THE ACCELERATED SCHOOLS PROJECT IN AUSTRALIA: RESILIENCE AND RENEWAL

by

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To the families and staff of my favourite school. You are all heroes, and I am proud to have your friendship and trust. The most important lesson from the past seven years has been what you showed me about that intangible outcome of hope;

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines key developmental issues arising from a six-year interpretive case study of the implementation of the Accelerated Schools Project (ASP) in Matterslea (pseudonym) Primary School, Tasmania, Australia. Matterslea is the first school in the Southern Hemisphere to apply the ASP model of comprehensive school-wide reform. ASP was designed in the US for use in high poverty communities. Through the process, Matterslea has reshaped its governance, school organisation and pedagogic approach. Not only has the model changed the school, but in the context of Tasmanian public education, the ASP model has also experienced contextual adaptations. The ways in which the model itself has been adapted and the changes resulting from its implementation are key focus points of the thesis.

Consideration is given in the thesis to the researcher's dual role of researcher/observer and 'coach' in the project which has been a collaboration of the University of Tasmania, the Accelerated Schools project (Stanford and Columbia Universities) and the Esk School District of the Tasmanian Department of Education (DoE). The research was multi-method in approach, involving participant observation, qualitative and quantitative data gathering. Using a combination of surveys, interviews, documentary reports and quantitative measures, the study analyses outcomes in three reform phases: establishment, consolidation and self-authoring. A review of the literature in the related areas of school renewal and organisational learning identifies three key difficulties common to top-down systemic reforms: coherence, member empowerment, and authenticity of learning. In terms of various measures, the outcomes of the study show that Matterslea's ASP implementation has made substantial progress in meeting those challenges, and how, as a so-called 'disadvantaged school', it has achieved an internal coherence of policy and practice that accords with broad central DoE policy but is not dominated by it. Critical determinants of Matterslea's organisational resilience are identified by the study. They are: the deliberate, committed distribution of its leadership; broad ownership of authentic vision-led priorities; and the use of transparent, culturally appropriate means of communication for all key member groups. The thesis examines the implications for contemporary Tasmanian school planning and curriculum reform.

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DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any institute, college or university, and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Research

1.1 A Case Worth Considering

This thesis is an analytical account of what occurs when the families, teachers, leaders and students of a so-called 'disadvantaged' community have the opportunity to intentionally shape a renewed future for their children and their community's school. In 1997 Matterslea School comprising 280 students in Kindergarten to Grade 6, their 230 families, 14 full time and several part time teachers and ancillary staff, agreed to implement the Accelerated Schools model of school-based reform over a minimum six year period. The case study follows those six years through three stages of establishment, consolidation and self-authoring, and the factors influencing successful implementation.

It is a unique case. Matterslea's [not the school's real name] example is the first use of the ASP in Australia, indeed in the southern hemisphere. Indeed, it is believed to be the first 'proprietary' or 'brand-name' reform to be implemented in a government school in Australia as a comprehensive, schoolwide reform. This encompasses not only curriculum but also the reshaping of school governance and the restructuring of school program organisation. It is promising because, after many years of piecemeal curricular and restructuring reforms, Tasmania's recently introduced School Improvement Review (SIR) process is opening a door to schoolwide, comprehensive perspectives on reform. Along with a devolution of governance is a compatible new framework of curriculum integration with clear social and personal room for values inquiry. It is ground-breaking because the ASP process has been 'transplanted' from the quite distinct US educational culture into the equally distinct Australian schooling environment.

The broad purpose of the study has been to consider on one hand what impact the ASP has in a Tasmanian school with demographics of disadvantage similar to those in the US for which

it was designed. The thesis analyses the outcomes of a formulated attempt to change the stocks of such a school in Tasmania. It tells not only what the school did *with* the ASP model, but also what it did *to* the model. In addition, it examines how the model changed the community of learners. A key part of the story is ascertaining the fidelity with which Matterslea School has been able to apply the ASP process. Equally important are the outcomes from the implementation. Because ASP is 'comprehensive', and therefore targets the three domains of governance, school organisation and teaching and learning, the outcomes from six years of implementation at Matterslea are substantial. Since ASP has a 'schoolwide' influence on teaching and learning, the study does not limit itself to outcomes in student academic achievement. Learning is conceptualised in the study as having organisational or collective dimensions. The learning community itself is examined within a state of renewal, and considerable attention is directed in the study to the problem of describing and explaining the organisational learning that can be attributed to ASP's effect.

1.2 A brief overview of the Accelerated Schools model

The Accelerated Schools model was first developed in 1986 to frame school-based reform by minority serving, high poverty schools in the San Francisco area of California. It is characterised by its three central principles: *Unity of purpose; Empowerment with responsibility; and Building on Strengths* (Hopfenberg, Levin & Associates, 1993, p. 33). Through a combination of democratic, inclusive, consensual governance and an ambitious, constructivist pedagogy termed 'Powerful Learning', its developers, chief among them Dr Henry Levin, originally of Stanford University but now at Columbia University, New York, tailored the model to renew the social and intellectual capital of participating schools. The 'accelerated' part of the name refers to its goal to accelerate the education of students, previously considered chronically bound to school failure as a result of their backgrounds, so that their academic outcomes at school leaving match those of the broader population. It is not directly associated with 'accelerated' or hot-housed learning (Rose, 1985) but it does promote 'gifted' methods for *all* of a school's students. Emerging in an era of high systemic accountability frequently justified as targeting so-called 'at-risk' learners, the model has for more than two decades run counter to the grain of deficit-focused, remedial programming so often prescribed for 'failing' or 'stuck' schools. It develops and employs ambitious, higher-

order pedagogies in Powerful Learning, that both affirm and utilise student and community strengths.

In its governance, the ASP favours a highly devolved locus of control, with forums inclusive of families, teachers, leaders and students, deciding the school's *own* priorities with inclusive self-selected, self-managing teams devising the school's own action plans to address consensually derived priority challenges. Through this collective problem posing and solving known as the 'Inquiry Process', the ASP builds a dynamic link between governance, school organisation and the development of engaging practices in teaching and learning. 'Maps' of the Year One ASP establishment and Year Two ASP processes are in *Appendices* A & B.

Under ASP, accountability is first and foremost to its school community. Nevertheless, since 1998, the ASP organisation has assumed a necessary deference to the centralised standards-monitoring implemented systemically by nearly all school systems of advanced economies worldwide (Accelerated Schools Project, 1998). In its early years ASP demanded little of schools' funds, but more recently many US schools have used Federal compensatory program funds to support their preparation and participation in the ASP program. Large scale independent studies have been commissioned by ASP to ensure that the model is worthy of Federal administration support (Rock, & Ham, 1999; Bloom , Ham, Melton, O'Brien, Doolittle, & Kagehiro, 2001). This thesis shows that the Matterslea ASP implementation, like its US counterparts, has had to strike compromises between the model's inherently 'powerful learning' or authentic, constructivist learning principles and the force of standards-led Statewide testing accountability processes and consequent influence from the 'right' of the curricular and pedagogical spectrum.

1.3 Implementing ASP in Tasmania

In 1996, while on secondment to the University from the Tasmanian Department of Education, the author was asked by the then Dean of the Faculty of Education, Prof. Bill Mulford, to first engage and then 'coach' one or more local public schools through the Accelerated Schools process. At that time, the new Tasmanian Government, through its Department of Education, had only months earlier mandated a school development planning and review process that to be phased in for *all* Tasmanian government schools over a three

year period. The Assisted School Self Review (ASSR) (DoE, 1999b) in tandem with each school's school/community Partnership Agreement on 'targets' was intended to be a standards-based reform contextualised by locally defined agreements about state-defined priority areas, particularly literacy, numeracy, information technology and behaviour management. The ASSR was just beginning its introduction across the state's 350 government schools. Had the opportunity been made available any later than late 1996, it is unlikely that any public school would have been in a situation to implement the Accelerated Schools' comprehensive, schoolwide reform. Several schools approached as potential implementers declined for this and associated reasons. As it was, Professors Mulford and Braithwaite of the University of Tasmania, convinced Matterslea's school district (now the Esk district) to take part and the support of the Tasmanian Department of Education was gained for the implementation. Matterslea would receive a temporary waiver from mandatory participation in the Assisted School Self Review (ASSR) process and related school/community Partnership Agreement. It would instead apply the ASP model as its form of school development planning.

The most common types of school reform in Australia are curricular reforms and standards-based reforms, and because of the highly bureaucratic and homogenous nature of government systems (Marginson, 1997) rarely do state or central governments attempt to instigate simultaneous whole-of-operations reforms in the three domains of school governance, structural workplace organisation and curriculum. It is just such holistic renewal that is intended by 'comprehensive, schoolwide reform' in models such as the ASP. Such reform goes well beyond the piecemeal approaches that Cuban (1998) calls 'tinkering towards Utopia'.

Tasmania's decentralisation and devolution since 1990 has been largely in the area of management of resources, mainly material, but to a limited extent in discretionary staffing. The breaking down of larger regional management into school districts has helped localise the implementation of central curriculum and structural initiatives. The tradition in which ASP has grown conceives the deliberative locus of control for the combined domains to be firmly at the grass roots level of the school and its community. Arguably, only private schools in Australia have traditionally had the level of autonomy necessary to approach schoolwide and comprehensive renewal in the same way that Matterslea has been fortunate enough to do.

1.4 Research approach

The case study is written as a piece of action research from the perspective of a participant researcher. The initial partnership that brought together the school the district and the University, along with the ASP organisation in the US, was a six-year commitment by all parties. Summary analyses and evaluations have been made to the sixth year, with interpretive voices ranging from parents to school leaders. In keeping with the all-encompassing nature of the school reform being applied, the study has left no stone unturned in gathering data. The volume of data collected has been extensive, encompassing interviews and survey over time, documentary analysis and quantitative data in the form of in-school and Statewide test results.

The key questions that underpin and guide data-gathering and analysis are:

Q.1 To what extent has the ASP process been implemented at Matterslea?

Q 2. How has the implementation of the process influenced outcomes in the areas of: (a) School governance; (b) Workplace and school program organisation; and (c) Teaching and learning?

Q 3. What implications can be drawn from Matterslea's ASP experiences for comprehensive school reform in the Tasmanian context and beyond?

Throughout the six years the author has taken the dual role of coach and student. Occupying a full time lecturing position in the Faculty of Education at the University of Tasmania, for the first two years the researcher spent the equivalent of one day each week in Matterslea Primary School, facilitating the ASP implementation through professional development sessions around the ASP process, helping with the school's preliminary data gathering and attending each forum or meeting related to the process. Over successive years, time spent 'coaching' in the school was able to be tapered back to around a half day per fortnight, while 'researcher' time increased with the volume of data needing collating and analysis. The 'insider' role attributed to me by the school's staff and parents is given at greater length in the *Research Approach*, Chapter Five. Over the six years there have been many opportunities to link the school's renewal activities to my academic work in teacher education. For example, seven of the Matterslea staff and leaders have presented a range of lectures to the Faculty's classes relating to renewal roles and classroom management.

All ASP implementations involve a coach who guides the school community through essential procedures. The procedures are explained in depth in Chapter Two, the Context. Preparation for the task of facilitating the ASP implementation was supported by all the ASP coaching resources available from the US National Centre at Stanford University, California. Close email contact has been maintained with the National Centre and several regional 'satellite' centers of the US ASP network. In 1998 the researcher traveled to the US with Matterslea's Principal (1)[1] on a three week study tour of ASP schools in California and Texas, gaining valuable information on how to sustain the momentum of ASP renewal. Throughout the time since our first meetings at Matterslea, the process facilitators, including senior staff and myself, have approached the task with a non-expert, collaborative orientation. In the 'other-hat' role of researcher, my major consideration was to make sure that sufficient data were gathered along the way to tell and explained the story, particularly to answer the research questions.

As the project progressed, the role of 'coach' became less demanding and the researching role developed a more analytical and interpretive nature. Because the questions of greatest interest to this thesis were also of interest to school members, a number of data gathering events, particularly interviews, joined the purposes of coaching and research, and my analyses of the data became matters of shared interest with members. Although the voice of summary analysis is that of the 'researcher', care is taken to honour where the project's real ownership of deliberation and actions rests: with the school community. Rather than use the term 'stakeholder' to describe the 'subjects', the term 'member' better expresses the inclusion and participation of those in the immediate school context.

The research questions build towards a summary and analysis that draw implications for the particular school, for the ASP model and its developers, and for policymakers have a system level, particularly those pursuing equity for disadvantaged communities and their schools. A wide range of methods are employed in the gathering of the study's data. Surveys, interviews and documentary analysis are used to describe the motivations, decisions and actions taken by the full range of members and member groups. Some instruments are from the ASP 'toolkit' of evaluation, some are designed specifically for the context. Several of the instruments are used at intervals to build a longitudinal character in the analysis. In the

[1] As a courtesy to maintain confidentiality, the initial Matterslea principal of 1997 to 2000 is given the title *Principal (1)*, and the succeeding principal 2000 to current, *Principal (2)*.

argument's treatment of data, triangulation is achieved across time, across methods and across subjects.

Drawn largely from the literature, several analytical frames have been applied to the questions and data. These include: *Typologies* of management style, organisational responsibilities and member involvement from Tannenbaum & Schmidt (1973), Owens (1998), Epstein (1995) and Rafferty (1997); *Resiliency factors* from Benard (1996) and Werner & Smith (1992); and *schemas of organisational alignment* (Dacin,1997). To ensure a more authentic evaluation, the analysis also uses criteria established by the ASP organisation in its clear procedural frameworks and evaluative 'toolkit' and importantly, by the school itself in its Vision. That Vision is arguably the most relevant yardstick for the members who take the central focus of the study.

Current involvement of the participant/researcher

In the last year room has been given for the school to grow apart from the 'coach', and to self-author its development pathway. In a shift from regular weekly contact, through to fortnightly contact, an arrangement was struck at the end of 2001 to limit the coaching involvement to an 'on-call' basis. This has given the study the opportunity to satisfy curiosity about what the school would do with the ASP process once the 'commitment' was relaxed, and how it would, in its own right, direct its expanded self-renewal capacities. From the direction of the research site's deliberations over time, the thesis takes up the notion that a school's prerogative to eventually re-conceptualise or self-author any reform initiative is a logical outcome of the very growth and maturity intended by whole-of-school reform.

1.5 Significance in the study and its outcomes

Atypical yet comparable

'Brand-name' or 'off-the-shelf' reforms (Fashola & Slavin,1998) do not normally overtake government schools. Matterslea Primary School is the only school in the state to have seized the opportunity to be an outrider in its own broader learning community. The outrider status of Matterslea school was achieved fortuitously, because in 1997, when approached to implement the model, fewer than half the State's school had entered the SIR process. By

the end of 1998, *all* government schools were engaged in it. In philosophy and in practice, the 'models' are very different, SIR falling into the 'standards-led' reform category and the ASP being a 'bottom-up renewal' process, inherently free from external accountability. Yet the thesis inevitably looks to identify similarities in the goal setting aspects of ASP and SIR, and what if any decisions have satisfy the DoE's planning orthodoxy up to this point. A key direction of the implications and conclusions from the study is to propose to policymakers avenues to bring contextualised strengths into play where so-called disadvantaged communities are 'partners' with the local school and, by direct association, with the District and State 'stakeholders'.

Following the 1998 visit to some fourteen ASP schools in the US, Matterslea's Principal (1) and the researcher (as coach) recognised that although the political and cultural aspects of schools may differ between California and Tasmania, students in the relevant schools are more similar in circumstances than they were different (Andrew, 1998). Among the conditions common to both are financial hardship, family conflict, relatively unengaged academic histories of parents, mobility and scarcity of learning resources that overpowered family and school attributes of pride, resourcefulness and incredible perseverance. In the crucial factor of expectations, some teachers hold onto a faith in the school and its families. Some struggle to identify at all with the hardships and uncertainty of the school community's under-employment and diminishing opportunity.

The ASP organisation has over 1000 member schools in the USA and has begun to expand its membership base into Canada, Israel, Hong Kong and, in our case, Australia. One of the important objectives of this study has been to test the fidelity in Matterslea's ASP implementation to the orthodox ASP 'model'. 'Fidelity' is another of Cuban's (1996) standards for evaluating the effectiveness of educational reforms. The chronicle that probes that particular query began a long-term lesson in what Bronfenbrenner (1979) called Dearborne's Dictum: 'If you want to understand something, try to change it'. Not only has Matterslea context changed, but the context has tested the strength and flexibility of the model. ASP is shown in the study to have been applied faithfully. In the process, however, many 'home truths' have emerged as implications that reach to theoretical levels in understanding how District and State offices might see the reform of unempowered learning communities. As such, the study has direct relevance to developers of comprehensive, schoolwide renewal model such as ASP and the Coalition of Essential

Schools (O'Neil, 1995; Sizer, 1999). Further interest will be found from system-level planners who are curious to understand how grass-roots initiative can, if understood, be utilised to innovative and effective ends in such system-wide reforms Tasmania's School Improvement Review (SIR) or the UK's School Improvement Planning (SIP).

Going beyond education as a discipline in order to make sense of school renewal

A number of context-specific and system-specific conditions only become noticeable in the confluence of a systemic educational orthodoxy with a problematic 'reform' like the independent minded ASP process. To help analyse both the broad and immediate contexts within which the focus school operates, the study utilises concepts drawn from business and social work. Organisational theory has contributed to some of the study's major outcomes, claims and implications. When a new operational pattern is introduced to an organisation, whether it is in balance or in crisis, things will give. Theories explaining tensions around maintenance and change (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991) are common to commerce (as stability and innovation), social science (as affirmation and transformation), and biology (as defense and growth). The thesis garners organisational theory to consider the school's reform decisions and actions, particularly in leadership, communication and empowerment.

An important discourse stimulated by the study's outcomes engages the helpful, system-reinforcing aspects (Senge, 1995) of organisational alignment that are argued produce consistency, stability and strengthening of effects. Conversely, evidence is raised to support the literature's contention that 'isomorphism' (or top-down pattern replication) can inhibit schools' capacities to define for themselves (and its District-in-support) what are their essential, context-dependent challenges. The contribution to stability made by a loosely coupled external-to-internal policy vector is considered. As it is with a household, stability for a school is first a function of attention to immediate, relevant circumstances known best to its members. Only in consideration of these circumstances can broader or more long-term futures be planned. The case's outcomes corroborate a 'truism' of community aid and development: Sustainable change is predicated on knowledge of local conditions and imperatives.

Differentiated Outcomes

Another important set of findings from the study is in the tensions and balances around devolved decision-making and district or central controls. Change initiatives are almost 'folkloric' in stimulating 'defensive teaching' (Gitlin, 1998) or 'resistance in the trenches' (Evans, 1993; Wagner, 1994; Hess, Maranto & Milliman, 2000) and reform demands are argued to have stressing effects on teachers' work lives (Churchill, 1998; Abbott-Chapman, Hughes & Williamson, 2001). As the thesis will show, contrary to initial expectations about outcomes likely to flow from the reform implementation, it has been teachers who appear to have grown most in their level of empowerment. It was expected that parents would show the most demonstrable gains in influence. It appears to be a function of the immediate impact made on their workplace roles by the decision-making process of ASP, and the level of professional autonomy fostered by ASP process.

As a teacher educator one is persuaded by argument (Groundwater-Smith, 1996; Ladwig & White, 1996) and experience that it is teachers' professional learning (including their capacity for shared authority with the school community) that represents the most empowering and transforming influence on students and families attempting to 'overcome the odds'.

Synergy

The thesis argues that comprehensive, schoolwide renewal processes reach far beyond test score improvements into the truly transforming outcome of member empowerment and social capital. Our systemic and even school-based evaluations are simply inadequate to measure much of what is valued by members of the Matterslea School community, but the thesis makes significant ground in uncovering what some of the hard-to-measure elements are. The study began as an investigation of how the ASP reform model might improve the learning conditions and learning outcomes of the school previously racked with social and educational adversity. At the end of the study period it has emerged that in the school's effort to produce resilient, effective students, it has developed as a collective the very conditions described by writers in the field as characteristic of individuals' resilience: care and support from confidantes; identification of high expectations from people valued in the social ecology; and opportunities to make meaningful decisions about one's affairs (Benard,

1996). Important conceptualizations made through the study's outcomes include the dynamic relationship of renewal processes to 'organisational resilience', the role of appropriate communication processes in redefining the 'participation' of school communities, and the part played by comprehensive schoolwide reform in school systems' innovation capacities.

The overall thrust of the argument

Through the cross-cultural implementation, the study 'pressure tests' the major tenets of the ASP for their relevance and impact in Tasmanian schools and communities. The inevitable question in any discourse about the six-year change process at Matterslea is, 'Was it a success?' The usual term 'evaluation' is the procedure of comparing the outcomes with the intentions of the 'intervention'. However, even in a relatively small school (278 enrolments) there are many members and member groups whose perspectives must be acknowledged, and so many domains addressed by the renewal process. In gaining a comprehensive overview, I have taken an interpretive approach to the case study, looking not just for inputs and outputs but for meanings attached to actions, for motivations, for developments over time that point up challenges both of the anticipated and hidden varieties.

The study acknowledges and addresses yardsticks of interest to system-level managers responsible for achieving equitable outcomes for schools. These personnel at Commonwealth, State and District levels are increasingly forging mutual interests and inputs to tertiary teacher education institutions and their courses. While responding to the question of student test performances, the thesis argues for broadened, more sophisticated 'outcomes' perspectives on the parts of central and tertiary stakeholders. The lived context of the learner is 'field and ground' to the active, engaging learning, and fundamental to the building of any broader outcomes. From that base more generic outcomes and less holistic processes may be accommodated, known to unknown.

Outcomes authentic to the model and to a broader conception of 'learning'

In embracing a wider aegis of effects from the ASP model, the thesis takes the relevance of the outcomes beyond Education Departments and Faculties of Education into allied fields of social psychology, community development and family studies. Most important to a 'fidelity

of intention', the study considers the intentions of the ASP model and of the Matterslea community that took it on. How much impact do the principles of unity, empowerment and affirmation have? What is it in applying ASP that moves Matterslea towards achieving its Vision? These are the 'authentic' objectives by which the six years of reform effort should appropriately be judged. The thesis shows that the current range of measures used by Tasmania's SIR process does not adequately account for these authentic objectives. A school such as Matterslea, with high levels of disadvantage in its community, is shown to have imperatives in both social and individual cognition, and in building both personal and interpersonal capabilities. The ability of a student to set personal and collective goals as part of a daily learning engagement is a skill that reaches a higher order of learning than is evidenced by multiple choice test responses. Academic assessments only tangentially broach the depth and capacity represented by a student's empowerment and ownership of learning.

In order to grasp the holistic reality of student and organisational resiliency, State and District partners are encouraged by the study to embrace comprehensive and schoolwide processes and to consider how communities like Matterslea have engaged in shared authority and self-definition of locally owned objectives. ASP is described in the study as potentially offering a transparent and inclusive process that *enables* those affected by educational disadvantage to take the threshold steps of ownership and participation so critically necessary to generate outcomes of pride, hope and equity.

The ASP emerges as having several clear governance and organisational elements that are compatible with Tasmania's SIR mandates. Its collaborative practices and pedagogical values also relate closely to the ambitious curricular demands of Tasmania's nascent *Essential Learnings Framework* (Department of Education, 2002). In its explanation of the generative links between decision-making process, organisational learning and powerful pedagogies, the thesis challenges school systems to rethink the assumption that, particularly for low SES schools, governance and school organisation have minimal potential impact on student learning and the resiliency of the community of learners.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The nine chapters are devoted to four broad writing tasks: to give a background to the study, the context and the account; to describe and interpret relevant research and theory; to report and explain the project's actions and outcomes; and to analyse the meaning for Matterslea and for the broader field of equity-seeking educational renewal.

Chapter One, *Introduction*, is setting the general orientation of the reader to the purposes and contents of the thesis.

Chapter Two, *The Context of the Study,* is in two parts. The first part provides an explanation of the tenets and practices of the Accelerated Schools model of school reform and describes the stages of implementation that relate to the phases of establishment, consolidation and self-authoring that have emerged from the particular implementation at the focus of this study. The second part considers why the studied site, Matterslea, is appropriate as an implementing school community, and how the project and its study were set up and initiated. The chapter concludes by drawing links from Matterslea's ASP renewal processes and initiatives in the Department of Education, particularly School Improvement Review (SIR) and the *Essential Learnings Framework.*

The literature relevant to this study is presented in two chapters. Chapter Three, *The Emergence of Comprehensive Schoolwide Reform,* locates the study in the past 40 years' development of equity-focused school reform, before considering what contributions of relevance have been made by research and theory to understanding 'comprehensive schoolwide reform' efforts in disadvantaged school communities. The perspective shifts from the ASPs country of origin, the USA, Europe and narrows to Australia, in particular to Tasmania, where the study takes place. Chapter Four addresses *Organisational Theory,* providing an examination of the conceptual environment of the study. It considers tensions around management and devolution in organisational learning, formal academic and 'authentic' purposes in learning, and the relationship of social cognition to individual cognition in the context of collective renewal.

Chapter Five, *Research Approach*, describes and justifies the choice of research approaches and the methods used. It describes the research's data-gathering procedures and sample selections, and explains the bases for the analysis conducted.

The Outcomes of the study are reported and analyses in three chapters that relate to both the stages and domains inherent in the ASP implementation. Chapter Six, *Outcomes in the Establishment Phase*, argues the fidelity of the Matterslea effort to the orthodox ASP model. It has the nature of an explanatory chronicle, because the steps undertaken within the establishment phase are important to an understanding of *process*. It is on this basis that the study's first research question is answered, concerning the 'extent' of ASP process applied.

In Chapter Seven, *Outcomes regarding School Governance and Workplace Organisation*, the first section considers the effects of leaderdship, democratic and consensual decision-making, transparency and inclusiveness in the management of the school, particularly in the distribution of leadership. A second section relates decisions made within the organisational domain in timetabling, resource management and roles. In addressing the first two domains of the second research question, the chapter introduces the synergistic dynamic that links the three domains of school operations that are targeted by comprehensive, schoolwide reform.

Chapter Eight, *Developments and Outcomes in Teaching and Learning*, first analyses student learning outcomes that have been ascertained in the study period, particularly in the area of literacy that has received the most focused attention in the school's planning workplace organisation and the reshaping of the school program. The focus then turns to organisational learning dimensions of school renewal, the capacity building represented by professional learning, empowerment of the community of learners and inclusive voices of members.

Chapter Nine, *Conclusions and Implications*, draws conclusions related to the first two Research questions, before addressing the third and final research question , interpreting the relative and mutual impacts of the models' processes. The model is shown to be a volatile avenue of change for the school and the 'blueprint' is itself shown capable of being contextualised and reconceptualised. Several directions for further research are indicated alongside three key theoretical 'propositions' drawn from the outcomes. The thesis concludes with implications of practical relevance to three levels of 'vested interest' in the implementation: the school; the model advocates; and the host system.

Following the body of the thesis are the *References,* a *Glossary of Terms Used* and a section of *Appendices* that carries, among other information, research instruments such as surveys and interview schedules, diagrams and a chronology too lengthy to warrant inclusion in the main text.

CHAPTER TWO

Context of the Study

2.1 Introduction

The first purpose of this 'backgrounding' chapter is to offer a concise explanation of the ASP model's philosophical bases and its procedural essentials[1]. A second objective is to describe the demographic, socio-political and educational contexts of the specific school site, 'Matterslea' Primary School.

2.2 The Accelerated Schools Project School Reform Model

Development of the model

Developed in a 1986 Stanford University initiative led by Dr. Henry Levin, its originators called the model '*Accelerated* Schools' to highlight the intention to speed up learners' progress to match that of more socio-economically advantaged peers in middle class areas by the time they exit elementary school. The project or 'network' now extends into middle schools and has even shaped the praxis of some tertiary teacher education faculties.

The Accelerated Schools Project (ASP) is a 'school self-renewal' (Goodlad, 1999) process focused on communities experiencing educational disadvantage. Goodlad (1999) distinguishes renewal from systemic reform in that renewal is school-managed reform, sourced in grass roots action, inclusively constructed, with planned change in all domains of a school's operations, and is conceived as an ongoing process of whole-school development. The premise driving the ASP movement is that participatory democracy (on the part of the whole school community) combined with a thorough praxis review of teaching and learning

1 As the thesis at times bridges to other cultures' education systems and disciplines other than education, ambiguities are possible around certain terms. The glossary of terms offered following the references is designed to help clarify a number of these transdisciplinary meanings .

in the school (largely along constructivist and inclusive curriculum lines) will result in improved student learning outcomes. In the terminology of ASP, *school community empowerment + powerful learning = improved student outcomes.*

The pedagogical basis of the model is that ambitious curriculum, rather than a slow-paced 'back-to-basics', narrowed offering, is needed to achieve acceleration for educationally disadvantaged learners. All children are argued to benefit from being treated as gifted, and should learn through engaging, authentic, context-honouring activity (Levin, 1996). The implication is that schools, rather starting from a deficit idea of their conditions, should operate from a strength and challenges position. ASP intends that schools design and proactively pursue a desired future, rather than lose educational energy 'making up shortfalls' defined by distal parties.

The model's place in the contemporary US reform environment

The Accelerated Schools Project (ASP) has been described in its own literature as a *movement* (ASP, 1996b, p.2). This suggests that the ASP 'model' is not advocated simply as a tacit, theoretical option, but rather as an active, adherent-seeking way to do things. Other reform practices described as movements include Sizer's (1999) *Coalition of Essential Schools* (CES), school effectiveness (Creemers, 1996a and Reynolds & Stoll, 1994) and school improvement (Goodlad, 1999). Movements imply a manifesto and loyalty or support from adherents. It also suggests growth or snowballing of the model. The Accelerated Schools Project claims 1,100 implementing elementary and middle schools across 41 US states, and with 12 'regional centers' the project has successfully decentralized. Previously at Stanford University, California, the ASP's National Centre has since relocated to the University of Connecticut. In recent years there have been attempts to internationalise the ASP. Four schools implemented ASP in Israel (Haim, 2001). At least one school is implementing ASP in Canada and some early exchanges have been attempted in Hong Kong, however no publications of those particular efforts have yet emerged.

In 1998, the ASP was one of 17 reform models 'recognised' by the US Federal Department of Education as meeting the criteria that define comprehensive school reform (Buttram, 1998). These models were recommended to schools as ways to utilise new funding under a bold addition to the working of *Title I*. Since 1965, *Title I* has been the US Department of Education's primary equity intervention against socio-cultural disadvantage. Following

enabling legislation in 1998, the USDE implemented the *Comprehensive Schoolwide Reform Demonstration* (CSRD). Growing from $145m in 1998 the CSRD provided over $US 200 in 2001 to US public schools through their States, specifically to implement comprehensive schoolwide reforms. Awarded competitively through state education agencies (SEAs), a district, known in some southern states as a local education agency (LEA), will make an application to the state education agency on behalf of schools in the district wanting CSRD funding. A minimum of $US50, 000 annually goes to a successful applicant school, over three years, renewable on SEA's recommendation. Of course, no such funding has been possible in this cross-culture implementation. A small amount of 'global budget' funds at the research site have been devoted to the ASP process at Matterslea, less than $3000 a year, and much of that being 'in-kind' outlay.

Nearly all US comprehensive reform models such as the *ASP*, *Success for All*, the *Coalition of Essential Schools* and *Comer Schools* have been 'grown' outside federal or state government drawing-boards, and until 1998, the organisations and schools promoting them relied largely on philanthropic, research and seeding funds from non-government sources. A number of high-minority, low income schools had begun in the 1990s to use Title I compensatory funds to support independent comprehensive model implementations in their schools. Since 1998, with the claims of success made by such organisations as *ASP* and *Success For All* , the sustainability and longevity of schoolwide reform models have been boosted through the (CSRD) initiative.

Comprehensive, schoolwide models are distinguished from single domain reforms such as standards-based reforms (emphasising accountability and assessment), restructuring reforms (that reshape teachers' work and governance roles or which change such program dynamics as school entry ages, teacher/pupil ratios or class sizes); and curricular reforms (which implement only new content or instructional methods). Comprehensive reform or 'renewal', on the other hand, targets multiple or comprehensive domains, comprising governance, school organisation and teaching and learning. It is *school-wide* in involving and affecting each member group or level, be it leader, staff, parent or student; *comprehensive*, in addressing the several domains of governance, school program structures, curriculum and instruction (including assessment), which are frequently dealt with in isolated fashion by schools or systems; and *school-based* in that the locus of decision-making, implementation

and accountability is at the level of the school. To be eligible for funding under the CSR Program, a school's chosen or self-designed reform must account for nine components:

- Effective, research-based methods and strategies
- Comprehensive design with integrated components including instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, and school management
- Professional development
- Measurable goals and benchmarks
- Majority of faculty/staff members support model implementation
- Parental and community involvement
- External technical support and assistance
- Evaluation strategies
- Coordination of resources

(US Department of Education, 1999)

Hess (1999) claims that "[u]nderstanding how the nature of specific reforms affects their popularity has implications for the broader literature on policy diffusion and agenda setting" (p. 458). This thesis intends to further that understanding. In addition to USDE endorsement, ASP has met most criteria of approval by researchers in the field such as Wang, Haertel & Walberg (1998a). Recent independent evaluations reported significant learning progress in ASP implementing schools (Bloom et al., 2001).

