of the principal's instructional leadership, and many staff questioned the appropriateness of Cheryl enacting a veto over curriculum recommendations from staff. In effect, this represented a rites of passage argument from teachers. In other words, due to the changed nature of the principal's work, the status of her knowledge and collaboration was considered inadequate by teachers to justify using a veto. By contrast, teachers perceived their own curriculum knowledge to be current and legitimate, in part, because they had collaborated extensively with one another on curriculum matters.

Cheryl's new out-of-school role left her unable to support staff instructional leadership as she once had. Moreover, her skills and knowledge about staff's instructional concerns did not remain current. The new role also meant, from a staff perspective, that Cheryl was not in a 'legitimate' position to insist or override them about instructional matters. Yet at the same time, the DoE-induced role change had actually increased the principal's authority to override or veto a within-school recommendation. Unfortunately Cheryl's "increased" authority was illegitimate in the eyes of teachers. Put simply, the DoE-initiated role change had resulted in a lowering of the principal's authoritative voice with her staff, despite the system-wide formal authority

which attached to the changing principalship.

Teachers remained unconvinced that the overall direction of public education was positive. Thus, when requests of staff emanated from head office, and, in turn, were conveyed through Cheryl, the staff viewed them as flawed. Within the school staff's perception of flaws in the external system often translated into flaws or shortcomings of the principal herself. In everyday life, the result was fear of Cheryl enacting leadership judgement on instructional concerns and an absence of trust in, and frustration with, that aspect of her work and her principalship. It also resulted in various forms of resistance surfacing amongst staff, one of which was teacher-to-teacher complaining about Cheryl's actions.

Cheryl had noticed an obvious and widespread form of resistance from teachers, that of them complaining amongst themselves. When she actively intervened to implement the DoE-imposed Curriculum Standards Framework (CSFs), teacher resistance increased. While she trusted teachers' ability to implement the new curriculum programs, she could not trust their attitude to follow through on this initiative. Unconvinced of benefits to teachers and students of the implementation of the new curricula, relative to the teacher costs of doing so, staff were not keen to relinquish current programs. Unfortunately Cheryl's actions in leading the change were understood by the principal and teachers to be little different to what principals Victoria-wide were now required to do.

Both Cheryl and staff also understood that the work required to achieve

the development of new programs was inadequately resourced. Time allowances, for example, had not been built into the resources provided by the DoE to meet this demand. The requirement for schools to implement the CSFs thus placed principals in a difficult position with teachers. The principal was faced with an imperative, while the teachers believed that the initiative should be justified educationally, open to critical judgement, and, if then found acceptable to local school needs, additionally resourced. Cheryl's act of competing teachers of the initiative immediately introduced the prospect of different interests being pursued. Efforts to implement this non-negotiable initiative thus diminished the amount of trust each party had in the other.

**Question 3: How does trustworthy leadership contribute to school culture?**

Teachers and their principal believed that a supportive collegial culture existed at Sarina North. In the main, teachers perceived support of colleagues—by the principal or themselves—to be an important professional obligation. The collegial culture was enacted frequently on a faculty basis and was also evident in dealings between teachers and the principal. Supportive actions included positive interpersonal relationships.

In contrast to supportive interactions teachers regarded even routine 'failed' interactions as disconcerting and frustrating. Affirming interpersonal relations, part of a prized norm at Sarina North, and symbolising collegial respect and recognition, represented an intrinsic source of satisfaction for

teachers who identified their efforts as one of the few positive aspects of public education. No teacher referred to the extrinsic reward system as being an adequate source of satisfaction. Indeed the annual determinations of higher duties payments and additional time allocations were a source of dissatisfaction to many because of their perceived insufficiency relative to the skill or time required to perform duties.

Teachers were confident of Cheryl's administrative knowledge and skills. They believed her attention to detail was sound and that she was effective in declining, and thereby limiting, some of the numerous requests of teachers and the school which emanated from external agencies. Despite being perceived as too oriented toward money and meetings, elements of Cheryl's administrative work demonstrated concern for teachers. Teachers regarded her as highly efficient at identifying teacher or school entitlements which they thought ought to have been, but were not, provided to Sarina North by central or regional DoE authorities. Teachers widely noted her attention to fairness in her treatment and concern for others about entitlements. Indeed, fairness and concern for others at Sarina North was what Cheryl and teachers believed students ought to receive from them, and they expected fairness and concern to operate at a collegial level as well.

In one-to-one dealings with the principal when a teacher had a personal problem, Cheryl's confidentiality was perceived as being highly reliable. Her confidentiality with teachers also was consistent with the respect and concern that, teachers believed they deserved. Respect and concern was not a form of

leadership, on the other hand, they perceived as being provided by the DoE. On these matters and in committee meetings with staff, Cheryl was regarded as being non-opportunistic with the knowledge she gained or her position. For example, rather than use her extensive knowledge of DoE policies to 'win' an argument in meetings, she often adopted a collegial role and let other committee members make a decision.

By listening to her occasional staff addresses teachers believed they could identify Cheryl's values and beliefs, many of which staff perceived to be similar to those shared with one another. The recognition by some teachers that Cheryl variously intervened to support some particularly disadvantaged students also coalesced with the staff culture of inclusion and the principle of equity which teachers promoted in classes.

For many staff Cheryl's long-tenure at the school, including the long hours which she worked, paralleled their deep commitment. By and large, Sarina North staff were satisfied to be working with one another. Their general satisfaction with teaching was often diminished by actions initiated outside the school. Usually the source was the DoE—the same catalyst to forced actions that temporarily discouraged Cheryl. Thus, many teachers perceived that Cheryl, like themselves, had a strong attachment to Sarina North and that much of their school life provided professional satisfaction.

In just over two decades, most Sarina North teachers had worked under eight Victorian Ministers of Education, each of whom had distinctive priorities and goals for schools. Despite the uniqueness of each Minister's initiatives,



teachers felt that the system-wide innovations, they had 'seen them before'. By contrast, with much of Cheryl's leadership, teachers perceived a consistency and a preference to working with teachers rather than imposing on them.

**Sarina East Secondary College**

**Principal: Ms. Jane Reid**

**Question 1: What do principal's do to engender and maintain trust with teachers?**

By and large, the Sarina East staff trusted Jane because of several of her personal and professional qualities and because they saw her acting in their interests. In particular, teachers appreciated Jane's maintenance of collaborative processes which had been operating at the school for many years. That collaboration enabled teachers to influence much of the school's organisational arrangements. Jane's readiness to work with staff collaboratively enhanced staff trust because they viewed her acting in a manner consistent with how she had behaved as a teacher at the school. In effect the collaboration with colleagues that she had valued then as a teacher, she continued to value as a principal.

Through collaboration, teachers believed they continued to have some influence over maintenance of work conditions. With the system-wide resource cuts, however, schools were left to implement the outcomes from the cuts. Yet, at the same time, schools had some leeway for determining which programs or areas would be least and hardest hit. The opportunity to minimise the effects of the cuts and an attempt to preserve widely-valued initiatives was appreciated by teachers.

The teachers also perceived Jane's negotiating skills as a basis of their

trust in her. Her achievements at successfully reducing the quantum of DoE-initiated cuts suffered by the school enabled fewer losses to be suffered. For example, teachers perceived that, the reduced administrative and planning time they now had would have been less without Jane's efforts. On this important concern Jane was recognised as being supportive of teachers.

Some teachers were not sure they could rely on Jane's confidentiality, in relation to keeping private matters from other colleagues, should they require it. This perception was a source of concern amongst many teachers and qualified their trust of the principal. Teachers were pleased that Jane trusted them as classroom instructors. Two strategies employed by Jane were perceived to be effective indicators of her trust of teachers in their instruction. Jane's non interference in classrooms and, to a lesser extent, positive feedback to teachers were interpreted by staff as an indicator of the principal's trust in them. She was also perceived as honestly sharing organisational information with teachers, which was particularly valued by teachers who wanted to make informed policy decisions. It also was important because teachers' external information networks had been reduced in recent years. In addition, teachers regarded Jane as knowledgeable and hardworking, both of which engendered trust in her principalship.

**Question 2: How does what principals are required to implement with teachers affect mutual trust?**

In the main, teachers accurately perceived changes which the DoE required Jane to implement at Sarina East. Teachers identified reductions in

costs, different record-keeping methods, new Curriculum Standards Framework (CSFs) as having emanated from the DoE. Moreover, they did not believe the changed role of the principal was in schools' or the teachers' best interests. For Sarina East, the effect of pressures from the DoE meant that much of Jane's time had to be spent in meetings and on cost-saving drives. The educational focus which most teachers believed should characterise a principal's work was not evident, undermining on the trust that many of them had in Jane. The teachers thought that two aspects of school life were suffering: Jane was showing an inadequate knowledge of classroom events, including teacher classroom performance, and she was not seen as demonstrating instructional leadership. Thus, the principal's shift away from what teachers considered to be important principal responsibilities for instruction and the classroom had resulted in a knowledge and skill gap which affected many staff negatively.

Teachers' trust of Jane was challenged most by her responsibility for restructuring. Although the prospect was only in its infancy at Sarina East, Jane's raising of the restructuring issue had already threatened the trust many staff had in her. At the same time, she was conscious of the need to position the school in order to secure the future. The fears of job loss, student exclusion, and staff disunity which were raised by the prospect of reorganisation positioned many staff apart from their principal.

Teachers tried to contend with the prospect of significant losses should the reorganisation proceed. The rewards, should they acquiesce, were items for students such as extra monies for computers, which teachers believed should

properly have been supplied by the DoE, with no caveats or conditions attached. By contrast, Jane's view extended more broadly and embraced both teachers' concerns and the need to advise strategically the school's staff, parents, and school council about the most viable way to secure the school's future.

As both Jane and teachers were aware, the principal was also obligated to do justice to the DoE's 'invitation' to restructure. Some teachers believed that Jane was providing staff with impartial reorganisation advice, others perceived her briefings as advice that assisted the DoE's 'case' for reorganisation; still others were unclear. By and large, those in doubt and those who were not convinced of the balanced nature of the briefings, wanted to, but felt that they could not, trust the impartiality of Jane's advice. In effect, they had not extended their trust to her but were prepared to, at a later point. To give her their trust they wanted to be convinced that the advice was developed with the best interests of the school and key stakeholders in mind. They also wanted to believe that, should a decision to proceed to structure be taken, the strategy would work. On this last matter, both the teachers who trusted Jane's briefings and those who did not, were as one. If a restructuring plan was agreed to, it needed to succeed.

Across staff, teachers believed that if the restructuring proceeded, the DoE would save money as a result. The possibility that the school might not achieve its part of any arrangement was feared by many teachers. The apparent failure by the DoE to subsequently abide by the terms of previous restructuring agreements led teachers to wonder whether that would again occur.

Amongst staff whose trust of Jane was effectively 'on hold', many were unsure whether their principal's obligations to the DoE would enable the staff and administration to be united on school reorganisation. As well, teachers were unsure about Jane's strategic ability to lead effectively, given the DoE's preference for reorganisation. Teachers wanted to feel confident of the plan to which they would commit.

Teachers perceived the direction of public education in Victoria to be negative and nominated the place of public education and resource shortfalls as problematic. The efforts of teachers and the continued survival of public education were identified as positive developments within the overall trend. The survival of public education had, several perceived, occurred despite the treatment it had suffered at the hands of the State Government.

### **Question 3: How does trustworthy leadership contribute to school culture?**

Although morale of staff was reported as being low at Sarina East, teachers regarded their own job satisfaction as typically being at a mid point. By and large, teachers at Sarina East were satisfied with their efforts at school. They were, however, unimpressed by many of the features of their work place. Inadequate resources, stressed colleagues, and students not receiving the education support teachers deemed necessary negatively influenced morale. Jane's trustworthy leadership was an indirect but important factor in teachers' job satisfaction. The prized norm of collaboration, which Jane actively supported, was a vital part of teachers' professional identity. So valued was teacher collaboration that they consistently gave up to 4 hours of their personal

time each week of the school year to do so. The 4 hours for collaboration were additional to other personal time teachers gave to their work. Fifty hour weeks were worked by most teachers so that they could continue to influence organisational and educational priorities at Sarina East. For many teachers, Jane's ongoing support of this process enabled them to regard her as one of 'them'.

The maintenance of collaboration was perceived as having been achieved at a time when other school staffs had relinquished or lost involvement in school-based decision making. Teachers also regarded Jane as being trustworthy when they considered this element of her leadership against the practices of less collaborative principals.

In the main, teachers also believed that collegial support was a professional obligation owed to one another at Sarina East. This obligation extended to supporting teachers who were stressed. For example, teachers expected Jane, as well as staff, to provide support for teachers who experienced student control problems. Thus, when particular teachers found they were unable to satisfactorily approach Jane over their concerns, teachers told other colleagues about the absence of leadership support.