2.3 ASP principles and procedures

Ideology

In ASP, there is an ideological invocation of Dewey's (1916) experiential, democratic learning. The ASP's Resource Guide (Hopfenberg, Levin & Associates, 1993) makes several references to Dewey, including his (1938) notions of 'inquiring into shared problems' that underpin ASP's Inquiry Process (Hopfenberg et al., 1993, p. 33). The politics of ASP's agenda for schools also resonate with Paulo Friere's (1972) context-honouring, informed activism or 'conscientization' that dignify the struggle against adversity, and sit well with the critical theory of Giroux (1988) and Gee (1996).

Although the word '*project*' might imply something ephemeral or fixed in its duration, the Accelerated Schools Project is not a 'limited edition' reform effort. Nor is it a content-prescriptive '*program*' with a set of procedural, sequenced instructions linked to proprietary resources or materials. It is a *process* embedded in particular reform movement. It is a

process that helps structure what is done (by way of decision-making, for instance), but more importantly, the principles and values expressed in carrying out the procedures or protocols affect *how* a school sees itself, how the resulting school climate affects schoolwide operations. In the case of the ASP, the philosophy relates closely to the practice. The 'praxis' is the 'philosophy in action'. The ASP refers to this as a 'systematic process' (Hopfenberg et al., 1993, p.55).

'Buying-in'

Before entry into the project, between 80 and 90% of the school community must commit to essential philosophical tenets. These are, first, that we should aspire to create for all children what educators want for their own children. Then, to match their better-performing peers, students should be treated as having gifts and talents and should be taught through ambitious, engaging pedagogies. Finally, all the schools must commit to three principles. These have been 'explicated' in the following terms by the report of an interview (Goldberg, 2001) with the model's main originator and recently retired director, Henry Levin:

> *1. **To succeed, a school must have a unity of purpose.*** It is not enough just to have a pretty vision statement. The school must follow specific steps for taking careful stock of everything from parents and students to strengths, challenges, and weaknesses. And no consultant can do this. The school staff must take responsibility for this serious task, since the unity of purpose comes about as a result of working together to define what must be done. In the end, there will be a vision statement, but it will be real and the result of working together.
>
> *2. **Empowerment comes with responsibility.*** This principle is reflected in the system of governance, in a system for decision making that uses problem solving, and in a system for assessment. All decisions must be informed by careful assessment, must be made by all the constituencies in the school, and must eliminate the notion of blame. When everyone is working together, there is no one to blame; instead, the emphasis is on finding solutions to problems.
>
> *3. **Building on Strength; Principles of instruction for the gifted and talented are used.*** The Accelerated Schools Project has a specific way of mounting an enrichment program called 'powerful learning'. This is a system that builds on strengths and uses the concepts of constructivism: active learning through independent projects and problem solving. Students frequently do hands-on projects, some of them real-life projects, that are based on the strengths of the students, teachers, and other adults in the local school community. While the acquisition of knowledge is recognized as important, the emphasis is on active learning, debate, and informed discourse within which knowledge is acquired.
>
> (Henry Levin, related by Goldberg, 2001, p. 632)

Establishment procedures and the working of the ASP process

Following a school's collective endorsement of the model's philosophical tenets, the committed ASP school is expected to pursue:

1. Establishment of a collaborative, consensual, inclusive management practice (*Governance*);

2. Ongoing decision-making and action-planning to achieve priority goals through a data-centred action research cycle (*called 'Inquiry' method*);

3. Purposive development of pedagogical and curricular conditions optimal to learner-centred principles (*'Powerful Learning'*).

(after Hopfenberg et al.,1993; Finnan, St. John, McCarthy & Slovacek, 1996)

To initiate the ASP process, a school undertakes a sequence of steps over the course of four or five months . The 'manual' for ASP-establishing schools, the *Accelerated Schools Resource Guide* (Hofenberg et al., 1993) sets out four key steps to early implementation: *Taking stock, Developing a vision, Setting priorities; and Creating new governance structures.*

Taking Stock. In this action, unity of purpose is fostered by empowering participants from the whole school community. Through an inclusive, collective audit that first emphasises ascertaining strengths in the school context, then identifies the challenges, the community gains a sense of how the school is currently situated. ASP terms this the 'here' picture.

Developing a vision. All members and member groups are involved in imagining what kind of school they want for their own child, with these goals expressed and celebrated as a shared 'Vision' statement that serves over time as a guiding manifesto. This is the 'there' picture.

Setting priorities. In the realistic understanding that not everything can be done at once, the community as a whole prioritises differences between taking stock data and the Vision. By consensus, three to five thematic areas are set to focus the planning and action of the school's working teams, known as 'cadres'.

Creating governance structures. Members from the school community 'self-select' onto one of the cadres, committing to meet regularly and problem-solve the identified 'here-to-there' challenges. A steering committee is formed of cadre representatives, school leaders,

parents, students and community, mainly to 'keep the Vision' to the fore, and the broad school-as-a-whole (SAW) is empowered to act as the school's peak decision making body.

The Inquiry Process

Following the establishment of the new governance process, in which the principal assumes a position of equality with members, rather than of executive power, action affecting school program organisation and teaching and learning can begin. This work of the cadres, who refer their progress and propositions to the Steering Committee and the SAW, is called the *Inquiry Process.*

The Inquiry Process is the engine room of program and curriculum development in the school. An action research cycle, it has five essential steps: focus in on challenge area; collect and interrogate any relevant data before brainstorming solutions; synthesise solutions and develop an action plan; pilots test/implement the plan; evaluate and reassess. Particular care is given to correctly identifying and posing the problem, *before* entering the problem-solving phase of the cycle. This suspension of any 'rush to judgment' is framed in the ASP literature as a critical orientation: being wary of "solutions dressed in hypotheses' clothes". As most of us are prone to desire or to offer solutions at the first sight of a problem, this 'step' in the inquiry process can require considerable guidance, time and concentration.

The cadres work through their challenge area's priorities, and depending on the challenge's status in the action planning, more than one challenge can be targeted within the same meeting. A typical set of challenge areas that define the cadres' focuses might be (i) Teaching and Learning; (ii) School Climate; and (iii) Home/School involvement. Cadres meet on site, weekly or fortnightly depending on the range of planning or development demands on staff and community, and meetings may be after school hours or may use time at the end of a shortened school day gleaned from four other slightly extended school days. Members take roles such as timekeeper and recorder, rotating on various schedules. Minutes of cadre meetings and other ASP forums are maintained using a consistent format and displayed on a school community notice board as well as being reported through newsletter channels. Data collected and decisions reached are potentially important information for later Inquiry Process searches, so they are filed and stored securely at the school.

Over time, at yearly intervals, the school's progress is self-evaluated against philosophical and operational benchmarks published by the ASP organisation as the *ASP Evaluation Toolkit*. The school's priority areas and challenges are also periodically reviewed and tuned or revised, in some cases, yearly, in others up to three yearly, depending on circumstances of policy and the local environment.

Values

A synergism in ASP thinking is evident in the recognition by ASP proponents that, although principles may be agreed as a starting point, the participation of a school's community in the ASP process progressively creates the *values* of a renewing culture. The values that emerge "as an accelerated school develops ... guiding the actions and interactions of people" (Hopfenberg et al., 1993, pp. 31-33) are frequently invoked in ASP literature: "*Equity; Participation; Communication and collaboration; community spirit; Reflection; experiment and discovery; Trust; Risk-taking;* and *School as a center of expertise*" (Finnan et al, 1996, p. 299)

Role of the Coach

To guide the establishment a 'coach' facilitates the process in each school. It may be an internal member, but is more often an educator from a District centre, a tertiary faculty or from an ASP 'satellite' centre. The current preferred model is for an external, full-time coach who works with two or three only schools. However, school and district sizes and the availability of ASP-experienced personnel will affect the logistics of coaching. Depending on circumstances, the coach may be external, internal, part or full-time. Funding of the coach's input is usually sourced in Title I funds either at District of school level. In the current coaching model, in addition to giving ongoing 'on-the-sidelines' procedural guidance, the coach offers several whole day training experiences for staff and community. The induction of new staff also requires time and information from the coach. A day a week is a common input from a coach, although this may be higher in the early stages, tapering to an 'on-call' basis as the process becomes embedded.

2.4 Curriculum under ASP

All school actions under the ASP aegis must move the school towards its agreed Vision and priorities, while the priorities and cadre domains are reviewed at around yearly intervals. The direct links between the Inquiry Process and developing practice in the school's teaching and learning is captured well by the ASP Resource Guide (Hopfenberg, et al., 1993):

> Instead of focusing on external demands of the system (mandates and short-term testing goals)... [t]he members of the school community work toward this shared vision *collaboratively*. The entire school community works together to create situations in which teachers become facilitators and students become discoverers. (p. 212)

Powerful Learning: the centrepiece of ASP teaching & learning

The ASP does not impose any particular curriculum on its member schools. Unlike more curriculum-prescriptive models such as *Success For All* with proprietary materials supplied, ASP leaves curricular choices and the selection of teaching materials up to the participating school. Two 'guiding principles' in teaching and learning are, however, quite central to the ASP process, and can be considered essential to the school's inclusion as an authentic ASP site. The first is that *powerful learning* methods are those that are ascertained by the school as those most likely to build on learners' strengths and which offer the opportunity for *all* students to experience success. While not stipulating which particular constructivist pedagogies or instructional approaches are orthodox to ASP, methods criticized in ASP literature include those that are "stifling in the obsession with low-level basic skills and repetitious drill and practice" (Levin, 1996a), those that recommend "the tracking of students into remedial instruction characterized by drill and practice and associative learning", often in a 'pull-out' or 'withdrawal' mode (Levin & McCarthy, 1996) and the labeling of students as 'at-Risk' on the basis of social problems (Levin, 1992).

Powerful Learning is conceived as having three dimensions: *what* is taught, *how* the content is taught and the *context*, which refers to "time, personnel, funding, materials, physical space and other resources that shape the organisational environment of the school" (Hopfenberg et al., 1993, p. 35). The solutions to effective learning, in Levin's view, do not result from transmitted curriculum or materials, nor from a downloading habit of mind that is inculcated

by deficit notions. Rather, the solutions are mainly found *within* the organisation, sited largely in the human resources and experiences of the community. Levin, 1996a, proposes:

> A powerful learning situation is one that incorporates changes in school organization, climate, and instructional strategies to build on the strengths of students, staff and community to create optimal learning results. What is unique about this approach is that changes are not piecemeal, but integrated into all aspects of the learning situation. This contrasts sharply with the usual attempts to transform schools through idiosyncratic reforms involving the ad hoc adoption of different curriculum packages, instructional practices or organizational changes to address each perceived problem that the school faces. (p.18)

Constructivism is the explicit 'umbrella theory' for powerful learning (ASP, 2000, p. 2) in its conceptual foundation. ASP literature promotes five criteria or 'components' to powerful learning. Powerful learning is:

> *Authentic.* Students can relate what they are experiencing in the classroom to real issues and situations. Lessons have recognizable goals, and build connections to the outside world.
>
> *Interactive.* Powerful learning includes interactive opportunities for individuals to collaborate with others in the learning process and to work together towards a common purpose. Through this interaction, students are able to further their expertise and knowledge by sharing and explaining it to others.
>
> *Learner-centered.* Exploration and continual discovery are essential to the powerful learning process. The direction and content of lessons builds on the strengths, experiences and interests of students. Through a challenging, supportive environment, students are able to take charge of their own learning.
>
> *Inclusive.* Powerful learning focuses on giving all students equal access to learning opportunities. The classroom environment and the learning opportunities are structured to draw on the expertise of students who may not be as vocal or perceived of as smart.
>
> *Continuous learning.* Powerful learning strengthens connections between different learning contexts so that students perceived knowledge in a more holistic manner. Students can apply existing knowledge to what they have already learned and make connections between different subject areas. (ASP, 2000, pp. 3-5)

Rather than being prescriptive the ASP model ideally "builds the capacity of each school to assess its needs and develop integrated plans that will lead to the school's unique vision" (Finnan et al, 1996, p. 300). Powerful learning is a result from the activation of ASP principles, values and practice, particularly the Inquiry Process that stabilizes development through whole-school inclusive action research and planning.

Suggesting the benefits of an aligned systematic process across ASP actions, Levin (1996a) notes: "A coach is trained to work with the school using constructivist activities that engage members of the school community in problem-solving experiences that lead to a sequence of major activities that the school undertakes over subsequent months" (p. 14). In this way the train of cultural and pedagogical approaches remains consistently constructivist (where the learners synthesise meaning from active inquiry) in the pathway of school renewal:

Coaching (training through constructivist learning activity)→ *Priority-setting* (inclusive, collaborative, open-ended) → *Inquiry-process* (problem-solving, consensual) → *Curriculum and Instruction* (learner-centred *Powerful Learning* (focusing on strengths and content) → *Student engagement and outcomes* (authentic, risk-taking, owned learning) → *Acceleration.*

2.5 Matterslea Primary School, the immediate community and the broader educational context

The comparative disadvantage of poor and underemployed communities is growing in Australia. Analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures has shown that "the share of household income – after tax and benefits in cash and kind – going to the bottom 20 per cent of households dropped from a peak of 8.4 per cent in 1988-89 to 7.4 per cent a decade later" (Henderson, 2001). Among Australian states, Tasmania has the lowest average taxable income, at $31, 000 (AMP-NATSEM, 2002). The 2001 Census (ABS, 2002) indicates that among Tasmanian localities, at $A231, Matterslea's average weekly household income was 28% below that of its encompassing regional city, Launceston. Anglicare, one of Australia's peak welfare-providing non-government organisations, presented research in late 2000 to highlight the deepening problems for welfare reform in Tasmania:

- There are now 15 persons unemployed for every job vacancy, even higher in some regions, compared with less than half this nationally;
- Tasmania's *official* unemployment rate is stuck at around 10% [my italics];
- 37.4% of Tasmanians are dependant upon Social Security payments as their main source of income (compared with a national average of 29.6% and 15.9% in the ACT);
- 35.5% of Tasmanian unemployed are long term unemployed (12 months or more with absolutely no work) compared with the national average of 25%;

- 30% of all work in Tasmania is part time or casual and the unemployed face effective marginal tax rates of up to 80%;
- Tasmania has the highest costs for most essentials of life, including food, transport, and power.

(Anglicare, 2000, http://www.anglicare-tas.org.au/research/js-welf.html)

If post-school youth unemployment is a benchmark, public education is failing to enhance the employability and productivity of a nation's 'human capital'. Tasmania has high jobless rates among school leavers, beyond 30% statewide (Anglicare, 1999), higher in pockets like Matterslea. Youth suicide in Tasmania has quadrupled over three years (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2002). A contracting economy, with a decreasing job market and consequent pressure at the bottom end on scarce work compromises the benefits of school retention efforts that are argued to improve equity for disadvantaged learners. Tasmanian school retention to Grade 12 (tertiary preparation or two years beyond compulsory schooling) has, after having risen in the 1990s, returned to being among the lowest in Australia. Tasmanian girls have the lowest retention rate in Australia, and its boys, the second lowest (ABS, *Social Trends*, 2000) among Australian State and Territories.

Equity and Tasmanian Government Schools

In each school district of Tasmania, there are schools whose students have regularly occupied the bottom few places of Statewide test outcomes, an outcome reflected in later years with weak school retention and school leaving results. These mainly urban fringe schools share predictable variables of 'housing commission'[2] areas: under-maintained public housing rental homes, a greater majority of the enrolments having school fee subsidisation (known colloquially as 'loan issue'), high levels of youth crime, truancy, mobility and alienation. Breakfast-providing programs are common in schools whose children perform in the bottom 5% on Tasmania's Statewide tests.

[2] The Tasmanian Government has recently embarked on a policy to move away from 'enclave' housing with large numbers of identical rental buildings to a more distributed method, placing new or renovated public housing in already settled suburbs. The solution however still leaves several 'difficult' suburbs and their schools in the 'problematic' basket.

Matterslea Primary School

Matterslea is a 'Northern suburb' of Launceston, in the NE of Tasmania. A regional city, Launceston's population is approximately 75, 000. Despite being of the 'perfect' size for cities according to Schumacher's (1973) 'Small is Beautiful', Launceston has one of the nation's highest unemployment rates (Flanagan, 2000). The Matterslea community has little internal infrastructure such as day care centres, health clinics and libraries. Established in 1954 as a school to serve a large government housing suburb, Matterslea Primary School, is a K-6 government school. Originally with 500+ enrolments, the school currently has 285 students, making it 'average' size in Tasmanian terms.

Just under 75% of its population receives government school levy assistance, Student Assistance (or 'STAS'), based on household income. Tasmanian schools are funded and staffed according to an 'educational needs index' (ENI) which factors in household incomes (as a socio-economic status measure) and numbers eligible for STAS assistance. Matterslea's Educational Needs Index standing was 89 in 2000, positioning it in the bottom 2.5% (5th lowest of 214 of the state's public schools) in terms of parent-body resource access (Department of Eduction, Tasmania, 2000). Seven of every ten Matterslea school community families have incomes close to the 'poverty line', compared to 4 out of ten families across all Tasmanian schools (Anglicare, 2002). Around half Matterslea's households are headed by single mothers, the majority of whom are young, not in employment and require rental assistance for their Government housing. That statistic is growing. Over the period from 1996 to 2001, single parent families in Matterslea rose by 13.2% (ABS, 2000). School records show around 14% of the school population have aboriginal identities, a proportion characteristic of Northern Suburbs schools. The state population has just over 2% indigenous persons. Of all groups in the Australian population, aboriginal students are acknowledged as the most academically and socially 'at-risk' (Hunter, 1999; McRae, 2000).

Statewide literacy and numeracy test results showed that up to1996, the year prior to ASP's introduction, Matterslea had among the lowest 3% on aggregated numeracy scores at Grades 3 and 5, and in the lowest 3% of aggregated literacy scores at Grade 5 level. The

concentration of stresses in the secondary school to which Matterslea transitions its students is a matter for concern, as *all* its contributing primary (K-6) schools are high (i.e., high poverty) on the educational needs index (ENI). Under Tasmania's teacher transfer system of the mid 1990s, Matterslea had 'non-preferred' status, signifying that its teachers could be guaranteed transfer to another school after a shortened appointment at Matterslea (three years).

In 1996 Matterslea Primary School's plight was highlighted in a book (Breheney, Mackrill and Grady, 1996) that told the story of the staff's efforts to turn around a school culture rife with oppositional behaviour and violence. In the summer following the book's publication, the suburb of Matterslea was a constant source of damaging newspaper headlines. Vigilante groups were forming to contend with the increasing incidence of property crime and assault, much of which was slated home to youth gangs and family rivalry. Only increased police presence quieted the situation and placated the fearful and angry residents. One of the important demographic facts of Matterslea is that a majority of the residents are second generation locals, and a sizable proportion of them go to a third generation. The suburb and its school had not always been in difficulty. It was established as a response to a post-war population and employment boom with accompanying high employment and stability. Over 500 students were enrolled. It has always been working class, but only since the 1980s has it experienced high under-employment and crime conditions. Over the last ten years there has been a relentless string of store closures and facility relocations away from Matterslea.

Parent participation rates at Matterslea in the 1990s were very weak and less than 25% typically attended parent-teacher meetings (Staff Meeting notes, 1997). Most of Matterslea's parents have had relatively limited education spans and fear that their own weak academic experiences or 'failures' will be replicated in their children. Some claim the best thing they can do for their children is to '*stay out of the way of their education*' (Interview, Parent, 1997).

Interest in school matters is arguably hampered by some low literacy levels in the community's parent body, but even that does not explain a response rate of 3.2% (8 out of 190 families) to a *half-page* questionnaire sent through the school newsletter early in 1997 to all the school's families. The study has clarified reasons behind the apparent lack of engagement, but that is for later discussion.

2.6 The introduction of Accelerated Schools Project to Tasmania

In 1996, at the beginning of a new conservative State Government's term, and in the face of a broad standards-and-accountability based reform agenda for education and all public services under State control, the idea of setting up one or more Tasmanian public schools as trial sites for the ASP must have seemed like setting a minnow to move against an overwhelming tide. The previous six years in Tasmanian education had seen a reaction against 'progressive', process-focused schooling, and a return to the rationalisation of inputs against outcomes, school closures, excision of middle-management. From 1990, following the CRESAP report (Department of Education and the Arts (DEA), Tasmania, 1990), the devolution of budgetary responsibility to schools was matched by a consolidation of curriculum control to Central Office. Three Regional Offices had been replaced by seven District Offices more closely responsive to Central Office directions. Amid the trend to greater system alignment and homogeneity, a brave proposal was made to the Education Department to allow an 'outrider' trialing of an American-sourced school reform model. Professor Bill Mulford, then Dean and Professor of Education at the University of Tasmania, proposed that the Tasmanian public system agree to the implementation of the ASP process in one or two Tasmanian public schools. The decision was referred to the relevant Forester District, located in the same geographical region as the Northern Campus of the University.

Earlier in 1996, during a visit to the US, an agreement of mutual intent had been signed by Prof. Mulford and Prof. Henry Levin, Director of the National Centre for Accelerated Schools. The ASP National Centre would support one or two implementing schools through a coach based at (and funded by) the University of Tasmania. Support would be in the way of resources, literature and connection to the on-line links of the ASP network. In the agreement, there were potential benefits to all parties: for the ASP organisation, there was the possibility of 'expansion' (Accelerated Schools Project, 1994) into southern hemisphere systems; for the University of Tasmania development of faculty/school system research partnerships; for the State system the 'trial' could be a cost-neutral exploration of a more adventurous school self-management and community/school partnership exercise than those within the parameters of ASSR (DoE, 1999b).

Selecting and approaching trial sites through the District Office

In August 1996, the researcher was asked to join the project as coach on the strength of my connections with local schools, as discussions began with the Superintendent of Forester School District. I had been seconded from the Education Department to the University some two years earlier. Forester School District, one of seven in the State[3], was an educational administrative cell of 35 public schools. Its bounds encompassed the University of Tasmania's northern campus at Launceston, the primary centre for tertiary teacher education in Tasmania.

To approximate the typical profile of ASP member schools in the US, trial schools in Tasmania would be in the bottom 10% of performers on academic measures and in the bottom 10% on scales of socio-economic disadvantage. Relative to other Districts, Forester contained a high number of schools known as 'disadvantaged' and the area directly adjoining the University contained a particularly high number of such schools as a cluster. The numbers of indigenous students in 'eligible' Tasmanian schools might be up to 17%, racial issues are not as volatile as in many of the US schools. Since 1994, the Commonwealth and state systems, including Tasmania, have identified indigenous students in disadvantaged areas as the most educationally at-risk group in the country. Each of the three potential sites in the Forester District considered for the project had between 14% and 17% identified indigenous students. Every disadvantaged primary school in Tasmania is small compared to US elementary schools. Each has fewer than 400 students, whereas most of the US schools in the ASP network have school enrolments over 500, and frequently number over 800. The 'potential' Tasmanian ASP sites had between 250 and 300 enrolments.

Narrowing the field of potential project sites

From around thirteen eligible schools in the District, the University and the Forester District Office narrowed the field to those schools within 50 km of the University and whose principals appeared likely to remain in the school for at least a few years. Of these, schools were favoured whose principals had shown a democratic, rather than 'top-down', style of leadership. Three schools met the criteria. Of these three 'eligible' schools, one was small (though once big) urban primary school soon to amalgamate with its nearby secondary

[3] From 1998, Forester School District merged with an adjoining district to create Esk School District, the largest in Tasmania with some sixty five schools. The use of 'Esk District' in the thesis applies to actions taken after 1998.

school to make it Tasmania's first K-10 'urban' version of the until then exclusively rural District High School. Its combined enrolment would be about 300. The second 'eligible' school was a regional primary school 50km from District office and the university. Copies of excerpts from the Accelerated Schools Resource guide (Hopfengberg et al., 1993) were given to the principals of these two schools, to be considered with their staff over a period of months (September and October).

Two of the likely schools withdrew from consideration late in 1996 because of school amalgamations that were beginning in the following year, 1997. One school was joining with its other local primary school and high school to form a K-Gr 10 school, while the other was rationalising its administration with that of the local adjoining high school to form one new school and administrative unit. In addition, both were committed to ASSR processes and one was setting up a school council with significant constitutional powers. The schools and their staffs felt the amalgamations and associated changes were enough to deal with at one time, and could not envisage giving ASP a fair go.

Work began with Matterslea, the third 'eligible' school early in the 1997 school year. The ASP literature calls this period of information and deliberation prior to commitment (or 'buy-in') the 'courtship' phase (Kushman & Chenoweth, 1996). Matterslea's new incoming Principal (1) had for some time been interested in the transformational, 'value-added' leadership ideas of US school management theorist, Sergiovanni (1990) and on reading the ASP literature excerpts copied for him, related that a number of the notions resonated with his democratic management initiatives at two previous schools in the District. He agreed that staff and active school community members should be given the opportunity to judge the potential value of the process for their school.

Matterslea eventuated as the only school site in the collaborated Tasmanian ASP implementation. In several ways this has eased the pressures on establishing the process, as, in retrospect, my full time University responsibilities would have seriously compromised my ability to 'coach' as the very novel circumstances demanded. I have remained with the school as an external coach for those six years, and through that time the school has chosen to maintain ASP as its central decision-making process. The initial Principal (1) at Matterslea took secondment in 2001 to a leadership consultancy in the Esk District Student Support Service. He was succeeded at Matterslea by the school's current Principal (2).

2.7 Identifying mutual purposes of Tasmania's Department of Education and the ASP model

The Tasmanian ASSR/SIR school improvement model has the following elements: the gathering of school-based data from proximal stakeholders and central databases; relevant performance data from Central databases; deliberative analysis by proximal stakeholders in the school community (teachers, parents and school council members); collective setting of school priorities according to Department-required target domains; and agreed timelines on directly related targets. Similar development planning processes have been undertaken by Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland.

At the time of the introduction of the ASSR, Matterslea was just beginning on its 'taking stock' phase of the ASP process. For the authentic trial of the ASP process in Tasmania it was important that Matterslea work through the ASP review and priority setting as free as possible from mandates which could artificially shape or constrain decisions. Meetings were held in late 1997 and early 1998 with the Superintendent of Forester School District, to establish a working agreement whereby Matterslea as a school community, its staff and Principal would be (a) free to develop priorities in their own right yet (b) not be disadvantaged in any way because of its operation outside the strict framework of ASSR. An assurance was given. Matterslea would have to keep adequate data. Further, if Matterslea's Principal (1) wished to take advantage of the contract and performance bonus being offered to principals in the Tasmanian public school system, the school would need to sign a school/community Partnership Agreement involving the setting of measurable targets in the system-mandated domains. This option was taken up by the Principal but only after Matterslea Primary School had spent 18 months in thorough ASP process.

Given the inception of ASSR/SIR in the Planning Unit of the Department of Education, with central stipulations of procedures and formats, target-related performance data and student test data circulated to the central Office for Educational Review, Tasmania's systemic improvement review reforms can reasonably be regarded as 'top-down'. Yet, unlike the rapid implementation of restructuring initiatives that followed the 1990 CRESAP Report (Department of Education and the Arts [DEA], 1990), the SIR initiative has been more gently introduced, with opportunities for staggered entry. Many schools have taken some years to initiate their ASSR/SIR involvement. Furthermore, if the recent guidelines of SIR

are an indication, since the Department evaluated the ASSR process in 2000, there is an increasing recognition that,

> [w]ith schools as the acknowledged centre of change, the power and the room to act decisively in response to review findings must be provided. Providing room means few system-mandated tasks. Providing power means significant autonomy for schools.
>
> (Department of Education, Tasmania, 2002, p. 6, http://www.info.tased.edu.au/oer/SchoolImprovementReview/SIR)

In early negotiations, Forester's School District Superintendent expressed the belief that there *was* genuine compatibility between the ASSR and ASP processes, but that the ASP process was clearly 'much deeper' in its whole school community engagement and ownership (Daly, 1997). While there are a number of clear differences between the more systemic SIR and the relatively independent ASP, there are several parallels between the two initiatives that ensure this study's report will stimulate informative discourse on their mutual implications. Through Matterslea's experiences, the thesis draws to the surface many implications for a systemic review process in a state where dozens of disadvantaged school contexts have internal and system problems to face *before* they can benefit fully from centrally designed reforms, particularly devolution of decision-making and curriculum reconceptions, before the schools can grasp 'empowerment with responsibility'.

More recently, growing from a system-wide consultative process across the Tasmanian educational community begun in 2000, the DoE has undertaken to implement a new curriculum framework to all governement schools, with practical engagement in it by most schools from 2002. Known as the *Essential Learnings Framework* (ELs) (Department of Education, 2002), it is a radical departure from the traditional curriculum approach based on discrete subject areas of English, Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and the Environment (SOSE), the Arts, Languages other than English (LOTE), Technology, and Health/Physical Education. Queensland and South Australia have embarked on similar broad scale curriculum redesigns. Tasmania's new framework goes beyond content to include a strongly integrated, constructivist approach to learning that challenges solo cognition as the main avenue to knowledge and skill, and places values such as "connectedness; resilience; achievement; creativity; integrity; responsibility; equity" as key pedagogical considerations. Although the State has not abandoned its use of the academic traditional discipline areas, those disciplines are being reconceived as tools through which

the bigger pictures of 'essential learnings' are to be investigated and mastered. The five new 'areas' of learning are: *Communicating*, *Social responsibility*, *Personal futures*, *World futures* and, integrating these, a fifth area of *Thinking* that emphasises "inquiry" and "reflective thinking"' (Department of Education, 2002). Seeking a "seamless curriculum" that will "engage learners in authentic achievement" (p. 4; 5), the EL framework is designed to:

- reduce the problems of a crowded curriculum;
- engage learners more deeply in their learning;
- make learning more relevant;
- improve learning across all areas;
- develop higher order thinking; and
- support the transfer of learning. (p.4)

This is a significant shift towards principles and practices that align closely with the ASP's Powerful Learning curriculum approach. The ELs initiative is relatively recent and has not affected the decisions, actions and outcomes of the greater part of Matterslea's ASP implementation. Nevertheless, the ramifications of ELs for steps to be taken by the school and its system in the near future are significant, and hence these influence the implications drawn at the conclusion of this thesis.

The first chapters have explained the study's specific purposes and the immediate context of the research. The following two chapters consider the literatures of school reform and organisational learning. They build from the contextual background of the ASP process and the task taken on by Matterslea's stakeholders to implement a cross-cultural school change model. Through the analysis of the literature, the study moves to consider how schoolwide comprehensive reform models came to occupy their current place and what school-based research and organisational theory suggest school communities might anticipate from participatory school change model such as ASP.

CHAPTER THREE

Review of literature:
The emergence of comprehensive schoolwide reform

3.1 Orientation to the literature and its argument

School reform operates simultaneously at three levels of policy (macro), facilitation (meso) and classroom practice (micro). Driven by central policy, systemic or pervasive system-wide reform envisages that at each of the three levels, multiple domains of schooling will be addressed. Governance, school workplace organisation, and pedagogy, potentially vast areas of challenge in themselves, are brought together in concert for a range of purposes, often politically expedient, including 'excellence', equality, raised standards and national capacity. The political and the educational stakeholders appear to concur on two goals of reform in one genre of evidence: that quality and equity will be manifested in student outcomes. There is little argument from scholars, practitioners or 'clients' in the educational community that there is good sense in the orchestration of governance, organisation and pedagogy, and that there is an imperative to quality and equity. However, the literature shows that when central governments attempt to impose systemic solutions on schools and their communities, problems arise most strongly in the coherence, ownership and authenticity of systemic reforms.

Comprehensive schoolwide reforms have emerged as alternatives to centrally designed, top-down initiatives, and identify themselves as more bottom-up, having their locus of control at the school level. Yet in the context of public education, schoolwide programs (SWPs) are not independent of central mandates, and, focused as they are on socio- culturally disadvantaged schools, are largely sustained by schools and districts' use of central compensatory funding.

This first chapter of the literature review looks at the major alternatives in systemic reform in the US, Australia and the UK, before addressing research conducted over time on school based alternatives, ASP in particular.

The second perspective on the literature, Chapter Four, looks to organisational theory for a conceptual window on the three 'challenges' of coherence, empowerment and authenticity raised for comprehensive schoolwide reform in Chapter Three. To momentarily escape the bounded rationality of educational policy and practice, the theoretical search looks to disciplines of community development, social psychology and management to extend the study's perspective on organisational learning. Taken together with the first chapters' analyses of applied school reform, the literature review reasons that coherency, empowerment and authenticity are inter-dependent. The study proposes that contrary to claims in the literature of practice, reforms to school governance may have a positive influence on a school's pedagogical practice, provided that, as in ASP, governance processes are purposed towards teaching and learning.

Following this orientation, the two related literature chapters are presented:

Chapter Three: Review of Literature: The emergence of comprehensive schoolwide reform

3.2 Problems identified in systemic reforms for educational equity in public education;
3.3 The emergence of schoolwide comprehensive reform models;
3.4 Research concerning the ASP reform model;
3.5 Summary of Chapter Three.

Chapter Four: Literature relating organisational theory to whole-school reform

4.1 Organisational learning in relation to processes and outcomes of school renewal;
4.2 Coherence;
4.3 Empowerment;
4.4 Authentic learning and outcomes;
4.5 Issues raised by organisational theory;
4.6 Conclusion.

3.2 Problems identified in systemic reforms for educational equity in public education

Governments and the educational communities responsible for public education in Europe, North America and Australasia have struggled to break the intractable association of low socio-economic background and relatively poor academic and social outcomes (Connell, 1994; McBeath, 1994; Ainscow, Hargeaves & Hopkins, 1995; Knapp, Shields & Turnbull, 1995; Dent & Hatton, 1996; Lamb, Long, & Malley, 1998). Each region of Western education has responded with a range of educational reforms intended to bring policy-based consistency (Cohen, 1995) across national and state boundaries. The 'systemic' broad-scale reforms are intended to integrate three areas of institutional governance structures, work roles and organisational milieu and core technology (teaching and learning) with "connections between the school and its larger environment" (Murphy, 1992, p. 9). While funding policy is the primary input, accountability occupies the politically important output end (Marginson, 1997).

In practice there is no dichotomy between top-down, systemic equity reforms and more autonomous 'renewal' processes (Goodlad, 1998). Their mutual dependence and interests have been well articulated by scholar-practitioners across many spheres: Cuban (1998) and Fullan (2000) in North America; Ainscow, Hargreaves & Hopkins (1995) and Creemers (1996a) in Europe; and in Australia by Ladwig & White (1996), Townsend (1996) and Hill & Crevola (2000).

The mutuality does not translate into mutual admiration. Systemic reforms bear considerable criticism from the field. They are seen as heavy handed and 'blunt' instruments of change (National Commission on Excellence in Education [NCEE], 1983; Natriello, McDill & Pallas, 1990; Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Marginson, 1997; Slee & Weiner, 1998) or for being idealistic initiatives (Connell, White & Johnston, 1991; Hanushek, 1994; MacMullen, 1996; Cuban, 1998; Goodlad, 1999). Despite the political pressure placed by education on national and state budgets (Marginson, 1997), systems' allocative reforms against social and economic disadvantage continue to attract criticism as misguided, pennywise and simply inadequate (Tanner, 1993; Watson, 1996; Nisbet & Watt, 1997; Sawyer & Watson, 1997; MacKay, 1999). Words frequently used to describe the lack of coherence in system-wide reform efforts are 'piecemeal', 'fragmented' and 'episodic' (Rossi & Montgomery, 1994;

Clune, 1997; Orlich, 2000; Horn & Carr, 2000), faddism (Slavin, 1989), discontinuity (Chance, 1986) and resource waste (Thomson, 2000). Socio-cultural arguments also claim that categorically highlighting social disadvantage in order to diminish it is pejorative and contradictory and that money thus spent reinforces dependency and helplessness (Carlson, 1993; Auerbach, 1995; Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1997).

Systemic school reforms range across three main policy thrusts: compensatory funding, restructuring and standards-based reform. The first is intended as affirmative action (Vinovskis, 1999) or 'positive discrimination' (Connell, 1991); the second and third intend more general improvements.

Policy and practice are the substance of reform fragmentation, with the loose coupling of systemic mandates to actual practice almost 'folkloric' in the field. Cohen (1995) asserts:

> systemic reform aims to change teaching, for without that, most students' learning would not improve. Reformers know that, but assume policy ... would 'drive' instruction ... that remains a conjecture, for there is little evidence of direct and powerful relations between policy and practice (p.11)

A dialogue around 'orchestrating systemic coherence' (Mawhinney, 1999) has centred in attempts to align the compensatory, structural and standards-based elements of 'top-down' reform, though each main thrust has in itself problems of ownership and authenticity. When analysed, the intractability of these problems is shown to have 'opened the door' to more schoolwide comprehensive models of reform.

Compensatory approaches

Compensatory reforms, also known in places as 'redistributive' reforms (Henry & Taylor, 1999), are represented in measures such as the US *Title I* program (Vinovskis, 1999) and Australia's Disadvantaged Schools Program (Connell, White & Johnston, 1991). *Title I,* arguably the longest lived and best known of compensatory equity reform among Western school systems, was initiated in 1965 as a compensatory strategy under the US Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to "(1) provide extra help to chronic underachievers and (2) equalize distribution of educational resources and opportunities" (Legters, McDill and McPartland, 1994, p. 39). System-level analyses (Rossi & Montgomery, 1994; Vinovskis, 1999) have pursued apprehensions about the effectiveness of *Title I* and *Head Start*. Legters et al. (1994) point to two consistently 'troubling' phenomena of some

compensatory strategies and programs. First, programs such as *Head Start* have been shown to have "fade-out" effects (Natriello, McDill & Pallas, 1990). Fade-out has also been claimed in evaluations of remedial measures such as Reading Recovery (Plewis, 2000). Second, there has been poor coherence across individual programs which often address only one source of difficulty: "Few programs ... explicitly address the student as a whole person with a variety of complex experiences, all of which have some impact, positive or negative, on her or his ability to learn" (Natriello et al., 1990, p. 38). Third, as funds under *Title I* and *Head Start* target categorically identified students, curricular reforms have tended to be programmatic or remedial, rather than broadly organisational (Jenkins & Heinen, 1989). Among other perceived shortfalls, perhaps the most damaging to system planning is that a recent *Congressionally Mandated Study of Educational Growth and Opportunity* (Puma, Karweit, Price, Ricciuti, Thompson & Vaden-Kiernan, 1997) produced negative results from a large scale longitudinal and cross-sectional study with a sample of some 30,000 students nationally:

> In the period [three years] covered by this study, children in high-poverty schools began school academically behind their peers in low poverty schools, and were unable to close this gap in achievement as they progressed through school (p. iv).

Title I has continued to operate under major evaluative review (Vinovskis, 1999).

Compensatory reforms in Australia

Australia's primary system-wide compensatory intervention, the *Disadvantaged Schools Project* (DSP), was conceived in a period of liberal politics and progressive policies, beginning in 1974. The DSP

> sought to promote greater equality of educational opportunity through *positive discrimination* in resource allocations, and by encouraging the adaptation of school programs to the special needs and social experiences of students. (Risvi & Kemmis, 1987, p. 46)

It was credited with attempting to avoid stigmatising individual students and 'categories' of students (Connell, 1991) and conceiving that structural reform of disadvantage was achievable changing the school as a socializing and educational context (Risvi & Kemmis, 1987; Connell, Johnston & White, 1991c).

The program was evaluated by Connell, White & Johnston (1991a) in the document *Running Twice as Hard: the Disadvantaged Schools Program in Australia.* To evaluate the

prolific program of over 150,000 funded school level projects, Connell's team used largely qualitative methods, against the DSP's three guiding objectives: equalising education opportunity and outcomes; engagement in meaningful, relevant curriculum; and collective inputs of staff and families in school improvement (Walker & Murphy, 1986, p. 75). Outcomes showed a lack of coherency was the major shortcoming of the program. With no articulation or consistency impressed upon over 8000 action research models, surveys structures or report formats, replicability and generalisability of the initiatives were lost. The uncoordinated approaches were characterised by Williams, Connell & White (1991) as "studies shaken out of a pepper-pot, sometimes touching each other, but more often not" (p.74). As a consequence, despite its school-based and community-designed principles, the sharing of collective wisdom *between* DSP schools was minimal (Connell, 1991).

Connell, White & Johnston (1990) observed in DSP schools an importance of workplace relationships for teachers (p. 90) but later questioned "whether the DSP has contested the individualising tendency within education by generating collective practices that address the needs of groups who share a common situation" (Johnston & White, 1991, p. 81). For Connell et al. (1991), studies of the DSP had produced no clarity about how to conceptualise the interplay between home (as a source of problems) and school (as a source of problems in itself (p. 75). By their estimation, in "the study of working class schools as institutions ... one decent school ethnography would tell us more about Australian education than 20 surveys of pupils' attainment and would cost a lot less" (p. 75). While large scale compensatory measures may cause socio-cultural problems to lose their personal face in national and international agendas (Connell, 1991), scale has also appeared as a problem for measures of effectiveness. Ascertaining the program's real effects was, in Connell 's (1989) view, hampered by the government's overuse of national cross-sectional survey and centrally commissioned studies. Williams, Connell & White (1991) point to the "lack of influence such hegemonic domination of credibility has had on actual educational practice" against disadvantage (p. 73). Connell et al. (1991) claim both the DSP and US Title I were initiated within relatively weak accountability frameworks, a view more recently supported by Vinovskis (1999) in her evaluation of Title I and Head Start.

Redistributive strategies in education over twenty years have not been proven to influence broad social trends in Australia, UK and America, which show a widening of the gap

between rich and poor (Anglicare, 2000; Nisbet & Watt, 1997). To reinforce national equity reforms, Australian Commonwealth and State systems have proceeded to wed compensatory funding to national and statewide student performance benchmarks through the current Commonwealth Literacy Program (DEETYA, 1998; Thomson, 2001).

Restructuring

A number of centrally supported restructuring changes are related to, or dependent upon compensatory funding. Some are explicitly targeted to prevent school failure: broad-system class size reductions (Black, 1999), differential staffing ratios according to socio-economic indices (Quin, Ashenden & Milligan, 1994), large instruction-focused staff allocations like Tasmania's *Flying Start/PASS* programs (DETCCD,1998; Department of Education, 2001a) and some to support *curriculum* interventions such as Clay's (1993b) *Reading Recovery* for those identified as at risk. Inclusion policies have been mandated in most western systems of education and in the UK recent initiatives have conceived the adjustments needed as central to school development planning reforms (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan & Shaw, 2000). Other structural reforms such as teacher transfer policies to direct 'fresh' staff to non-preferred schools (Cowley, 1999) are claimed by central offices to benefit equity (Steffy & English, 1994), but are not specifically or targeted to the interests of disadvantaged populations in schools. Generalised system-wide mandates to decentralise and devolve administration and governance to schools (Caldwell & Hayward, 1998) have been critiqued as simply "a way of opening up public institutions to forces of the market" (Risvi, 1993).

Standards-based measures

The second 'arm' of systemic reform is represented in *standards-based* mandates such as national and Statewide testing programs (Ravitch, 1995; Hill & Crevola, 1999) and teacher development standards (Chadbourne & Ingvarson, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 1998). System-wide testing is claimed to advance equity by providing benchmarks and performance feedback to educators (Stone, 1996: Strike, 1997), and in producing comparative baselines that are transparent to stakeholders (Hill & Crevola, 1999).

Over the past two decades, 'outputs' as student outcomes have overtaken inputs and processes at the centre of policy and funding (Goodlad, 1997; Lamb, 1998; Henry & Taylor, 1999; Sirotnik & Kimball, 1999). Accountability demands have increased systems' attention to the 'measurable' aspects of schooling. Yet, as with the shortcomings of

compensatory reforms, standards-based measures over "the 16 years since the publication of *A Nation At Risk* [1983]... have seen little evidence of overall national improvement in educational effects" (Ross, Sanders, Wright and Stringfield, 1998, p. 5). Ross et, al. note other social costs such as dropping out of high school have, in the same period "become increasingly stark" (1998, p.33). Voices in opposition to standards-based reforms are heard in the literature across the globe. They have included Haertel (1999), Apple, (1996b) and Shapiro (1993;1998) in the U.S, Madaus (1994) and Slee & Weiner (1998) in the U.K., and Little (1992), Watson (1996) and Thomson (2001) in Australia. Slee and Weiner (1998) assert that the efficacy of test scores for comparison purposes does not prove that they are the *best* measures of effectiveness, nor that 'academic' knowledge is the most important type of outcome to be drawn from education or schooling. Haertel (1999) argues that standardised measures used are not sufficiently sensitive to contextual conditions to be satisfactory measures of educational effectiveness. He reflects, "In the rhetoric of educational reform, it often sounds as if improving the education system is synonymous with improving test scores" (p. 662).

Negative impacts on the working lives of teachers have been described as the result of system-wide standards mandates (Cohen & Spillane, 1992, Little, 1992; MacGilchrist, Mortimore, Savage & Beresford, 1995; Woods, Jeffrey, Trotman & Boyle, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 1994). Some studies have shown testing-captivated teaching to have limiting and narrowing effects on disadvantaged students' school experiences (Bracey, 1994; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Adams & Karabenick, 2000). Others have continued criticism of the political and media forces driving pejorative interpretations of the results (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Sawyer, 1997). A compromising effect of publicized test outcomes is to damage the reputation and even the viability of struggling public schools in which public schooling systems are concerned to stem the flow of higher achieving students to private schooling (Davis, 1996).

Teachers are in the main skeptical of the standards movement's bona fides. Adams & Karabenick (2000) studied 1,656 elementary school teachers in 51 counties of Michigan, finding "test results are too delayed to be of much use to teachers" (p.4). When the results were reviewed by teachers, " year-to-year changes in mandated test scores [were seen to be] primarily influenced by changes in groups of children (i.e. a cohort affect), the degree of

parental encouragement, changes in test content, and changes in the way students are prepared for test taking" (p.4).

In the face of high stakes systemic standards accountability measures, teaching culture is under pressure to move away from socially purposed values and practices envisaged by both systemic and school-based reform (Carlson, 1993; Knapp & Shields, 1995; Hargreaves, 1997b) towards academic objectives (Francis, 1998; Leeder, 1998). Many teachers respond with what Darling-Hammond (1994) characterizes as sham equity, including teaching to the test and instruction on test-taking skills. Cohen (1995) claims:

> systemic reform envisions profound changes in teachers' professionalism, including steep elevation of professional knowledge and skill, extraordinary complication in teachers' roles and it seems unlikely that such changes could be 'driven' by non-professional systems of external rewards and punishments, administered by agencies of the (p. 16)

Hargreaves & Evans (1997) recognise that 'imposed change' (p. 4) does nothing to reverse what governments identify as teachers' anti-intellectual responses to reform. Action-research and inquiry-based professional learning (Groundwater-Smith, 1996) are argued as productive 'intellectual adventure' (Hargreaves & Evans, 1997), capable of bringing educators' emotional dimensions into professional action. Practitioners are not easy collaborators with reductionist researchers who may wish to describe teachers' work as simple input/output variables.

Vinovskis' (1999), on the basis of her extensive evaluation of systemic reforms for the US Department of Education, offers a summary caution to scholars: "Rather than as a reform based on prior extensive state and local educational development and testing, systemic reform should be viewed as a plausible but as yet empirically unproven hypothesis" (p. 187).

3.3 The emergence of comprehensive schoolwide reform models

Cuban (1998) shows how central policymakers are selective about influences on their reform agendas. Three standards commonly used by political and bureaucratic elites are effectiveness, popularity and fidelity. Clearly these have quantifiable indicators such as test scores, adherent school numbers and point-by-point implementation checklists. However, "two lesser known criteria used by practitioners" are adaptability and longevity. Time has proved Cuban's claim to be fairly accurate, as the first three are factors that figure very

clearly and explicitly in the US Department of Education (1998a; 2001) on-line sites to help orient users of Title I funds in discriminating between various reform models. Adaptability and longevity are more related to judgments of model users, with longevity related to adaptability in an interesting way. Beyond certain limits, a model might be so adapted over time by the school as to bear little functional resemblance to the prototype. Again, it is likely only those 'on the ground' can make such judgments.

Effectiveness has been perhaps the most commonly used 'quality' measure of reform outcomes. The major research influence concerning a more systematic coherence and effectiveness of centrally supported equity reform appears to have come from studies of effective schools (Joyce & Showers, 1994; Shields & Knapp, 1995) and unusually effective schools (Levine & Lezotte, 1990; Lein, Johnson & Ragland, 1997).

Effective Schools

A large scale study by Shields & Associates (1995) surveyed 1, 500 school districts regarding the characteristics of their most comprehensive school-based reform efforts, what was common among them and what district support was available for those school-based reforms. The operational definition of school based reform was "taking steps to *energize, empower* and *reorganise* the work of teachers and school administrators, both individually and collectively, in the context of particular school sites" (Shields & Knapp, 1997, p. 289, [my italics]). While it did not specifically target disadvantaged school communities, although each of the districts studied included high-poverty and/or high minority schools in their samples. Two common measures of effectiveness, scores on standardised tests and change adoption levels were rejected by the study as failing to "capture the full range of goals that lie at the heart of all but the most limited school-based reform efforts" (p. 290). Promising reform models were found by Shields & Associates (1995) to:

- *hold high and appropriate standards* for all students;
- *build academic challenge* into content and pedagogy;
- *reorganise time and groupings* to support instructional changes, teaming and professional development;
- *enhance school level decision-making* without preoccupation with governance;
- *involve the school and district staff in shared decisions* about school program, instruction and assessment;
- *emphasise collaborative teamwork* skills through professional development;

- *balance ambition with feasibility*, tackling fewer things at once, over a longer time line.

The ASP deliberately manages for the majority of these attributes. In respect of the last point, while ASP simultaneously tackles multiple fronts of governance, workplace organisation and the teaching and learning process, it nevertheless emphasizes teaching and learning as its ultimate focus.

On the basis of positive effects demonstrated across the range of sub-groups of ethnic and socio-economic identity Knapp, Shields & Turnbull (1997) concluded "teaching for meaning belongs in the repertoires of teachers who work in high-poverty elementary schools" (p. 776). District offices were shown to have vital effect in the support and promotion of reforms through professional development, catalyzing and facilitating change by judicious staff placement, and using flexibility regarding requirements in curriculum, assessment and accountability. In some "19% of all instances of school-based reform nationwide, district officers granted waivers to schools for particular changes they sought to make" (p. 293).

Shields & Associates' (1995) claim that successful schools avoided preoccupation with governance challenges the governance-led systemic devolutionary reforms of Chicago City (Bryk et al., 1998) and the governance behaviour shown by the 'subject' school in this case study of ASP process implementation.

'Unusually effective schools'

Studies of 'unusually effective schools' (House, 1996; Lein et al., 1997; Ainley, 1999) grew as an offshoot of effective schooling research and "studies of schools thought to be effective" (Joyce & Showers, 1995, p. 84). This genre of study that seeks factors common to schools which have succeeded on normative measures 'against the odds', should be distinguished from school effectiveness research. The latter is largely focussed on factors inside the classroom door than outside (Reynolds & Stoll, 1994; Creemers & Reezigt, 1996).

A study of 26 *Successful Texas Schoolwide Programs* by Lein, Johnson & Ragland (1997) of the University of Texas, was conducted thoughout the 1994-95 school year. This study is significant for both its breadth and its specific attention to low-income school communities. The sample was generated by narrowing the 'universe' of successful Texas schools with three criteria: schools had over 60% of students meeting free or reduced lunch criteria; schools were at various stages of implementing *Title I* schoolwide programs under ESEA

conditions; and at least 70% of students had passed in the reading and in the mathematics sections of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills. (TAAS). "In 1995, few Texan schools had reached this level of academic achievement" (p. 1). The Texas Education Agency (1989) placed a criterion of 70% for identifying schools as 'recognised' for high performance in the state's accountability system. Of the fifty schools filtered out by the criteria, 26 were studied from urban and rural, large and small districts, and served the diversity of ethnic populations represented in Texas. Some were *Accelerated Schools*, some were working through *Success for All*, some had purely 'homegrown' entire-school processes. Using case study methodology, Lein et al. (1997) sought to identify key practices common to the successful high poverty schools (the great majority of study schools had over *75%* of student meeting the free-and-reduced-lunch criteria. The study found "more differences than similarities in the instructional approaches" used in the 'recognised' schools. Schools were distributed along several continua: whole language to phonics; constructivist to direct teaching ; high tech. to virtually no tech., multiple 'model frameworks' for change to no out-sourced model; early engagement in the schoolwide process to several years. The themes found to be common to the successful schools were:

- *a focus on academic success for every student*, in which formative assessment balanced external measurement and frequent analysis of data allowed ;
- *no excuses* or a 'whatever it takes' approach;
- *experimentation* through collaborative action research in both pedagogical and organisational functions;
- *inclusivity* and *sense of family* in which holistic (not simply test score) development was evaluated, and multiliteracies and multicultural approaches were prevalent;
- *collaboration and trust* in which decision making was truly collective and transparent and teaming went beyond grade levels;
- *passion for learning and growing*, where a 'community of learners' is " What happens when the entire school establishes a difficult goal and achieves it?" (Lien et al., p. 12) with professional development genuinely supported by formal efforts to build families' skills in teaching and learning. (Lein, Johnson & Ragland, 1997)

Previous U.S. studies of unusually effective schools serving disadvantaged communities emphasised the extent to which successful schools shared a *common mission* (Texas Education Agency, 1989) and a study of twelve successful Title I schoolwide projects found

that effective visions had a primary focus on learning outcomes for all students (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

The Lein et al. (1997) study corroborates many of Knapp et al.'s (1995) conclusions, particularly high academic expectations and inclusivity as learning communities, but, while recognising the importance of collective intention and reflective implementation of change initiatives, Lien et al.'s report makes no comment on the actual impact upon schools of their involvement in any of a number of curricular and comprehensive reform models.

The Comprehensive Schoolwide Reform program (CSRD; more recently, CSR)

Investigations of comprehensive schoolwide programs have been implemented and investigated over some two decades, and some of the most promising models have been endorsed as suitable models in which schools might utilize their Title I funds identified for equity reform in disadvantaged school communities. Goodlad (1999) distinguishes these 'bottom-up' designs from more centrally or system-driven 'school reform', calling them 'school renewal' efforts.

The legislation that first put comprehensive schoolwide reforms (CSR) on the agenda of central government in the US, the 1988 Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments, "designed to increase accountability for student performance, provide opportunities for greater flexibility in pursuit of improved performance, stress higher order thinking in addition to basic skills, and increase emphasis on parent involvement" (Rossi & Montgomery, 1994, p. 43). Schools with 75% or more students eligible for free lunches were free to use Title I compensatory funds for schoolwide programs, where they previously were restricted to categorical uses such as remedial programs, pull-out teachers or teacher assistant time. The Accelerated Schools Project actually predated the Hawkins-Stafford initiative by two years, and so can not be seen as opportunistic or resulting from accountability /credibility trends (Orlich, 2000).

In 1994, the ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act from which *Title I* was conceived in 1965) was re-authorised as the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA). The IASA, by articulating five themes as consistent with ESEA's goals of 'standards-based reforms', opened the way for the US Department of Education to actively promote

schoolwide reforms as effective interventions toward both excellence and equity (www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA, cited by Petti, 1999, p. 18):

- High standards for all children;
- Focus on teaching and learning, with professional development, technical and expert support;
- Family and community partnership and participation;
- Flexibility for innovation at school-based and District levels, coupled with local responsibility for student performance; and
- Targeting of funds sufficient to make a difference to areas of greatest need.

Under IASA and the 1998 Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) initiative to extend and regulate SWP implementation, networks like the *New American Schools* and the *National Network for Educational Renewal* (Goodlad, 1997) have burgeoned, and some restructuring/renewal projects with 'brand-names' such as *The Coalition of Essential Schools, Success For All*, and *Accelerated Schools* have close to 1000 implementing schools each (U.S. Department of Education , 1999).

Through the CSRD program, schools are being offered the funds and the power to choose (or, more rarely, devise) one or more models to implement over significant (at least three years) period. In the lexicon of school improvement research, US schools are being given means to become 'unstuck' (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993). Richard Riley, US Secretary of Education (USDE, 1999b) stated to the US House of Representatives Budget Committee that the Administration's strategy to turn around 'failing' schools would rely on "Fixing Our Schools from the Bottom Up ... Fortunately, we know how to fix persistently low-performing schools. The same comprehensive approach that States and school districts are using to improve the performance of all schools is equally effective at turning around failing schools. Raising standards, better teachers, smaller class sizes, increased accountability, and greater parental involvement can turn around the worst of schools" (http://www.ed.gov/Speeches/ 09-1999/990923.html). Riley identified the CSRD program as part of the Department's own comprehensive set of "research-based education reform programs". By invoking standards, restructuring dependent upon government redistributive aid and accountability, Riley was inadvertently locating the CSRD's 'control' with *central* authority: "I believe that when our public schools are not working as well as they should, we have a patriotic responsibility to fix them ... establishing rigorous accountability systems

that hold districts and schools accountable for student performance and providing support for those schools that aren't getting the job done" (USDE, 1999b, *What Really Works*). So while the support is offered, a 'shape-up-or-ship-out' ultimatum serves as a background to the Central solution.

In the circumstances of an uncertain economy and a politically motivated claim of a crisis in marketable academic skills (Berliner & Biddle, 1996) US and other Western systems have increasingly devolved 'responsibility' for school management while holding 'power' through curriculum design and standards monitoring (Marginson, 1997; Thomson, 2000; Blackmore, 2001). In this climate, and amid the 'piecemeal' loose coupling of reforms (and their costs) to student outcomes (Rossi & Montgomery, 1994), corporate and tertiary inputs via reform models and supports for reform efforts were sought by schools, largely through the application of *Title I* money. Umbrella national organisations such as the New American School Development Corporation (NASDC) and reform hubs such as ASP help apply the available funds, but other private sources such as the Carnegie and Annenberg foundations have since 1994 made significant contributions to comprehensive reform funding (IRRE, 1997).

With the marked spread of 'off-the-shelf' (Fashola & Slavin, 1998) reforms, the U.S. Department of Education instituted in 1998 the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSRD) with the aim "to provide financial incentives for schools to implement comprehensive reform programs based on reliable research and effective practices, and include an emphasis on academics and parental involvement" (US Department of Education, 1999a). The focus remains standards-based, "designed to enable all students--including children from low-income families, children with limited English proficiency, and children with disabilities--to meet challenging State content and performance standards and addresses needs identified through a school needs assessment" (SEDL, 1999) http://www.sedl.org/csrd/criteria.html). Known since 2000 as the CSR program, it specifies nine key attributes that should be in place within schools' chosen reform models in order for the funding to be applied. These have been listed earlier in the thesis (*Context,* p. 18). CSR dissemination literature (U.S. Department of Education, 1999b) acknowledges that "few models, if any, fully address all nine ... aspects of school operations" [no pagination]. To the question "what is a comprehensive reform program?" CSR legislation

answers in a way that almost defines contemporary reform as coherent education. Comprehensive schoolwide reform:

> integrates a comprehensive design for effective school functioning, including instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, and school management, that aligns the school's curriculum, technology, and professional development.
> (US Department of Education, 2001, http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/appendb.pdf)

In 1999 U.S.Department of Education estimates show "1,600 schools participating in the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program across the nation ... [and] 15,000 *Title I* schools implementing schoolwide programs" (Yap, Douglas, Railsback, Shaughnessy & Speth, 1999). The Accelerated Schools model is one of a dozen or so models of comprehensive reform recognised by USDE criteria as 'promising' models worthy of federal promotion under the aegis of the CSRD program.

Largely conceived by academics, rather than school practitioners (Cuban, 1998), models such as Levin's ASP and Sizer's (1999) Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) could be argued to be 'lateral' rather than 'bottom up'. In a sense, CSRs fill the space of contention between broad-brush systemic and fiercely school based schoolwide equity reforms. They provide for leverage from central stakeholders and local members. They appear to operationalise the concepts of coherence, empowerment and authenticity while remaining amenable or vulnerable to central standards policies for accountability and professional competency in public schools.

The research conducted in ASP schools has important implications for the conduct and meaning of this study and for the claims of CSRs (or SWPs) generally. The key areas of focus in ASP studies have been academic effectiveness, leadership concerns, reform process coaching and roles of District Offices.

3.4 Research concerning the Accelerated Schools Project

Identifying the major focus areas of research on ASP

Beyond statewide academic achievement evaluations, the main thrusts in research concerning ASP have centred on implementation issues, much of it with an in-house audience in mind. Even in model-to-model comparison studies, ASP research has looked to

inform practitioners and policymakers who are using or considering using the relevant school reform models. In addition to the independent evaluations, three areas of interest have broad implications for the international scholars, school leaders and change agents, and particular relevance to this thesis: (a) principals as change agents and the dilemma of principal succession; (b) roles of District offices in school reform; and (c) roles of internal and external coaches as change agents.

Independent evaluation: Transition from self-defined outcomes to centrally-mandated accountability

Prior to the CSRD initiative in 1998, research directly or indirectly relating to ASP took the form of comparative studies of organisation and implementation factors across different models. The differences between governance based and curriculum based reforms was noted by McCollum, whose work in the early 1990s bears some durable insights into the organisational impact in disadvantaged schools of ASP and similarly purposed models.

Between 1990 and 1994, the US, collaborating with the US and OECD, conducted a 14-nation study of programs for at-risk children, including Accelerated Schools and Comer School Development Program, as well as several school-based management projects (McCollum, 1996). On-site interviews probed model adoption and implementation, leadership, staff development, curriculum and parent involvement. The study found by the end of the second year that (1) the broader the scope of the program, the more impact context had on implementation (2) time, rather than money, was the most scarce resource; (3) professional development most often failed to challenge teachers' orthodoxies; (4) involving family members was very challenging, even given rich decision-making opportunities; (5) governance-based reform outcomes such as improved teacher work-lives may bear little direct relationship to students; (6) ambitious, higher order pedagogies were still rare in classes; and (7) even with the most successful reform initiative, connections to other social services may be essential. Identified as a 'governance-based reform', ASP has perhaps more pressure upon it to draw links from school cultures to student outcomes. At least the first part of that case has eventually surfaced as an acceptance of non-authentic measures of student development (such as test scores) that form central criteria of program 'success' in political perspectives of reform. An earlier report by the same researcher (McCollum, 1994) asserted from the study curriculum-based reforms such as Success for All show more academic results in the short term than do governance-based reforms but they rely on

individual teacher capacities and proficient management. The goals of governance-based reforms like ASP are longer-termed, and alter according to changing contextual demands. They require sustained leadership and teacher commitment. McCollum concluded no matter what type of school change model, greater professional opportunities for teachers would appear to promote sustained organisational learning and growth.

To establish its credibility in more measurable (though not necessarily more curriculum-referenced) ways, in the years following the CSRD initiative ASP has promoted more independent evaluation of its effects on student academic performance. It should be borne in mind that, despite the ASP National Centre's post-CSRD attempts to emphasise academic achievement as a central outcome of the ASP process in schools, the early literature clearly championed understanding, creativity and cultural contextuality as the foundational outcomes of 'powerful learning'. Early ASP rhetoric clearly dissuaded adherents from over-emphasis on 'basics', rote and remedial learning (Freeberg, 1989; Levin, 1991). The constructivist principles that underpinned the model have been reiterated in all key ASP documents (Hopfenberg et al., 1993; Finnan, et al.,1996; Levin, 1998). An early, fundamental philosophical disinterest in achievement testing is further evidenced in the model's placement of "authentic learning" as the first tenet of the ASP's pedagogical framework of (Hopfenberg et al, 1993; Keller & Soler, 1994; Levin 1996c). It was with an air of 'concession' to the pragmatics of accountability that Levin (1997) circulated to member schools a briefing note that explained the necessity for ASP to prove its credentials in a high-stakes, funding-dependent environment. The ASP claims:

> our main concerns have been not only to validate [schools'] effectiveness, but to use evaluation in results to continually improve the model and that process. Our evaluations have shown that Accelerated Schools consistently raise academic achievement, student attendance, and parental participation, and reduce student turnover, special education placements, students retained in grade, and teacher turnover. (Accelerated Schools Project, 2002 http://www.sp.uconn.edu/~wwwasp//research/research_bulletin_htm).