Of the numerous requests of Sarina East from outside agencies, teachers believed Jane effectively buffered staff from what amounted to many calls on their time and efforts.

Teachers' classrooms efforts had, in recent times, been jeopardised by inadequate funding from the DoE and a student population with increasing

educational needs. Against these circumstances Jane was seen as having successfully negotiated with the DoE to stem the tide of losses that would otherwise have occurred. Jane's actions were, therefore, perceived as being in the interests of staff and students and drew staff trust.

Trustworthy leadership practices were not identified by staff as coming from the DoE. Indeed, many teachers feared what may eventuate should another reorganisation occur. The very prospect of one had raised issues which teachers did not want to face: Job losses and internal destabilisation of staff relations were assumed to be consequences. The DoE reorganisation incentives offered to the school were interpreted as immoral by many. As teachers saw the situation, if they opted to give Sarina East students access to an adequate supply of computers they had to agree to staff losses. Staff considered the reorganisation to be a win-loss prospect, with the DoE expected to win against individual and collective interests at Sarina East.

Jane's role in bringing the reorganisation issue to teacher's attention was, in the main, interpreted by teachers as their principal continuing to value their efforts and involve them in decision making. The possibility that the school, in the course of the reorganisation, might introduce policies which would result in some working class students leaving the school, sat uneasily with many teachers. For example, staff believed many students would not stay at the school if wearing uniforms was made mandatory. Yet most believed Jane's claim that future student numbers had to be shored up and the Sarina East residential demographic was changing and thus it was necessary to attract

middle class students. What teachers were less clear about was how much time the school had in order to stabilise and change its student population.

Because of teachers' classroom commitments they were content to leave the gathering of reorganisation data to Jane. Less clear at the time of this fieldwork was how much trust teachers would put in the projections. By and large, teachers had, and continued to, trust Jane as they trusted other colleagues. What made the (likely) next reorganisation particularly unsettling was that teachers' dependency on Jane (as the information source and strategic guide) had increased, the (employment) environment for students and teachers had worsened. Staff perceived the risks and stakes to be higher and leverage to collaborate, was, due to the goodwill of Jane.

Unlike on some school matters, teachers perceived Jane as having few options, no chance of producing an ideal solution, and a legitimate need to be looking at wider school interests. Hence, the culture of cohesion and inclusion, which, for so long had characterised the work lives of principal and teachers at Sarina East was, at least temporarily, being driven by lower order survival needs.

**Ruthven Secondary College**  
**Principal: Ms. Liz Recinos**

**Question 1: What do principal's do to engender and maintain trust with teachers?**

Liz Recinos pursued what she perceived to be key priorities to buttress the school's student numbers and secure its future. At the same time she used



two strategies with staff which she believed indicated evidence of her trust in their abilities. In general, there was non-interference in teachers' classes by the principal and positive feedback provided. Non interference in teachers' classes affirmed norms of 'turf' and privacy. Most teachers interpreted those actions as evidence of the principal's trust in them. Those strategies supported the staff's perception that Ruthven teachers were doing a good job.

The hard work Liz Recinos demonstrated, including her teaching role and her efforts to strengthen the support to students who struggled academically, was noted by many teachers. Also evident to some teachers was the progress made by her in caring for other aspects of student welfare. Her achievements were improvements which attracted trust. The principal was leading by example and in her short time at the school achieved some wide reaching changes for students.

The principal was perceived by staff as supporting teachers who were not able to perform effectively. Liz's collegial support engendered trust. Many staff who trusted Liz's strategic ability and her plan to save Ruthven. Liz's strategic leadership was particularly valued as it meant that over-entitlement could, in future, be minimised by proactive planning.

At Ruthven, the over entitlement issue appeared as a particularly unwelcome prospect. For likely teacher candidates a forced transfer represented forced change. As well, teachers believed that those 'declared' were increasingly stigmatised. The over entitlement rules norm (a feature in public schools which had been around since the mid 1970s) no longer guaranteed

excess teachers would be given another school posting. Thus, over entitlement brought with it the possibility of non-placement and leave without pay.

The diminished employment safeguards which over entitlement teachers faced and the increased autonomy principals could exercise in the nomination altered some teachers' sense of dependency upon the principal. Many teachers believed the changed overentitlement rules added to the power of the principal, although few expressed their view to Liz.

In terms of the actions Liz had taken in the past on over-entitlement matters, she believed that her practices had remained straightforward and open. By still being able 'to look such teachers in the eyes' suggested that Liz was clear in her mind that the determination was fair, given the non-negotiable circumstances that she faced.

**Question 2: How does what principals are required to implement with teachers affect mutual trust?**

Beginning at an early stage in Liz's appointment to Ruthven Secondary College, over entitlement staff needed to be declared. Whilst these and subsequent 'excess' occasions caused some teachers to question their trust of the principal, it did not jeopardise Liz's trust of staff who were concerned with the processes in, and end result of, over entitlement. For many teachers their trust of Liz was not called into question by over entitlement. Instead, the responsibility was seen to be an unpleasant one that forced the principal's hand.

For most Ruthven staff the (Curriculum Standards Framework) CSFs were an unwelcome impost which offered few benefits compared to the effort

required in their implementation. Unlike over entitlement situations which directly impacted on the appointments of one or two teachers, the CSF initiative was to apply to all teachers. That Liz was ensuring that the CSFs would be implemented, allied her with the central authorities of the DoE. Her action challenged or diminished the trust some teachers had of her. Rather than the CSFs being interpreted as classroom support or up-dated curricula, many teachers perceived the initiative as requiring more of their time. To give time to the initiative meant, for most teachers, taking time away from other commitments, as teachers already worked about 46 hours each week and they did not want to give more of their private time to the job. Liz's curriculum change efforts therefore were interpreted as being against the interests of teachers.

So far as Liz was concerned, the reluctance of teachers toward implementing the CSFs did not challenge her trust of teachers' abilities. Their reluctance did, however, result in Liz not trusting teachers' attitudes toward curriculum edicts. The resistance which teachers displayed was responded to by Liz through additional principal support of the curriculum coordinator and expected one-to-one discussions with 'resistant' teachers.

The responses of the teachers and principal were perceived by one another as being unhelpful to colleagues and making their own job more difficult. For the principal, the need to implement a key DoE initiative had to prevail. For those who were resisting involvement in the initiative, local teachers' knowledge of what was preferable should have determined whether or

not the CSFs should be implemented.

As well, many Ruthven teachers saw little that was particularly encouraging in Victorian public education apart from its continued existence. The request of teachers to identify positive aspects of public education was the only question which invoked a widespread need for participants to pause prior to responding.

By contrast, few teachers required a pause prior to identifying particularly concerning aspects of public education. Teachers commonly referred to the Department of Education hierarchy as not caring about schools, resource shortages, and the direction of public education.

### **Question 3: How does trustworthy leadership contribute to school culture?**

Ruthven staff had been at the school up to 20 years and hence many had witnessed considerable change. Priorities which, over two decades, were launched by the DoE had waxed and waned, and teachers had 'seen them before'. By contrast, much of the same era had been characterised by job security, career progression, and principal-teacher collaboration.

By the time Liz Recinos took up her position at Ruthven, job security had achieved a qualified and relative status. Career advancements, in the main, had stalled. A culture of entrenchment had been joined by a culture of 'stuck' (for those wanting of a transfer), and a culture of fear (for those unwilling to be declared as 'over entitlement').

The challenge of returning the school to a 'viable' operational size

involved the principal in considerable change-initiation. The changes which Liz made included appointing new teachers to positions of responsibility. Many teachers who, for a long time, had held such positions lost them. Few of those teachers agreed with Liz's decision to not re-appoint them. For many of the newly-appointed holders of senior positions, Liz Recinos was seen as having made these decisions in the interests of achieving changes and ultimately extending the school's length of operation. This latter view was also shared by yet another group of teachers (those who had not sought and/or those who had not been deeply upset by not being awarded positions of responsibility). In their view, the survival of the school was ultimately a more important goal than salary or time 'extras' to many teachers.

The newly-promoted teachers at Ruthven were, in effect, part of a newly created 'moving' culture at Ruthven. The 'moving' group plus the other group of teachers who supported Liz's decision making perceived the principal's leadership to be trustworthy. In turn, there was a preparedness by those two groups of teachers to support, for example, initiatives such as for disadvantaged youth. Making decisions on the basis of their inclusionary principles, despite any inherent difficulties attached to the outcome, reinforced values to which many teachers in those two groups were drawn.

By spearheading an initiative to support students who were experiencing severe learning problems, Liz was seen by staff as being genuine in her concern for students. At the same time, several teachers considered students were being given too much attention whilst teachers' needs were being inadequately

recognised by Liz. A few teachers feared, for example, teacher burn out, due to the efforts of some colleagues. Fears about burn out, frankness, loss of seniority, enforced transfers, and the 'mystery' agendas of the principal featured in the concerns of many Ruthven teachers.

Proactive initiatives, which Liz took for other reasons, provided a counter to some teachers' fears. By establishing a more open committee system, being clear about her intentions, and attempting to buffer teachers from optional external requests of the schools, Liz sought to increase openness and collaboration and, at the same time, to reduce teachers' stress. In the main, these initiatives were accepted by teachers. Nonetheless, what prevailed amongst staff was a strongly held view that larger developments in the education system had made teachers' work more difficult. Rather than challenge this view through protracted discourse, Liz Recinos endeavoured to pursue the priorities which were oriented to students and furthering of the school's life. She believed that complexities which surrounded teachers' workplace concerns required a longer-term, strategic approach if they were to succeed. Teachers' expected that their workplace concerns deserved to be addressed in the short term.

The preparedness of Liz to teach, take extra classes, and do yard duty was an improvement on the practices of the previous principal. Liz's actions were perceived by staff to be especially noteworthy given the principals' increased workloads.

A culture of loss was evident at Ruthven. Over the past decade this

long-serving staff had lost a principal, assistant principal, 50 teachers, and 500 students. Additionally, career prospects and teachers' external 'voice' networks (subject and industrial associations) had been diminished, and the job security of many had been shaken. The school improvement plan which Liz had got underway provided a counter to this culture and, for example, physical improvements to the school's external environment were visible evidence of favourable gains. Recent gains in student numbers at Ruthven also signalled that the negative trends which characterised the past decade, may have been halted. Those positive initiatives by Liz were outnumbered in meaning and volume by the losses which teachers perceived schools, including Ruthven, had suffered. They nonetheless were perceived by many staff as being early evidence of the principal's and Ruthven's capacity to achieve.

### **Cross Site Analysis**

The analysis now attempts to "build a general explanation that fits each of the cases, even though the cases ... vary in their details" (Yin, 1984, p. 108). The analysis is again organised around the three research questions.

#### **Question 1: What do principal's do to engender and maintain trust with teachers?**

Many personal and professional characteristics and work practices displayed by principals engendered and maintained trust with teachers. Some characteristics and practices were evident across the sites and others were site-specific. Teachers and principals held similar and different views about which characteristics and practices engendered trust with teachers. All principals

claimed to have trust in, almost, if not all, teachers' classroom abilities and symbolised this through their non-interference in the classroom. Principals believed their compliments to individual teachers also evidenced trust.

In the main, teachers believed they were trusted by their principals. The principal's non-interference in the classroom was identified as an indicator of a principal's trust in a classroom teacher. This practice was usually appreciated by teachers.

When principals' non-interference in the classroom was interpreted as being related to the new principal role, or the demands of other work priorities, teachers did not believe that the 'non-appearances' engendered trust. In those circumstances, teachers perceived a principal had no choice but to trust.

Teachers often perceived their principals as knowledgeable, which was trust-engendering because teachers could rely on the principal to locate responses to, or direct, their inquiries. Nonetheless, much of these principals' knowledge and work priorities were perceived by teachers as being increasingly about 'money, management, and meetings'. The bureaucratic development had occurred at the expense of students, teachers, and curriculum. Across the four sites it was clear that teachers' understanding of principals' altered role was conceptual. Teachers did not have a detailed grasp of what principals' new work involved.

Principals, of course, had a clear and detailed grasp of the extent of their recent and dramatic role change. Principals acknowledged the increasing volume of meetings, paperwork, and financial matters which characterised their



job. One consequence of the additional time devoted to such bureaucratic duties was an 'arms-length' involvement in curriculum program development. Thus, the role change made instructional leadership more difficult for principals. Concerns which principals had about the role change in the job were, however, put to the side, so as to get on with the job. Teachers, by contrast, did not bracket their perceptions of the role change and its meanings and, for example, expected an ethic of care would characterise any interaction between themselves and their principal. Irrespective of how busy principals were, teachers expected to be spoken to in a courteous manner.