Only a relatively few studies have been published by researchers independent of ASP. Ross, Wang, Sanders,Wright, & Stringfield, (1999), working as a team across three universities, compared the academic effects of 25 schools in the Memphis City school district who had been implementing one of eight externally developed "whole school restructuring designs" (Ross, Sanders, Wright & Stringfield, 1998, p. 11) with 34

demographically matched non-restructuring control schools and a further 40 'other' schools included for cross-demographic comparison. One per of the 8 models represented was Accelerated Schools. Six *New American Schools (NAS)* designs were represented: *ATLAS, Audrey Cohen College*; *Co-NECT, Expeditionary Learning-Outward Bound, Modern Red Schoolhouse* and Slavin's *Roots and Wings*. The two non-NAS designs were *Paideia* and *Accelerated Schools.* In addition to the 25 'reforming schools' who had begun many implementations in 1995, 12 more schools who had began restructuring in 1996 were added to those studied. An earlier sub-study by the same team (Ross et al., 1998) had found that among the reforming schools, "the faster starting designs were Co-NECT, Paideia and Roots and Wings" (p.6), with Accelerated Schools rated as moderately fast in its start-up. This is understandable, given Accelerated Schools' requirement of consensus among the whole school community for 'buy in' and our rigorous 'taking stock' process before any action plans are designed and enacted. From the earlier, related study, Accelerated Schools was found to have a relatively low demand for resources and "the quality and rate of design implementation appeared strongly related to teachers support for the design at the individual school level" (1999, p. 9). Early research to investigate implementation processes and outcomes commenced in 1997 and found

> in nearly all schools, movement towards greater use of student-centered ("constructivist") learning activities, such as projects, exhibitions and demonstrations, was evidenced [and] a somewhat troublesome disconnection remained in many teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the fit between design-based teaching and the more "skills-based" learning assessed by the TCAP, the state-mandated norm-referenced achievement test, and the associated Tennessee value added assessment system.
>
> (Herman & Datnow, 1997, cited in Ross et. al., 1999, p. 10)

Ross et al.'s (1999) study found that, "across all subjects averaged, R95 [schools commencing reform in 1995] schools demonstrated greater gain from pre-reform (1995) to post-reform (1997/1998) than did not a-restructuring schools" (p. 21). The mean benefit of 17.4 CPN points represented an effects size of +0.7. In terms accepted across the three research-sponsoring institutions, this was a strong and highly educationally significant effect (Cohen, 1988). Higher poverty schools tended to benefit most when compared to matched control schools. No restructuring design performed more poorly than non-restructuring schools. Three designs emerged as having the strongest benefits: Accelerated Schools, ELOB, and Roots and Wings, although only effects for Roots and Wings reached statistical

significance. While Roots and Wings-95 showed significantly greater pre- to post- reform changes, Accelerated Schools demonstrated "moderate or strong change school effects size in one or more subjects" (Ross et al., 1999, p. 23). In the six Accelerated Schools studied, there were above-CPN gains in the five the area is tested in contrast to control schools. In reading, student achievement had "risen from the equivalent of the 30th percentile to almost the 70th percentile" (ASP, 2002). The Memphis study by Ross et al. (1999) made an interesting observation about the less outstanding performance of R96 schools [schools commencing reform in 1996] relative to matched schools. The rationale surmised by the researchers suggest that many NR [non-restructuring] schools

> were receiving increased exposure to content standards and professional development activities associated with school reform; many NR schools were also in the process of investigating reform designs for future adoption. In other words, NR schools were becoming over time increasingly more like R [restructuring] schools than typical 'control' schools (p. 22).

This would suggest a generalised benefit to a district or system from both direct and indirect exposure to restructuring, reforming or renewing schools, and that incentives systems that support schoolwide reform increase professional learning in unexpected ways.

Perhaps the rigorous quantitative study of Accelerated Schools' achievement effects has been conducted by an independent social science research organisation, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) (Bloom et al., 2001). Eight schools across several states were included in the statistical analysis of pre and post implementation standardised scores of the ASP schools. Using 'interrupted time series', data comprising test scores from 3 years prior to ASP in reading and maths and predictions based on those trends, was compared with scores in three post-ASP-intervention years. The interrupted time series method is similar to the CPN (*cumulative percentage of norm* measure used by Ross et al. (1998; 1999) in that the comparison is against national mean gains 'expected' without any intervention. The MDRC method because in net the comparison is against previous performance improvement rates determined from the three years prior to ASP implementation. Grade 3s were studied because "this grade marks a critical pint in the development of basic reading and maths skills" (Bloom et al.,2001, p.1)

In another parallel to the Ross et al. (1998; 1999) study, Bloom et al. (2001) afforded their work some advance organisation with a methodological investigation that considered "integrating quantitative and qualitative research methods to evaluate whole school reforms"

(Rock & Ham, 1999). The introduction to the preliminary study warrants being quoted in full, as it demonstrates that the chimerical nature of complex, authentic change efforts:

> process-oriented reforms involve schools in a loosely-specified process of change towards a general goal, rather than a well-defined series of prescribed steps. Hence, implementation may look very different from school to school. This makes it difficult to attribute changes in student outcomes to the reform. In addition, process-oriented reforms take many years to implement which makes it difficult to identify when impacts should be expected to occur and to control changes in schools, making causal impact of the model difficult to discern. (Rock & Ham, 1999, p. 1)

Rock & Ham's (1999) preliminary study found that three years after launching the Accelerated Schools model, all the study schools had adopted the practices aimed at improving *school culture* and *governance*. Changes in *curriculum and instruction* were implemented less systematically and more slowly, with many schools starting to address these topics only in the third or fourth year of implementation. Several findings in the Bloom et al. (2001) study provide both encouragement and challenge to the program. At the end of the five-year follow-up period, the average third-grade maths and reading test scores in the participating schools were higher than those during the baseline period by a statistically significant amount. The magnitude of these test score improvements is similar to that found in the well-known Tennessee class-size experiment.

The increases observed in average test scores were largest among the study schools that had the lowest average test scores before implementation of the Accelerated Schools model. Caution is urged by the MDRC team in the results, because "they are based on a sample of only eight Accelerated Schools that had reached an advanced stage of implementation by the early 1990s, did not emerge until four to five years after the reform was launched, and may not persist in later grades" (p.3). As in the Ross et al. study (1999), the researchers felt that "[t]he positive impacts in the last follow-up year are especially noteworthy given the low cost of this early version of the Accelerated Schools model relative to that of other school reform approaches" (p.3). The fact that positive impacts appear only towards the end of the five-year post-implementation period, is argued as indicating a "need to focus on curriculum and instruction earlier in the reform process and to make powerful learning easier to implement" (p.4).

Principals as change agents and Principal succession

There is a well-established literature demonstrating critical characteristics of principals in the reform of school culture and pursuit of both excellence and equity. Sergiovanni's (1992) notions of transformative leadership, Fullan's (1993) collaborative vision-generating principals and Murphy & Hallinger's (1992) studies of 'teacher-leader-makers' provide school leaders with many checklists of the desirable attributes. However, in the climate of high-stakes and transparent school performance (Strike, 1993), principals of schools in disadvantaged areas with histories of school failure must juggle external, standards-based demands for reform with internal imperatives of pastoral leadership, compassion and community confidence (Thomson, 2002). Research in Accelerated Schools has devoted considerable time to the question, and because of the need for sustained engagement in its reform processes (Cuban, 1990), ASP-focused research has attempted to improve understanding of principal succession and its pitfalls.

Christensen (1994) found effective principals in ASP schools quickly let go of managerial, reactive and autocratic styles in favour of transformative, proactive and collaborative processes. The catalyst attribute in these examples were that successfully restructuring principals were prepared to "take risks by sharing power". In a study of 22 schools' implementation of ASP process, Brunner & Davidson (1998) noted the importance of the relationship between principal and the external 'coach' (often working out of District office). While "most principals initially have a hard time with the Accelerated Schools model" because "they have to share power and authority in a new governance structure and they have to accept decisions made by the school as a whole", decisions "with which they may not always agree" (p. 250). The district coach was "appreciated by the principal as an influential ally in the journey and a spokesperson for the concerns of the school". This prevented isolation and frustration when the ASP process seemed slow.

The capacity of principal to act democratically is a recurring theme in studies of reforms with serious intentions of whole school change (Fullan, 1993; Reynolds and Stoll, 1994; Creemers, 1996a). Christensen (1996) investigated principals' roles in five ASP schools in four districts of California. Each of the principals in question had at least three years involvement with ASP. Sixty respondents across the full range of school stakeholders provided qualitative data for Christensen's "most frequently cited things a principal must do

to be an effective Accelerated School principal." The five actions most valued by the communities were: "be willing to let go of control; be supportive of staff ; be present ; stand up to the district; (and) be a 'real' expert on the accelerated schools process" (Christensen, 1996, p. 197).

The desire for the ASP principal to be an 'expert' reflects on two problematic circumstances in ASP schools, and any school undertaking thorough (in the sense of 'schoolwide') restructuring/renewal. First is where the coach (or 'model advocate') of the process is an on-site staff member. In this case, as it was in most of Christensen's study schools, consonance between the perspectives of the principal and the coach is a necessary condition for the 'letting go' action. Second, the on-site coach commonly has less leverage on a principal than a school district or satellite-centre based coach. For school community members with limited formal influence on principals or district offices, such leverage is important. For incumbent principals at the beginning of a reform implementation, the capacity to advocate for the model is considered an essential element in securing adequate consensus [90% 'buy-in' from the school-as-a-whole]. Several of Christensen's (1996) 13 behaviour categories of principals, identified through her 'critical incident technique', relate to the capacity to advocate the model. Principals who remain with the ASP process for more than three years most prominently: Foster the [ASP] process; support their staff; promote learning; and promote parent involvement. (p.192). Christensen notes

> a large number of reported behaviors had to do with fostering the process, with specific behaviors relating to the workings of the governance structure at its various levels. This doesn't appear in general school change literature other than through a broad interpretation of sharing decision making ... careful adherence to the governance process can make positive changes in communication and collaboration norms at a school (p.200).

The relationship of a principal to a schoolwide reform process is brought into stark relief by principal succession. Outside the ASP collection of research reports, authors have debunked the folk-belief among central offices that "bringing a new administrator to an organisation experiencing performance difficulties will solve the problem" (Davidson & Taylor, 1998, p. 130). Ogawa (1995) shows that principal succession can have positive or negative impact depending on their ability to "fit" to the new organisational norms (p. 368). Where a succeeding principal brings an open mind to the task, the participatory and distributed nature of leadership in an ASP school can be quite enabling. Mims (1996), researching the

experiences of 7 ASP principals, found in the succession of one principal, it was a relief to find she "had permission not to know all the answers" (p. 213). Research on principal succession investigated in ASP schools by Christensen, (1996), Rappaport, Seaman & Mejia (1998), Davidson & Taylor (1998) and Davidson (1999) has been consistent in these recommendations. But among the most compelling recommendation for ASP schools has been that the Steering Committee operate as a bridge between the District and the school in appointing succeeding principals. For district offices, the responsibility is to maintain reform capacity by appropriate principal appointments and, in the event of districts themselves supporting certain models' implementation, coaches'. A further suggestion (Rappaport et al., 1998) is the use of outgoing principals in guiding the district office's decision-base and mentoring the successor principal on the ASP process. The more objective input of off-site coaches (e.g. from an 'ASP Satellite Center') is also noted as advancing the district's chances of arriving at effective appointments.

The roles of US School District Offices in supporting schoolwide reform efforts

District roles in American schools are central to ASP and other models' success, particularly as the transfer of principals from school to school is a district office role. Districts have been recognised in more recent reform literature as pivotal in their potential to mediate central and local demands (Elmore, 1995; Goertz, Floden & O'Day, 1996). Leithwood, Leonard & Sharratt (1998) identify school districts as "interpreters" of pedagogical and administrative content in central policy, and in rendering policy to a practicable form, district personnel are keys in the alignment process and to the organisational learning that must flow from resolving the distal/proximal conflict..

US legislation identifies the minimum composition of school improvement teams. The amendment states... the (schoolwide) plan must be developed with the involvement of the community to be served and individuals who will carry out such plan, [PL 103-382, Sec 1114 (b) (2) (C) (ii)] (cited by O'Donoghue & Ragland, 1998, p.11). Formalising Districts' reform engagement, the legislation states: " ... the Schoolwide Plan is to be developed in consultation with the district and its school support team or other technical assistance provider" (PL 103-308, Sec. 1114, (a) (2). Yet one 'cannot mandate what counts', and as Fullan (1993) has elegantly explained, administrators sometimes justify just ends by unjust

means, and wittingly or unwittingly overlook attempts to bring about change by coercive means and can confuse collaboration with 'co-option'.

Bauer, Meza & Duplantis (1999) summarise the key implications of ten years of district-related ASP research. Most are predictable supportive imperatives, including "staffing schools with supportive and knowledgeable principal leadership" (p. 13), and providing financial and managerial support for coaches. Less 'predictable' is the suggestion by Bauer et al. (1999) that districts "warn schools of ways their decisions might be challenged or run counter to broader district of state policy". Finnan & Levin (1998) see the ASP-supporting district as ensuring that central 'standards' are built into the initial *taking stock* process. Bauer et al. (1999) frame this notion into a three-tiered accountability model:

> the state and district share accountability for defining desired student outcomes and that these outcomes become the center of school and classroom change activity. At the school level, stakeholders share accountability for engaging in improvement activities ... [and] the creation of a context conducive to change. (p. 20).

For ASP leaders, the last point is 'accounted' by the steering committee's responsibility to ensure alignment of learning-focused Inquiry (multi-membership, data-based action research) to the whole-school agreed Vision and subsidiary priorities. At the 'classroom level', individual teachers, students and their families are accountable for pedagogical designs, learner engagement as "knowledge workers" (Schlechty, 1991) and learning outcomes (p. 21).

In recent ASP literature, "scaling-up" of various CSRD-funded reform initiatives has a strong bearing on school and district alliances. The ASP National Centre, now based in the University of Connecticut, is of the belief that the ideal organisational environment for the ASP model is a whole-of-district implementation. In such a structure, key difficulties such as principal succession, balance and continuity of internal and external coaching, and teacher and community development via networking is argued to be more efficiently and effectively managed (Driver, Thorp, Kuo, & O'Neal, 1997).

Research on ASP coaching processes

The third area of qualiatative focus in ASP research is study of the role of coaches in the implementation and maintenance of the model's momentum. This aspect is particularly

important as throughout the study I have been in both roles of participant researcher and change agent/coach. Coaches are an integral part of ASP implementation. The broader literature on change agency has alternative terms for the same role: Title I's CSR program specifies a 'technical assistance provider' (US DoE, 1999); Brunner & Davidson (1998) use the phrase 'dissemination agents'. Chasin & Levin (1995) move change agency well beyond the 'technical' expectations of Title I to a transformative role:

> the overall [coaches] training approach is based upon a constructivist model which assumes that human beings learned most effectively when they actively construct their own understanding of phenomena rather than passively receiving someone else's understanding (p. 137).

Brunner and Davidson (1998) offer a development of that theme:

> Coaches are not leaders but develop leadership in the school...Coaches never tell the schools what to do and how to do it but help schools to construct their own understanding of their strengths and challenges and how to use their strength in overcoming their challenges.(p 241)

Rappaport et al. (1998) report ASP coaches in schools they investigated "offered constant attention to the cadres as they work through the list of priorities, and assisted in the complex Inquiry Process. They also served as process gatekeepers, providing guidance for Steering Committee meetings and for school-as-a-whole meetings" (p. 207).

Where reforms' central hubs set up regional centres (ASP has 13 'satellite centres' in different US states) it is likely that a coach is also a researcher, and at least a data-gatherer towards implementation evaluation (Brunner & Davidson, 1998, p. 238). The current model of ASP coaching (Hamill, Garcia & Muscatello, 1998; Asera & Hamill, 1999) recommends a 'full-time coach' model developed by the Texas Accelerated Schools Centre where the coach role is not distracted by classroom, school or district administration and teaching roles (Asera & Hamill, 1999; Accelerated Schools, 1995). The National Centre has set a requirement that at least 25% of a coach's time be spent in a pilot school--the rationale for this is that "even second and third year schools still need a lot of attention and time from the coach. Thus, coaches or coaching teams need to make sure that they do not take on too many schools" (Brunner & Davidson, 1998, p. 242).

A constant dilemma for schools and district offices is in whether to apply internal ('in-house') or external ('off-site') coaches to the task. Bodilly (1996), following a study of New

American School reform models, divided the forms into either "*developer-maintained* (design team-developed) or *extensively site-based reforms* developments" (p.16). There is little literature on the site-based reform/renewal forms' internal training processes. A recent 'unusually effective schools' study, *Hope for Urban Education*, conducted by the Charles A. Dana Center, University of Texas at Austin, (1999) determined the nine most academically successful high-poverty, high minority Title I schools across several states. Of the nine schools noted, "only two of the schools used nationally known comprehensive school reform models. One used the Accelerated School Program and another used Success for All." (Charles. A. Dana Centre,1999, http://www.ed.gov/pubs/urbanhope/execsumm.html).

Brunner & Davidson's (1998) New Orleans study of coaches and principals in 12 ASP schools over 11 school districts notes not all regional areas are sufficiently replete with human and financial resources to have full-time or even external coaches. In such circumstances "the important tasks of networking and finding funds expected of off-site coaches need to be assumed by the center [district or ASP Satellite]" (p. 255). Their study found 'in-house' coaches provide closer daily supervision of process and more educative leadership in the curriculum and have more flexibility though less availability. They also lack credibility and persuasion in respect of principals; and often have difficulties resolving within-staff conflict. Off-site coaches have: less knowledge at first of the school's culture, greater credibility and persuasive power *vis a vis* school leadership, greater success in mediating school level conflict; and difficulties maintaining school-based records (p. 263).

Bol, Nunnery, Lowther, Dietrich & Associates (1998) studied the 'inside' and 'outside-in' support processes of eight reform models, investigating in particular teacher perceptions in year one and year two of implementation. Strong correlation was found to between external professional development support on one hand and perceived pedagogical change and student outcomes on the other. Accelerated Schools were rated highest regarding this association, and were also rated highest in "adequacy of resources" (p. 373). Given that ASP is not dependent on prescribed texts or materials, the high rating may be indicative of teachers' favouring of professional learning over 'syllabus' and proprietary materials. There is little research literature concerning teachers' preferences regarding *prescriptive* or *non-prescriptive* curriculum in school renewal/reform models. Nor is there evidence of inquiry into the compatibility of various reforms' *pedagogical* principles and practices with those

pre-existing in the reforming schools' sites, in particular how the 'fit' of old to new slows or advances teaching and learning effects.

Synthesis of ASP-related literature

The literature concerning the ASP project shows that positive effects in student achievement can be expected from schools' concerted application of the ASP process. Available studies have not probed long-term and transitioned effects (e.g., from one tier of schooling to the next) of particular schoolwide reforms. The principal's role in school reform efforts as a facilitator of participatory process is given stark profile in ASP studies of principal succession. Under ASP and other predominantly site-based initiatives, District offices are shown to have different, more supportive demands to both honour and foster the local social capital being tapped by comprehensive reforms.

Of significant interest to the researcher/coach/author of this thesis, the literature suggests that for the empowerment of the 'client' group, coaches do well to emphasise *ingredients* but not *recipes*. Coaches might expect three results: more influence on the principal, and less on the staff; mediate school level conflicts with greater flexibility in time management than on-site personnel; and lack local cultural understanding but have credibility in beyond-school issues. Coaches are likely meet significant difficulties among staff and non-staff participants within the Inquiry Process that underpins all action planning in ASP schools.

Schoolwide reform models such as the ASP rely on identifiable non-administrator change facilitators (or model-implementers) to guide the renewal processes. The literature of community development is explicit that 'consultation' and 'facilitation' is about empowering the 'client', whether individual or collective (Healy, 2000). Yet the 'enabler' is not an unchangeable change agent. A question not answered adequately in ASP or other schoolwide reform literature concerns how the research/renewal context itself might affect or construct my role as a participatory researcher and coach, a role common among many authors of the reported research.

3.5 Summary analysis of the relevant reform and renewal literature

The literature of policy and practice has described the broad brush of systemic reform as having mistaken equality for equity, and failing to recognise that no matter what curricular mandates or restructuring templates were impressed upon schools by central wisdom, it was the school that was the unit of change and that local circumstances defined the real operational variables. Accountability reform is equivocated in the dual purposes of standards-achievement and shared responsibility between central and local parties. But the key professional criticisms of 'top-down' reforms lie in their subverting curriculum and instruction to external accountability, a restriction seen as potentially de-professionalising teaching and disempowering teachers. Authentic student and community outcomes are not perceived by school level educators as valued by the accountability systems associated with systemic reform. Systemic, non- holistic reforms are perceived to have failed to offer policymakers a satisfactory answer to inequitable school outcomes.

The reforms identified as comprehensive and schoolwide, supported by central equity funds offer a compromise that acknowledges academic and social goals, local and central accountability, internal and external support needs. Most important, the school is reconceived as a coherent, integrated system capable of generalising learning across the whole organisation. The notion of community participation is enshrined in the various systems' legislation and operational protocols of schoolwide reform. In the relatively brief history of schoolwide reform scholarship, a critical dialectic is emerging between student learning, measured by limited dimension state-mandated tests, and social capital in organisational learning that is multi-dimensional and relational but no less 'telling'. As a system-serving strategy for exerting greater pressure on practitioners to raise teaching and student standards, devolved forms of school governance and community engagement bear in them the seeds of emancipation and unlocking of learning enhancement little imagined by mainstream 'policy elites' (Cuban, 1998).

Like the UK, Australia is shown to have arrived at a more 'review' oriented program than the 'renewal' orientation promoted by the US' CSRD initiative, and despite its States' intentions to devolve to school communities the responsibility for equitable responses, the

Commonwealth has been criticized as reluctant to shift from central control of the educational equity agenda.

As yet, the government school system lacks articulation of how its School Improvement Review (SIR) program specifically addresses socially mediated educational disadvantage. Comparisons of Tasmanian 'like schools' based on socio-economic indicators, are outputs measures, and no explanations are given in the literature of how articulation or coherence is to be achieved across elements of the centrally managed school review model.

Research in ASP schools and networks has raised a number of practical and theoretical findings to help our understanding of the relationship of empowering governance and authentic educational outcomes for the whole range of school members. Introduced into the homogenous territory of school reform process in Tasmania, the ASP is a unique innovation to Tasmanian equity planning, offering community-negotiated goal-setting, curriculum reform, implementation support, professional development and critical attention to accelerating students' learning. All of its design elements are compatible with Tasmania's SIR review program. The literature reports independent evaluations that both challenge and reward the faith of the models' progenitors. Process-based studies conducted across many of the 1000 adherent schools and their District offices have given important explanations of the key roles of principals, teachers-as-leaders, District personnel and model-implementation coaches. The ASP is shown to rely very much on the redistribution of leadership in its schools as a precondition to sustained organisational learning argued to produce outcomes of powerful schoolwide learning processes and concomitant improved student learning measures.

CHAPTER FOUR

Literature relating organisational theory to whole-school reform

4.1 Coherence, empowerment and authenticity from schoolwide reform

Organisational theory touches each domain of school reform: schools governance; functional arrangements of human and physical resources; and the 'main game' of teaching and learning.

> Changing schools is not simply a matter of developing the right policies and planning more accurately for their implementation ... Far from being rational and predictable ... changing cultures and schools is a more complex, contradictory and often contestational process.
>
> (Christie, 2001, p. 268).

In commerce and standards-based accountability in education, some aspects of organization have been dealt with as objectified, measurable phenomena of time and motion or 'absenteeism'. More often though, the indicators and dynamics of organisation are qualitative by nature. This section of the review embraces the tentative nature of organizational theory's causational and associational premising, but as with social capital that a product of trust, networking and mutual interest (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993; Falk & Harrison, 1998), organizational intangibles are evidenced by the fruits of schools' work and outcomes.

School 'workplace' organization represents what used to be framed as the task and focus of bureaucratic 'administrivia' and school affairs housekeeping (Henry, 1994). Yet a concern more recently with the micropolitics (Mawhinney, 1999) and relational function of school organisation (Hargreaves, 1997) has brought factors of organization affecting personal and professional efficacy in reforms into an explicit and pivotal position. Issues of workload, time management, space allocations are all critical factors in the satisfaction, stress and by direct implication, motivational levels of those who participate in school affairs (Dinham & Scott, 2002). Workers and volunteers such as family members share the school's space or

site and share tasks of both 'housekeeping' and core technologies (Elmore, 1990; Henry, 1994). Organisation affects all domains and member groups.

Prestine & McGreal (1997) conjecture that "although there is some evidence that changes in school organization and teachers' work may be necessary precursors to or, at least, facilitators for other changes, they offer no guarantee of significant changes in curriculum and pedagogy" (p.372). However, recent studies *have* drawn links between matters of organizational culture (such as school climate and inclusive practices) and teaching and learning outcomes (Silins & Mulford, in press), and others contend that organizational factors are inescapable meso-level *requisites* of sustained curriculum and pedagogical development (Meier, 1995; Hargreaves, 1997; Robinson, Timperley & Halliday, 1997).

Theories of organizational learning from other social sciences and management disciplines offer the thesis an extension of its theory base. Such theories interrogate dynamics of direct relevance to organisational alignment, power relations and process/product appropriateness. The concerns of coherence, empowerment and authenticity are considered here under nominally separate subheads, but even before being discussed as seamless, interactive dynamics in organizational learning, their interactivity is compelling. The ideal of realizing and sustaining the three 'solutions' in concert justifies the intentions of schoolwide reform models.

4.2 Coherence

Conformism and contestation

Coherence signifies co-ordination and consistency between the whole and its parts, but also within the school itself. Coherence has meanings both for the whole (education system) and the part (school). It can be argued that, as it is with power relations and pedagogy, coherence in school reform has vertical and horizontal dimensions. The vertical dimension links central policy to school site practice but also requires 'feedback' from the field to planners. The horizontal dimension is relational, indicating partnership, teaming, unity, consensus, harmony and other coherency descriptors at the proximal level. The alignment of values and purposes has been shown to be a key criterion in reform quality benchmarks (US DOE 1999). Without it, the messages given and received by schools are mixed and potentially confusing or contradictory. Alignment of policy, facilitation and practice is sometimes described as the 'systematic' in systemic reform (Cohen, 1995). Policy is not the exclusive business of

central offices in education. The school is a system within a system, managing governance, workplace and pedagogy on a daily basis.

Hence coherence is challenged in logic by ideological inconsistencies; constructivist professional development juxtaposed with transmissive classroom practice (Brunner& Davidson, 1998); democratic classrooms alongside autocratic principal/staff relations (Rafferty, 1997); positive student behaviour policies relying on bullying teachers (Kohn, 1996; Rogers, 1998). The school level presents other horizontal problems for coherence, especially the diversity of member groups: administrators; professionals; ancillaries; students; parents; site-based or visiting specialists and so on, as well as cultural differences in member groups. If not addressed, the diversity of understandings, agendas and capabilities is a challenge to coherence but addressed, it may harness cultural capital to effect clarification, consensus and aligned collective will (Lareau & Shumar, 1996; Healey, 2000).

Leiberman's (1995) research in professional development of reforming schools suggests a level of hypocrisy exists in some schools' professional learning cultures:

> What everyone appears to want for students – a wide array of learning opportunities that engage students in experiencing, creating and solving real problems, using their own experiences, and working with others – is for some reason denied to teachers when they are the learners. In the traditional view of staff development, workshops and conferences conducted outside the school count, but authentic opportunities to learn from and with colleagues *inside* the school do not (p. 591).

Levin (1987) recognized early that a uniting vision was critical to any reform process because it gave (ideally) an internalized reference point through which to align governance and pedagogy in a school. In approaches later developed to train coaches of ASP schools, the multiplier effect is made explicit: constructivist 'powerful learning' methods are used to enable coaches to use active, collaborative discovery methods with staff and community in pursuit of 'powerful learning', as advanced pedagogies in school and community.

Isomorphism suggests the inevitability of influence from 'greater' educational ideas. Hargreaves & Hopkins (1991) see the 'empowered school' as having come to terms with tensions around maintenance and development (p. 17). Coherence would seem from the literature of organisational learning to be desirable in any system, at whatever level. Institutionalisation is at least in part a desirable outcome for a school reform initiative

(Finnan, 1996; Fullan, 1992). It determines the difference between a fad and a sustained change process (Roy & Seguin, 2000). But continuity between what is valued as a resource in the school culture and what is envisioned in a renewed school culture is problematic. 'Unconscious', pattern repetition is shown in theory to be likely, whether desired or not. Senge uses the term 'system reinforcement' to denote *conscious*, deliberated cultural patterning for positive elements change (Senge, 1999).

Organisational theory furnishes useful understanding of how patterns of behaviour and values are consciously and unconsciously transmitted in or between organizations. One important concept explaining this is *isomporphics.* Isomorphics, the dynamic of organisational form-replication, is an established standing hypothesis in organizational theory (Di Maggio & Powell, 1983; Dacin, 1997; Roy & Seguin 2000). Dacin (1997 describes isomorphism as the tendency of smaller organizations to mirror the form and function of larger organizations, particularly where the smaller organization is an embedded part of the 'greater' organization (See also Alvesson, 1993). Interpreted as conformism, organisations can be disempowered by the reign of orthodoxy impressed on schools by conformsim, depending on the reflective capacity or inquiry-based deliberation in a school (Wasley et al., 1996; Hargreaves, 1997b). However, some patterns of behaviour or institutional norms such as conflict resolving routines or success-celebration are likely to be held as desirable. Acccording to Semler (1997), well-aligned organizations have systematic agreement among "structures and culture" (p. 23). In order for participatory reforms to be aligning or system-reinforcing, the purposes must be matched by the process. Values embedded in the patterns need to be made explicit through discourse or contestive conversation .

School reforms, both 'top-down' initiatives and schoolwide models with inbuilt required practices can foster orthodoxy rather than change, and compliance[1] rather than strategic renewal can result. In a conforming, converging culture of sameness, context and authentic reform is potentially inhibited (Roy & Seguin, 2000). Thomson (2000) notes the loss of context that comes from system-wide monitoring policies to 'screen out' schools' differences in data analyses creating "a set of 'like schools' based solely on student characteristics drawn from positivist population sociology" (p. 168).

[1] Thomson (2000, p. 167) cites Reay's (1998) claim that under central mandates, school administrators and staff believe they are asked to 'fit in' rather than 'feedback' .

Research and theory around system-reinforcement does not appear to clearly address 'ground-swell' effect, or in 'bottom-up' patterning process in reform. One could conceive a 'reverse isomorphism dynamic in which the context-borne initiatives of school community members modeled processes so effective and powerful that they influenced system leaders 'above them' and through them State and District policy. This was in part the rationale behind the Disadvantaged Schools Project (DSP) (Connell et al., 1991; Thomson, 2000) and more recent alliances of the National Schools Network (Ladwig & White, 1996). The assumption driving these initiatives is that reform research should be intrinsically 'action research' with the 'problems' *posed* by schools, not just addressed by them. In this reversal of the expert-novice-relationship (Graves, 1983), tertiary and government levels support, absorb and publish the findings and facilitate their broader take-up. Thomson (2000) alludes to the imperative of bottom-up influence, coining 'thisness' to describe the pervasive rationale of contextual imperative of school level participants in disadvantaged schools' change efforts. Quite simply, practitioners and community in the schools "point to the complex interplay of systemic and neighbourhood issues that come together in their schools, and demand a policy framework that not only meets their needs but sees their situations as they are" (p. 167). Giroux (1988) and Richardson, (1997), however, draw attention to the voices lacking expression in school communities and by direct implication, in the wider discourse of school change agendas (Roberts & Dungan, 1993; Johnston & Nicholls, 1995; Rafferty, 1997).

4.3 Empowerment

The transformation implied by 'renewal' or 'acceleration' is not a simple output effect upon the organization and its product: it is a reconceptualising of the manager as a leader and, importantly, of members as leaders (Sergiovanni (1990). Leadership distribution has the capacity to reinforce organisational development at its base. Blase & Blase (1997) attribute to Sergiovanni (1992) the point that in 'shared' conditions "directive leadership from principals as professionals is de-emphasised and articulating a vision, for example, becomes a *community* task rather than a leadership task" (Blase & Blase, 1997, p. 143).

Owens (1998) proposes that, through the first half of the 1900s, a sharpening of focus brought by psychology and sociology has irrevocably brought "morale, group dynamics, democratic supervision, personnel relations and behavioural concepts of motivation into

'administrative science' (1998, p. 17). Sergiovanni (1992) describes a related shift from "what gets done gets rewarded" to "what gets done is rewarding" (p. 43). Trusting leadership is an important avenue for a sense of ownership, acknowledgement, job satisfaction in teachers (Bishop, 1999). The capacity to distribute leadership, (therefore ownership and power) is increasingly associated with school renewal (Darling–Hammond, 1995; Hargreaves & Evans, 1997; Cranston, 2001).

Leithwood's (1992) postulations of 'transformational leadership' look at school cultures as mainly shaped by "principals who foster school cultures that encourage the talents and contributions of all members, thereby eliciting excellent, motivated performance"(p. 8). Blase & Blase (1997) cite Leithwood's (1992) interpretation of transformational leadership as "power *through* rather than power *with*" (p. 143). The initiative to organizational development, however, has more than a transformed output as its objective. The organizational identity of the members is reconceived and opportunities are opened for underdeveloped or under-utilised organizational resources (leadership, imagination, commitment/sacrifice, quality percept) to 'self-actualise' (p.143).

Leaders in schools have come to occupy a pivotal position in that they bridge distal and proximal change force loci (Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1993). Barth (1990) makes the wry assertion that, "the principal is the agent through which others seek to prevail upon teachers to do their bidding" (p. 27). The cultures of schools are identified as reflections of their managerial styles. They filter distal influences, promote professional learning opportunities, and have a range of attitudes to community from inclusive to exclusive. Research and theory hold cautions to leaders not to tokenise participation from the base (Fullan, 1993; Epstein, 1995; Rafferty, 1997). 'Co-opting' is not only a sham of 'collaboration'; it undermines it (Fullan, 1993; Bishop, 1999). Evans (1993) claims, "because resistance is inevitable, the primary task of managing change is not technical, but motivational: to build commitment to innovation among those who must implement it" (p. 20). In Evans' theoretical change framework, implementation depends on five dimensions of change:

1. the content of the reform;
2. the faculty's willingness and capacity for change;
3. the strength of the school as an organization;
4. support and training; and
5. leadership.

The sequence is deliberate: "To examine restructuring in the light of the first four dimensions is to see that it places an exceptional burden on the fifth." (Evans, 1993, p. 20).

Democratic and distributed leadership

Etheridge & Hall (1991) studied site-based decision-making in Memphis schools, and found at the early stages that authoritarian leadership inhibited team functioning while democratic leadership enhanced shared decision-making, co-operative teaming and group development. Their work is important for its longitudinal results, which found, some years down the track that democratic leadership was the only leadership style positively linked to improved student performance, as was teacher empowerment. The absence of democratic leadership was strongly associated with teacher attrition and in schools studied, "student achievement scores increased in relatively short time when teachers were empowered or anticipated becoming empowered decision makers' " (Etheridge & Hall, 1995, cited by Blase & Blase, 1997, p. 17).

Bailey (1997) posited that schools as organizations can only reach maturity if it they go beyond *shared decision-making* to *shared authority.* Such critical activities as the setting of whole-school agendas and the definitions of in-school roles go beyond deciding whether or not to support the leadership's propositions. Bailey (1997) believed that not only were teachers not yet prepared for the sharing of authority, but their problem was shared by District offices.

Drawing on work in commercial organizations, Kiernan (1993) proposed seven 'architectural pillars' of high-performance firms in the contemporary corporate environment:

- Organisational learning;
- Innovation/ experimentation;
- Constructive contention;
- Empowerment/ shared leadership;
- Optimised value potential;
- Corporate sustainability; and
- Strategic reframing. (p.2)

The seven elements unpack administrative science's equivalents to renewal models' participatory governance. Kiernan sees the object of 'empowerment' as "quite simply to tap

the creative and intellectual energy of everybody in the company, not just those in the executive suite" (p. 7). Kiernan's inclusion of 'sustainability' as an essential 'pillar' reinforces two criteria of quality in school reform efforts proposed by Cuban (1998): adaptability and longevity. Allied to 'optimised value potential', sustainability is directly related to members' ideological and affective attributes such as beliefs, commitment, motivation, role satisfaction readiness to take risks. These attributes in turn facilitate an organization robust enough to maintain 'constructive contention' as part of its governance and educative deliberation.

Barry's (1991) observations of self-managing teams in organizations suggest that democratic process requires greater levels of leadership than 'bossed' arrangements[2]. Democratising leadership and improving participatory levels in reform is not about stripping away power from leaders or in neutralising power in 'followers'. Healy (2000), speaking to social workers, asserts, "Once egalitarian practice relations are recognised as an accomplishment of power rather than arising from the absence of it, we are compelled to address ourselves to the productive exercise of worker power within activist practices" (p. 87). To Fouccault (1980), power is not *in* the person's identity but operates *through* discourses in organizations about affairs directly relevant to the context (p.52 [my italics]). This has implications for students' learning of 'democracy'. Not only is it in their decision-making activity that it is learned (Howe, 1997; Elliott & Downey, 1999) and in collaborative learning (Brody, 1997) but, through the nature of their interactions, modeled in part by the school climate.

Tanenbaum & Schmidt (1973) propose a continuum that can help describe the locus of decision-making control in organizations such as schools. Because each circumstance is bound to context, purpose and a time fame, among other conditions, in any one day, an organization may see all levels in play. However, over time the organizational culture of the institution will in the main be characterized as operating within one of the following managerial styles:

[2] Barry characterises distributed leadership as situational to tasks such as scheduling and resource-gathering as well as the development of group processes of cohesiveness, effective communication patterns. He warns, "because many members of self-managing teams never receive formal training in group process skills, these groups are frequently unstable, tending to fission rather than fusion" (p.31).

Figure 4. 1 Continuum of manager and non- manager behaviours (after) Tannenbaum & Schmidt's (1973) model

Executive ←						→ *Shared*
Manager able to make decision which non-managers accept	Manager must 'sell' decisions before gaining acceptance	Manager presents decision but must respond to questions from non-managers	Manager presents tentative decision subject to change after non-manager inputs	Manager presents problem, gets inputs from non-managers, then decides.	Manager defines limits within which non-managers make decisions	Manager and non-managers jointly make decision within limits defined by organizational constraints

While organisational culture in influential, its boundaries are difficult to draw. The origins and upshots of members' decisions may be quite distant from the immediate school site. Schools are very permeable organisations (Hargreaves, 1997b). For instance, changes of personnel in all stakeholder or member groups, external demands in a constant stream towards the principal and teachers, increasing access by media to schools and spokespersons, and professional development – all are points of exchange. Alvesson (1997) and others from sociological disciplines are at pains to remind us that organizations are always to a significant extent 'small cultures' through which the 'greater culture' is manifested. Though the stronger trend is towards devolved power *within* organizations, theory accepts the balance of internal and external interests. Freedom is still tempered to the purposes of a more common good by controls. Schmitt, Swope & Walker (2000) claim "Contemporary political theory, as well as non-cooperative game theory, suggests that non-binding agreements reached in the absence of an external enforcer are unlikely to change individual behaviour and improve group outcomes" (p. 829).

What 'binds' can be contractual or 'transactional' (Falk & Harrison, 1998), but can also be intrinsically derived from motivation or shared commitment. Social capital theorists and researchers describe the school as a point of exchange (Putnam, 1993; Teachman, Paasch & Carver, 1997), of interactivity, with such attributes as 'trust' being both generator and outcome of productive exchange. School reform and improvement practitioner-researchers (Fullan, 1993; Hargreaves, 1997b; Marks & Seashore-Louis, 1995) assert that organisational climate is represented by relationships, and that while distal audiences may value scores and data because they are often the currency of their exchange with schools, local valuing goes emphatically to human outcomes (Lieberman, 1993).

Governance

While leadership and management are terms that semantically suggest 'front runners' and followers, 'governance' is a term more embracing of collective behaviour, and usually connotes a level of collectivity in decision-making. The democratic governance explicit in ASP process is the activity facilitated by shared authority or effectively distributed leadership. Mohrman, Wohlstetter and Associates (1994) promote *school based management* as an open system of organization which, within itself, finds each area of the organization affected by change in any other area (p.4). The simplicity of clear lines of command and clear distinction between worker and management is, in a paradigm shift, being replaced with more complex power relations and more complex roles. In the view of Mohrman et al. (1994), organisational complexity calls for *high-involvement management* characterised by decentralised leadership. The authors describe the emergence of:

> a new organisational paradigm ...one that shares many of the concepts that abound in the literature on educational reform: decentralisation, flattening, multistakeholder decision-making, flexibility, innovation, lateral networks and teams. (Mohrman & Wohlstetter, 1994, p. 3).

Complexity is not, however, a necessary predicator to organizational effectiveness. House (1981; 1996) has asserted that research on educational reform occurs from three basic perspectives- the technological, the political, and the cultural:

> In a sense, transaction-cost economics is an updating of the technological perspective. Political factors, such as conflicting interests, and cultural factors such as organisational culture, would expand the comprehensiveness of the appraisal scheme, but also make it more complex. (1981, p.13)

The psychology of concept schema development (Case, 1992) has long suggested that complexity is as much an *outcome* of learning as a cause of it . If the organisational behaviour of schools in renewal is found burdensome in its complexity, the result will be a lack of coherence. Key stakeholders are shown to use simplifying heuristics in their evaluations of school matters. Schneider, Marschall, Roch & Teske (1999) researched parents' use of "low information rationality" with visual indictors such as broken windows in school buildings to shortcut to the information they need. They demonstrate parents employ alternatives to encyclopedic knowledge in making decisions of importance. The increasing scarcity of time and resources suggests this as a tendency in all educational

stakeholders, compromising the authenticity of assessment at classroom and system levels (Elliot & Borko, 1999) and to fast-track policy decisions (Bauer, Meza & Duplantis, 1999). In support of 'virtuous impatience', West (2000) recommends that in order to maintain momentum, schools should not invest too much attention to any one phase of school improvement. Writers in schools of management (Barry, 1991) and community development (Moll, 2000) point to differing levels of leadership distribution at evolving stages of group or community development. Shared authority is developed, arguably learned, not 'downloaded'. In a longitudinal case such as this study, stage-related variations in authority sharing for different member groups appears to be a worthy point of inquiry.

Self-determination in school renewal

Alvesson (1993) cautions that "broader, historically anchored cultural ideas tend to create unquestioned understandings which restrict our autonomy" (p. 78). Alvesson cites Hofstede (1985) as arguing the permeability (even the determinability) of organizations by their cultural environments at the level of social norms, beliefs and values which in turn are contingent upon national or class cultures, and "cultures of professional or occupational communities" (Alvesson, p. 79). Alvesson's thinking challenges those in renewal efforts to acknowledge the permeability of boundaries, and to examine what orthodoxies or 'bounded rationality' (Bower, 1999) may stand between the status quo and any vision of change. Schein (1985) claims many organisational phenomena (culture, climate, identity an so on), even consciously and positively developed, do not reach the status of being what Sergiovanni (1990) calls "routinized" p.(15) or become operationally embedded in the organizational behaviour of the institution. The cause may in part be teachers' own cultural experiences, identities and limitations that are brought across the institutional boundaries every day. Payne (1995) and Lareau & Horvat (1999) are among many who argue that teachers' social class consciousness is a significant barrier to renewal efforts and should be made a key focus of professional learning in high poverty and high minority contexts.

Another term for internally directed democratic organization is "self-organisation" (Hock , 1999). Hock claims this is largely growing as a function of social sector organizations' need to have a level of distance from the potentially bureaucratic and disinterested public sector and political pressure. In one sense, this partly explains the 'loose coupling' (Martin, 1993) commonly identified as mediating policy and practice (Cohen, 1995). It is not a novel notion

at all to attribute organisational maturity as a function of the relative autonomy of its members. Argyris (1957) espoused it in the 1950s. He ventured that personality is a trait that trends toward actualisation through:

- *passivity* to *activity*;
- *dependence* to *interdependence;*
- *behaving in only a few ways* to *behaving in many ways;*
- *shallow interests* to *deeper interests;*
- *short time perspective* to *long-term perspective*;
- *being in a subordinate position* to *an equal and/or superordinate position relative to peers;*
- and *.lack of awareness of self* to *an awareness of and control over self.*

Clearly Argyris was taking a transformational line in his proposition. However, the point should be made that development is not always conceived as a shedding of an old identity for a new one and a learning of a totally fresh set of concepts and skills. To the contrary, maintenance and development are (in their various synonyms) important referents in theories of social work, management and biology, to name a few. Sustainability implies continuity *and adaptability* (to threats, demands, uncertain conditions and wear, among many conditions).

Community: inclusive participation and outcomes

The ASP has two rather specific purposes for its collective action: governance and inquiry. Both are framed as collective organisational behaviours. Taken together, they represent empowerment with responsibility. Responsibility in itself connotes both ownership and purpose. In the school reform scholarship around theorised 'communities of inquiry' (Sachs, 1997), a conceptual line of continuity links social cognition in participatory planning with authenticity of learning and outcomes from the school program.

Many terms have been used to describe collective self-regulation with a learning discourse at its heart. Tracy (1998) discussing public organization asserts that "a community of inquiry must be democratic *and* egalitarian" (p. 597). *Communities of practice* (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Falk & Harrison, 1998); the *learning organization* (Senge, 1992; Robinson et al., 1996); the *community of learners* (Barth, 1990; Groundwater-Smith, 1998), a *community of inquiry* (Dewey, 1933; Francis, 1997; Sachs, 1997, Tracy, 1998), a *learning community* (Ledford & Mohrman,1993).

The role of 'community' in public schools' governance and learning programs has been given thorough attention in other research reports, particularly parents' involvement to counter educational difficulties (Epstein, 1992, 1996; Lewis, 1992; Limerick & Neilsen (1995), Aronson, 1996; Cairney & Ruge, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey& Sandler, 1997; Griffith, 1998). The overwhelming, if not predictable, finding is a positive correlation of parent involvement and improved student achievement. The studies confirm the association of low income and social adversity with low parent involvement levels (Epstein, 1991; Eccles & Harold, 1993). However, no clear differentiation is made of the effects of instructional-type help from other school involvement such as governance and social events.

A question of particular interest to this thesis, which is explored in depth in the Matterslea context, is in the socio-cultural dimensions of parent/teacher communication and mutuality of educational understandings. Several researchers implicate teachers' class-bound concepts in lowering expectations of working class parents' participation and creating a self-fulfilled deficit (Lareau, 1987). The concepts of collaboration and 'partnership' of key stakeholders in bringing about change become problematical in certain circumstances. Lacking in either political commitment to equity in education or awareness of participatory development dynamics, staff in schools may 'tokenise' community involvement and inadvertently limit opportunities for non-teaching members to improve awareness, ownership and empowerment (Cairney & Munsie, 1992; Epstein 1991). Cautions are offered to educators, however, by Limerick (1995), Payne (1995), Lareau & Shumar (1996) and Orfield et al. (2000) not to rush to judgement on involvement levels of families in poverty or families with non-dominant ethnic backgrounds. In accord with earlier work by Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie (1987), Lareau & Horvat (1999) suggest there are many culturally appropriate ways for parents to 'support' schools, and that the fact that a parent is not 'in your face' can signify considerable confidence in a teacher. Griffith (1998) cites Furstenberg (1992): "families living in high-risk, low-resource neighbourhoods employed in-home strategies over community strategies so that they could protect their children from dangers of the neighbourhood" (Griffith, 1998, p. 59).

Fathers in particular are found to be relatively absent from participation in schools, but counter to common belief, a study by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1997) concurred with earlier findings by Cooksey & Fondell (1996) that

single parents, fathers or mothers. The NCES study claims fathers show a higher attendance at school or class events (such as a play, science fair, or sports event) and general school meetings. The authors surmise that fathers may find these easier than serving as a volunteer at the school or attending regularly scheduled parent-teacher sessions because they are more likely to occur during non-school and non-work hours. With many families in high-poverty having single mothers as heads of the household, low participation by fathers is predictable. Organisational adjustments may be needed in order to improve men's engagement levels in the more curricular aspects of school programs. In gauging the level of parent involvement in schooling, Epstein's (1995) typology of parent involvement is particularly pertinent to this study:

Figure 4.2 Levels of school involvement according to Epstein & Dauber (1991) and Epstein (1992; 1995) Epstein (1995; 1992)

Level of Involvement	Description and sample practices
1. Basic obligations of families (parenting)	*Health, safety and positive home conditions*
2. Basic obligations of school	*Communicating*
3. Volunteering	*School or classroom-based parent help*
4. Learning assistance at home	*Instructional partnerships*
5. Decision making, governance and advocacy	*Participatory roles in school management; activism*
6. Collaborative community	*Integrate community resources to strengthen school and family practices*

Although all levels of Epstein's typology have intrinsic worth to learners, the ideals of participatory school reforms are only fully realised at levels 5 and 6. it is at these levels that school renewal can seek to give each member group a 'voice' as part of inclusive participation in the school agenda (Roberts & Dungan, 1993).

Student voice

Models such as ASP include students explicitly in the notion of a community of learners. Brown, Ash, Rutherford, Nakagawa, Gordon & Campione (1993) advocate that students be 'apprenticed' "into a community of research practice where they gradually come to adopt the ways of knowing, cultural practice, discourse patterns, and belief systems of scholars" (p.223). The authors contend that although authentic learning is sometimes bound in traditional disciplines, domain-independent learning offer learners access to new knowledge

forms and the ability to engage in a community of practice "of their own choosing" (p. 223). Brown et al. (1993) see the emergence of student voice as a capacity grown in a diverse, not homogenous learning environment:

> Distributed expertise is a central facet in authentic communities of scientific practice ...[and] distributed expertise is no less desirable for grade school classrooms, when authentic learning is the name of the game, than it is for practising scientists. The idea that all children of a certain age of the same grade should acquire the same body of knowledge at the same time, an essential assumption underlying mass assessment, is one of the reasons that contemporary school activities are to large part inauthentic." (p. 224)

As Connell. et al.(1991) found in Australia, research and practice in the development of student voice has most commonly been in secondary schools. In the US, Gips & Wilkes' (1995) report that "teachers favor student involvement in site-based decision-making but are unclear about what age or in what form such involvement should occur" (p. 89). Johnston & Nicholls (1995) claim that teachers hear student voice selectively and offer opportunities to individuals and groups that are safe for the teacher or that maintain the status quo. Rafferty (1997), from a practitioner-researcher perspective in Scotland, proposes a typology similar to that of Epstein, 1992, building on work by Hart (1992). It has the potential to guide teachers beyond comfort zones of 'democratic process' to a more emancipating level of participation. The 'ladder' is useful in ascertaining the 'authenticity' of student engagement, and in itself theorises the development of students' empowerment of 'voice':

Figure 4. 3 Rafferty's (1997) Ladder of Student Participation (after Hart 1992)

1. Manipulation
2. Decoration
3. Tokenism
4. Assigned but informed
5. Consulted and informed
6. Adult-initiated, shared decisions
7. Child –initiated and directed
8. Child initiated shared decisions with adults

Rafferty's model suggests that authentic participation in meaningful decision-making (represented by the shaded cells) is often beyond students' usual school experience. However, decisions of a more schoolwide nature, such as those characteristic of student representative councils (Bow & Samson, 1997; Elliot & Downey, 1999) can be at Rafferty's

'7th' degree of participation, 'child initiated and directed'. The eighth degree requires confidence, trust, and a level of 'opportunity' rarely seen outside 'progressive' or 'free' schools (Illich, 1976; Maslen, 1999). Rafferty's construct suggests students need a voice in curriculum design and governance if they are to develop authentic empowerment.

Non-coerced, school-directed implementations suggest that a level of self-windingness[3] (Hoban, 1967) needed to be present in the school culture for them to undertake the reform in the first place. Owning the problem is a first step to empowerment (Lein et al., 1997). A leader or change agent may be able to help a school community to realise that such feelings as anger and frustration (for instance, at their children's school failure or fear of an unsafe school environment) are part of the necessary motivation to reform. Impetus or strength where leaders precipitate necessary contestation is represented by Sergiovanni (1990) as passionate, value-purposed "leadership by outrage" (p. 154).

Participation in decision-making is not necessarily 'empowering' although it may be involving or engaging. Ownership implies that the decision-maker goes beyond the decision to the accomplishment of the objective in the decision. For a group like parents in the school community, decision making forums are not enough in themselves to promote ownership. Roles in action research, working parties, multi- stakeholder teams and focused home or classroom input are where 'choice' turns to 'responsibility'. This is the meaning behind the ASP's second principle of 'Empowerment with responsibility' (Hopfenberg et al., 1993).

Ownership only grows from empowerment where there is acceptance rather than resistance (Huberman, 1993; Gitlin & Margonis, 1995; Hargreaves, 1997a; Hattam, McInerney, Smyth & Lawson, 1997) or passivity (Eisner, 1992; Sykes, 1996). At school level, the problems of systemic reform (in coherency, ownership and authenticity process and outcomes) attract negative connotations of control, responsibility-shifting and numbing orthodoxy. However, Gitlin & Margonis (1995) remind the field that contestive voices are necessary to interrogate the validity and grounding of reform proposals. The capacity of school level 'stakeholders' to enter a creative contestation is important to finding a balance between external and internal demands of reform. Hattam et al. (1997) see 'authoritative leadership' as the most

[3] In the novel 'The Mouse and his Child', Russell Hoban creates a tale around one toy's burning desire for self-determination. The toy is a father mouse with his son held at arm's length. In better days the wind-up Mouse would spin fast enough to raise his son's circling feet from the ground. Now broken and poorly repaired, the father mouse can only walk forward, his hapless child dangling, his back to the future. Unwanted but 'moving' the pair depend on 'real creatures' to turn their key. The story's quest is for the mice to become 'self-winding'.

effective means of turning school members' concerns, conflicts and beliefs into positive, 'dialogic' contestation. These chains of reaction suggest that communication is an important factor in the distributing and expanding members' 'ownership' of problems of the reform task.

Communication

Communication serves two organizational ends of 'sharing': it makes organisational decision-making and behavior transparent (or otherwise); and it represents an exchange of ideas towards problem posing, problem solving or advocacy. The infrastructures of communication in schools are typically newsletters, memos, reports, minutes, 'handouts' and bulletin boards. The print reliance of these means of communication is not lost on multi-literacy and multi-cultural scholars (Gallego & Hollingsworth,1992; Auerbach, 1995; Freebody et al., 1998; Lareau & Horvat, 1999) who caution that more can be lost than gained if avenues of communication are not two-way or 'audience-friendly'. Conversation is equally important, but has a greater 'informal' dimension to it than print communication in schools. Of course, teaching and learning in classrooms is based in conversation, but the professional and informal discourses that occur between members outside the classroom shape much of the school climate and usually mediates decision-making at its beginning and end points.

Hargreaves (1997a) links a school's work and its deliberative 'conversation': "When engaged in change efforts, schools often decide upon their internal professional response first, then take a managerial approach to informing their community later through meetings or newsletters" (p.16). Teachers are reticent to have their 'dirty linen' aired in front of community members, "yet, counter-intuitively, when schools involve communities with them in the uncertainties of change before the internal professional response has been decided, assistance, support, and understanding are much more likely to be forthcoming" (Hargreaves, 1997a, p.16). The ASP process takes the discourse wider than 'internal professional response' alone, by including self-selected community members and students alongside teachers and leaders in a level playing field of design and implementation. In the ASP cadres' multi-member-group that inclusive governance can be conceived as bridging governance directly to teaching and learning. Through the cadres' 'Inquiry Process', problem posing and problem solving discourse leads to a consensual action plan that

specifically addresses priorities of teaching and learning in the school's Vision statement. Through this means, community learning and professional learning are the one 'conversation'; not only is leadership a distributed function and 'power', but learning is a diffused and collective activity, expressing both situated and distributed cognition (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Communication distributes ownership of change, offers all members opportunities to be part of the internal response, and are essential co-constructors of a context-honouring, authentic curricular and pedagogical experiences of learners.

4.4 Authentic learning and outcomes

Acknowledging comprehensive and context-relevant outcomes

Lieberman (1993:1995) and Joyce & Showers (1995) in the US, Hargreaves (1997b) in the UK, and Townsend (1995), Slee et al., (1998), Ladwig, & White (1996) and Groundwater-Smith (1996) in Australia have argued persuasively that the learning of students placed at risk is most commonly not compliant to competitive and passive methods. The high expectations that are strongly supported by school effectiveness research (SER) regarding 'at-risk' learners (Reynolds & Stoll, 1994; Elmore 1995; Creemers, 1996a) and resiliency studies (Werner & Smith, 1992; Benard, 1996) are not compatible with a narrowed or foundational-only curriculum (Carlson, 1993; Connell, 1994; Knapp, Shields & Turnbull, 1995). In this sense, 'ambitious' curriculum (Freebody et al., 1995; O'Neil, 1995) fuses raised expectations with higher order learning. Hargreaves (1997a) cautions progressive educators to consider how some ambitious approaches can also be implicated in a limiting of curriculum and potential outcomes:

> higher-order thinking skills, problem solving-all address only what goes on in children's heads ...Our change priorities fail to develop what Goleman (1995) calls the emotional intelligence of students and teachers alike: emotional intelligence that actually adds value to students' classroom learning and teachers' professional learning. (p.1)

Research and professional argument has presented to educators a challenge for broader understanding of the multiplicity of student and institutional orientations to 'outcomes' from schooling. Even in the strongly standards-based educational environment of most Western nations, many school reform scholars argue that, particularly for students at risk, a narrowing of the curriculum and the range of outcomes is tantamount to heaping greater inequity onto

an already adverse set of conditions (Carlson, 1993; Connell, 1993b; Germov, 1994; Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Levin, 1996a).

Social justice to de-privatise the curriculum of reform

The previous arguments have made explicit links between empowerment, ownership and meaningfulness of the curriculum to the learners, both individual and collective. While systemic policy tends to view equity as an academic performance output (Goodlad, 1997), critical theorists in the area of poverty and education such as Carlson (1993) and Connell (1994) apply a socio-political interpretation to the school program. They challenge the hegemony of the traditional curriculum as silencing the critical thinking of the very students who need such capacities in order to understand the situational dimensions of their poverty and to make headway past structural and prejudicial barriers. Not only should the curriculum facilitate their full participation (MCEETYA, 1994), but it should have social justice as content, providing both disadvantaged and more privileged peers the opportunity to deconstruct ideological and environmental limitations to equity (MacKay, 1999). Reform literature carries much debate about the relative appropriateness of liberal and instrumental dimensions in a socially just curriculum. Apple (1996a) positions himself as

> not in principle opposed to national standards or to the processes of assessment--if and only if they are employed to instigate a national debate at every school and in every community about what and whose knowledge should be considered 'legitimate' and about the very real patterns of differential benefits our schools produce" (Apple, 1996a - http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v4n10.html#1 - not paginated).

The collective nature of learning is frequently referred to in professional development literature (Joyce & Showers, 1995; Robinson, Timperley & Halliday; 1996), but often has more to do with a conception of learning as 'cooperatively' generated for the individual, rather than being 'owned' by the collective or community of learners (Johnson & Johnson, 1994; (Brody, 1998). Two aspects of development in the community of learners appear to be emphasised in the literature of organisational learning and school renewal:

(i) learning *through* community, principally in program participation and problem solving – Little (1993) calls this 'joint work'; and

(ii) learning *as* community, raised by Putnam & Borko (2000) and Moll (2000) in the concept of 'social cognition'.

The concept of social or distributed cognition differentiates individualistic, in-the-head thinking from learning behaviour as collective identity and social capital. Moll (2000) explains,

> ...Thinking is usually considered as taking place solely within the mind of the individual, what some psychologists refer to as solo or in-the-head cognition. Schools accept this notion, testing students to determine their presumed individual ability or intelligence ... Conceptions of human activity (including intellectual activity) as culturally mediated bring about a radically different idea about thinking. The key point is that human beings and their social and cultural worlds are inseparable; they are embedded in each other. Human thinking is not always reducible to individual properties or traits (p. 238).

Social cognition is not only about shifting from traditional conceptions of learning to one where learning is socially mediated and transpersonal. The notion also challenges educators to consider 'other ways' of learning in other cultures, including sub cultures of our own society. Luke & Luke (1995), Auerbach (1995) and Slocumb & Payne (2000) are among many who suggest equity from school reform rests upon educators' ability to free ourselves from socialised attitudes of competitive, individualised opportunism in education, and from prejudiced or patronising deficit notions of social disadvantage.

Non-cognitive dimension of change efforts

Workplaces are described by Jarzabowski, (2000) as 'saturated' with feeling. Accepting that emotions form "an integral and inseparable part of everyday organisational life" (Ashforth & Humphrey,1995, p.98), Andy Hargreaves (1997) and Glatter (1997) link motivation to affective roots and assert that collective change efforts, no matter how tight the organization, are more easily abandoned as a result of participants' feelings than from reasoning. Hargreaves (1997) notes critically "[p]assive-aggressive leadership that masquerades as rationality and reasonableness engenders only frustration among followers who are exposed to it" (p. 13), while Glatter (1997) maintains that mainstream educational management has become preoccupied with the institutional side of leadership to the neglect of policy and context factors. Such a management style "risks the accusation that educational management is being too technocratic and mechanistic and pays insufficient regard to values" (p. 182).

Deal (1990) has brought emotional considerations to prominence in school reform by conceptualizing change as a 'social drama' that has effects on players akin to the Kubler-Ross (1969) 'stages of grief'. Dilemmas of school change such as staff disillusionment from

'principal succession' and 'teacher resistance to change' are presented as consequences of emotional investment and members' fixed notions of continuity. Jarzabkowski (2000) describes emotional activity as integral to collegial organisations. Leadership is cited as a major element in the emotional health of an organisation because it is leaders who appear to bear greatest responsibility in maintaining the momentum of collaborative process. Jarzabkowski notes Little's (1990) claim that the prospects of conflict are greater in collegial practice, since one's professionalism and self-esteem rest on the outcome of these 'deprivatised' practices (p. 193). Taken further, there is arguably more chance for conflict in democratic renewal processes because "opportunities to work together increase, and schoolwide decision-making takes more prominence in this kind of community" (Jarzabkowski, 2000, p. 32). If contestation is constructive (Kiernan, 1993) and inquiry-based (Wasley, Hampel& Clark, 1996), participatory development processes such as ASP and the Coalition of Essential Schools may accelerate organisational learning.

In the same vein that research on 'unusually effective schools' has attempted to look to what makes schools as institutions do better than could be expected in their circumstances, the field of resilience research considers how young people in particular have defied adversity and how their social ecology contributes to attributes of resilience. This line of inquiry provides practitioners a perspective through which to 'break the envelope' of a restricted conception of schooling's outcomes, and is especially relevant to this thesis.

Resiliency research towards a synthesis of personal and organizational learning

The field of psychology has contributed an alternative perspective to the problem of advancing achievement equity for students. Investigating risk factors for students such as poverty, neglect, abuse and family claim, Rutter (1987), Masten, Best & Garmezy (1990) and Werner & Smith (1992) among others have developed the notion of *resilience* to describe 'successful adaptation response to high risk' (Fraser, Richman & Galinsky, 1999, p. 134). Risk refers to "environmental factors that innocently or in combination have been shown to render children's failure to thrive more likely" (Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999, p.307). Resiliency research has identified *individuals* in high risk populations who have succeeded "against the odds" (Masten, 1994). Resiliency research, reaches beyond academic success as an indicator, to acknowledge such outcomes as school retention, employment, crime avoidance and homemaking (Batten& Russell, 1995; Werner& Smith, 1992). Psychological

indicators include positive academic self concept, orientations to drug use and proaction in career planning (Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994; Seligman, 1995).

Educational theorists and researchers such as Benard (1993; 1998) and Wang (1997) have extrapolated this work to suggest 'evidence-based' protective factors that teachers and schools can use to counteract a negative "life trajectory" (Howard et al., 1999). Labeling students as 'at-risk' is seen to place too much emphasis on deficit-described, individualised condition, whereas a more positive and proactive approach is to investigate and explain the nature of school and community mechanisms that circumvent or negate the risks. Benard found students who have overcome initial disadvantage possess each of the following attributes: *social competence*; *problem solving skills*; *autonomy*; *and a sense of purpose and future.* Benard's research also determined three significant protective factors common to the social ecologies of these students. They are represented in three categories:

- *caring and supportive relationships;*
- *positive and high expectations;*
- *and opportunities for participation in making meaningful decisions (*Benard, 1997).

Benard (1993), citing Sarason (1990), explains the consequences of alienation, dropping out and exclusion from neglect of students' fundamental needs[4]:

> when one has no stake in the way things are, when one's needs or opinions are provided no forum, when one sees oneself as the object of unilateral actions, it takes no particular wisdom to suggest that one would rather be elsewhere. (p.48)

Central to Benard's argument is that schools can provide opportunities for empowerment of young persons that are difficult to offer unengaged youth in the broader community. She recommends such methods as negotiating curriculum, cooperative problem solving and cross age mentoring (1993, pp. 46).