Whilst the principals had the opportunity and authority to take cost-saving actions at the expense of particular teachers, by, for example, hiring a junior teacher to replace a more senior teacher, they chose other strategies and in so doing, helped to maintain teacher trust. Similarly, by principals endeavouring to downplay their power differential with teachers, teacher trust was aided. Practices by principals which encouraged critical dialogue were particularly effective in drawing teacher trust. Those principals' work practices were interpreted by teachers as being in teachers' best interests.

Teachers across the four sites were able to indicate overall, whether or not they trusted their principal. As well as responding in the affirmative (as most did) or the negative, teachers detailed specific domains (characteristics and work practices) which engendered trust. Valued characteristics and work practices that were perceived to be missing in their principal were frequently nominated. Through observation, for example, teachers made judgements about

their principal's interactions with other teachers. What teachers observed often contributed to teachers' trust in their principal.

Teachers' experiences with other principals also were used by many teachers as one standard against which to gauge the trust of their present principal. In particular, teachers' past experiences of low, or no, trust in a principal were regarded unfavourably and were often associated with low job satisfaction. Few of the participating teachers in this study experienced such an absence of trust in their principal.

Embedded in teachers' comments concerning trust in their principal were indicators of their expectations, obligations, and interests. Many of the expectations and obligations which teachers believed in and valued strongly, formed part of their professional identity. Expectations and obligations, in effect, provided the criteria which were used by teachers to judge whether a principal's characteristic or work practice was in their, or valued others', interests.

In short, principals characteristics and practices which engendered and maintained trust with teachers included trusting colleagues, having integrity, being knowledgeable, confidential, and caring. Encouraging critical dialogue was particularly effective in attracting teacher trust. Downplaying power differentials and using non-exploitative approaches in dealings with teachers also aided trust. Treating other colleagues courteously or in other supportive ways, contributed to teachers' trust of their principal .

Maintaining an emphasis on what teachers perceived to be core school

'business'—students, teachers, and curriculum—also engendered and maintained trust with teachers. The importance of these characteristics and practices was underscored most when they were absent. A perceived failure to honour confidences, entertain critical dialogue, address teachers courteously, focus on students, teachers, and curriculum, qualified the trust teachers had in their principals.

Teachers identified in overall or absolute terms, whether or not they trusted their principal. That is, when asked about the extent to which they trusted their principal, in effect, teachers' responded, "overall, yes" or "overall, no". Although this overall dimension of teachers' trust in their principals was noteworthy, greater detail was revealed in the domain-specific, relational, and comparative dimensions of teacher trust. It is these dimensions which provided the particulars about teachers' perceptions of principals' efforts to engender and maintain trust.

**Question 2: How does what principals are required to implement with teachers affect mutual trust?**

Teachers and principals believed that non-negotiable initiatives from the DoE were the most common catalyst to a loss of mutual trust. The type of initiatives from the DoE which challenged, and often diminished teachers' trust of the principal were those which were perceived to be against the key interests of teachers.

The two initiatives which were most problematic were the Curriculum Standards Framework (CSFs) and over entitlement staffing. As teachers perceived the initiative, the externally-imposed CSFs had not been accompanied

by a convincing justification for their implementation. Instead, teachers believed the emphasis in what was communicated to them was the imperative to comply. Principals were, because of their line-management role, required to ensure implementation of the initiative. Because the task of implementing new school-wide programs was considerable and time-consuming, principals invariably were linked with promotion of the CSFs over time. Thus, at two schools where the CSFs had been put forward for implementation, principals were being identified with curriculum that teachers found to be unnecessary. Over time, the 'gap' in the position of principals and teachers in these two schools did not improve. Principals' responsibility to implement the initiative remained, yet teachers claimed the arguments mounted to justify the effort of program change continued to be unconvincing. Whereas the principals were faced with a policy implementation task, teachers wanted educational grounds for altering programs. Two of the schools in this study were yet to deal with the CSFs in an intensive way, it seemed, because one school was dealing with post-reorganisation effects and the other was focussed on the prospect of again entering into reorganisation.

Teachers at the four sites variously referred to similar policy initiatives which had, in earlier years, also been accompanied by a request for teachers to put in considerable effort to change their curriculum. Most of these teachers had also witnessed as many as eight Ministers of Education enter and exit the Victorian education scene. As many of these Ministers was identified with various changes that had since lapsed, teachers were convinced that the

considerable time investment required by the CSFs would meet the same fate.

Because the educational merits of the CSFs were, by and large, overshadowed by the themes of compliance and force-choice, principals and teachers, were, in effect, positioned at odds to one another. Resisting teachers perceived that they held the educational 'high-ground' on the issue. Perceiving that there was little choice but to implement the CSFs as required, two principals continued to do so. Their efforts were expected to continue until programs changed.

The good faith which principals exhibited to the DoE over this initiative was not interpreted as such by many teachers. Being linked with an initiative that provided compelling, rather than convincing grounds to be involved, risked the credibility of principals' instructional leadership.

The endorsements which principals' organisations regularly offered to the Government in their first four years of office were interpreted by many teachers as being in the interests of principals rather than teachers or students. Teachers understood that principals had been given more power and autonomy since Victoria's change of government. Teachers were cognisant of having a different relationship with government than they had had with the previous government. Rather than being marked by reciprocity of the kind enjoyed by principals and the government (policy support received by government, enhanced autonomy and salaries for principals), teachers regarded their decision making and 'voice' as having been restricted. Despite their perception that teachers were without an organisation which was 'heard' by their employer,

teachers remained confident of their capacity to contribute to curriculum.

Teachers used their curriculum knowledge and skills when they questioned implementing the CSFs and they expected principals to discuss the initiative on those terms. Time constraints and the imperative to implement the initiative, however, limited principals' capacity to respond with lengthy educational arguments.

Ambivalence and resistance which characterised much of the teacher response toward curriculum change at Ruthven and Sarina North had not diminished their principals' trust in teachers' abilities. However, principals were not able to rely on teachers' attitudes being positive or cooperative. Principals thus felt compelled to take more of a lead role in the implementation process than they might otherwise have done.

While none of the four principals or their staffs could speak favourably of over entitlement situations, it was principals who were put in the difficult situation of having to nominate which teachers would be relinquished. Teachers and principals were aware that almost no teacher wanted to be named.

Unlike in the 1980s and early 1990s, when several teachers may have volunteered to leave, this was no longer so. The reciprocity built into the earlier over entitlement rules no longer necessarily applied. Previously a preparedness to volunteer had been, in effect, supported by the DoE centre ensuring that over entitlement teachers were transferred to other, usually suitable (to the excess teachers), schools.

The current transfer prospects could no longer be assured by the DoE

and this loss of reciprocity had been responded to by teachers' showing a lack of willingness to volunteer. Over entitlement was perceived by teachers to have a stigma attached to it, which implied that those nominated were not as good as those who were 'within' entitlement. Many teachers spoke of the fear created by the prospect of over entitlement, due to the stigma and uncertainty associated with being in excess.

When teachers perceived the selection processes (which a principal employed to determine which teacher/s were nominated) as opaque, then trust of the principal was challenged. In a few instances, where decisions had been interpreted as manifestly inappropriate, trust was diminished. By and large, across the four sites, teachers perceived their principals as acting very ethically on matters of over-entitlement.

Non-negotiable initiatives which teachers' perceived as being both in their key interests, and adequately resourced, sometimes added to teachers' trust of the principal. Some caution is necessary here because, across the four sites, teachers overwhelmingly perceived school initiatives as being characterised by inadequate resource support. For example, additional support for students who experienced language acquisition difficulties was a statewide initiative which teachers welcomed. Yet teachers believed schools were inadequately resourced to genuinely enable the initiative to succeed.

Overall or absolute trust between teachers and principals was not negatively affected by non-negotiable initiatives. However, elements of domain trust in particular, and relational trust were jeopardised by initiatives which

teachers perceived to be against their, or valued others', key interests. Key interests which were advanced by an initiative which was inadequately resourced also sometimes challenged teachers' trust of their principal.

As well as identifying similarities from across the four case studies, considering noteworthy differences is also important. Although three of the schools had experienced a reorganisation, only one had 'won', despite having suffered severe losses as a consequence of the reorganisation. Kandos teachers and their principal had been at the 'front-line' in an attempt to ensure the school's survival, which ultimately was achieved. Sarina East and Ruthven had both been reorganised more than once. Each time a reorganisation took place, staff claimed the schools ended up with fewer resources. These were events where, according to teachers, schools invariably lost. Each reorganisation resulted in a further depletion of resources. The pattern of losing more teachers, for example, with each reorganisation, served to cumulatively affect teachers' workloads. Attempts by both principals to minimise the extent of losses were noted by teachers despite the principals not being able to alter the essential features and consequences of reorganisation.

The extreme determination which was required of Kandos teachers and principal during their reorganisation resulted in heightened sense of trust of each other. In particular, teachers were in no doubt that their principal had, at times, been subjected to harsh treatment by their employer, in an effort to discourage her interest in the school surviving. This established beyond any Kandos teacher's doubt, an extraordinary preparedness to risk oneself for the sake of the



students and school. In other words, the principal was perceived as being thoroughly committed to the 'collective good'.

Because the principal and teachers at Kandos were positioned and operated 'as one', so far as reorganisation was concerned, mutual trust was enhanced. The frankness of opinion that all teachers considered they could share with their principal was accompanied by a confidence that any differences of opinion would not be treated punitively by the principal.

In the other three schools, teachers believed their principals were more frequently positioned with the DoE, rather than themselves on educational issues. Although individual teachers at those schools considered they could be frank and or disagree with their respective principal, the view it was not widely-shared.

Hence, the extent to which the teachers and principal at Kandos combined as one, and in so doing, relied on each other, in the face of their school's reorganisation, created lasting and considerable mutual trust. Teachers at Kandos, as well as their principal, considered that their efforts to save the school were often risky, in terms of their employment.

Teachers at two schools had not been faced with a 'final' reorganisation, that is, one where the school faced extinction. Instead, theirs, in effect, involved repeated losses or 'downsizing'. Though dreaded by teachers at Ruthven and Sarina East, reorganisation did not give rise to highly organised campaigns of protest and their subsequent protests and disquiet, overall, remained school-based. The absence of principals and teachers combining in such way meant

that the degree of reliance upon each other was never developed.

What characterised the efforts at Kandos to ensure the school's future was a sense of agency. That is, at Kandos there was an open, reflective, and active capacity to achieve collectively. Teachers at the other three schools did not have a sense that they could overturn a key DoE initiative through open conflict. By staff not identifying 'as one' and being prepared to campaign actively in response to reorganisations, there was no prospect, at Ruthven and Sarina East, of teachers engaging their principals in such a process. Instead, teachers relied more heavily on the efforts of their principals to negotiate and minimise losses within a DoE framework.

Department of Education policies which staff agreed with and that principals implemented contributed to mutual trust between teachers and principals. In those circumstances teachers clearly recognised the considerable administrative knowledge and skills of their principals. In turn, principals' trust of teachers was maintained because their implementation was not subject to considerable resistance.

### **Question 3: How does trustworthy leadership contribute to school culture?**

When teachers consistently perceived leadership from the principal which was congruent with the aspects of the school's culture which they valued, mutual trust was enhanced and a strengthening of shared expectations occurred. Across the sites principals evidenced characteristics and work practices which commonly were perceived to be trustworthy. There were also site-specific preference by teachers for particular characteristics and work practices. These

preferences were differences in detail rather than principle, for example, teachers at the four schools valued integrity in a principal. How each principal created a perception of integrity, that is, through what they did, varied. By way of a further example, an instance which was universally valued at one school for its existence—the ability to engage in critical dialogue with their principal—was not present to such an extent in the other three schools. Yet teachers preferred exchanges with principals to be characterised by an absence of fear from repercussions for engaging in critical dialogue.

In addition, at each of the four sites staff regarded themselves and their principals as hardworking. The principals' practice of working hard, therefore, was congruent with what teachers' valued and their efforts at these schools. Similarly, across the four sites, teachers' expectation that classroom competencies were a key teacher obligation was complemented by an expectation of principal competency.

This mirroring of school culture through leadership characteristics and practices, in effect, reinforced what both teachers and principals valued and strengthened shared expectations about school life. This was particularly important for teachers because those characteristics and practices not only reinforced school culture but also aided teachers' individual trust of the principal. When a principal was perceived, for example, to entertain critical dialogue, teachers were more inclined to question the principal directly, on a one-to-one basis. The culture of critique evident across Kandos, for example, was reinforced by the principal but also enabled individual teachers to

participate more fully. An absence of fear of being frank enabled Kandos teachers to individually put forward what they, as with the staff, believed to be in the school's best interests.