Howard et al. (1999) corroborate Benard's set of internal qualities and environmental factors (terming them 'internal assets' and 'external protective strengths' (p. 309). They extend Rutter's (1990) caution against seeing protective factors as a matter of individual constitutional strength of weakness. Brown, D'Emidio-- Caston & Benard, (2000) note that the iterative purpose of "resilience education," is not to speculate which idividuals are

[4] Thomson (1987) provides an excellent explanation of three needs levels: *fundamental, normative* and *instrumental.* The taxonomy, like Brennan's (1985) 'must, should, could' frame is useful in determining priorities of curriculum or service.

resilient, but to determine "what resilience exists in each person" (p.xii). Put another way, the search "is not for broadly defined protective factors but rather for the developmental and situational mechanisms involved in protective processes" (Rutter, 1990, p. 183). This perspective recognises the social ecology of the child primary systems of family school and community and the role a school may play in promoting individual agency through participatory, collective identity. Though the individual might receive threats and setbacks as circumstances, events and material conditions (alongside, of course, social and familial relational challenges), the social resources and mediating interpersonal skills available largely define the individual's 'self-righting' capacity (Benard, 1993).

Payne (1995), studying the resilient cultural attributes of high poverty communities in southern USA, concluded that poverty was not a function alone of inadequate financial resources. Many resilient individuals and surviving families have low financial resources but high levels of other resources such as emotional (perseverance, assertiveness), spiritual (purpose, guidance), and physical (health, mobility), among others (p. 16). Poverty, rather than being seen only as generational, can if conceived as situational, be understood as temporary. Perhaps the most changeable of resources is financial. However, socially mediated, and internalised resources transfer across situational boundaries. Payne (1995) & Benard (1996) show resilience to be a synergy of buffering attributes against financial and physical threats.

Howard et al. (1999) recommend that schools interpret resilience in the light of their "organisational and behavioural" characteristics (p. 319). Schools must acknowledge students' social competence as "the ability to integrate thinking, feeling and behaviour to achieve social tasks and outcomes valued *in* the host context and culture [my italics]" (p. 310). School systems controlled by certain class-bound thinking can fail to recognise values that are desirable in the at-risk students' culture, such as aggressiveness or passiveness depending on the situation. They recommend that "reforms address more than just school instructional programs" (p. 311), not applying "add-on, quick-fix programs" (Benard, 1993, p. 45), but seeking coherence among elements of the learner's broad learning environment. Wang's (1997) inner-city resilience research has led to the conclusion that "no single component of practice can account for improvements -- rather the crucial element is the way

in which successful practices are combined in an integrated system of delivery that considers the needs of the students and the site's specific strengths and constraints" (p. 16).

Nevertheless, because research has shifted focus from individual traits to socially mediated protective mechanisms (Howard et al., 1999), messages in the resilience literature bear upon whole-of-school supports and alignment of 'conditions of learning' conceived broadly rather than in the classroom alone. Benard (1993) makes a point of great importance to the argument of this review and to the thesis as a whole. The individual, she asserts, "must have a sense of coherence, a feeling of confidence that one's internal and external environment is predictable" (p. 44). She raises the point of resilience for any school community in the process of renewal:

> What is far less acknowledged [than the effects of resilience in individual students] is that creating this climate for students necessitates creating this environment for *all* school personnel. Paraphrasing Sarason [1990], whatever factors, variables and ambience are conducive of growth, development and self regard of students are precisely those that are crucial to obtaining the same consequences for a school's staff. (Benard, 1993, p. 48)

Resilience research provides an evidence base to support distributed cognition (Moll, 2000 Putnam & Borko, 2000) as a process and end in school development. An intentionally collaborative learning community (Mohr & Dichter, 2001) is a powerful extension of the learner's identity and learning capacity. Importantly, it supports the importance of coherence and alignment (Semler, 1997) between connecting learning contexts of the student: family; friendships; classroom, schoolwide and community and between elements of the student's school's vision and strategies. Resilience research also helps explain synergies through which a more broadly conceived 'community of learners' might develop *collective* factors of resilience: *supportive relationships* evidenced in trust, transparency, teamwork and consensual or contestive discourse (as in the ASP's Inquiry Process — see *Context,* p.21); guaranteed opportunities to make *meaningful decisions* in authoring and enacting school agendas; *high expectations* for the organisation represented in negotiated, shared vision and priority-setting. Rather than minimizing risk, whole-school resiliency-producing reforms embraces risk as a key to innovation (Cuttance, 2001) and appropriate curriculum. Risk-taking, then, contributes to innovation that is in turn necessary to sustain learning and organizational development.

Howard et al. (1999), writing from a South Australian context, note that "no comprehensive studies have been undertaken to delineate the construct of resilience in the Australian context" (p. 315). They caution, "we cannot assume that research conducted in Minneapolis or Houston or Philadelphia, will be relevant to children and schools in Auckland, Adelaide or Sydney" (p.315). Resiliency theories appear share a strong conceptual alignment with the principles of participatory development embodied in schoolwide, comprehensive reforms such as the Accelerated Schools model. Matterslea's case probes Howard et al.'s assumptions.

4.5 Issues raised by organisational theory

Organisational theory explains the dynamics of planning and achieving outcomes for the organisation's clients and the for organisation's members. Schools conceived as learning communities dissolve the client/member distinction and treat the business of organisation as learning rather than production. The literature of reform practice described in the previous chapter shows that governments are prepared to invest much public funds to achieve a coherent solution to what Thompson calls 'the poverty-learning' nexus (p 167). That solution is elusive because no matter how much sense top-down reforms make regarding quality, they furnish no sense to equity unless those who carry out the work of reform are empowered to make learning effective, owned by the learner and appropriate to the context (Freebody & Luke, 1990; Carlson, 1993). School members may have difficulty solving all the problems of poverty and education by themselves, but the beginning of appropriate solutions is where leaders enable members to pose the problems for themselves. Where standards-based reform looks to improvement as 'betterment', schoolwide reform looks to enablement and capacity. Self-organisation is part of what Cuttance (2001) calls 'second order' change: new goals, new structures and new cultures.

Old solutions are neither owned by the local players, nor are they designed for the context. A level of freedom from generalised and stereotypical orthodoxies is called for (Blackmore, 1999; Thomson, 2000) so that at the relational, organisational level of the school, coherence takes the connotation of *meaning* rather than *conformity*. Mulford (2002) theorises that to cope with constant (often centrally mandated) change, schools become dependent take relief in conformity (See also Henry & Taylor, 1999). Emphasising the benefits of heterogeneity over systemic homogeneity, Mulford (2002, p. 131) relates Pfeiffer et al.'s (1989) analogy of

a bee colony. While 85 percent of the hive works the known source of nectar, the remaining 'non-conformists' seek new sources. What at first looks aberrant is in fact the very innovation that sustains the organisation. The analogy implies a particular value in the loose coupling of central policy and school practice . Schoolwide reform models provide an internal coherence at the level of governance and resource relations. More importantly, their processes of collaborative and inclusive contestive discourse allow innovation towards appropriate cultural and pedagogical responses to disadvantages inhibiting both generic and authentic outcomes of learners.

In the ASP's Inquiry process certain conditions mean that some level of 'maintenance' to the existing reform paradigms is inescapable given current educational policies and orthodoxies of advanced economies. These include the big picture elements systemic coherence demanded from the union of standards-based accountability and related general public funding of schools. Local picture conditions include continuities of school identity and primary schools' constraints in transitioning students to secondary vocational or academic programs. Yet Brown (2001), connecting whole school reform to resiliency, proposes that 'whole-school reforms' may be at the leading edge of a paradigm shift in equitable education. The shift is from a deficit systemic strategy of centrally dependent 'risk reduction' to capacity in self-authored resilience-affirming development. Brown (2001, p. 47) sees this as a potential 'revolution' in Kuhn's (1962) terms of "non-cumulative developmental episodes in which an older paradigm is replaced in whole or in part by an incompatible new one" (Kuhn, p.92). Whole-school action research such as the Matteslea ASP implementation represents a new "learning history" (Kleiner & Roth, 1997) a case of coherent, empowering, schoolwide risk-*taking*.

4.6 Conclusion: The literature's bearing on central themes of this study

The combined literatures of school reform practice and organizational theory confirm the potential of comprehensive schoolwide reform models such as ASP to achieve coherence, empowerment and authenticity for its participants. But like systemic reform in Vinovskis' (1999) assessment, schoolwide reforms should be seen as 'plausible', even promising, but 'unproven'. The notion of a 'model' is more useful in posing and solving problems if it is interpreted as a springboard rather than a blueprint.

In the building of social capital, a distinction is made between micro-level bottom-up dilemmas of development in integration and linkage, and top-down dilemmas that demand synergy and integrity (Woolcock, 1998, p. 151). School reform scholarship ascribes to systemic reforms a hamstrung praxis rather than a consequential and working model. The domination of credibility by standards-bound remediation for equity's sake has waned, and in its place a more grounded, non-hegemonic approach to school reform is emerging. Practitioners and their partners in the field are looking to finer grained school-level examples for clearer understanding, still demanding integration and linkage. Connell's (1991) words mentioned earlier are resonant: "(in) the study of working class schools as institutions ... one decent school ethnography would tell us more about Australian education than 20 surveys of pupils' attainment" (p. 75).

The design and evaluation of equitable reform demands that research considers the whole range of members, and in a socially just society, any analysis must attach particular value to the condition of our most vulnerable, least advantaged groups or members (Giroux, 1988; Connell, 1991; Blackmore, 2001). For 'disadvantaged' communities who might begin renewal with relatively few empowered members, comprehensive schoolwide models offer context-engaging ways to design school priorities and to collectively pursue them. Empowerment or 'ownership with responsibility' is both a process and an outcome.

The literature suggests that a devolved locus of control is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to raise students' prospects in socially adverse contexts. There is much still to learn about how participatory whole-school development might 'work' in sustainable, effective ways. A widened interpretation of the term 'effectiveness' is being probed in comprehensive school reform. Rather than abandoning academic improvement, it is extending competence to include resilience (Finley, 1994; Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1998b) and learning to embrace both individual and social dimensions. To achieve improved social capital in a school community, leadership is required to distribute authority, however school level research is also needed to explain members' developing capacities of participation and authority at various stages of participatory reform.

Of particular interest to this thesis are links between the literatures of reform practice and organizational learning theory. Top-down isomorphism inhibits ownership and motivation of teachers in particular. As a 'model-as-springboard', ASP offers a way to free the arms of

the context rather than their remaining bound to uncontested orthodoxy. Contestive discourse is placed by organizational learning theory at the heart of building communities of learners and school capacity. From the literature, the Matterslea ASP renewal effort promises several encouragements to participants in Tasmanian school equity reform: it is a potential explorer 'bee' seeking socio-culturally appropriate innovation; it brings mutuality of purpose to professional learning and community learning; and it is designed to generate rich integrated pedagogies of the type central to Tasmania's new *Essential Learnings* Framework.

'Signs of encouragement' must remain moot until the outcomes of the model's implementation are analysed. The curiosity driving this thesis is in how the principles and practices of the US' ASP process stand up in a 'testing' Australian school context. The outcomes show that 'fidelity' to ASP-style comprehensive schoolwide reform *is* possible in Tasmanian public schools. But more important, the outcomes confirm the central premise of schoolwide reform: that democratic governance is essential to whole school resilience, and that decision-making, school organization and learning are wholly interdependent. Practices of inclusiveness, transparency, consensus and learning-centred inquiry emerge as Matterslea's key contributions to school reform's pursuit of coherence, empowerment and authenticity.

The following fifth chapter, the *Research Approach,* describes and justifies how this study has structured its investigation of a cross-cultural implementation of a schoolwide reform model. Taking together the study's aims and indications from the literature concerning knowledge required for the field of renewal, the research design helps shape the *Outcomes* chapters as they explain what has been achieved in the Matterslea ASP implementation, how the model changes the context and how the context changes the model.

CHAPTER FIVE

Research Approach

... search for the truth and repress that spirit of exaggeration which is almost ever the effect of novelty on ignorance.

Watkin Tench, 1793, A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson. From: Flannery (1996) p.15.

5.1 Overview

This chapter offers a rationale and a procedural map for the research approach taken in the study. First the researcher is sited in the ASP project as coach, distinguishing that position from my parallel role as researcher. It explains why case study is the logical methodology to be chosen, and anticipates why and for what purposes various data gathering procedures are used. Finally, the chapter outlines how the data is analysed within the context of the case.

An important intention of this chapter is to explain the open-ended nature of the inquiry. In keeping with the 'schoolwide, comprehensive' style of reform or renewal characterised by the Accelerated Schools model, this chapter argues the sense in an holistic interpretation of the outcomes, and provides a rationale for the multiple data gathering approaches and data forms. It also explains how the data is progressively interpreted against school and system aspirations and against several theoretical frames raised in the Literature of school reform and organisational learning. The researcher is in a privileged position of both insider and outside, a position enhancing interpretation but which demands in this chapter a 'bracketing' of potential bias.

The methodology, in its claim to be participatory, interpretive and constructivist (Phillips, 1995), is not seeking a single correct answer, but rather attempts to exploit the depth and breadth of available data in a six-year long insider-researcher case study, in order to expand knowledge in three spheres of learning linked in the study: Matterslea's community of learners; ASP's applicability across contexts; and broad system's understanding of school renewal in countering educational disadvantage.

5.2 Ownership in the research

From the outset, it is necessary to make a distinction between (a) what was the Matterslea ASP project, independent of the research reported in this thesis; and (b) what was the doctoral research effort published here. Understanding these, it is possible to consider (c) what has been mutual to the two pursuits.

(a) The Matterslea ASP project in its own right

The ASP implementation has stood alone. There is no reason to doubt that Matterslea's ASP implementation and maintenance could have occurred without my research activity or that of any other body. However, ASP is itself rooted in an 'Inquiry Process' of data-based action research (Brunner & Hopfenberg, 1996), and treats much of its actions as processes of discovery: discovery of strengths & weaknesses in Taking Stock; ascertainment of consonances that produce a Vision. Self-conscious 'discovery' is also the ASP's *modus operandi* of constructivist learning or 'powerful learning'.

The ASP's Inquiry Process is strongly procedural in its operation, and structures useful records of hypotheses, data, analyses and action plans. This is data *for* the school's ASP project (as distinct from data *about* the project for my thesis). There are also a number of instruments designed by ASP personnel for Accelerated Schools sites to monitor and evaluate their implementation or institutionalization of the process. These are called 'The Accelerated Schools Assessment Toolkit (Accelerated Schools Project, 1996a). Several years of ASP and independent literature has not revealed the use of results from these tools in any evaluative or even descriptive research of the ASP. It seems their data have not been made available in raw or treated form to external researchers or even proponents in other ASP-implementing schools. Rather, the predominant measuring stick used to investigate ASP impact in schools has been students' test scores, arguably because of their perceived empirical basis and their place in state accountability systems.

(b) The doctoral research *about* the project

In Chapter Two, the *Context*, the researcher's role as 'coach' in the Matterslea ASP project has been introduced as demonstrating and guiding the participants in the essential or non-negotiable elements of the ASP process. I have chosen to use the first person from this point in the thesis to realistically situate myself in the insider/outsider's role that I have taken.

My work as 'ASP coach' for Matterslea had been brokered with the Department of Education by the University of Tasmania. Its *quid pro quo* was a research partnership with the school and its district that might yield publishable and credible research. With ASP's National Center at Stanford University (and now with the University of Connecticut) as *non-financing* stakeholders, my supervisors envisaged some evaluative dimension to my study report. The initial role I had was to find one or more sites suitable for ASP implementation. My own professional 'stake' in the outcome would be a doctoral candidature. The thesis or report was not 'commissioned' by any of the project's major institutional stakeholders (Universities of Tasmania and Stanford; Department of Education, Tasmania and its Esk District Office; and Matterslea Primary School). Nor was it sponsored with funding by non-university funds. The research reported here was conducted under the supervision of the Faculty of Education, but the intellectual ownership of the report rests with me.

(c) Confluence of inquiry purposes

To conduct my role as coach I did not need to gather data, rather it was my role to advise when the school might gather data for its own purposes, in accordance with steps in ASP implementation. At certain times, however, in the gathering of data there were potential benefits to all institutional participants, for iterative and reflexive exchange, especially myself and the school. Much of the data gathered by the school for its *Taking Stock* and *Inquiry* processes would inform my research questions. As a corollary, some of my running and summary analyses stood to help Matterslea, especially if my data gathering (e.g., interviews) and my interpretations were aligned with Matterslea's research task (e.g., Taking Stock and cadre-based Inquiry).

Where it was clear the school needed to interview its community to gauge their opinions or to probe constraints to involvement, I helped design the interview schedule or questionnaire. The school was often grateful for my first draft of survey tools because their time for such tasks was scarce. I pressed several times for collective analyses of survey and interview feedback because my time was also limited and the participation from community members promoted their ownership and motivation in the ASP process. Perhaps the most 'exploitive' data gathering events I conducted were focus group interviews of early childhood, middle primary and upper primary staff sections. The results of these were instructive for me as a

coach but even more for the case study, to confirm or contradict my understandings of Matterslea's organisational culture as it unfolded under ASP.

One proviso I pursued in the participatory and generous atmosphere of the project was that my 'collaborants' should know they were also subjects of a research report that was to eventuate as a published summary document, i.e., this thesis. In this understanding, what was said, printed or observed by participants, including me, could inform my account without compromising the intent of the members.

Ethical approval was sought early in 1997 and received in due course from both the University of Tasmania, through its Ethics Committee on April 4, 1997 (H2761), and the Department of Education (Appendix C) September 26, 1997. The privacy and confidentiality of respondents and data gathered from them has been ensured at all times. Procedures were preceded by a covering permission sheet such as those in Appendix D, stating purposes of the data gathering, assurances of confidentiality and an offer to share the data and/or analyses with the respondents, on request.

The interviews with community members were conducted in the subjects' homes, following telephone requests using school and university contact details. Some 10% of family members approached declined the invitation. All consented to the use of a small tape recorder. Interview tapes were transcribed by an independent stenographer, and the transcripts, void of identifying features, were analysed in the first instance by teams comprising teachers and parents. Following this, I conducted secondary analysis of the interview data, taking into account the initial school-based teams' analyses.

Teacher focus group interviews were conducted in a school office, audio-taped and video-taped (from behind, to identify speakers whose voices might be confused). An independently employed transcriber prepared the end product. Transcripts were member-checked and subsequent analysis was undertaken by me. A similar process occurred for interviews of the individual PTA executives and principals, although no video was necessary for these. Individual students interviewed were approached through their parents, using appropriate permission documentation.

Video-tapes of classroom practices were produced following appropriate permission procedures prior to the camera-work (Appendix E), sponsored by the production with a

research seeding grant, and while the masters are stored at the University of Tasmania, the available-for-loan VHS tapes are kept in the Matterslea Resource Collection. The majority of survey data has been stored in disk, mini disk and hardcopy form, filed in an office of the University of Tasmania accessible only to myself and to the Faculty management. However, as much of the data was collected for the school's review purposes (rather than specifically for this study) certain files necessary for school planning purposes are held on-site in the Matterslea School office.

The community at the heart of this report deserves explicit praise for its energy, and courage and candour throughout its renewal effort. Despite the strong likelihood that the school could be identified without too much research, I have felt it courteous to use pseudonyms for the name of the school and the names of participating members. It is possible that, in future publications regarding the community and its positive renewal actions, the school may seek through it district office to identify itself plainly, but that is their prerogative.

5.3 Choice of research approach and method/s

The methodologies that I have chosen to address the mutual pursuits of the 'subjects' and 'researcher' are interpretive *case study* and, embedded in the case study, *participatory action research.*

No matter what emphasis the project or its investigation was to place on quantitative evaluation (say, of students' academic achievement), the study could not overlook the 'context variable'. Stenhouse (1985) notes that in the natural sciences, 'context [is] seen as an impediment to generalization" (p. 265). As this present study is very much about the impact of context. Stenhouse (1985) described two major traditions in case study: historical; and ethnographic. The historical had usually been the precinct of insiders while ethnographic case study had most often been conducted by outsiders. This distinction breaks down in the present exercise. While the 'historical' perspective is employed to ascertain Matterslea's fidelity in the steps of ASP process, I (the nominal 'outsider') have attempted to use a more ethnographic approach to probe the motives and meanings of members' actions in domains of governance, school and program organisation, and organisational learning. Student scores on Statewide tests are treated more as documentary evidence than as summative measures towards global evaluation of the project. The project's aegis is inherently too multi-dimensional to imagine a single measure as a defining value.

Benefits of Case Study

Case study is seen by research methodologists as both heuristic (Merriam, 1988) and critical (Stenhouse, 1985; Hutchinson, 1988). Merriam (1988) saw case study as appropriate where (a) description and explanation are sought in contrast to prediction, (b) when there are many variables, and (c) when a holistic picture of the case is desired. Gross (1993) relates the situative capacity of case study to the demand for theoretical extension from research. She asserts case study is 'inductive' , working from intimacy with the known to its eventual problematising. Both the understanding of the research context and the comparable 'cases' borne in the literature provide a capacity for critique, a capacity to take the case beyond description to application: "The setting of the critique within a broader social and political analysis...depends by definition on the development of the critique that is to be so disciplined by contextualisation" (Stenhouse, 1985, p. 266). Merriam's (1988) sense is that:

> the researcher beginning a case study may have a tentative working hypothesis, but his or her expectations are revised as the findings of the study are analyses andevaluated. Discovery of new relationships, concepts and understanding, rather than verification of predetermined hypotheses characterizes qualitative case studies. (p. 13)

Donmoyer (1990) sees advantages of case studies relevant to reform. In his view, "uniqueness is an asset rather than a liability ... When we are interested in expanding cognitive structures [theoretical schema], the outlier is prized, for the outlier has great heuristic value" (p. 194). Matterslea's uniqueness is in its being the first and only ASP school in Australia. But as argued in the Context Chapter, it is not unique in its social circumstances. Poverty, educational underachievement and regional employment depression are found in hundreds of municipalities across all States and Territories. The findings from Matterslea's case prospectively will inform school planning in any such school with sufficient central support to shape significant change in its operational entirety (i.e., school-wide). The 'case' will be explained to system audiences as an exemplar, not of success, but of a relatable change process that informs through its signposts and its pitfalls.

Case study does not operate to limit the field's methodological or interpretive options. Donmoyer encourages,

> Research can only function as a heuristic; it can suggest possibilities but never dictate action. It may well be the case that case study research can fulfil this function as well, or possibly even better, than the traditional approaches to

> research ... discussion of the role of paradigms in research reminds us that researchers must inevitably rely on *a priori* conceptualisation that is not determined by the data but, rather determines what the data are. (p. 182)

Participatory Action Research

The practical effect upon the researched site is also important (Stenhouse, 1985). Honouring the 'intentionality' of the participants in reform activity, well constructed case study reports can provide alternative paths without upsetting the balance of the current program.

Throughout the study, many participants have been faced with data capable of destabilizing their schema of educational purpose and practice, a combination known to Freire (1972) as *praxis*. Donmoyer recognizes teachers are particularly prone to "self-fulfilling prophecy" (p. 197). The action research that underpins ASP Inquiry Process is explicitly designed to avoid 'solutions dressed in hypotheses clothing' (Hopfenberg et al., 1993). The expectation in ASP of a continuous reflection on school practice demanded of me as a coach that I engage in a level of Socratic exchange with the members, including parent groups such as the PTA, men or the aboriginal community, to bring the model and its principles to conscious scrutiny.

Ledford & Mohrman (1993) assert that "the action researcher has the unique role of facilitating the creation of the learning community and mediating between subsystems and system levels" (p. 143). In this 'approach' more than any other, I have seen the overlapping of ideation from project to research and vice versa. The bulk of action research involving Matterslea members has been conducted in the Inquiry teams (cadres). Nevertheless, I am including this as one of *my* methodological approach actions because I have made available to the members my running analyses, and have utilised at times their feedback to inform the coaching and my analysis of individual and collective outcomes. Where indications have suggested that, with my analyses or interpretations of happenings, members might make better informed decisions to 'alter course' in their reform process, I have felt obliged to provide this information openly via the cadre/SAW forums. Recognising mutual contributions of both case study and participatory action research to the Matterslea study, an appropriate 'label' for the particular hybrid of the account's approach would be 'participatory case study'.

The following section explains my own 'positioning' in the project, so that a reading of the research outcomes can more effectively 'bracket' or 'discount' any potential bias in my interpretation.

Placing quantitative measures in context

To use a single litmus of students' test scores is not defensible for describing both the development of change processes and the outcomes of comprehensive reform effort. Eisner (1979) foresaw the pressure on educators. He drew attention to 'Scientism', as "the faith in measured performance and so-called objective procedures for evaluating schooling and appraising competence" (p. 24). Scientism, he observed,

> ... influences teachers because it influences the criteria used to determine professional competence. Even if it omits from its purview the intangible is in education that it is impossible to measure, it at least provides some teachers and administrators with the "objectivity" that they believe will protect them from capricious supervisors. (p. 24)

The literature since has provided many cautions against this temptation (Cambourne, 1989; Madaus, 1994; Haertel, 1999; A. Hargreaves, 1997; House, 1996,; Shapiro, 1998; Sirotnik & Kimball, 1999).

It could be considered equally invalid to attempt to 'measure' teachers' actual empowerment experiences, as numbers alone, to unravel the holistic tapestry of collective effort to determine measured proportions of blame and claim, to place a numerical value on the relative long-term benefits of student learning versus community learning or teachers' professional learning. Individual and collective motivation and behaviour determine reform outcomes in cognitive, social, and professional domains. A 'community of learners' concerns relationships and their active inherency, as well as their products. Finding adequate determinants of intellectual or human capital to describe multiple levels of learning and growth has been proven to be a chimerical problem (Andrich, Falk, Griffin, Ingram, Lee, & Mok, 1997; Bawden, 1998). The realms of social capital investigation have reached closer to the multi-dimensional or holistic. The students' learning is seamless from that of parents and of their teachers (Falk & Harrison, 1998; Wilkinson, 1991).

Szecsy (1997) challenges the methodological appropriateness (at all) of survey methods within a naturalistic case study: "certain data collection instruments, such as surveys and

questionnaires, are administered out of context, even when completed in the school environment, and serve confirmatory purposes" (http://newlinks.tc.columbia.edu/ems/re). She cautions against using instruments that might "interrupt the flow of interaction in the field with a researcher ... [and may] disrupt the data flow and thereby upset its reliability". Szecsy's cautions on the invasiveness of the tools of positivist social science are sensible, especially for phenomenological approaches (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 1994; Marton, 1988) but don't come to terms with the full range of conditions found within the actual, natural context of a deliberate and deliberative school renewal event. ASP process itself entails the use of survey techniques to reach numbers of participants. Quantitative data is part of the 'natural data flow' in ASP reform, and in this sense, it can't diminish the reliability of the account. Further, student scores are currently a mandates data flow, and given the beyond-context interest in student performance as well as teachers' engagement in the collection of those scores and the reading of their analyses, I am unable and unwilling to ignore them. Nevertheless, the advice of Eisner, Szecsy and others bear on my interpretation of them.

Current circumstances of coaching and researching

After six years of regular involvement in the Matterslea project, I have had, to the time of writing, some seven months of 'hands-off', deliberate distancing from the project's implementation. In 2001, the 'empowerment' imperative had impressed itself upon me. I wrote in my journal, *"It appears that after gaining the confidence of the majority of players, it is important/ necessary that I draw back from the context adequately -- and enough to ensure ownership [by Matterslea]"*(Coach's Journal, 15/2/2001). But it wasn't until the end of 2001 that the conflict between participation and report really struck home. I negotiated my (physical) withdrawal with the school members at the beginning of the year 2002. My rationale in withdrawing has been first to allow the school an opportunity to deliberate, on its own, its continued commitment to the model, and secondly to allow myself time (amidst a full-time teaching load) for more continued reflection, analysis and writing. Buchanan, Boddy & McCalman (1988) raise a number of issues in regard to a strategic withdrawal from the research site. I can identify with all of them:

> The amount of information that can be gathered concerning an organisation and its members is potentially infinite. It can therefore be difficult for the researcher

> to decide finally to leave the organisation, to gather no more information, and to begin the process of analysing and documenting what data have been collected. This can be an awkward psychological leap as there is always the possibility, usually a strong probability, that vital information has been overlooked. (p. 64)

Open-ended engagement with the project

There is a difference between the design of a study and its ultimate shape. In this 'case' there was a relatively open research agenda attached to relatively fixed ASP procedures. Nobody knew whether it would be a one-year or a ten-year phenomenon, and the fate of the project beyond my candidature was not mentioned. As a very early orientation to the project I was influenced by the simple evaluative frame of experiential learning: *What? So what? Now what?* (Dennison, 1990; Henton, 1996). The ownership of the actual reform work by the Matterslea school community made it inevitable that the study would, to a large extent, assume its own shape. I did however try to anticipate triangulations that might be needed over time to aid the interpretation and analysis of what I was to find. It was reassuring to know that there was a degree of rigour in the ASP process which, if followed with a degree of faithfulness to its orthodoxy, would yield a sizeable body of data for my purposes.

The role of the sole researcher

I conducted the doctoral research largely single handed, with occasional access to interviewer assistants and some transcription service. As I had a full-time tertiary teaching load I needed to use methods that matched the time available for treating and interrogating the data, but which were at the same time reliable, thorough, and as far as possible, exhaustive.

Several factors led to the study being conducted over a relatively long period. Matterslea school and the university had committed to six years of engagement in the ASP project. So long as the school was receiving adequate support from me (and access to feedback from 'mutually' useful data I was collecting) there was no time limit put upon my work. Although it would have been convenient to study just the establishment phase of the first year, it was my early belief that the theoretical and practical implications drawn from such an unfinished story would not match the potential value of a beginning, middle and downstream account. The long-term engagement has not come without analysis difficulties, however. Burns (1994) raises the possible limitation of lengthy case studies. The extensive information may be "impossible to analyse ...[and] increases the tendency to selectivity and bias" (p. 327).

Given the holistic (all-encompassing, if we want) scope of ASP process, my research questions and theoretical frames from the literature are important to guide any necessary selection and to keep my interpretation focused, grounded and 'parsimonious'.

Situating myself in the phenomenon

Despite the range of procedures, perspectives and theoretical foundations built into the study, there is no escaping the subjectivity involved in participant observation, especially where my on-site role has been largely as a change agent. This, I believe, is more an advantage than a limitation. Peshkin (1988) asserted, "researchers should systematically seek out their subjectivity, not retrospectively when the data have been collected and the analysis is complete, but while their research is actively in progress" (p.17). Through the use of a personal journal and publishing for audiences outside the immediate research site, I have kept touch with my changing perceptions over the six years of the study. However, I have not given disproportionate weight of account to my smaller part over those of the several member groups.

Prior to my taking the role of coach with the Matterslea project, I had gained some knowledge of the community and the school through an 'out-students' program negotiated in 1985 between the alternative school school that I coordinated at the time and the principal of Matterslea. Our independent 'family' school of just 36 children took disruptive students from Matterslea on two-week alternative enrolments to offer them experiences of choice, freedom, trust, cross-age interaction and so on. Later on I spent three years as a visiting resource teacher with special needs students and their teachers at Matterslea. For several years I had been a teacher in the school to which many of the most difficult or alienated students from Matterslea were 'sent'. By chance I had also taught a tertiary bridging course that included the elder of Matterslea's major aboriginal clan and we had become good friends. He had two children at Matterslea when ASP entered in 1997. Several staff and parents knew me from those days, some from working with me at other schools. Some had even been teacher education students of mine at University. 1995 I had been a colleague in a National Schools Network project with Matterslea as one of its 'cluster' schools. Some of the community knew me from one of the local cricket teams (a factory-based side) that included some of the Matterslea men and played against some others. So when I surfaced as the proponent of the ASP project, I had a degree of local knowledge, relationship and

continuity that afforded considerable credibility to my role. Importantly, I'd had previous professional interactions with the incoming Principal (1) of 1997, having been a support teacher visiting his remote school in NE Tasmania several years earlier.

How different to the preparation and roles of other coaches was mine?

While there is no one 'type' of coach or 'style of coaching' in ASP, there are increasing conformities or standards developing in the training of the coaches. At the time of my appointment to the role in 1996/7, however, the coaches in the US were receiving around two days of intensive coach's training for the role, and uneven levels of follow-up. Support was offered through the National Centre, to which I had access by email and phone, and I was in receipt of whatever coach-relevant literature was distributed to my US counterparts. With a number of years leading an independent, co-operatively owned, progressive community school between 1981 and 1986, I had a personal immersion in constructivist and student-centred learning. This placed me in ideological alignment with the 'powerful learning' principles behind ASP. By the same token, I had also spent seven years working with disadvantaged youths in special and included settings of public education, and had conducted my masters research on appropriate curriculum for mildly disabled young adolescents in inclusive settings. I had direct experience of meeting those demands and balancing explicit teaching with natural learning models (Cambourne, 1987). There were elements of the ASP rhetoric with which I felt a strong affinity: empowerment of disenfranchised community; consensual, participatory governance; and ambitious, authentic curriculum free of text adhesion. Elements I feared from proprietary educational 'products' were empty hype and self-fulfilling process.