The culture of critique was not present across the entire staff at the other three schools. This often resulted in teachers refraining from frankly sharing their views and an absence of teachers contributing in staff meetings. Frequently those teachers limited what they said to their principal, on a one-to-one basis.

Whilst at one school teachers' resentment of their principal's veto capacity in curriculum prevailed (and was made worse by the prospect that it might be used again), at another school teachers were frustrated by, and unconvinced of the need to re-write the curriculum. In another school there was disaffection with the perceived lack of confidentiality. Although these particular events were unique to each school, they were the same in outcome, in terms of a culture of critique.

The extent of teachers' resentment felt over these, and other school events which were negatively linked to the principal, was rarely conveyed directly to the principal. This resulted in principals often being denied the opportunity to discuss or debate claims which pertained to, for many teachers, sizeable grievances. Hence, conversations, for example, between teachers were usually more frank and highly prized than those with a principal.

In turn, these differential ways of exchanging critical dialogue calibrated schools' norm of continuous improvement. That is, regardless of the

reasonableness, or accuracy, of teachers' perceptions about events which they deemed to be inappropriate, their resultant teacher-to-teacher dialogue was oriented to better ways of their school operating. Embodied in teachers' dialogue was their expectation of how schools should be. In the instance of a concern about a lack of principal confidentiality, for example, was the expectation that school principals should be confidential.

By teachers not including principals in many such conversations, principals were effectively locked out of contributing to improvements via this forum for collegial reflection and analysis. The restricted dialogue which characterised many teachers' associations with their principals also underscored an assumption that principals' expectations were different to, and hence not shared with teachers. Yet, for those teachers across the four sites who did engage in frank conversations with their principal, dialogue provided a means of verifying whether their own assumptions and expectations coalesced with those of their principals.

Just as these schools' cultures were comprised of shared expectations of real and preferred ways of school life, so too were teachers' expectations for trustworthy leadership. A perception of insufficient leadership care in teacher-principal interactions, for example, was generally viewed unfavourably by teachers. It was also understood as a shortcoming rather than simply a feature of school life or leadership practice.

Shortcomings in principals' trustworthy leadership were usually domain-specific rather than absolute. As each of these principals consistently evidenced

trustworthy leadership which, in the main, was perceived to be congruent with school culture, their characteristics and practices strengthened culture.

In summary, trustworthy leadership that is congruent with school culture, strengthens shared expectations and trust between principals and teachers. Trustworthy leadership contributes to culture because it affirms what is widely valued by staff, that is, trustworthy leadership responds positively to teachers' expectations of how schools are, or should be. Across the four school sites teachers preferred to be positioned 'as one' with their principal on key issues such as curriculum development.

### **Summary of Principal Findings**

#### **Question 1: What do principals do to engender and maintain trust with teachers?**

A combination of principals' personal and professional characteristics plus work practices engendered and maintained trust with teachers. Trusting in teachers, being knowledgeable, hardworking, caring, confidential, and having integrity were commonly favoured characteristics that attracted teacher trust. Work practices which were non-exploitative, de-emphasised principals' power differentials with teachers, and especially that which encouraged critical dialogue, engendered trust.

Teachers' perceptions of trust in their principals were found to be multidimensional. Four dimensions were evident: absolute, domain-specific, relational, and comparative. In absolute terms teachers indicated, in the affirmative or negative, whether they trusted their principal. In a domain-

specific way they identified particular characteristics and work practices of their principals which were trust engendering. Teachers sometimes nominated perceived domain deficiencies in the course of describing how their principal engendered trust. Although teachers' emphasised what they personally found to be trust inducing, they often took account of situations where the principal related closely with others, particularly teachers. Thus, principals' characteristics and practices in relating to others influenced teachers' perceptions of what engendered trust. Finally, experiences with other principals were sometimes used as a standard by teachers to gauge the extent to which their present principal was engendering trust.

**Question 2: How does what principals are required to implement with teachers affect mutual trust?**

Non-negotiable initiatives from the DoE which teachers perceived as counter to their interests often challenged, and sometimes diminished, teachers' trust in the principal. In those situations teachers often responded to the DoE initiative and sometimes the principal with limited enthusiasm. If teachers' lack of enthusiasm extended to resistance, principals' trust of teachers was often challenged and diminished. Loss of teachers' trust in the principal was usually greater than the principal's loss of trust in teachers. Domain-specific trust of one another was likely to be most at risk. For example, teachers' trust of the principal's curriculum knowledge may have been called into question. A further example was evident when principals' questioned their trust of teachers' attitudes toward implementing curriculum changes. When teachers were unconvinced of the need to reorganise curriculum, they often proceeded slowly.

In turn principals regarded the teachers' hesitation as being due to resistance rather than inability.

The DoE's non-negotiable initiatives which teachers' perceived as being both in their key interests and adequately resourced added to teachers' trust of the principal. In these circumstances implementation was pursued by principals and teachers. On the other hand, if initiatives were not perceived to be adequately resourced, teachers' trust of their principal was challenged and/or diminished. The latter initiatives were often perceived by teachers as being theoretically viable but practically unworkable. Teachers' trust, for example, of the principal's knowledge of remediation programs for illiterate students may have been called into question. Teachers often responded with limited enthusiasm to the initiative and implementation. In turn, the principal's trust of teachers sometimes was challenged by teachers' cautious response to the initiative..

**Question 3: How does trustworthy leadership contribute to school culture?**

When teachers consistently perceived their principal's trustworthy leadership to be congruent with the school's culture, trust of the principal was enhanced and a strengthening of shared expectations occurred. Those shared expectations, or norms, were comprised of real and preferred ways of participating in school life. In effect, consistently trustworthy leadership reinforced both trust between teachers and the principal and school culture. As well, trustworthiness in the principal complemented the trustworthiness which teachers perceived they demonstrated in their classroom work.



Across all sites, teachers experienced difficulty in nominating a particularly encouraging aspect of public education. Of the few encouraging aspects acknowledged, participants consistently recognised teachers' efforts, particularly in the face of increasingly difficult circumstances.

Given the special needs of the student population in each of the schools, and a perception by teachers of their schools being insufficiently funded to respond fully to those needs, the value teachers placed on colleagues, including principals, being trustworthy was considerable. In other words, the educational needs of students were so great and the resources for assisting students so inadequate, that it made vital the need for principal and teachers to work effectively for students—on their own and together.

### **Comparison with Findings in Related Studies**

The finding, here, that it is important for principals to trust in teachers also emerged from studies by Blase and Blase (1994) and Harcher and Hyle (1996). Almost all of the teachers from Kandos, Ruthven, Sarina East, and Sarina North, believed they should be, and deserved to be, trusted in the classroom. Bennis and Townsend (1995) also have argued that leaders must trust if they want to create a trusting workplace ultimately.

That teachers value being trusted by, and being able to trust in, their principal loosely supports Inglehart's (1990) explanation about which citizens are more likely to be trusting. The teachers in this current Australian study were educated professionals who worked in a public and service-oriented enterprise. These types of demographic features are often predictive of post-

materialist citizens.

Moreover, teachers typically contributed at least 6 hours of unpaid work each school week in the performing of their duties, a finding which supports data on teachers' hours of work by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997b). Teachers' willingness to regularly perform unpaid work in their job indicates, in line with Inglehart's description of post-materialist individuals, that they view work as more than a source of income.

Further, by taking account of Inglehart's argument that history and, in particular, the economy one grew up in, play a vital role in an individual's later life predisposition to trust and a post-materialist or materialist outlook, further understandings about this study's participants become contextualised.

The mean age of the 112 teachers was about 40 years, and, using Inglehart's reckoning that the economy of, for example, thirty years ago illuminates present day life, several points can be made. The economy in Australia during the late 1960s, when many teachers were teenagers, was wealthy, increasingly service oriented, and one in which 'full' employment prevailed. As Table 1 displayed, most of this study's teacher cohort entered teaching in the mid-seventies, a time when there were ample job opportunities for graduates who had degrees. In addition, in 1975, a shortage of public school teachers in Victoria existed. Hence, it can be argued that most of those who entered the teaching profession in those years did so in order to satisfy more than merely earning a living. In other words, unlike Inglehart's materialist citizenry, teachers were not driven to maximising individual wealth or

advantage.

As well, it can be argued that in view of the then expanding nature of public education (see, for example, Table 1), that teachers were drawn to a career which was oriented to 'collective good'. Thus, put simply, as postmaterialists, teachers entered the profession because of the prospects of becoming engaged in a public good, in addition to earning an income. In the years since then, one of the key pre-service attractions of the teaching profession has been maintained to the extent that most participants continue to put in the hours of work they deem are necessary to do the job, rather than work only the hours for which they are paid.

Teachers' longstanding interest in contributing to collective good has remained with them in what are now lengthy careers, indicating that teachers, in typical postmaterialist style, have long valued intrinsic aspects of work life. Their interest also helps to explain, as Inglehart theorised was the case with postmaterialists, the importance placed on having trusting interpersonal relation with others. In other words, apart from practical reasons for needing to be trusted in the workplace, trust inheres in the professional lives of teachers and principals.

Participants in this Australian investigation explained that particular characteristics and work practices of principals engendered and maintained teacher trust. The most important principal characteristics included trusting teachers, being knowledgeable, hardworking, caring, confidential, and having integrity. Work practices which engendered trust were non-exploitative, de-

emphasised principals' power differentials with teachers, and in particular, encouraged critical dialogue between teachers and administration. In broad terms, those conditions coalesce with the views of Barber (1983), Bennis and Townsend (1995), and Shaw (1997). Bennis and Townsend asserted that leaders who wish to gain trust of employees needed to demonstrate four essential 'ingredients ... congruity, consistency, caring, and competence ... " (p. 61). Barber (1983) also argued that competence is vital if trust is to be developed. He believed the decision (of others) to trust is often made after an assessment of the leader's competency. Shaw (1997) considered leader competency, as evidenced through the achievements of results, to be a vital component in the development of workplace trust. In a similar way to Bennis and Townsend, Shaw suggested that two further key components, integrity and concern, must be evident in leaders if employees' trust is to be gained.

The four principals in this study variously demonstrated personal and work characteristics that were indicative of integrity, concern, and competence. This Australian study did not reduce the trust-engendering elements of principals to a fixed and finite form that Bennis and Townsend (1995) or Shaw (1997) suggested applies to leaders. The difference between my study and those of the others appears, in one sense, to be a matter of emphasis and interpretation and, in another sense, of research design differences. The inductive nature of this study was not oriented to locating a fixed list of leader features which engendered employee trust. Bennis and Townsend and Shaw drew on several studies, including some with deductive designs, to make their

assertions. Such claims, although different in nature and origin, warrant respect. They offered 'universal' information which was intended to guide organisations regardless of their size, location, and purpose. My study of four Australian principals and 112 of their teacher colleagues was oriented toward uncovering more local and school-specific understandings.

Nonetheless, in a school which has limited resources and students who have a disparate and significant learning difficulties, we would expect that trust-engendering leadership, and trust between principal and teachers, would add to the effectiveness of the school. When, as was evidenced across the four sites in this study, schools are not adequately funded to respond to students' disparate learning needs, principals need to call on teachers to put in additional effort. Indeed, it can be argued that the interdependency of both principal and teachers is greater in such circumstances, if there is a collective commitment to maximising student progress.

Part of the effort provided by teachers, as this study evidenced, is a voluntary one, provided in a context where teachers' typical work week extends well beyond their required hours of duty.

Instead of, or in addition to, seeking more time from teachers, principals may seek to change the way teachers use their 'school' time. Such a qualitative response by principals to the circumstances which face a school may hold one of the keys to capturing of school-based potential.

By trusting teachers, engaging in critical dialogue with them, minimising power differentials, and adopting other trust engendering practices, principals

will induce teachers to respond positively. As this study showed, many teachers responded by trusting in their principal more, and by being more job enfranchised, so far as the school was concerned. This study however, uncovered no evidence to suggest that, under such circumstances, teacher disenchantment with central authorities would change. Alienation from central authorities was almost universal across all four sites. Greater job enfranchisement, when reinforced by a principal who maintains trust with teachers, opens the prospect to principal and teachers then working together to find mutually agreed ways of maximising their school's resources.

This study has provided further understandings about teachers' trust of their principal. Trust is multidimensional—teachers identified, in absolute terms, whether or not they trusted their principal. More informative, in terms of organisational learning and how schools can improve, was teachers' reference to domain-specific dimensions of principals which they did or did not trust. Knowing, for example, that teachers perceive insufficient confidentiality in a principal, and therefore feel unable to discuss private or contentious issues with administrators, may be a helpful catalyst to workplace discourse, the need for changing perceptions, or altering practices.

Teachers' trust of their principal was, in part, formed by comparing experiences they had had with other principals. Observations of how the principal deals with others also have the potential to inform practice. Teachers in this study perceived some practices and particular initiatives which principals were required to implement, as being against teachers', or valued others',

interests. Putnam's longitudinal study of Italian citizens and regions showed that where such stakeholders identified their interests as extending beyond just themselves, greater trust was evident in the region. The high-trust regions of Italy were also more efficiently governed.

The obligations and expectations of teachers were influential in determining whether, for example, a curriculum initiative was in their students' interests. These obligations and expectations often appeared to be linked to teachers' professional identity and each school's culture. If an initiative, in effect, breached a valued school norm, it was usually interpreted as not being in teacher's interests. This interpretation had likely negative implications for implementation. It also may have impacted on trust of the principal. Coleman (198), Giddens (1991), Lewicki and Bunker (1996), and Luhmann (1980) also suggested that obligations and expectations play a role in a decision to trust. Coleman believed that a complex web of networks and norms can combine, for example, to create a strong group or community expectation for trust. In turn, supportive networks and norms will have emphasised the need for individuals to honour the obligation, by being trustworthy. Giddens (1991) took a similar view arguing that trust was a catalyst to action. Coleman also identified trust as being catalytic.

In most social systems a complicated set of time-consuming and intricate networks and relationships can be found. When trust exists, Luhmann (1980) argued, some of these social-psychological complexities can be transcended. An expectation that trust will prevail in a social system or interpersonal

transaction may extinguish the need for intricate safeguards to keep everyone safe.

Lewicki and Bunker (1996) noted the role which expectations play in influencing whether trust is developed between individuals. Also important to the development of trust, according to Lewicki and Bunker was an assessment which individuals made of the risks and context which they faced. Teachers and principals in this study were cognisant of the new educational context in which they found themselves. The assessment by teachers of whether their, or valued others', interests were being variously advanced, jeopardised or diminished lends support to Poole's (1996) argument that instrumental and social concerns figure in school-based collective trust.

The teachers in this study, were already typically adding in an extra 6 hours of private time each week to their work. Few wanted to give any more hours to their work. So, when a principal asked teachers to rewrite programs because of an externally-driven requirement, principals—as many teachers perceived it—were asking teachers either to put in extra time and effort or to stop doing existing tasks that teachers' valued. The amount of time teachers were prepared to 'give' to the school was at maximum. Thus, existing time-use required changes so as to enable curriculum re-writing to take place within, for example, a 46 hour week. Added work time was unsatisfactory to many teachers because they were expected to sacrifice the effort they put toward 'worthwhile' work for a curriculum which they perceived offered students little or no improvement over the existing curriculum. As Poole's (1996) study



showed, tasks which teachers considered were unnecessary threatened to reduce teacher trust. In this study, the principal had the system task of ensuring that teachers would comply with many such changes.

Moreover, this study produced evidence of a limiting of the amount of teachers' private time that they were prepared to give to the job due, in part, to a perception of past 'mistreatment' by the Department of Education. Teachers perceived their employer as having acted in extremely unsatisfactory ways toward public education and their local school. The critical response of teachers (to reduce their generosity in the face of a deemed loss of generosity on the part of an employer) represented a very negative form of employee-employer reciprocity. Poole's study, like this one, showed that when teachers perceive key features of the school to be awry, they react with resistance to change, including collegial talk and ambivalence. It may also, as Poole observes, include compliance.

As with this study, Poole documented how teacher trust of principals in the United States can be jeopardised if norms of control and hierarchy are employed to ensure implementation. The current study depicts the trust which principals may risk losing if they are linked with non-negotiable implementation programs over an extended time. Principals' specific knowledge or skills may be called into question, which, in effect, amounts to teachers questioning aspects of principal competency. As Poole indicated, teachers identify themselves as legitimate school members and competent classroom practitioners. They expect that a measure of autonomy should be attached to their work. They do not

appreciate discounting their professional knowledge and skills because of an hierarchical mandate.

Australian teachers also perceived themselves as knowledgeable and legitimate school stakeholders. By contrast, teachers questioned the standing and competency of central authorities who limited teacher decision-making and proceeded to employ authority as a means of gaining teacher compliance.

When principals in this study operated in ways that were congruent with their schools' culture, the trust between principals and teachers was enhanced. Although Rossman, Corbett, and Firestone's (1988) study of school culture did not explore trust, it showed that cultures of different schools vary. Whilst school cultures evidence, as Rossman et al. indicated, some universal themes—be they national, state, or district—they also comprise the local responses to educational concerns.

The finding by Rossman et al. (1988) underscored the need to recognise that trustworthy leadership is best understood when the culture of a principal's school is taken into account. The participants in this study showed that there are some characteristics and work practices of principals which commonly engender trust across sites. The characteristics are trusting teachers, being knowledgeable, hardworking, caring, confidential, and having integrity. The work practices are non-exploitative, de-emphasise power differentials with teachers, and, in particular, encourage critical dialogue. In schools that have a similar profile to those in this study it is therefore likely that, for example, caring work practices by principals will engender teachers' trust.

As well, in schools in which there is a culture of critique, it is likely that teachers' trust of the principal would be maintained, at least in part, when teacher criticisms produce no negative reactions of the principal.

More importantly perhaps, the study showed the importance of school-based understandings of culture being sensitively comprehended so that trust between principals and teachers could be maintained. The emphasis which teachers across the four sites placed on being able to pursue their classroom roles coalesces with findings by Lortie (1975) and McLaughlin, Pfeifer, Swanson-Owens, and Yee (1986). Although teachers' concerns about their classes manifested itself in different ways at each of the schools, they highlight the key importance that teachers continue to assign to teaching and learning.

The finding in this study that the pressure on principals to serve the larger system has made demonstrating instructional leadership in their school more difficult, lends support to Harcher and Hyle's (1996) investigation. The increasing requirement of the four principals to attend to administrative work—which once had been performed by central support services—reduced their opportunity to lead locally for instructional improvement. Given the importance teachers attach to 'classroom' concerns, as both Harcher and Hyle's and this study evidenced, together with the instructional skills which many principals bring to their position, the current nature of principals' work is problematic. As principals in this multiple site case study typically worked longer hours than teachers, simply extending their hours of work so as to create time in which to provide instructional leadership, was not a viable solution.

Another alternative, to adjust the 'mix' of administrative work and instructional leadership undertaken, also was impractical, given other externally-imposed imperatives principals were required to handle. The circumscription, by central authorities, of what Victorian schools, and in particular, principals will do in an era of increased school-based autonomy, was noted elsewhere (Bishop, 1995; Bishop & Mulford, 1996).

Given the difficulty the four principals faced in finding time for additional instructional leadership, their situation is suggestive of the need for wider reform to enable those principals who can lead instructionally, to do so. As Harcher and Hyle (1996) emphasised, instructional leadership is a means through which principals can gain teacher respect.

As both studies showed, effective instructional leadership from principals can also develop trust. By leading instructionally as this study underscored, principals are performing a role which teachers value in school-based leaders, irrespective of how a principal's job has been redefined by the employer.

The study lends support to Putnam's (1993) finding about the time frame needed to change radically levels of engagement and trust between individuals. Putnam's investigation of well- and poorly-performing regions of Italy showed that regions which were effectively governed, had substantial social trust. In particular, the trust between regional councillors and their citizens was robust. To improve performances of poorly performing regions, and hence the low trust between their councillors and citizenry, decades of time were required.

Similarly, for effective regions to become part of the poorly performing regions required decades rather than several months or years.

In a similar vein, it can be argued that the interdependent, close and largely productive working relations which have characterised teachers and principals over much of the past two decades (Bishop, 1995; Mulford, 1986) would have produced mutual trust. On this basis it can be argued that which threatened teachers' trust of principals was an outcome of central edicts. In other words, principals' practices which emphasised their power differential with teachers by, for example, exercising a veto over curriculum decisions, are a recent development. Under *Schools of the Future*, which was introduced in 1992, the individual power of principals to determine matters has increased. This had provided principals with the option of going against teacher opinion, should they deem it necessary.

The use of enhanced powers by principals has, in part, altered their working relationship with teachers. On the basis of these four schools, the changed relationship has not affected teachers', overall, or absolute trust of principals. However, if the domain-specific, relational, and comparative dimensions of trust are considered, it appears that changes over the past two decades and, in particular, in the 1990s, have influenced elements of teachers' current trust of principals.

Given a substantial and historical bedrock of trust between each school's personnel, and the finding that all four principals were trusted in absolute terms, any threats to 'overall' trust would require further lengthy periods to elapse for

teachers' trust of these principals to become a serious problem. However, it would not be so for a principal who did not enjoy, at least in overall or absolute terms, the trust of his or her teachers.

In data from the four schools were examples of teacher scepticism, as revealed through their comments. Indeed, evident in some teacher perceptions was a cynicism—especially toward their employer, in whom there was an absence of trust. A doubting of principals' purposes, claims, and or competencies by teachers was frequently evident at three sites.

Such doubting amongst teachers coalesces with findings by Deal and Peterson (1994) and Leithwood, Menzies, and Jantzi (1994). The deduction, by Leithwood et al. (1994), that there is a culture of scepticism in the teaching profession, when considered with Inglehart's (1990) finding that teachers as individuals are trusting citizens, suggests that principals may face an ongoing and, at times, complex challenge of engendering teacher trust.

When teachers in this multiple site case study expressed distrust of their principals, it was frequently in a context of perceiving principals, as a cohort, 'in league' with the central authority. In other words, principals' interests were seen to be allied with those of the centre, rather than with those of teachers. The difficulty which this presented for three principals was that some interpretations assigned to those principals' efforts by teachers were markedly different to the explanations the principals gave to particular efforts.

A particular situation these principals faced was that, in implementing DoE policies they fulfilled the doubts of sceptical teachers. The teachers'

perception of principals having a close relationship with the employer, and teachers being excluded from the same, was apparent across the four schools. A school-based perception that Victorian principals had, as a cohort, been coopted by the centre was also found in a previous study by Bishop (1995).

Based on this current study, a further difficulty in the perception of teachers who viewed teachers' and principals' interests as growing apart, was that it fuelled other interpretations about the appropriateness of curriculum change. As the Sarina North and Ruthven cases demonstrated on curriculum, and Sarina East on reorganisation, such scepticism often resulted in the principal encountering teacher resistance to change. In turn, such teacher reactions often led to a slowing in the rate of whatever progress was achieved. As well, for principals it often demanded of them additional patience and tenacity, which was most apparent when, in collaborating with teachers, issues which principals had previously ruled on or outlined, were again raised by teachers as ongoing concerns. In effect, teachers were acknowledging principals' previous responses to issues, rather than accepting them.

Finally, the study suggests a clear preference on the part of teachers and principals for mutual trust. In this respect the study provides support for others (Bishop, 1995; Bishop & Mulford, 1996; Blase & Blase, 1994; Blase, Blase, Anderson, & Dungan, 1995; Harcher & Hyle, 1996) who have recognised how important trust is to the operation of the school.

### **Reflections on Methodology**

The methods of this study satisfied several 'traditional' criteria for

methodological trustworthiness according to Guba and Lincoln (1989), Merriam (1991), and Yin (1994). As well, the methods fulfilled key 'parallel' criteria which Guba and Lincoln (1989) argued naturalistic studies should be judged against.

By developing a study design which provided participating teachers and principals with considerable opportunities to share their perceptions, the investigation met with considerable interest from participants. In the main, participants at the four schools had been used to providing responses to questionnaires. They appreciated the chance to reflect on their experiences and current educational views. The opportunity to contribute was especially appreciated by those who considered teachers no longer had a 'voice' with their employer.

In addition to satisfying research purposes, the feedback and member-checking strategies used in this study provided participants with new (to them) research approaches. By and large the use of interviews, as a data collection method, and the feedback sessions were especially welcomed by participants.

The decision to select an interpretive multiple case study design enabled the researcher's orientation to remain focused on eliciting understandings and interpretations from participants. That the study did not depict a simplistic relationship of 'right' and 'wrong' amongst principals and teachers, was appreciated by many participants. Instead, the design made it possible to capture some of the complexities and competing interests which participants, and in particular, principals faced in schools.



## Summary

In brief, many personal and professional characteristics and work practices displayed by principals engendered and maintained trust with teachers. These characteristics were entrusting in teachers, being knowledgeable, hardworking, caring, confidential, and having integrity. The work practices were non exploitative, de-emphasised power differentials with teachers, and, in particular, encouraged critical dialogue.

Non-negotiable initiatives from the DoE, including, for example, curriculum mandates, which teachers perceived as being against their key interests, often challenged, and sometimes diminished, teachers' trust of the principal. Such externally-imposed initiatives often were met with limited enthusiasm from teachers. If teachers' responses extended to resistance toward implementation, principals' trust of teachers' attitudes was threatened.