Having digested all the ASP coaching materials available (provided by my supervising professors on their return from the ASP National Centre at Stanford) I was as prepared as anyone could have been without a rather unlikely two-day visit from Launceston to San Francisco – realistically, it would have been impossible to gain potential training *prior to* my February starting date as the training sessions were held in the American summer period, some five months later.

Insider or outsider

I considered it important that Matterslea's school community would recognise I had situated myself *within* the ASP project at Matterslea rather than as an academic whose primary interest was an end product report such as a thesis. It would not have worn well with staff and the school community if I were seen to promote egalitarian and collective effort while actually gathering data for my own ends. In truth, I *was* more concerned for the project's successful launching and implementation than for my study. After all, without the project, my research would be vaporous. The empowerment of all member groups and all individuals in the process was a goal never far from the surface. 'Empowerment with responsibility' was a key tenet of ASP. As a 'coach' there was a responsibility to align my practice with the ideology and intent of the processes I was mediating. Although I didn't see this as a constraint, it was nevertheless a benchmark, short of which my insider status would have quickly evaporated.

Having begun the very first day of the year with the staff in 1997, I was treated more as a part time staff member than a University colleague. Thanks to the ability to structure my teaching slots at the University, I was in the school on a regular basis, each Wednesday and I always showed up, just as did specialists and part-time staff. Saban (2000) mentions the importance of the researcher having a mailbox via which school documents and personal notes can be directed to the researcher. This was facilitated for me (unsolicited) very early in the project. I was able to use the mailbox, known in Tasmania as a 'pigeon hole', for 'on the record' and 'off the record' communications with staff, part-time and ancillary members and parents.

The school community knew of course that I did have my own full time commitment in teaching at the University, and I think this lent credibility to my capacity to understand the effort involved in the project. For parents' parts, especially those who had leadership roles, it was important they understood that I too had school-age children, and balanced my parenting with my work commitments. As a result, I have made a conscious effort not to ever-expect on the goodwill of school members.

Stresses of time and related demands actually affected my data gathering at several points, with staff occasionally making comments like "not another bit of homework (i.e., questionnaire), you must think we have time to burn!" or "Couldn't you use a bit less jargon in that questionnaire, Rob? I've got my tax return to figure out yet!" My desire to try either

questionnaire or interview at certain intervals was to a large extent controlled by members' attitudes and by a pragmatic benchmark of participants being 'ready, willing *and* able'.

Balance of internal and external perspectives

As Brooker & Macpherson (1997) maintain, "data which informs an inquiry can be positioned in a variety of ways and can, or indeed should be, weighted differentially" (p. 4). It was most important that the dominant voices in my study would be those of the Matterslea school community. Although I was a player, my role was essentially advisory. At any point in the study period that 'coach' role was to take priority over my 'study', though not over my university teaching commitments. I reasoned that my chance to interpret, analyse and evaluate would inevitably come. Because I would have the last word, I determined that my report-as-codicil should be about the school community, and only about me insofar as I took a role *in* the community. Although I was the nominal 'expert' in the process and a guide through it, the answers needed to be determined by the community.

5.4 Tasks required of the data gathering and analysis

The 'Context' chapter has described the ASP project's principles of schoolwide member empowerment, collective and inclusive participation, deep professional learning and ambitious pedagogies towards accelerated student outcomes. From these tenets, it can be understood that the methodological approach, if overt and to any extent participatory with the 'subjects', needed to satisfy several criteria inherent to the topic:

- It would produce a holistic account that honoured the nature and intent of schoolwide, comprehensive renewal;
- Its procedures would yield description, interpretation and explanation of the multiple dimensions (domains) involved, sustaining investigation and analysis of those domains' synergy;
- The research method should not constrain creativity, autonomy/choice, honesty or openness characteristic of communities moving to empowered condition (Freire's *conscientization*) ;

- It would have to facilitate a balance of *emic* and *etic* positions (i.e., self-declared and other-deemed – Pike, 1960; Stake, 1995), reflecting the involvement of both school-based and external players;
- It should iterate the role of time in members' development and learning, describing and explaining constancy and change; and
- It should use theoretical perspectives from the literature to progressively situate this study's findings in both local and macro contexts.

The notion of an 'holistic' view is on one hand important to the social cognition of organisational learning. It also acknowledges that complexity can be better understood in the 'whole which is greater than the sum of the parts'. Stake (1995) defines holism as the "belief that understanding is served better by concentrating on the entity than on its constituent parts" (p. 171). However, I have approached the holistic demands of this study in a slightly different mindset. It is central to understanding the organisation of Matterslea School 'as a whole' that I regard individual and member group perceptions *in relation to* that whole. The philosophical underpinning of the ASP process is 'communitarian'. Far from accepting the reality of this as a given, I have required a way to keep reality checks on this. Individual and member group consonances, of opinion and action, help ascertain the 'isomorphism' (Dacin, 1997) of part-to-whole and whole-to part. Holism is critical to ethnographic traditions of research, because "the actions of individuals are motivated by events within the larger whole and thus cannot be understood apart from it" (Burns ,1996, p. 250)

With these influences on my thinking, I identify the research demands of 'holism' to be (a) providing a range of sources and methods that reflects the multiple facets of 'community' and 'learning'; (b) acknowledging the political and social ecology within which the school and its community operates; and (c) maintaining a theoretic perspective , informed by the literature, throughout any analytical activity in the study.

5. 5 Rigour in the research and relatability of the findings

Schon (1991) claims qualitative researchers are essentially "unable to be rigorous in our studies in any way we know how to define" (p.10). We are in his view faced with a dilemma to choose between the *rigour* contained in "technically rational analysis of relatively

unimportant problems" and the "*relevance* of inquiry into messy problematic situations of manifest importance " (p. 10 [my italics]). The two major bases of the case study for arguing sufficient rigour are its attendance to questions of *fidelity* in process (Cuban, 1998) as represented by the detailed 'rich description' of the implementation and consolidation phases, and in the *triangulation* of multiple sources and multiple methods to form and inform the 'account'.

Fidelity

Fullan and Pomfret (1977) addressed many of the issues related to measuring innovation as a variable in the change process. They pointed out the complexity of understanding and measuring the changes in an innovation during implementation:

> One of the most complex and important issues regarding the formation of research instruments concerns the two perspectives of fidelity and adaptation ... It is important to consider that the nature of innovations in use may transform over time and that we need instruments to detect these changes in further specification, redefinition, or development. (p. 367)

For my part, the best avenue for such a 'detection' has been to be aware of precedents, to be 'sufficiently present' or in-touch with the key actions and to accrue essential, useful documents. Hall and Loucks (1978) proposed "that researchers and practitioners in change situations should be oriented to addressing continuously the program explicitness and degree of complexity of educational innovations that they are attempting to use" (p. 371). In this way, the 'representativeness' (Denscombe, 1998) of the case can be judged. It is of importance that I can demonstrate that the ASP process was faithfully applied, and on that basis, describe and explain the contextual compromises, adaptations or changes that occurred, not only as a result of the ASP process but changes *to* it.

The credibility of respondents' constructions

For the qualitative researcher, what most distinguishes human society from the material and natural world is language and the capacity for reflection. Analysis of aspects of human society will usually capitalise on humans' capacity to speak their minds, i.e., interview and survey methods. In this thesis I have given a respectful level of 'credence' to my sources. I have no reason to spend valuable time and energy rooting out self delusion in respondents' opinions, judgements or statements. While deluded or momentary viewpoints must no doubt

occasionally appear, the diversity of sources and tools used in the study tends to bring perspective on biased views or unexpected perceptions—indeed, participants' 'biases' are *sought out* by interview and survey, and are valued for integrity and even courage.

There is no one valid reality, and just as the process employed in ASP has tended to embrace and defuse, rather than reject and fuel up reactionary positions taken by members, the research has treated people's disclosures and angles as important and, to the extent that the respondents are part of the conscious whole, valid. Hence 'deconstruction' is not an analytical procedure deliberately taken in the study. Where views have changed over time, the changing is seen perhaps more as a desirable outcome of renewal than as a sign of 'hypocrisy' or inconsistency or uncertainty. Words and actions are given face value in my research, just as an opinion in a survey has causal power, and is not deconstructed before being counted, so too I have attempted to respect the source and the substance of the data.

Authenticity of the case's treatment

The case study looks through three lenses of increasing strength at the one phenomenon. At the widest angle, there is the broad argument from the collage of literature that empowerment benefits learning. Throughout the case study, this discourse is alive and applied. At the next, more fine grained level of focus, the belief under scrutiny is that held by the ASP model's advocates that the model brings empowerment to bear on a learning environment with positive effects. And at its closest focus, the faith of the Matterslea community of learners applying the model in a 'new' context is examined. These three levels of active interpretation serve to authenticate the 'interrogation' of the data. Schon (1991) uses Popper's (1968) line of thinking to question whether we can "treat a belief as a disconfirmable hypothesis" (Schon, p. 349). While we might have difficulty *defining* the rigour we employ:

> appropriate rigor in the study of practice will depend on the researcher's ability to generate, compare, and discriminate among multiple representations of practice phenomena ... [and] in turn, on two main factors:
> 1. the researcher's underlying story with its implicit or explicit theoretical framework; and 2. the approach adopted by the researcher. With respect to the first condition, the *ontology,* or fundamental categories, of an underlying story determines the kinds of observations that must be made in order to disconfirm an explanation derived from that story (p. 349).

Popper's validity criterion of 'competitive resistance to refutation' is cited by Schon (1991) as "a restraint on the researcher's unilateral control of the situation. The sharing of control ... demands a willingness to seek out and honor ways of seeing the situation that differ from one's own" (p.357). The process of triangulation is used in the study to in part furnish bases for 'competitive resistance to refutation' and to open several doors for 'disconfirmation'. It should be borne in mind, nevertheless, that where a positivistic emphasis might see the 'ASP reform' mainly as an intervention that is hypothesis-testing, this study does not lay claim to such a posture. The study exposes the phenomenon to a more culturally and politically focused 'thesis'– the 'story', a term carefully used by Schon (1991) and Eisner (1997), is just as much about the cultural impact of the intervention as it is about the accountabilities of the 'intervention' *per se*.

The study at hand is an exposition of the Matterslea ASP intervention, rather than a limited-parameter, evaluative quasi-experiment favoured by systems or program sponsors (House, 1996; Goodlad, 1999). Consequently, the gaining of multiple perspectives, and the 'sounding out' of those with survey and questionnaire probes, is what takes the study beyond case history into participatory, interpretive inquiry.

Triangulation

Schon (1991) gives a pertinent rationale for participatory research and reflexive inquiry:

> [T]here is no given, pre objectified state of affairs waiting to be uncovered through inquiry. All research findings are someone's constructions of reality. And yet the researcher must strive to test her constructions in the situation by bringing to the surface, juxtaposing, and discriminating among alternate accounts of that reality ... Where the subjects of research are also co-researchers, the categories of an underlying story must be ones the participants can understand and use in making and testing their own causal inferences. (p. 357)

Triangulation, according to Le Compte & Goetz, (1982) and Stake (1995) is the most pervasive authentication technique cited by researchers in social science literature. It is a key to the 'disciplined subjectivity' that Burns (1994, p. 272) asserts is required in participatory research. The preceding paragraphs have introduced three related but distinguishable techniques of triangulation used in this thesis. First, a range of micro, mesa

and meta levels of praxis (practice, model and theory[1]) is progressively applied and built throughout the account. Second, multiple methods (Denzin, 1970) of observation, documentation, survey and normative baselines are used to provide comparability over time and within the designated reform domains. Third, different members' and member groups' viewpoints are used to bring multiple perspectives on actions described. The three triangulation approaches operate simultaneously, yet with circularity to the issue of praxis that informs the third and final research question (about implications for the immediate and broad reform context and the adaptability of the model itself). Rather than a 'confirmatory' tool triangulation protocols have represented just as much a "search for additional [or alternative] interpretations" (Stake, 1995, p. 115).

From the action-oriented inquiry represented in my interactions as 'coach' with the renewing school's members, the dialogic sharing of results, and perceptions gave several opportunities for 'member checking' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Yin, 1994) of the transcripts and of various analyses I have ventured, for instance of questionnaire results and observations of cadre process. This has proved particularly useful of clarifying motives or intentions. The aim is ultimately *not* to leave mine as the only hands on 'the ball'. As Schon (1991) has been noted in saying, my task is to have at the very least, rendered the 'story' as one with which the participants 'should' identify. Those I most want to be able to relate to the account are the 'subjects' themselves (Connell, 1991; Stenhouse, 1985).

'Relatability' as an alternative to 'generalisability'

Stake (1978, 1995) speaks of "naturalistic generalisations" that, rather than forming predictions that might lead regularly to expectation, "guide action, in fact they are inseparable from action" (1978, p. 6). It is Donmoyer's (1990) view that "the propositional language of hypotheses ... is too gross a tool to encompass all that we learn from experience" (p. 187). In the discourse within which this case study engages the field and research, the meaning being made is not solely the author's province. Stake's (1995) description of naturalistic generalization as "one which readers of the report make themselves" (p. 20) places responsibility on the report to establish firm bridges between the intended field/audience, the selection of theory applied to the case and the actions in context that

[1] Denzin (1989) calls this 'theory triangulation'.

account for the data. Lincoln & Guba (1985) accommodate both contextual complexity and similarity between contexts into their reconceptualising of 'generalisation'. Through the congruence between what they call the sending and receiving contexts ('fittingness'), Lincoln and Guba claim a finding can be projected from one site to another.

Sanger (1994) combines notions of resonance and transferability to propose a practitioner's version of generalisability, coining the term "relatability". Resonance here is a by-product of the study's necessary reach for fidelity — fidelity described and probed in the ASP model's implementation, and recognisability of the operational context of implementation. Hugh Mackay (1994) describes effective communication as a function of the speaker's attention to audience. From this thesis, the reader should gain a resonant sense of the school's circumstances and systemic demands so that a reasonable answer to the following questions can be claimed: 'What sort of school is doing this?'; 'What sorts of system and local demands and constraints does the school experience?'; and 'What *are* they actually implementing? Relatability also begs some ascertainment of the transferability of the procedures from one site to another. I have also offered clear procedural descriptions, and have made sufficient descriptions of the choices that have progressively confronted the school. I have taken steps to ensure the physical, organisational and social variables influencing decisions made by the school are well enough understood. Since I don't imagine following researchers of related reform implementations would (or should) use identical analytical standpoints, I have made clear my interpretive bases in this chapter and where they appear in the following outcomes chapters.

There is no attempt to anticipate the political or ideological position of the reader, but for relevance in the study, I try to relate results to conditions of disadvantage experienced by the Matterslea school community and its students. Primary (or elementary) classrooms throughout the world share a surprising number of similarities (Rosenholz, 1989); the default 'directive' position of principals and other school leaders is still common in the majority of sites; and certain limiting conditions in communities of poverty and minority resonate in many countries. Granted, the particularities of any context and its history make every school truly unique. Nevertheless, the resilient adult who manages to overcome socially mediated adversity in schooling will 'relate' to what is 'related' of the Matterslea members' experiences and, if the purposes of the study are achieved, possibilities for school

and system action will be better understood from my interpretation of Matterslea's renewal effort.

5.6 Choice of procedures within the case study

An attempt has been made to treat the study in as naturalistic a manner as possible. Beyond opportunistic 'doubling-up' on several data gathering exercises, data sets and results primarily purposed for Matterslea's internal ASP process, I have not allowed 'Matterslea's business at hand' to be influenced by my research behaviour. In that sense, the project itself as a phenomenon, not the research has been to the forefront. The key 'doubly-purposed' data have been community interviews, Inquiry Process (cadre) records, and descriptive statistics from ASP Toolkit instruments (see Appendix F).

In order to take the thesis beyond description into interpretation and explanation, or from 'observation' into 'analysis and theorising (Turner, 1988), I have used probes or 'snapshots' at intervals to inform my research of the condition of the project and of Matterslea School as the implementing organisation. Such probes include interviews with key stakeholders and stakeholder groups, open-ended and ASP-designed questionnaires. In addition I have compared the *ideal* (in terms of both the ASP rhetoric and Matterslea's Vision for itself) with the *actual*, through frames found in or emerging from the literature. The actions that describe the 'actual' are sourced in observation (coach journal) and documents such as published minutes and reports, school newsletters and video recordings.

Survey techniques of questionnaire and interview have gathered members' declarations and attributions concerning the reform and their involvement. *Documents* are reports or files that describe the main actions and organisational outcomes in the reform process. *Observations* are private, running commentary on the behaviour and reasoning of the participants, by the coach and to the coach incidentally. *Baselines* of student performance and certain member behaviours (suspensions, absences) from central and school files offer some quantified descriptions of member 'outputs'. Figure 5.1 outlines the procedures and data gathered:

Figure 5. 1 Data Gathering procedures, their respective sources and formats

DATA and PROCEDURES USED	*BEHAVIOUR,VALUES and MOTIVATION DESCRIBED*	*FORMAT OF DATA RELATED IN THIS REPORT*
DOCUMENTARY DATA		
• Taking Stock data • Vision-forging statements	• Audits of members' opinions, priorities and aspirations (raw; and consensually moderated)	• Member groups' statements (lists, brainstorms, survey data); • Published/collected archives
• Cadre minutes (Action research cycles) • School-as-a-Whole reports	• Action planned and action taken in and through Inquiry Process	• Records on file • Excerpts from 'Mayday' School newsletter and notices
• Videos of classroom teaching and learning, governance and community learning	• Teaching/Learning practice • Stakeholder/member organisational behaviour	• Accounts of edited and unedited video images
• Formal 'Interim reports' by coach in Establishment Phase to SAW and District Office	• Summaries of Matterslea's ASP actions	• Excerpts of published reports
• Coach and participants' informal observations	• about the general progress of the project • about the coaching role	• Excerpts of: Journal entries; Emails
SURVEY DATA		
• Video Feedback surveys	• Parents and children's reactions to school educational and governance practices	• Descriptive statistics and open comments
• Interviews with individuals from the three main stakeholder groups	• Decision-making rationales; demands and constraints regarding reform involvement	• Transcripts from audio & recording
• Surveys of cadres and S.A.W members	• Priorities and opinions regarding decision-making roles/procedures	• Largely open-ended comments; some descriptive statistics
• School priorities-setting and reprioritising surveys	• Whole-of school community ratings of priority options from informal surveys and brainstorming sessions	• Basic descriptive statistics and items from lists, ordered and annotated according to rankings or percentages.
BASELINES		
• ASP Toolkit data: ASP Benchmarks; ASP Questionnaire	• Participants' ratings of school and group ASP activity	• Toolkit Benchmark results as tables and selected items
• Statewide Test scores • Student learning assessed achievement levels (PASS levels; KILOs, KINOs and Social competencies	• Comparative scores of students' Literacy and Numeracy Tests at Yr s 3 & 5 • Internal assessments of student learning	• Statewide and internal Student academic learning outcomes as grade- aggregated descriptive statistics in designated curriculum areas.
• School records: Suspension rates, staff absences, student mobility...	• Member group behaviours	• Totals, compared over time. • Excerpts of annotated 'end of year class list' allocations

5.7 Description of the procedures

Documents/documentary analysis

- *Taking Stock data and Vision-forging data.* These were among the first data collected. These data are sourced from:

  (i) Informal logistical surveys (about whether and how members want to be involved) conducted between April and November 1997 (Appendix G);

  (ii) Brainstorming sessions held in community, staff and class meetings over 1997; these comprise lists (originals on butcher's paper, whiteboards), most transferred to word-processed lists then published for further meetings (Appendix H).

- *Cadre and SAW minutes (Action research cycles).* Matterslea has kept minutes of all ASP meetings. The data, recorded by nominated 'scribes' on proformas, are held on file in the School Office. Ready access to these has been made available by the school.

- *Video data of classroom teaching and learning, governance and community learning.* In the process of preparing video productions of aspects of the school program and community involvement, over thirty hours of digital microcassette and VHS recoding was taken in the school context over the first two years of ASP implementation. The three main products (as artefacts) by dates of procedure were:

  September, 1997: Three 20 minute classroom videos *'A Look Inside Matterslea'* which carried natural (i.e.,non-staged) images of teaching and learning in classes at particular levels (early childhood, middle primary and upper primary). These were multiple copied (5 per class) and distributed to *all* families with a Questionnaire (Appendix I) seeking opinions/feedback from families on current pedagogies;

  December 1997: One 20 minute video report, *Directions for 1998 and Beyond*, reporting Matterslea's ASP early establishment process (up to and including the setting of priorities).

  September, 1998: One 20 minute video, *'Matterslea: Where People Matter'*, showing real footage of 'opportunities for community involvement' in the school's curricular, governance and social spheres; Distributed with Questionnaire (Appendix J).

- *Formal 'Interim ASP reports' by coach in Establishment Phase to SAW and District Office.*

At roughly four monthly intervals in the first two years of the study, lengthy and comprehensive reports were sent to District Office and my supervisors at University. The reports were also being made public to Matterslea's school members.

- *Coach and participants' observations, communications and publications.* Throughout the study period I kept an irregular but reasonably continuous journal to capture my momentary and cumulative reflections on the ASP implementation at Matterslea. I also received and sent many emails, some from within the state, many from the US. Further, I made some personal and professional reflections of an interim nature in conference and journal publications. These provide 'observations' at times useful to my analysis of Matterslea's development in the process. Matterslea's Principal (1) (1997-2000 incl.) also occasionally made presentations to principals' associations and such forums. These contain some relevant reflections and statements.

Survey

Interviews with individuals from the three main stakeholder groups

- *Interviews with parents and carers of the school's students* were interviewed using semi-structured schedules (Appendices K & L). The sample of 31 parents (of 28 families) was derived from every fifth family on the school office enrolment records. Several families declined requests. Two rounds of interviews were conducted with the same sample, the first in September 1997 before priorities were fixed and the second round in August 1998 after ASP cadre meetings had been operating for five months. The female interviewers were the school's early intervention pre-school teacher and a mature age university research student. Data from the transcribed audio tapes were collectively analysed by parent/teacher teams, two questions per team. Salient points in families' perceptions of strengths and challenges before the school were noted among other 'stand-out' issues.

- *Interviews with Teachers.* Teachers were interviewed in two rounds (Dec. 1998 and Dec. 2000) as grade cluster focus groups (early childhood, middle primary and upper primary groups), using the same fairly tight semi-structured schedule with each team (Appendix M) The interviews, with a total of fifteen teachers, were conducted by me, audio taped and

videoed 'from behind' to help identify speakers who may be confused on the audio record. The major focus was on teachers' ASP experiences and opinions.

- *Interviews with Student leaders.* Students were interviewed three times concerning their actions in school decision-making (including cadres and Student Representative Council involvement): First in June 1998, students engaged in the cadres were interviewed individually by an honours student working in a University of Tasmania program; again in Nov. 1998 as a focus group, and individually in March 1999.

- *Interviews with School leaders.* The Principal (1) was interviewed in November 1998 and November 1999 by myself, using a semi-structured schedule to allow longitudinal follow up of key points; Principal(2) in 2000 and 2001. The PTA were interviewed individually in 1998 and 1999 and the new PTA leadership again in 2000.

Questionnaires

- *Community Surveys.* At several intervals in the study period surveys were sent on behalf of ASP action to seek the Matterslea community's views on such matters as school priorities, policy orientations (e.g., re bullying or numeracy). Mainly brief rating and open comment formats, they were most often distributed with the Mayday school newsletter, otherwise by direct post. All families were canvassed and the response rate ranged from very high to very low. The surveys were used mainly by the cadres and the Steering Committee to ensure contact, opportunities for schoolwide participation and to 'read' community wishes and values (Appendices N & O).

- *Video Feedback survey.* Videos (a) and (b) mentioned under the 'Documentation' section were distributed in September 1997 and September 1998, along with a brief questionnaires (Appendices I & J). Response rates were 68.75 % (of 240 distributed) and 50% respectively. Content analysis probed themes targeted by the open-ended questions.

- *Surveys of cadre and SAW members.* Two 'genres' of survey were used:

  (i) Informal/opportunistic surveys

  Informal, sometimes quite spontaneous questionnaires were initiated with member groups mainly to ascertain logistical priorities and desires of meeting members for instance what teachers wanted in survey questionnaires or notes, what frequency of

cadre meetings was optimal and whether the Vision was continuing to guide cadre action (Appendices P & Q).

(ii) ASP Assessment Toolkit

At three intervals in the study period (ends of 1998, 1999 and 2001), cadre participants were surveyed using the National Centre-designed *ASP Questionnaire*(Appendix R). This lengthy Likert-style rating tool covers the gamut of ASP process areas. In addition, the ASP Benchmarks Questionnaire was applied to cadre members, in this case conducted as a whole-of-cadre, consensually answered scaling of the school in respect to statements about school performance in ASP reform.

Baselines

- *Statewide Test scores.* The Tasmanian Department of Education, through its Office for Educational Review (OER) tests all government school Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in Literacy and Numeracy. The OER data base was incomplete to 1999, but since has carried year by year aggregated scores for classes, years and schools by learning area. Like school comparisons are also carried, but the data are not 'league tabled' for public scrutiny. Individuals' performances are available only to school personnel through the Principal's (2) password to the centralised database.

- *School-based student assessments.* Classroom learning behaviours in literacy, numeracy, information technology and social skills have been conducted since 1998 across all classes. Instruments and measures used include Clay's (1993a) text level and Running Record process, the Waddington Reading and Spelling Tests, Tasmania's teacher-moderated Key Intended Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes (KILOs and KINOs) and the Tasmanian Information Literacy Outcomes (TILOs), benchmarked against age/grade expectations. These data have been collected in a central digital file at Matterslea Primary School.

- *School records*: Data such as student suspensions, staff absences, student mobility, property damage reports and demographic information are maintained by the school. Incidental records of attendance at meetings and events have been kept since early 1997 in 'attendance sign-up' books, head-counts and RSVPs.

5.8 Analysis of actions and related data

Time and domain dimensions

The outcomes are expressed through project phases introduced in Chapter Two. The steps and actions described within the phases relate specifically to the Matterslea project:

Figure 5.2 Phases in the Matterslea ASP implementation

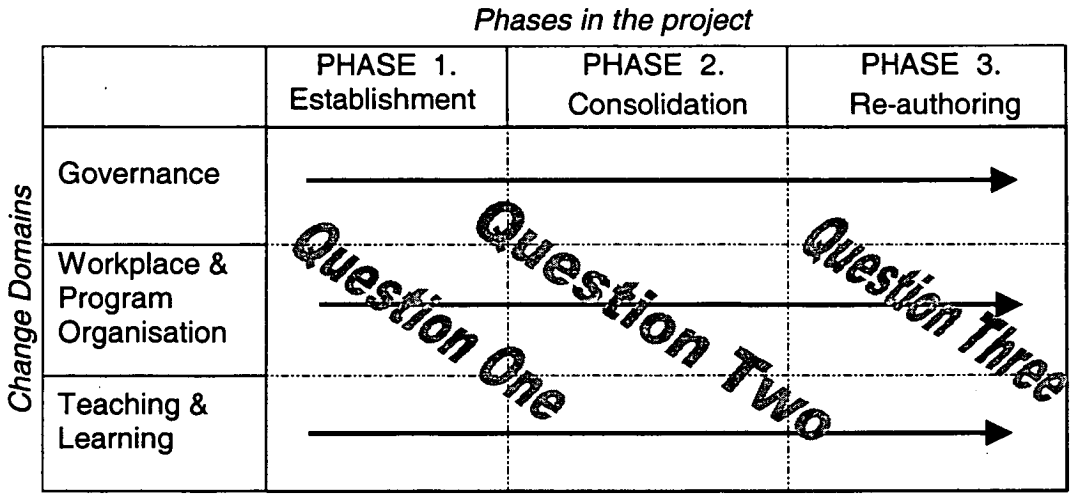
PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
Establishment	*Consolidation*	*Re-authoring*
1½ years	3 years	6 months
(1996 –1997 incl.)	(1998-2000 incl.)	(2001 -Current/ongoing)

The construct of Fig. 5.2 gives temporal markers to the institutional phases of the project. It is a means to organise the large volume of data available for analysis.

The phases are my own devising, and have emerged as an interpretive structure from the observations and reflections I have made over time and on-the-ground in the Matterslea ASP effort. Corresponding to both common sense and notions in the literature of organisational development (Owens, 1998; Cuban, 1998), the phases organise the arguments in the thesis around the research questions concerning first, fidelity and second, impact. These lead to the implications and conclusions of the third research question which projects to the wider field of renewing schools in Tasmania and beyond.

Kushman & Chenowith (1996) have proposed four-phases of successful implementation of an Accelerated School: (i) *Courtship*; (ii) *Training and development*; (iii) *Changing school structure and culture*; (iv) *Changing classroom practice.* (p.87). This model, they acknowledge, corresponds roughly to what has been called a 'rational model of school change' (Rosenblum & Seashore Louis 1981). But the Kushman & Chenowith model, in its attempt to remain simple and one-dimensional, falls short of conveying the non-linear dynamics of the reform experience. In their own words: "We propose our four-phase model only as a heuristic device ... the actual change process is hardly as linear and sequential as this framework suggests" (p. 87). In Figure 5.3, I have formulated a matrix in two dimensions of *time* and *change domain.* At each phase or stage, there is activity in each domain, though with varying degrees of emphasis or priority over time.

Figure 5.3 Dimensions which frame the outcomes



The charting of questions against time and domains situates the data and analysis for Research Q. 1, concerning fidelity to the form, largely in Phase 1 but trueness to form is also 'tracked' to innovations in Phase 2. Research Q. 2, which addresses the renewal's outcomes, is in the main focused through the Consolidation phase, yet again connects to Phase 3's outcomes of model adaptation. Phase 3 more neatly owns the third question regarding where the school and system might take the model in the near future.

The dual connotations of 'narrative' for analysis

To develop the account within a theoretical sphere, the facts and attached meanings must receive analysis and explanation. The account is presented, as a case study demands, in a chronological sequence. Yet description is not the purpose of the thesis. The 'facts' presented are both historical and relative – historical in that they are sourced in reportive documents; relative because at many points of time, multiple realities (lived experiences) are given and compared. Through multiple perspectives afforded by survey data, interviews and the various players' commentary, a discernible, triangulated 'picture' is presented, analysed and represented.

ASP literature emphasizes the institutionalisation of the ASP philosophy and process (Kushman & Chenoweth, 1996). Where it does consider down-stream organisational change and maintenance of the change impetus, the focus is on 'revitalization' and 'constant internal renewal' (Brunner & Le Tendre, 1996). The change produced through the study is not constrained to the ASP model, as Matterslea's engagement with ASP is not subject to the

contractual demands of US federal funding protocols or other US State/school arrangements. The third phase of *Re-authoring* is an explanation that brings to clearer focus the many tensions that characterise cross-contextual transplanting of an 'operating system'. Modification is anticipated and in the ASP's terms, warrants the rigour of inquiry-based evaluation to explain and justify adaptations to the theoretically 'fixed model' of ASP. For this reason, it is important to reflect two important effects from the case study: (i) what ASP has done for or to Matterslea; and (ii) what Matterslea has done to (arguably, *with* and *for*) ASP.

While a map of the journey is one account, the reasons for choices made at many key crossroads tell perhaps a richer tale, and a more useful tale for the intending traveller in school reform. Certainly the developing account of Matterslea's decision-making behaviour shows not just *what* happened, but *how* and *why* certain challenges were met.

In, from and of the experience

The 'events' in time are important markers by which to track changes or developments. More important, though, in the context of a school community's development, the *experiences* of the various member groups provide the third dimension to the model. The term 'experience' brings together event and the meanings attached both as precedents and antecedents to the events. It is their reality that brings the whole to life and renders the 'case' as a human and social phenomenon, lived over time, through several domains and with multiple interpretations. For the case study, achieving high fidelity and high resolution in the image is critical to the purpose of making the case 'understandable and communicable. Without the 'emic' (Stake, 1995) dimension of the study, there would be no symptoms, only signs; there would be no aspiration, only tracks; no dynamic, only bearings.

Treatment of the data through 'expository account'

The term 'account' is inclusive of both description and explanation. Where the data includes perceptions and evaluations, ratings and minutes of decision-making deliberations, the 'story' remains descriptive. The 'commentary' made by the players' perceptions takes the data toward explanation. Further,

> Understanding is also connected with intentionality in a way that explanation is not. One understands the aims and purposes of an agent, the meaning of a sign or symbol, and the significance of a social institution or religious rite. This

> intentionalistic ... dimension of understanding has come to play a prominent role in more recent methodological discussion (Wright, 1971, in Stake, 2000, p. 2).

Merriam (1988) reasons that "data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research" p. 119. Within the 'account', I shift from reporting the events and associated affirmations and confirmations by the subjects (I prefer *members*) to extending the making of meaning – these are 'postulations' made 'in my own right'. I have found that it makes sense to develop progressive iterations of meaning alongside the source data rather than in succeeding or summary chapters of the thesis. That way my claims and their evidence can be more sensibly read.