When teachers perceived trustworthy leadership from their principal which was congruent with the school's culture, mutual trust was engendered and maintained. Moreover, the shared expectations of each school's principal and teachers were strengthened.

The chapter which follows initially outlines a summary of methods and procedures plus a summary of findings. The study's conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further study are subsequently detailed.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS**

Mutual trust between principals and teachers can contribute to school-based potential. Yet developments in Australian society and the nature of what is being asked of schools may make mutual trust between principals and teachers more difficult to achieve. Without mutual trust, principals may find that initiatives which teachers perceive to be unconvincing or unappealing educationally, will not be implemented. Given the increasingly complex era through which principals are expected to lead schools, such collegial trust may be one part of an effective response to a lack of school improvement. In responding to these, and similar considerations, this study sought to portray the capturing of trust between four Australian post primary principals and their teachers.

In broad terms, this chapter considers contributions the study has made, how the study responded to the original problem, and the conclusions and implications which can be drawn from it. These issues are pursued through the five sections which comprise this chapter: 1) Summary of methods and procedures, 2) Summary of findings, 3) Conclusions, 4) Implications of the study, and 5) Recommendations for further study.

#### **Summary of Methods and Procedures**

An interpretative, multiple-case study framed this investigation, because of three given conditions (Yin, 1994). First, the study's questions were, in effect, 'how' or 'why' questions. Second, the researcher had limited control over

the setting; and third, the phenomena of interest were set in a contemporary, natural setting.

Four principals and 112 teachers from four Victorian secondary colleges comprised the study's participants. These schools were purposively selected from an inner metropolitan region of the Victorian Department of Education. In the main, students at these four schools were members of low-income families.

The selection of 'working class students' provided an opportunity to illuminate aspects of school-based trust in settings where principals and teachers were faced with difficult student learning contexts. As well, these educators worked in schools which had only limited avenues for gaining further funds which, strategically, could be channelled into student learning.

Against a background of disparate and considerable student needs plus limited income-producing avenues, public schools have, in recent years, experienced a resource reduction from State Government (1997a). In short, schools have begun to operate with fewer resources. A statewide reduction of 8,000 teachers has, for example, translated into larger class sizes for most schools (Colebatch, 1997). Under these circumstances, principals and teachers have had to rely on fewer personnel to do more. In such settings it was expected that the trust between principals and teachers would often be tested.

The researcher was the primary instrument in this investigation. Because the field work was set in naturalistic settings, the use of a human instrument proved to be most adaptable, particularly in response to participants' disparate work and time commitments. Comprehensive briefings were given to potential principal and teacher participants. Teacher participants in this study

favoured, ahead of written surveys, interview as a means of tapping their views. Direct observation and documentary analysis were also employed by the researcher. Prior work history of the researcher in schools and centralised education settings together with previous case study experience proved to be an advantage in this investigation.

The use of multiple sources of evidence assisted with construct validity and methodological triangulation. By corroborating evidence from multiple sources, triangulation of data were often achieved. Extensive member-checking of data and interim analyses took place so as to enhance the credibility of the study.

A total of approximately ten school weeks was spent in the field, with at least eight days being spent in each school. The principal was shadowed and interviewed extensively over four days. Teachers were usually interviewed the following week. Teachers also provided relevant demographic details which enabled development of a profile of each site's teacher participants.

A modified form of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) employed in the analysis of data, was particularly suited to the concurrent processing and collection of on-going data. Constant comparisons also variously accommodated the multiple perceptions which participants provided. Data analysis provided patterns, themes, and categories from within and across the four sites.

Responses from teachers, four principals, and the audiences at the reporting-back sessions were positive in relation to the feedback they received. At each of the four whole staff reporting-back sessions the researcher was

similarly informed that " ... this is the first time that we have been given such honest, detailed, and useful feedback from a study we've been in". Common, across the four sites, was an appreciation by teachers of the generosity of their principal in being prepared to have their practices subjected to such wide scrutiny.

As well, teachers appreciated the my preparedness to detail sensitively data that were potentially critical of principals. Principals also were pleased with my efforts to, as one principal said " ... get it so close to how it is". Indeed, another principal commented " ... we are one of the most highly studied schools in the State, yet I have never had a researcher persist and return so often, to try and get it right. Usually we never hear from researchers once they've collected their data".

The efforts adopted at the outset of, during, and following fieldwork added to the trustworthiness of the study. Member checks plus efforts to triangulate data aided internal validity. Ensuring that there was a consistency of (researcher) approach on a cross-site basis plus recording detailed accounts of how and what site processes occurred, assisted with the study's reliability. The transparency and detailed record of what happened has made replication a viable option for other researchers.

By briefly turning to Guba and Lincoln's (1989) alternative or 'parallel' criteria for judging the quality of an investigation, it is apparent that the study was successful on several 'parallel' grounds. That is, Guba and Lincoln argued that naturalistic studies should be judged according to criteria which are linked to the assumptions behind, and features of, naturalistic research. So as to help

researchers do that, Guba and Lincoln developed criteria which parallel criteria originally developed for judging positivist studies. In a similar vein, Wolcott (1994) indicated that qualitative studies should be judged on their claims and merits.

By negotiating with participants at each site about my developing impressions and through member checks, the study's credibility was enhanced. As Guba and Lincoln (1989) indicated, it is through such efforts that the researcher can better match the realities of participants with the " ... reconstructions attributed to the various stakeholders" (p. 237).

Moreover, the feedback sessions exhibited ontological authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), in that the information which was provided developed participants' key thematic contributions and hence enabled their knowledge to expand. Because feedback sessions provided counter standpoints and, when present, noteworthy outlier views, the study also achieved 'educative authenticity' (p. 248). That is, it enabled many participants to hear different perspectives and gain new insights about colleagues. Many teachers appeared to be surprised by, yet understanding of, the reasons which principals gave for being behind some of their practices.

The one-to-one and large group feedback sessions in the four schools had 'catalytic authenticity' (p. 249). That is, the feedback sessions inspired new activities or practices within the schools. In one school, for example, the principal accelerated her efforts to encourage teachers to take leave for health-preservation when required. At another school the principal heightened her efforts in obtaining considerable amounts of demographic data and projected

population forecasts to try to well orient the school for the next five years. This principal's commitment to maximising the information at hand for decision making was complemented by the increased interest of teachers. The interest of teachers in such data was heightened after they had been presented with demographic projections in a feedback session.

### **Summary of Findings**

A combination of principals' personal and professional characteristics plus work practices helped to engender and maintain trust with teachers. Trusting in teachers, being knowledgeable, hardworking, caring, confidential, and having integrity were commonly favoured characteristics that attracted teacher trust. Work practices which were non-exploitative, de-emphasised principals' power differentials with teachers, and, in particular, encouraged critical dialogue, engendered trust. Teachers' perceptions of trust in their principals were multidimensional. Four dimensions were evident: absolute, domain-specific, relational, and comparative.

When asked about the extent to which teachers trusted their principal, teachers' response effectively indicated, "overall, yes" or "overall, no". That most teachers indicated, in overall or absolute terms, that they trusted their principal is, perhaps, not surprising. The principals and teachers in this study had, worked with each other for more than a year. They live in an affluent Western culture, are educated professionals, and work in public enterprise and, as Inglehart (1990) has shown, are usually trusting individuals. Moreover, the principals themselves had been in public education for at least a decade, and

hence were highly knowledgeable about schools.

No of the principal in this study experienced widespread teacher distrust. However, were a principal to be perceived as untrustworthy by teacher colleagues, such a response should provoke the attention, and reflection, of principals. It may not indicate, for example, any overall shortcoming so far as the trustworthiness of the principal is concerned. However, it would suggest that there is, at the least, a problem with how a principal is perceived.

This study identified the dimensions of trust which teachers found to be especially important. Three dimensions—domain specific, relational, and comparative—hold greatest promise, for example, in terms of organisational learning prospects. These domains provide the detail concerning what teachers prefer to be apparent in their principal's efforts.

Teachers want a principal who trusts teachers, is knowledgeable, hardworking, caring, confidential, and has integrity. As well, teachers' trust is engendered when principals are non-exploitative, de-emphasise their power differences, and encourage critical dialogue.

In addition, teachers value a principal who treats other teachers similarly well. Teachers, expect colleagues who experienced classroom-related stress, to be supported by their principal. The collegiality amongst teachers was such that many were not satisfied for themselves alone to be treated in a caring manner by principals. Teachers expected an ethic of care to extend relationally, across staff. A perception that the principal's care was not shared with all staff was deemed by teachers as insufficient.

In a similar vein, work experiences which teachers had previously had



with other principals, shaped their perceptions of trust in their current principal. Outliers, or highly trusted or distrusted principals from the past, were prominent in teachers' comparisons of what was a standard to be used, or avoided, in gauging whether to trust their current principal.

The research indicates that teachers have clear and multiple expectations of principals regarding the engendering and maintaining of trust. How well principals met those expectations varied. It was apparent, however, that teachers made many judgements about their principal's trustworthiness because of what they had experienced themselves through observation of others interacting with the principal, and in conversations with colleagues.

During the 1990s, a period which has seen principals' powers to act, and hours on the job increased, one option for leaders has been to reduce explanations of their decisions. This study has shown that one of the labour market's most astute cohort of observers, namely teachers, transfer a skill that they have honed in the classroom, to out-of-class settings. They observe and shape their perceptions of their principals based, in part, on what they see. When principals do not explain their decisions, teachers often become alienated from the decision and the principal. This study has underscored the need for principals, on trust-related concerns, to explain themselves. Such explanations would not impact on their power, but they could enhance their school-based authority.

In this investigation, the need for principals to explain decisions was particularly important in instances where prized or contentious matters were involved. When teachers were informed that initiatives had originated from

central office, rather than from the principal alone, teachers were 'equipped' to be able to delineate sources of the initiative. They were also better placed to grasp the role requirement of principals to implement edicts from the DoE. The implementation role, which was imposed on principals, may not have required that explanations, for example, on curriculum issues, be provided. But the trust-linked ramifications from insufficient dialogue suggest that they were required.

The extent to which teachers perceived their key interests advanced or diminished by a non-negotiable initiative influenced the nature and extent of their implementation response. Resistance, ambivalence, and non-cooperation were common responses to such initiatives. If teachers perceived these initiatives were to be against their key interests, their trust of the principal was challenged and often diminished. Curriculum matters were an issue which teachers wanted to discuss with their principal prior to a decision about what to change, rather was made. Teachers' capacity to debate and rewrite curriculum was not doubted by principals. If principals perceived teacher resistance to an initiative to be due to their attitude, principals' trust of teachers was often challenged and sometimes diminished. Initiatives which were perceived to be in teachers' key interests, and adequately resourced, sometimes added to teachers' trust of the principal and, in such circumstances, implementation was pursued by principals and teachers.

When teachers consistently perceived trustworthy leadership from the principal which was congruent with the school's culture, mutual trust was enhanced and a strengthening of shared expectations occurred.

## **Conclusions**

My mere ten week stay in the field plus the similarity of participating schools' socio-economic profile were limitations in this study. More research time might have revealed more findings. The similar features of the schools might have led to a consistency in the findings that would not have emerged had, for example, a 'middle class' school been part of the sample. Difficulties in students' learning cultures, by way of a more specific feature of these working class schools, affected the work of teachers in these schools. Given that poor learning contexts were combined with resource shortages needed to improve learning cultures, teachers' outlooks may have more negatively influenced than they would have otherwise. Nonetheless, based on the findings and within the limitations of the study, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, teachers and principals value trusting one another. Teachers' and principals' work lives appear to be qualitatively improved when they feel the trust of one another. Without trust, there is a risk of feeling, or being, undermined, and alienated from their jobs.

Teachers believe their classroom efforts deserve the trust of principals. Similarly, principals believe their leadership efforts deserve the trust of teachers. Yet, as is evident from this study, principals understand teachers' scepticism of many administrative initiatives which they have been required to implement in recent years. Teachers expect that key initiatives which effect classroom work and teacher time, should be educationally credible to them early in any implementation phase. It is in the interests of the designers of key initiatives to amend elements of their implementation strategies to enable teachers to

participate more actively at an earlier stage in the development of key initiatives. That is, if teachers are involved in decision-making during the planning, development, or evaluation phases of an initiative, they are more likely to 'own' the initiative and be prepared to actively participate in implementation. If teacher involvement is not a viable prospect for regional and central authorities, then schools need to be given greater autonomy to implement changes, as it is important that teachers be given the opportunity to shape initiatives rather than merely act as an end-point, and 'transform' curriculum only in the classroom.

The acute observation skills teachers have developed in classrooms are used in interactions with principals. Such effective observation enables principals to be scrutinised by teachers according to multiple criteria and expectations. So far as mutual trust is concerned, teachers clearly expect to be spoken to in a manner that is respectful and caring, regardless of how burdened or distracted the principal may be. Despite the way the central employer, media or lay public treats teachers, they want due recognition in the classroom.

Through four ways of developing trust for their principals, teachers have provided important organisational information. It is clearly preferable that principals are trusted in overall or absolute terms. But what is critical—in terms of organisational learning—is the detail provided in domain-specific, relational, and comparative dimensions of trust. This detail underscores the extent of teachers' considerable expectations of principals.

Teachers expected to be extended courtesy from principals, irrespective of principals' other concerns and workloads. Confidentiality needed to be honoured by principals when teachers shared private or personal matters with

them.. An ethic of care in principals' dealings was desired. Principals were expected to be knowledgeable (particularly if they were going to overrule teachers). Efforts to downplay power differentials between themselves and teachers were also sought in principals.

Regardless of efforts of those who are not located in schools to describe how well schools are funded, teachers appear to form their own views about resource adequacy which are based, in large measure, on their own school's resources. For state Department of Education (DoE) non-negotiable initiatives to succeed, they need to be practically viable, as well as theoretically appealing, to teachers. If principals are regularly associated with initiatives that teachers perceive to be unviable due to being under funded or, in other ways, not in teachers' best interests, the standing of principals may be jeopardised. Put simply, in these situations teachers may wonder why a principal is prepared to ask teachers to implement something that, in their opinion, represents little or no improvement on the status quo.

Some initiatives thus raise in teachers' minds, questions of educational credibility and competency, and these queries historically have been directed at central office. In this study, many teachers extended their questioning to take in principal competency on curriculum matters. By contrast, the chief lack of trust in staff by principals in this study related to teachers' attitudes toward implementing curriculum changes. Differences in attitude, difficult as they sometimes can be, are less potent in their impact on trust, than matters of competency, suggesting a need to offer schools, and in particular principals, greater discretionary powers over the handling of externally-driven initiatives.

If a strengthening of mutual trust and shared expectations occurs when teachers perceive principals as consistently evidencing trustworthy leadership, then principals who are keen to increase trust between teachers and themselves need to comprehend the school's culture. That is, principals—especially those who are 'new' to a school—need to identify what are the highly prized values and norms of staff.

By endeavouring to understand how those staff values and norms have developed, principals gain greater insights about their teacher colleagues. In the course of understanding what is so prized in that school setting, principals invariably will be in agreement with, or supportive of some, values and norms. As well, they may be unaccepting of others. By firstly understanding, and secondly affirming those 'agreeable' values and norms, principals are then, as Case One evidenced, better placed to challenge less favoured aspects of culture. The practice of affirming at least part of what teachers highly prize, in effect, helps to place principals 'with teachers' rather than appearing at odds with them.

Principals also need to decide whether and, if so, to what extent, they can adapt their leadership characteristics and practices to complement mutually valued features of school culture. Hence, for example, if a school curriculum has had a tradition of being debated in an effort to evaluate critically what is best for students, a principal who is not used to such a debate may need to develop the skills needed to both engage in, and lead with conviction and information. By not endeavouring to respond to at least some of teachers' prized norms and values, a principal risks being positioned (by teachers), in effect, as 'Other', rather than as colleague.

To be identified more as 'Other', or in non-collegial terms rather than as a colleague, as this study evidenced, was to be identified with the Department of Education. The locating of principals in the lap of the employer on a specific, teacher-prized issue or a more general basis, presents a potential threat to a principal's effectiveness in the school.

Casting the principal out occurs when the employer is widely perceived by teachers as inadequately resourcing the school. If, in addition, for example, a principal is perceived as requiring teachers to re-write curriculum that teachers deem an unnecessary task, the principal's standing may suffer even more. The principal may be identified by teachers as requiring them to do a task which, because of the time it takes and the necessary sacrificing of other things to do it, may make teachers' jobs (as they perceive them), more difficult. When teachers perceive that their jobs have been made more difficult by administrative intervention, most of a principal's practices risk being interpreted as negative and unhelpful.

### **Implications of the Study**

The patterns and themes which were apparent in participants' contributions indicate that there are four dimensions of teachers' trust in their principal. The detail which was revealed in three of these dimensions—domain-specific, relational, and comparative—show that the more general, and absolute dimension of trust (even when indicted in the affirmative), is not of itself, sufficient for principals to achieve.

Hence, amidst an expanding volume of organisational literature which is

calling for leaders and their colleagues to develop relations of trust between them, it is apparent that teachers have specific perspectives about what is important when it comes to principal-trust.

For a principal to be trusted in overall or absolute terms, is a positive achievement. However, rather than being an end point, it is a bedrock for the other three dimensions. In other words, for principals, being generally trusted by teachers is a good basis upon which to develop deeper relations of trust with teachers.

The contributions of participants in this study suggest there is value in improving trust between principals and teachers. When teachers' trust of principals exists in absolute, domain-specific, relational, and comparative dimensions, teachers have confidence in most, if not all of their leader's practices and characteristics.

In such circumstances, team or collegial 'membership' at the school includes the principal. There is a greater willingness to trust in the principals' efforts, even if they are disagreed with, when the four dimensions of teacher trust are invested in him or her.

As well, responsibility for policies which teachers' perceive to be highly unsatisfactory, for example, the amount of preparation and planning time, is traced (by teachers) to the central education authority alone rather than, in addition, to the principal. Hence the presence of such trust provides principals with additional teacher support and recognition.

It is also apparent that most of this study's participants do not depict the larger public school system of which they are part, in broadly positive terms.



These perceptions, which arise from, and are grounded in, their ordinary school experiences, stand in stark contrast to the claims that suggest that these schools are now performing better than previously (Caldwell, 1997). There appear to be public-sphere claims about the robustness of government schools which defy the private realities of their teachers. It is a schism that fuels scepticism amongst both teachers and thoughtful administrators.

Some of the shortcomings in schools which participants identified had their genesis more than a decade ago. From the standpoint of these school-based personnel, shortcomings such as resource reductions, are long-term problems. Heightened withdrawals of resources in recent years have, however, reached a point, where, for many teachers, there is a perception that the quality of what these schools offer students is less than what was offered a decade ago.

Against these negative perceptions about schools, principals and teachers continue to put in efforts which extend well beyond the hours for which they are remunerated, suggesting that principals and teachers continue to identify their contributions in more than transactional terms. In turn, this is suggestive of a profession which continues to be intrinsically committed, rendering the need for trust between principals and teachers even more important than between employees whose labour is exchanged for money and for whom the 'meaning' of work is largely instrumental.

School culture continues to act as a powerful influence against many change initiatives. School culture continues—when enacted by teachers—to act as a check against dramatic workplace developments. It does so with varying degrees of success. It often makes principals' tasks more difficult, at least in the

short term. Nonetheless, school culture also acts to protect what many teachers and principals also highly prize in schools. If principal and teacher compliance is a measure of success for key system-wide implementation agendas, individual school culture need not be better comprehended. If the criteria for success include substantial trust between principals and teachers and their belief in key system-wide implementation agendas, then school culture needs to be more sensitively grasped. This study suggests that, when it comes to classroom or other highly valued aspects of school life, teachers most trust themselves. The challenge exists for other collaborators to capture more of that trust.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

Several recommendations can be made regarding new research which could be undertaken. Recommendations 1, 2, and 5 arise from a desire to complement this study. Other recommendations proposed here arise from the findings in this investigation and have the potential to further build upon knowledge gained in this multiple-site case study. In all, eight recommendations are proposed.

1. A study which is similar in design to this investigation but is based in socio-economically affluent school settings may further illuminate understandings about trust between principals and teachers.
2. It may prove to be additionally informative if (at least two) men and women principals can participate, so as to provide opportunities for gender analysis.
3. Potentially rich opportunities exist to probe in-depth, the domain-specific

and relational dimensions of principal trust. Much remains to be understood about these dimensions of trust, especially with respect to insights which teachers can share.

4. A valuable contribution to understandings about principal-teacher trust could be made through a study which further considered the norms and networks that now exist in schools. Such a study could be expanded to take account of schools' norms and networks which were in operation at, for example, the beginning of this decade.

5. A longitudinal study which was designed to capture the understandings of principals and teachers on both aspects of their work and trust of each other, may assist the field.

6. Further investigations which are oriented toward identifying the expectations and obligations which teachers and principals hold for themselves and the other in the workplace may extend understandings about their mutual trust.

7. A study which identifies the direct and indirect influences of principals' trust engendering practices on student learning outcomes would add to current understandings of what constitutes 'effective' leadership.

8. Finally, qualitative data collection methods are likely to be particularly suitable for these studies because of their potential to achieve in-depth understandings. As the four sites in this study showed, 'local knowledge' is a potentially rich source of information for those personnel who are committed to school improvement.

**APPENDIX A**

**OBSERVATION PROTOCOL**

## **Observation Protocol**

Patton's (1990) suggestions provided the basis for the following guidelines.

- Be conscious of the effects that the researcher's presence invariably has on who and what is being observed.
- Try to appear even-handed in dealings with others (so as to avoid putting cliques or individuals offside).
- Wherever possible, triangulate observations with the results from other data gathering methods.
- Note:
  - \* The chronological order of what is observed.
  - \* Critical incidents.
  - \* Major events.
  - \* Settings, places.
  - \* People involved, their links to others.
  - \* Decision making, socialisation, communication (physical and verbal).
  - \* Key issues.
  - \* What is not there that one might expect to be.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **CHECKLIST FOR DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

### **Checklist for Document Analysis**

The following series of questions provided a starting point for the document analysis which prevailed in this study. These questions were developed from ideas suggested by Taylor and Bogdan (1984) and Plummer (1983).

- What seems to be the key purpose of the document?
- What are the key messages in it?
- What are the key perspectives contained in it?
- What are the document's concerns?
- What, if any, assumptions can be inferred to those who have produced the document?
- What activities are these producers involved in?
- Is there anything missing that one might have expected to find in such documentation?
- Does the document inform about any of the following:
  - \* Social constraints?
  - \* Social worlds?
  - \* Human experiences?
  - \* Economic experiences?
  - \* Organisational experiences?
  - \* Individual responsiveness or creativity?
  - \* Chronology of events.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **LETTER TO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



01 March 1996

Mr Steve Macpherson  
General Manager  
North/West Region  
Directorate of School Education  
Locked Bag 11  
Fitzroy 3065

Dear Mr Macpherson

As part of my Doctor of Philosophy studies being undertaken at the University of Tasmania I seek permission to approach five nominated secondary schools from your Region, with a view to obtaining their involvement in a multiple case study.

Ideally the fieldwork component of the study will begin late in March 1996 and conclude by December 1996. The study, entitled *Trust and the Capturing of School-based Potential* will follow a largely qualitative design and is expected to highlight the value of school networks, symbols, ideals and trust.

The following research questions will guide this study:

- What do principals do to engender and maintain trust with teachers?
- How does what principals are required to implement with teachers affect mutual trust?
- How does trustworthy leadership contribute to school culture?

The sample population sought is to be drawn from five schools and consist of each school's principal and teachers. Student involvement is not required. It is intended that the principal of each participating school would be the focus of the research, and that the fieldwork would be augmented by teacher participation. More specifically, the plan is to 'shadow' (follow, observe, interview) each principal for four consecutive days. In the following week the researcher expects to attend each respective school for another four days. At this stage brief (five to twenty minute) interviews will be sought with willing members of the teaching staff with a view to at least gaining triangulation (with each principal's views and the researcher's observations). Where considered appropriate by the principal, the views of non-teaching personnel may also be sought during this period.

Up to eight one-hour subsequent interviews over the course of the 1996 school year will be requested with the principal only. The purpose of this is to enable early data analysis to be clarified and checked against the impressions of the principals, and ultimately to enhance reliability of the study.

Although some quantitative use of demographic data (for example, ethnic profiles of each school) will be made, the study is primarily a qualitative multiple-case study. As

noted above, interview and observation will be the key means by which information is obtained.

Having successfully conducted a similar study in four North/West Metropolitan Region middle-class primary schools in 1994 as part of my Master of Education studies I believe I am sufficiently well grounded in research ethics, protocols and methodologies to enable this study to make a positive contribution to the field. As with the earlier study, detailed briefings will be made with the principal (and teachers depending upon the approval/advice of each site's principal), both prior to, and following the study.

Five secondary schools (within North/West Region) that each 1) fall within a 20 kilometre radius of the Melbourne GPO; 2) have largely working-class students; and 3) have a principal who has been at the school for a minimum of one year, are sought. Additionally, from across the five schools, there must be at least two male principals.

Listed below are five schools that the researcher seeks approval to approach:

If any of the above schools is unable or unwilling to participate or it becomes apparent that another school is more appropriate for inclusion in the study, then approval to so amend will again be sought from North/West Region.

Fieldwork will not begin until all formalities between the researcher, North/West Region and the University of Tasmania are completed. My Supervisor for this research is Professor Bill Mulford, Executive Dean, School of Education University of Tasmania (PO Box 1214 Launceston, 7250; telephone 003 243 288; fax 243 303).

If you require any further details please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below for a prompt, written response.

Yours sincerely

Pam Bishop  
PO Box 292,  
Carlton North Vic 3054

## **APPENDIX D**

### **LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



DIRECTORATE  
SCHOOL  
EDUCATION

NORTH-WEST METROPOLITAN REGION  
1st FLOOR  
Cnr. CHANDLER HIGHWAY  
& HEIDELBERG ROAD  
FAIRFIELD

POSTAL ADDRESS  
LOCKED BAG 89  
FAIRFIELD 3078

TELEPHONE (03) 9488 9488  
FACSIMILE (03) 9488 9400

LTR-45.DOC

14 March, 1996

Ms Pam Bishop  
P O Box 292  
Carlton North 3054

FAX 9499 3721

Dear Ms Bishop

I acknowledge your letter of 1 March 1996 requesting approval to conduct a research project at five secondary schools in the North West Metropolitan Region.

Approval is granted on the understanding that the Principal of each school has the right to deny access to the school for the purpose of this research. In such a case you are required to advise me of the alternate school willing to be involved in the research.

Please contact Mr Keith Sandford, on (03) 9488 9480, for any further assistance with your request.

Yours sincerely

RUSSELL COLLIER  
DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER

**APPENDIX E**

**INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS**



UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

## INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS

### *Trust and the capturing of school-based potential*

#### Who is conducting the study?

Chief Researcher is Professor Bill Mulford, Executive Dean, School of Education, University of Tasmania. Field researcher is Pam Bishop, University of Tasmania student. The research is part of her doctoral studies.

#### Why was this school selected for participation?

Because it meets the sampling criteria, that is

1. Schools are based within
  - a) a twenty kilometre radius of the Melbourne GPO;
  - b) the North/West Metropolitan Region of the Victorian Directorate of Schools.
2. Students are drawn from largely working-class backgrounds; and
3. Principals have been based at their respective schools for a minimum of one year.

#### What is the time commitment?

Approximately fifteen minutes if you take part in a one-to-one interview with the field researcher.

#### Are there any benefits to be expected?

Hopefully your contributions will be part of a larger depiction of trust-relations between principals and teachers, from which colleagues can learn.

#### What is the study about?

A largely qualitative multi-site case study that employs observation, interview (of teachers and principals) and document analysis. The study will seek answers to these questions:

1. What do principals do to engender and maintain trust with teachers?
2. How does what principals are required to implement with teachers affect mutual trust?
3. How does trustworthy leadership contribute to school culture?

It is believed that trust-relations between principals and teachers may influence aspects of how schools operate. The study is especially seeking the opinions of teachers and principals concerning matters of trust. A fuller explanation of the purpose and rationale of the study can be provided at the completion of the multiple-site case study. To elaborate further on the purpose or rationale of the study may compromise the integrity of the study or 'lead' you. However, there is a risk that this study could cause embarrassment or effect relationships among or between teachers and principals. Every effort will be made to minimise this risk.

### Feedback

The results of the investigation will be forwarded to the Principal of this school. A reporting-back session will also be conducted by the Field Researcher, if the Principal approves.

### Ethics Committee Contact

The Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee (University of Tasmania), Ms. Chris Hooper, can be contacted on (002) 202763 for concerns or complaints about the study.

### The Chief Investigator

If you have any queries about this study please contact the Chief Investigator, Professor Bill Mulford, Executive Dean, School of Education, University of Tasmania on (003) 243 288.

### Participation is voluntary

To opt in, or opt out or withdraw at any time without prejudice is your choice and your decision will be respected.

### Anonymity

Each teacher's identity will be preserved by the researcher. Identifying information will be removed. Names of participants will not be used or linked with their respective contributions. The data will be used for research purposes only. If you consider that your participation may cause concern, please feel free to decline from participation.

### Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality of research data. Data obtained in interviews will be stored separately from details of the information sources.

### Ethics Committee Approval

This statement has been cleared by the Ethics Committee (University of Tasmania) and complies with the laws of the State.

Thank you for your assistance.

Pam Bishop

01 April, 1996

**APPENDIX F**

**INFORMATION SHEET FOR PRINCIPALS**





UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

## INFORMATION SHEET FOR PRINCIPALS

### *Trust and the capturing of school-based potential*

#### Who is conducting the study?

Chief Researcher is Professor Bill Mulford, Executive Dean, School of Education, University of Tasmania. Field researcher is Pam Bishop, University of Tasmania student. The research is part of her doctoral studies.

#### Why was this school selected for participation?

Because it meets the sampling criteria, that is

1. Schools are based within
  - a) a twenty kilometre radius of the Melbourne GPO and
  - b) the North/West Metropolitan Region of the Victorian Directorate of Schools.
2. Students are drawn from largely working-class backgrounds; and
3. Principals have been based at their respective schools for a minimum of one year.

#### What is the time commitment?

The time required for this study is about four days of observation of the principal by the field researcher. During this period you may be interviewed. The researcher will return to school the following week for the purpose of interviewing over a period of four days, willing teachers. You may be interviewed up to eight subsequent times over the course of 1996. These interviews are expected to last for approximately one hour at a time.

#### Are there any benefits to be expected?

Hopefully your contributions will be part of a larger depiction of trust-relations between principals and teachers, from which colleagues can learn.

#### What is the study about?

A largely qualitative multi-site case study that employs observation, interview (of teachers and principals) and document analysis. The study will seek answers to these questions:

1. What do principals do to engender and maintain trust with teachers?
2. How does what principals are required to implement with teachers affect mutual trust?
3. How does trustworthy leadership contribute to school culture?

It is believed that trust-relations between principals and teachers may influence aspects of how schools operate. The study is especially seeking the opinions of teachers and principals concerning matters of trust. A fuller explanation of the purpose and rationale of the study can be provided at the completion of the multiple-site case study. To elaborate further on the purpose or rationale of the study may compromise the integrity of the study

or 'lead' you. However, there is a risk that this study could cause embarrassment or effect relationships among or between teachers and principals. Every effort will be made to minimise this risk.

#### Feedback

The results of the investigation will be forwarded to you as Principal of this school. A reporting-back session will also be conducted by the Field Researcher, to either the Principal only or the entire staff, subject to your approval.

#### Ethics Committee Contact

The Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee (University of Tasmania), Ms Chris Hooper, can be contacted on (002) 202763 for concerns or complaints about the study.

#### The Chief Investigator

If you have any queries about this study please contact the Chief Investigator, Professor Bill Mulford, Executive Dean, School of Education, University of Tasmania on (003) 243 288.

#### Participation is voluntary

To opt in, or opt out or withdraw at any time without prejudice is your choice and your decision will be respected.

#### Anonymity

Each principal's identity will be preserved by the researcher. Names of participants will not be used or linked with their respective contributions. The data will be used for research purposes only. If you consider that your participation may cause concern, please feel free to decline from participation.

#### Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality of research data. Data obtained in interviews will be stored separately from details of the information sources.

#### Ethics Committee Approval

This statement has been cleared by the Ethics Committee (University of Tasmania) and complies with the laws of the State.

Thank you for your assistance.

Pam Bishop

01 April, 1996

## **APPENDIX G**

### **CONSENT FORM FOR PRINCIPALS**



UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

**Informed consent for principal participation in the research project**  
***Trust and the Capturing of School-Based Potential***

This study considers the matter of trust between school principals and teachers. It is performed as part of the requirement for the Field Researcher's PhD (educational administration) in the School of Education, at the University of Tasmania. It should be noted that the North/West Metropolitan Region of the Directorate of School Education is aware that you have been approached concerning possible inclusion in this study.

I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that:

1. The study involves the following procedures: The time required for this study is about four days of observation of the principal by the Field Researcher. During this period I may be interviewed. I understand that the researcher will return to school the following week for the purpose of interviewing over a period of four days, willing teachers. I further note that I may be interviewed up to eight subsequent times over the course of 1996. These interviews are expected to last for approximately one hour at a time.
2. There is a risk that this study could cause embarrassment amongst or between principals and teachers. Every effort will be made to minimise this risk. If any discomfort should arise during the observation or interviews, principals will be invited to cease the particular activity.
3. The study includes answering questions verbally that will be audio-recorded.
4. My participation is entirely voluntary. I may terminate my involvement at any time without prejudice.
5. All my data are confidential.
6. All data are for research purposes only.
7. If I have questions about the research or need to talk to the Chief Investigator during or after my participation in the study I can contact the Chief Investigator, Prof. Bill Mulford, Executive Dean, School of Education, University of Tasmania (003) 243 288).
8. I have read and understand the Information Sheet for this study.
9. The nature and possible effects of this study have been explained to me.
10. Any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
11. I agree that research data gathered may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a subject.
12. The Field Researcher's name and address is  
Pam Bishop

Name of participant .....

(Participant's signature) ..... Date .....

I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation

Name of investigator (Field Researcher) .....

(Field Researcher's signature) ..... Date .....

**APPENDIX H**

**CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS**



**Informed consent for teacher participation in the research project**  
***Trust and the Capturing of School-based Potential***

This study considers the matter of trust between school principals and teachers. It is performed as part of the requirement for the Field Researcher's PhD (educational administration) in the School of Education, at the University of Tasmania.

I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that:

1. The time required for this study is about fifteen minutes.
2. The nature of my participation may include answering questions verbally that will be audio-recorded.
3. There is a risk that this study could cause embarrassment amongst or between principals and teachers. Every effort will be made to minimise this risk. If any discomfort should arise during the interviews, teachers will be invited to cease the activity.
4. My participation is entirely voluntary. I may terminate my involvement at any time without prejudice.
5. All my data are confidential.
6. All data are for research purposes only.
7. If I have questions about the research or need to talk to the Chief Investigator during or after my participation in the study I can contact the Chief Investigator, Prof. Bill Mulford, Executive Dean, School of Education, University of Tasmania (003) 243 288).
8. I have read and understand the Information Sheet for this study.
9. The nature and possible effects of this study have been answered to my satisfaction.
10. I agree that research data gathered may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a subject.
11. The Field Researcher's name and address is  
Pam Bishop

Name of participant .....

..... Date .....  
(Participant's signature)

I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Name of investigator (Field Researcher) .....

(Field Researcher's signature) ..... Date .....

**APPENDIX I**

**SHADOWING PROTOCOL**

### **Shadowing Protocol**

The following elements guided the researcher's role when shadowing principals. In the main, this protocol was adapted from suggestions by Fetterman (1989), Manning (1987), and Taylor and Bogdan (1984):

- The researcher to be dressed professionally but not overly formal.

Dress to take account of each specific setting.

- The researcher to endeavour to put principal and others at ease from the outset of field contact. Researcher to show an interest in what principal does. If principal requires assistance or cooperation with a task, researcher to oblige.
- Unless invited to do otherwise, when in each principal's office, choose a low lounge chair which is either offside or at an angle to the principal's seating arrangement. That arrangement will likely be at his/her desk or in a lounge chair.
- When following a principal to and from his or her office, unless engaged in conversation them, the researcher should generally remain at a 45° angle to and approximately 30 centimetres behind the principal. If not, the researcher should maintain a distance which allows observation of principal when he or she is watching, greeting, or interacting with others.
- In situations where principal stops to meet someone in the corridor or elsewhere, researcher to remain relatively unobtrusive and passive.

Unless brought into conversation or introduced, researcher to stay back,



approximately a metre away (or other distance if observation still possible).

- Researcher to remain humble, for example, if drawn into conversation.
- Use 'wide angle' and 'narrow angle' observation techniques on occasion to allow for both 'big picture' impressions and a blocking out of any individuals other than principal.
- Minimise note-taking when others are around. Do so as soon as possible after leaving the site.

**APPENDIX J**

**DEMOGRAPHICS SHEET**

Demographic Sheet

University of Tasmania

Pam Bishop

Years of teaching \_\_\_\_\_

Study leave \_\_\_\_\_

Current salary \_\_\_\_\_

Expect to resign/retire from teaching when aged \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Typical work week hours at school \_\_\_\_\_

Typical work week hours at home \_\_\_\_\_

Job satisfaction (1= terrible  $\Rightarrow$  10=excellent):

On a really bad day \_\_\_\_\_

On a really good day \_\_\_\_\_

Typically \_\_\_\_\_

Member of:

School council at another school \_\_\_\_\_

Church-related organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Parent-teacher association (elsewhere) \_\_\_\_\_

Sports or hobby club \_\_\_\_\_

Charity \_\_\_\_\_

Fraternity \_\_\_\_\_

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