In the thesis, two approaches have been taken treatment and interpretation of outcomes. First, there is an ongoing analysis of behaviours and of meanings attached to them by participants. In a spirit of continuous reflection, characteristic of collaborative action research (Louis & Marks, 1998; Elliot, 1993), I've frequently attempted to clarify to the collective just where the journey has been. The 'tentative explanations' have, in many instances, been part of the feedback loop to participants or members in the ASP process. In my coach's analogous role as a navigator, I have provided my research *and* the school-as-a-whole's ASP effort with objective readings of the passage of events. Often enough, the accuracy of my 'bearings' has been challenged through the use of probes such as ASP questionnaires, video feedback, or focus group interviews. The account that flows from this periodic probe-and-feedback approach is of value to both the internal participants and the broader educational community. Certainly the developing account of Matterslea's decision-making behaviour shows not just *what* happened, but *how* and *why* certain challenges were met. While a map of the journey is one construct, the reasons for choices made at many key crossroads tell perhaps a richer tale, and a more useful advance organiser for the intending traveler in like-context school reform. This reflexive level has most relevance to Research Questions 1 and 2 of the thesis.

The second level of interpretation is more summative, and has much more to do with the Research Question 3: *What implications can be drawn from the Matterslea ASP experiences for comprehensive school reform in the Tasmanian context and beyond?* At this level, key decisions are interpreted against the bigger picture of ASP reform orthodoxy. Alvesson's (1993) challenge is borne in mind: we have to acknowledge, no matter how focused on the

micro-political or sub-cultural context we may be, as is inevitable in a single-case study, that the greater culture has an imprint[2] on the lesser.

In the application of critical theory to education (Giroux, 1988) those members whose initial actions are wholly or in part unconscious make more critical contributions if their actions are informed, owned and purposive. Dialogic research promotes in proximal players what Freire termed 'conscientization' (Freire, 1972; McLaren, 1999). The 'actions' of participation and being informed are co-generative, and the 'transformative' effect of distributed leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992) should produce a more 'informed' voice from respondents. The result, one can argue, is a more 'valid' case study. However, the argument in this case goes beyond a socio-political imperative. It rests also in an ethical responsibility of social science (Stenhouse, 1985; Schon, 1991) to honour the participants as the foremost audience. Research at the systemic level should inform systems or be deemed self-serving; research involving school-site participants should, at the very least, inform those 'stakeholders'.

Conceptual frames

Conceptual frames are used for three interpretive purposes in the study:

(a) to link the theoretical grounds of the literature to the data arising in the 'case'; and
(b) to structure tentative propositions of consonance and dissonance between participants' views; and
(c) to explain conditions of maintenance and adaptability perceived in the organisational behaviour of the school or its member groups.

In education, theoretical frames, like the limits of belief conditional to a paradigm, do not have the status of laws and maxims—they themselves are tested by their use as much as phenomena they 'interrogate'. The frames used to extend understanding of Matterslea's reform 'actions' are in turn put 'to the test' by application:

[2] Bailey (1997) provides discussion on the several ideological and operational *imprints* that organisations express.

Theoretical Frames used in interim and summative analyses of the outcomes

Q. 1 Frames addressing *ASP Process fidelity*

- ASP 'systematic process' *(Take Stock→ Develop Vision → Set Priorities → Create Governance Structure → Inquiry Process* (Hopfenberg et al., 1993).
- Participant attributions *in ASP principles and processes; data from three* ASP Questionnaires, *at the end of the years 1998, 1999 and 2001.*

Q. 2a Addressing *Governance developments*

- Range of decision-making opportunities commonly found in public schools*: Matterslea ASP member groups' behaviours.* After Owens,1998; Bailey, 1996; Caldwell. & Hayward, 1998.
- Continuum of manager and non-manager behaviours, *applied to Matterslea Primary's shifts in decision-making prior to* 1997 (Tannenbaum & Schmidt 1973)
- Distinction between '*shared decision making'* and '*shared authority'* (Raywid, 1990; Bailey, 1997).
- *Levels of school involvement,* according to Epstein (1992;1995)

Q. 2b Addressing *School and program organisation*

- ASP Questionnaires *Member participation and relations within school: data from three, at the end of the years 1998, 1999 and 2001.*
- *Five dimensions of change* (Evans ,1993)
- Alarm or Alert, *Teacher and parent responses in the reporting of student academic or social behaviour/ performance* (Andrew, 1998)

Q. 2c Addressing *Teaching and Learning actions and outcomes (from student, teacher, parent and organisational perspectives)*

- Academic measures*: test scores from Tasmania's Office for Educational Review (OER) and school based assessment actions;*
- Criteria of *"engaged learning"* North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL): (http://www.ncrtec.org/pd/lwtres/ewl/ew/_l.htm.) cited ASP Newsletter, 'Imagine' 2001 (p. 9)
- *Attributes of promising reform models* (Shields et al.,1995)
- Developmental trends toward actualisation *in organisational personality* (Argyris, 1957)
- *Matterslea's 5 Vision points* collectively formulated in the 'Establishment' phase (phase 1) of the project

Q. 3 Addressing *Implications for school reform in contexts of disadvantage in Tasmania and abroad*

- *A matched typology of member groups' degrees of participation* (Rafferty, 1997, after Hart, 1992; Epstein, 1995)
- *Organisational isomorphism and alignment* (Dacin, 1997; Semler, 1997)
- *Resiliency factors* applied to collectives (after Werner & Smith, 1992; Benard, 1996).
- *Coherence, empowerment* and *authenticity,* established from the Literature Review as critical challenges for school reform at school and system levels.

Interpretive case study allows categories, patterns and emphases to emerge inductively from the data while resonating more broadly with theory that has built in the relevant field of inquiry (Yin, 1994; Prestine & McGreal, 1997). In the study I was not presented with a ready pool of data upon which to apply content analysis (Burns, 1996) in order to derive frames of meaning. The data grew with the project as did some of the frames. Although at the beginning of the data gathering several conceptual frames had shown to align themselves with the nature of the project, and some were embedded in ASP evaluative tool kits, most arose in the literature of school reform, of disadvantage, democracy, community learning and organisational learning. I returned to the literature frequently over the study period, and because the rest of the world was also getting on with its various reform agendas, I had some six years of 'keeping abreast of the field'. Naturally in this time, a number of the conceptual frames emerged to relevance in my mind. I was also introduced to the conceptual drivers of the initial Principal (1), particularly to do with leadership, and to some curricular notions influencing staff.

Meaning and interpretation

Phillips & Burbules (2000) make a distinction between actions and effects in the focus of social science, particularly educational research. While certain branches of research use 'hypothetico-decuctive' methods to link effects (e.g., scores) to causes (e.g., technologies), the authors believe a 'post-positivist' qualitative approach is able to make scientific (rigorous) sense of naturalistic action. They relate the 'somewhat crude' philosophical equation: *action = behaviour plus meaning* to bring participants' goals or intentions to bear on their behaviour. They suggest "the main criterion for interpretive inquiry in education ... is that an interpretation would be borne out by the evidence" (p. 81). This resonates with my

analysis approach. The action is the *case*, comprising behaviour described, wedded to actors' associated meanings. But I see the '*study*' part of case study to be a further iteration, a reflective turn (Schon, 1991) that interprets the action (as posited by Phillips & Burbules. 2000). In terms of analysis of the case, to a great extent the evidence is the *beginning* point. My interpretation explains the 'actions' (behaviours + meanings) related in the two outcomes chapters. To do so I have looked for consonances, agreements and corroborations in the data, interrogating the data for that purpose, sometimes using further probes to check my tentative interpretations. I have also made sure the data has "withstood the search for negative or refuting evidence" (Phillips & Burbules, 2000, p. 81). The adoption of a non-standard, foreign reform organ (ASP) into an original (endemic, standard) operating system (in this case, of Tasmanian public education) can be expected to generate behaviours that 'agree' with the status quo, agreed by and agreeable to those affected. But some 'actions' will be incompatible, the discordant and disagreeable in the site of application. Viewed with an interpretive turn, departures, misalignments and realignments (as 'actions') are arguably even more important to reconceiving the schema of 'equity-focused reform' in Tasmania than those that might make a good fit.

5. 9 Limitations of the methodology

Working single handed, I have not had the benefit of contested interpretations of the phenomena by tertiary colleagues equally immersed in the research. While I have leaned frequently upon the co-operation of school-level participants during the reform process seeking progressive interpretations, at a more summary level I am constrained to bear the responsibility. The triangulation described above gives me some confidence that this limitation has been addressed as well as is possible.

Care has been taken to avoid staking too much of the study's 'credibility' on quantitative evaluations of learning, for reasons already advanced, mainly to do with a wish to keep expanded notions of 'outcomes' and 'learning' to the fore. This could be considered a 'weakness' in so far as the trend is towards such evaluations, particularly in the US where high stakes (Goodlad, 1999) are predicated on such data. I use the available data, but cautiously and selectively, much as the school under scrutiny in the study has done. My intention is to make a more theoretical contribution, and my defense rests in the conviction that, were I to devote more attention to non-authentic assessment data, the study could suffer

what Denzin (1970) called 'goal displacement' (p. 58), in this case towards evaluative, rather than interpretive inquiry.

At the other end of possible excesses lies the 'threat to validity' (Phillips & Burbules, 2000) posed by descent into the necessary speculation demanded of interpretive inquiry. To counter the temptation I have maintained a position of parsimony in respect of evidence and claims. For my context-bound aspects of the case's analysis, I argue the tight lines established between data and interpretation are 'reliable'. But I admit not all 'threats to validity' are entertained and examined along the way to proposing theoretical "truth[s] of the matter" (Phillips & Burbules, 2000, p. 78). The field of school reform seems boundless, its relationships to organisational theory equally plentiful, with literally dozens of psychological and sociological paradigms through which one can read 'change'. In this sense I am limited by plenitude. Methodologist Donmoyer's (1990) appears to offer me an appropriate *apologesis*, claiming that "in fields such as education, social work, and counseling -- fields in which there is a concern with individuals, not just aggregates -- all research findings are tentative" (p. 183).

Caught between vastness and uncertainty as 'givens' in the business of theorising, I find some solace that even the more conservative qualitative theoreticians like Stake (2000) acknowledge a researcher's immersion in a 'case' goes beyond simple logic: "Intuition allows for the generation of far-reaching hypothesis. Formal logic facilitates conceptualization and implementation of an evaluation procedure. And coming full circle, intuition is often the main way of judging and trusting results" (http://www.ed.uiuc/circe/EDPSY339/B1_Case_st_socialinquiry.htm). Donmoyer (1990) sees the reader has an important opening in the making of meaning from case studies: "it is reasonable to assume that case studies will provide sufficient medium-rare data so that a reader who starts from a different authentication from the researcher's could fashion an interpretation significantly different from the researcher's narrative" (1990, p. 196).

Bias is an obvious potential limitation of a participatory case study. I have attempted to neutralize the effect personal bias by bracketing (Ahern, 1999; Crotty, 1996) my role first in the Background and Context chapter, and in sections of this chapter, above. Throughout the study, I have not preserved any of my actions from scrutiny. My motives in influencing the members' thinking, my rationales in procedure selection or data analysis, all are made

transparent, and that transparency is only tempered by the fact that I haven't wished to overstate my part in the proceedings. In this spirit, I have paid what Silverman (1985) termed "proper attention to participants' meanings" (p.3), directly through interviews and widely across members via open-ended opportunities in questionnaires. Wherever possible, I have sought members' input not only into the analysis of the data, but into the design of the inquiry, through concepts or questions that might be probed (Appendices I & P).

5.10 An expanding schema

Donmoyer (1990) uses Piaget's theory of cognitive processing to suggest that single case studies serve to modify theoretical schemas[3]. They "expand and enrich the repertoire of social constructions available to practitioners and others" (p. 182). Finding *the* 'correct interpretation' is futile. Rather, as Donmoyer asserts, "from the schema theory view of generalisability, the purpose of research is to expand the range of interpretations available" (p. 190). This chapter has explained the interpretive form of case study employed in the research, the procedures and the theoretical bases upon which the interpretations are made. I have situated myself as researcher and change agent, and answered some of the criticisms with respect to bias and authenticity that can be anticipated in participant-inclusive inquiry. Some effort has been made to distinguish the methodology as appropriate for pursuing a broadened conception of 'outcomes' and 'learning'. Perhaps most importantly, the chapter has made a case for the authenticity of the account, and the pertinence of its analyses to similar contexts of reform.

[3] Donmoyer's use of Piagetian 'schema theory', like Kuhn's (1970) 'paradigm shift', is elaborated by the research theoretician: "after the dual processes of assimilation and accommodation have occurred, Piaget's theory indicates a cognitive structure will be both more *integrated* (a particular structure will accommodate more things) and more *differentiated* (a particular structure will be divided into substructures)" (1990, p. 191).

CHAPTER SIX

Outcomes in the *Establishment Phase* of Matterslea Primary School's ASP reform

6.1 Introduction to the early implementation

At the grass roots level of renewal much of the potential dissonance between model and context is likely to arise during the introduction or installation of the model. This first of three outcomes chapters focuses on the meeting of model and context, and what factors advance or challenge Matterslea's fidelity to the spirit and word of the ASP model. To recap for the coming chapters, the study's *Research Questions* are:

Q 1. To what extent has the ASP process been implemented at Matterslea?

Q 2. How has the ASP process influenced Matterslea's outcomes in the areas of:

(a) School governance; (b) Workplace and school program organisation; and (c) Teaching and learning?

Q 3. What implications can be drawn from the Matterslea ASP experiences for comprehensive school reform in the Tasmanian context and beyond?

The second question is addressed in two outcomes chapters. Chapter Seven investigates outcomes in governance and school organization while Chapter Eight considers ASP's impact Teaching and learning, broadened by the school as a whole to include organizational learning of all members. The third question, as a summary interpretation, occupies Chapter Nine, *Implications*.

Phases

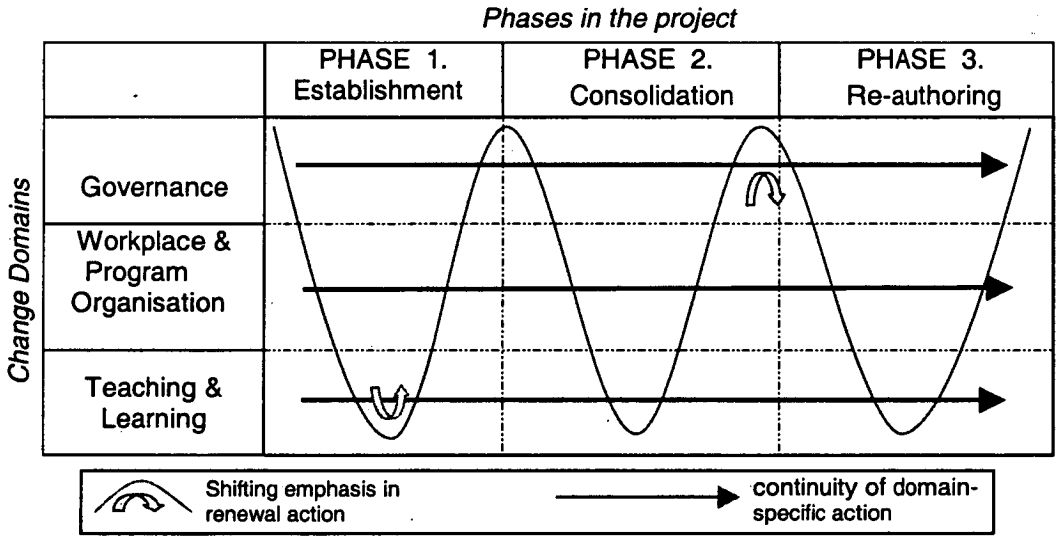
Three phases have emerged during the six years of Matterslea's involvement. They have been rationalized in the previous chapter. Phase 1, *Establishment*, ranges from mid 1996, when the project was first mooted, to the end of 1997, at which point the process had been set up but was not yet in action as the day-to-day 'operating system'. Phase 2, *Consolidation*, covers the Matterslea's use of ASP as its fully-fledged planning and action

model integrated in every domain of school operation. Phase 3 is current and ongoing, in which Matterslea is '*self-authoring*' adaptations to the process to fit its developing needs.

Domains

Figure 6.1 revisits the basis of the diagram in the previous chapter. It shows how the three domains set out in the second research question are carried through each phase and how actions and outcomes in the study link governance, organization and teaching and learning. The thesis extends the view of learning to incorporate organizational learning (Senge, 1995) and more social, situated and distributed forms of cognition (Moll, 2000; Putnam & Borko, 2000). 'Teaching and learning' applies to staff, families, and students, with outcomes ranging beyond academic performance.

Figure 6.1 Dimensions framing the results



The oscillating line of the renewal actions illustrates the seamlessness of renewal domain emphases, and reflects an ever-present debate in school reform, particularly comprehensive, schoolwide reform, especially concerning effects from association *between* domains. One key notion probed in this study is the overt 'hypothesis' of the Chicago City Schools' reform that school governance, devolved to community level, would produce significant positive student learning effects (Bryk et al., 1998). As will be seen in the Matterslea instance, ASP reform in the early implementation passage of the Phase 1 tends to emphasise governance and 'workplace & program organisation' rather than immediate curricular or pedagogical reform. In this sense, it is no accident that I have placed 'governance' first in sequence among the domains, and have started the line of renewal behaviour in that zone. Learning,

especially student learning, develops as an outcome related to changes in governance and organisation and teacher/parent development.

Figure 6.2 clarifies the relationship of the *Establishment* phase to the succeeding phases of *Consolidation* and *Re-authoring*. It can be seen that, after the 'courtship' in which District and school administrators accept the mooting of the notion to members and offer support conditional to members 'buying in', the first phase occupies occupies the whole of the first full school year of the study. This is much longer than most school development planning or school improvement review processes provide for.

Figure 6.2 Phases and Action steps of the Matterslea ASP Process

PHASE 1	***ESTABLISHMENT*** *August 1996 through December 1997* (Half way through Aus. school year 1996 to end of school year 1997)
Dates	ACTIONS (labeled in this phase as ASP procedural STEPS)
Aug 96 – Feb 97	***Courtship (involvement mooted to possible stakeholders)***
Feb – Apr 97	**Buy-in**
Apr - Sept 97	**Taking Stock**
Oct-Nov 97	**Forging a Shared Vision**
Apr –Nov 97	**Priority Setting**
Feb – Dec 97	**Establish Governance Structure**
PHASE 2	***CONSOLIDATION*** *February 1998 through November 2000* (One month short of three full school years)
	ACTIONS
Feb 98- Mar 98	**Develop Inquiry Capacity (Coaching/Training)**
Feb 98 –Nov 98	**Implementing Governance / Inquiry process (form + function)**
Mar 98- Nov 2000	**Developing Powerful Learning**
Nov 98 – Dec 98	**First Review of Vision and first Resetting of Priorities**
Feb 99 – Mar 99	**Induction of new staff and community members**
Apr 99-Dec 99	**Inquiry Process matures and Powerful Learning develops**
Feb 00- Nov 00	" " " " " " "
PHASE 3	***SELF-AUTHORING*** November 2000- May 2001 and ongoing
	ACTIONS
Nov 00-Apr 2001	**Resetting Priorities and Review / re-affirmation of Vision**
Feb 01	**Principal Succession ; significant staff turnover**
Feb 01 – May 01	**Review of Governance procedures and practices (form & function)**
May 2001	**Implementation of refreshed Governance & Inquiry processes**

Treating 'establishment' as an outcome

The 'successful transplanting' of the ASP process is treated in this study as an outcome in its own right, and this particular chapter 'interrogates' that intricate and at times complex passage of events. The thesis argues that the setting up of the decision-making framework and forming an environment of shared responsibility is the basis upon which Matterslea school's ultimate intentions (as learning outcomes) are realised. Governance is found to be the basis for the reform's stability. Though ASP rhetoric is clear in its placing of students' learning as the central criterion for success, the establishment of a firm, agreed platform for decisions and actions are primary element of the ASP model.

In schools such as those in Tasmania where curriculum has traditionally occupied the majority of members' attention, placing a priority of organizational attention to setting up conditions for collaborative decision making is a potential 'culture shock' for teachers focused on classrooms and parents focused on student achievement. Yet ASP predicates just such a shift in attention. Hopfenberg & Levin (1993) identify

> three interrelated stages or aspects involved in producing ... long-lasting change in an accelerated school. The first stage of a school community's transformation involves *building the capacity to collaboratively make decisions.* The second stage involves *implementing the results of collaboratively made decisions.* The third stage involves *the emergence of accelerated school outcomes.* (p.317)

The three 'stages' correlate with the phases of *establishment*, *consolidation* and *self-authoring* outlined in Figure 6.1 (previous page), and reflect Silins & Mulford's (in press) sequence for 'bottom-up' reform: (i) trusting and collaborative climate; (ii) shared and monitored mission (Vision); (iii) empowered decision-making, initiative and risk-taking; and (iv) ongoing relevant professional learning.

Appropriate attention to the spirit and detail of the model

The account compares Matterslea's processes with that of the ASP orthodoxy. As a result, data are organized under subheads related to *steps* in the Establishment Phase 1. In this phase the form of the model is embedded as the school's *modus operandi.* Subsequent developments can be argued as departures from, or adherence to, that established form. The establishment phase is more than procedural. Without the embedding of the 'spirit' of ASP process, the school could be argued to simply be 'going through the motions'. The three principles, explained earlier in Chapters One and Two, are: (1) Unity of purpose; (2)

Empowerment with responsibility; and (3) Building of Strengths. It is difficult to 'observe' internalisation empirically, to tease away beliefs and behaviours attributable to ASP from those that accord simply with teachers' prior ideologies or practices. Questionnaires and interviews help triangulate the 'answers', along with records of decisions, resulting policies or plans and the actions themselves.

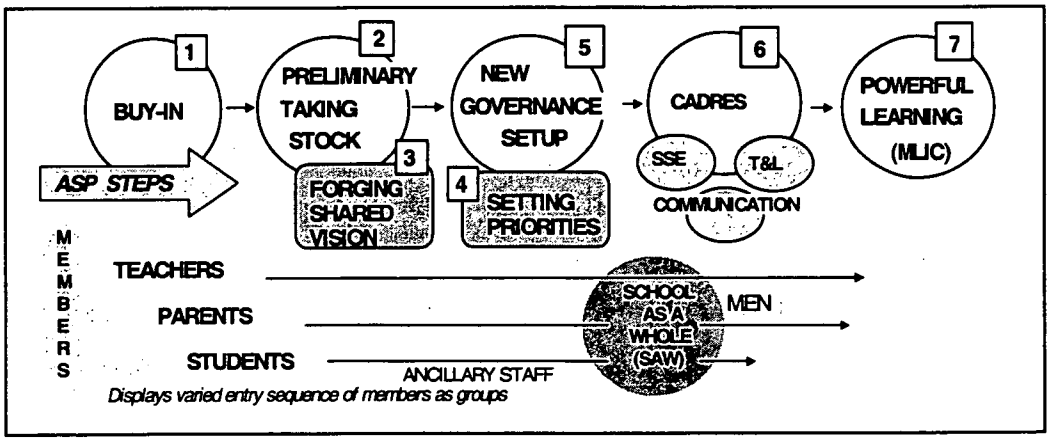
Cultural and contextual adaptation of the model

It is part of the professional curiosity in carrying out the implementation of US's ASP in a Tasmanian school that aspects of the ASP 'proto-type' *will* need to be customised for the receiving context. Cultural attributes can act as inhibitors or enhancers of school renewal generally. The point is often pressed in this chapter that it is essential to recognise the extent to which Matterslea's implementation has been true to the prototype. But of equal importance are indicators of modifications to the 'received' model, how the model's composite elements interact and react with the local school and system to produce recognisable but unique outcomes. These help explain coherency, self-organising and adaptive capacities of the context *and* the model being used.

6.2 Steps in the early implementation of Matterslea's ASP process

Figure 6.3 shows the sequence of steps undertaken at Matterslea in the first year of the project, 1997. It also shows the range of members who took the steps.

Figure 6.3 Steps in the early implementation of the ASP process at Matterslea



The steps closely mirror those of the ASP Resource Guide (Hopfenberg et al., 1993 – see Appendix S). Figure 6.3 was reviewed by a combined meeting of cadre members (teachers

and parent members) on Oct. 25, 2000. It was verified by the participants as an accurate description of what *had* happened (as opposed to what the ideal might have been). In the case of Matterslea, according to the member check, the journey conformed closely to the map. Meeting reports, the published communiqués to families via *Mayday,* and production of the video *Matterslea, Where People Matter* (recorded in 1998) carried clear evidence in the first stage of 'building the capacity to make decisions collaboratively'.

The key implanting steps of this phase are: the *'Buy-in'* through which school staff and school community members agree to commit to the tenets and practices essential to ASP; *'Taking Stock'* which is an audit of the strengths and weaknesses represented in the school and school community prior to forging a collectively agreed *'Vision'* ; and the *'Priority-setting'* action which results from a comparison of the Taking stock position and the Vision position.

6.3 Step 1: *Buy-in*

The 'buy-in' step represents reaching whole school commitment to the ASP process. This was approached by the coach first through providing each member group with information about the model through brochures I designed (Appendix T), selected excerpts from ASP material, and open forum sessions.

At the beginning of the school year in February 1997, member groups were approached through their regular meetings. Alongside their new principal, teachers responded proactively to the ASP proposal. A staff member was roundly supported in his claim during the meeting that *"anybody could see we need to get the parents on side" (Coach's notebook, Feb 1997).* With 14 full-time teachers plus four part-time staff, the numbers were small and consensus regarding the buy-in developed rapidly. The group agreed no decision could be made before families and school interest groups had information and time to consider the implications. The PTA met around the issue, expressing *"distinct factors they saw as attractive in the process: (i) the significant intended time span of program involvement, six years(ii) the expanded role for families in decision making, and (iii) the focus placed by the ASP process upon student learning"* (Mid-term Report on ASP to District Office,1997). Broadly supporting the notion, the PTA , with the Principal, acted as a de facto Steering Committee, helping to coordinate open community forums that would discuss concerns, aspirations and what ASP might offer in meeting them.

As a result, two surveys went to the school community. The first was a half-page sheet inserted in the weekly newsletter, *Mayday*, asking "What do you want for your children from school?"; "What sorts of learning activities do you want"?; and "what do you want the school to offer *you*?" It stimulated 6 responses from 185 families. clearly the community was either apathetic or the survey method was flawed. The second survey, sent as a letter to families through each eldest child, asked the best times for meetings. The twenty responses showed that afternoons from 1-3 pm would allow more people to attend than any other option.

The risk presented by transparency

A decision was made by the interim steering committee to pursue transparency concerning students' comparative statewide performances. This was a potentially embarrassing and inflammatory topic. Early in the 1996 school year, the school leadership had sought comparative data concerning Matterslea's Grade 5 students' performances in statewide testing. Putting aside questions concerning the age, irrelevance or non-curriculum referencing of the test items in reading and mathematics, Matterslea's performances were shown to have been in decline over the previous fifteen years. Table 6.1 shows the data that had school's leadership in a quandary; it was unsure whether to with-hold the data or to risk sharing it with the Matterslea school community[1]. Differences should be seen relevant only within-year, as test items altered in substance and number from year to year.

Table 6.1 Matterslea's statewide test results 1978 to 1993

Year	10R Matterslea	10R State	Difference	10N Matterslea	10N State	Difference
1978	28.31	29.04	-0.73			
1979				25.71	26.52	-0.81
1981	25.47	28.17	-2.70			
1982				24.80	27.08	-2.28
1986				16.10	22.61	-6.51
1988	25.8	30.69	-4.89			
1990				13.00	18.10	-5.10
1992				16.00	19.80	-3.80
1993	26.58	29.84	-3.26			

Note: *10 R* was the standardised state-wide pencil and paper reading test for 10 year olds; *10 N* the standardised state-wide pencil and paper mathematics test for 10 year olds.

[1] The data had been provided to Principal by Office of Educational Review staff in 1997. However, in 2001 certain inadequacies in the details were pointed out by Malcolm Kays of the current OER. Some of the results given to the Principal were statewide *school* averages, while some were *student* averages for the state. The data certainly gave a crude comparative picture of Matterslea's students' performances. However, the data requires the addition of standard deviations for the state student scores to afford a more valid comparison across time and instrument changes.

The staff perception was that they should not be held responsible, given their relative recency on the scene. They also held an entrenched belief that poor home learning experiences and readiness-building were primarily responsible for students' poor performances. Yet the 1996 statewide literacy test scores showed that their current batch of Matterslea students had also performed relatively poorly against the state 'average'. Figure 15 shows the 1996 data from what had been the fist application of a new form of literacy test, the DART assessment.

Table 6.2 DART Statewide Yr 5 Literacy Monitoring Program: 1996

Element	Matterslea	Cohort (All schools)	Matterslea difference	Difference as % of raw
Speaking	7.5	8.5	-1.0	-11.7 %
Listening	14.5	17.4	-2.9	-16.7 %
Reading	9.0	15.1	-6.1	-40.4 %
Writing	7.5	8.8	-1.3	-14.8 %

(Scores represent raw tallies, averaged)

The data were really the only evidence of an objective nature available. What was most problematic at the time and what remains problematic for teachers in schools serving so-called disadvantaged students was the likelihood that Matterslea's students were not under-performing against their *most comparable* counterparts in other Tasmanian low-socio-economic contexts. But this was virtually impossible to communicate to the families without at the same time appearing to condescend or to denigrate the suburb's circumstances. This was further complicated by the fact that the more active parents in regular contact with the staff did not seem to identify themselves as 'disadvantaged' or even as 'battlers'. It was not politically sensible to make glib comparisons of Matterslea's performances with other 'working class' suburbs' schools. Some parents had family or close friends with children at those schools, and there was a sense of solidarity between some staff and such schools in the 'northern suburbs' schools, most of which were in similar circumstances to Matterslea.

The staff responded with only a small degree of trepidation to the request of the interim steering committee (Principal, AST2 senior teacher and president of the PTA) to *"reveal all"* and *"get the skeletons out of the closet so that [they] could get on with the job together with the community"* (Staff Meeting, March 1997). As a researcher I was impressed with the courage and confidence of the staff. The academic record was first introduced to the PTA at its April meeting. That small group received the intent of the staff well, even though the content was challenging for them. As with other public schools, no grades were given at

Matterslea, and, by design, no basis was offered whereby parents could make comparisons with other children in the class, nor with children in other schools. Such comparison was thought by staff to be misleading because Matterslea's children were, in the eyes of those who taught them, "*behind the eight ball from the start*" (Teacher, Focus group Interview 1998).

The response of the families to the bald revealing of Matterslea's poor and declining student tests record was predictable – almost following the stages of grief (Kubler-Ross, 1982). But a mood of 'acceptance' accompanied the overall tenor of strengths affirmation being applied in the forums, so that the eventual impact was one of trust-building. This candour was the beginning of honest exchange, and led to a non-defensive mindset in the coming brainstorms on ideals and realities.

Moving to commitment

Open forums or 'little launches' were held in March to develop shared expressions of concerns and aspirations. They continued to attract the largely the 'hard-core' of involved, active parents. On the suggestion of PTA leaders, a different tack was taken to broaden community representation at the meeting needed to test consensus across the whole school regarding commitment to ASP. Early in April, each Matterslea student hand-addressed a proform invitation for their parents to a whole-school forum that would first decide whether to commit to ASP, before brainstorming their strengths, challenges and aspirations for their school. (Students were only indirectly involved at the 'buy-in' phase, largely because there was no Student Representative Council in place. Student representatives elected by their peers to act as contributing notetakers for later 'Taking stock' and 'Priority setting' whole community meetings, for which even the younger classes contributed to strength and weakness audits).

'Little Launch'

Thirty–six parents arrived for the crucial whole school forum. This was by far the biggest school community (non-sport, non-entertainment) attendance the staff and families had seen at Matterslea. The usual was "*about three, namely the PTA executive*" (Teacher, Staff meeting, Feb, 1997). Though invited, no ancillary staff participated. Only one parent was male, although three other men had attended previous forums. Three members of the aboriginal community contributed as family members, rather than as group spokespersons.

Importantly, the District Superintendent showed her support by joining in, not as a dignitary, but as a community stakeholder representing the broader context of Matterslea.

The anticipated difficulty of reaching consensus on a 'buy-in' did not occur. A swift, unanimous decision by show of hands determined the commitment of the whole school to the six years of ASP engagement. After several weeks of informed discourse among stakeholder groups, The question of 'whether' to undertake whole school renewal had been settled relatively quickly. 'What' and 'How' were to take several more months.

Then came the more active objective of the time together. For nearly all the parent community participants, the Little Launch was their first experience of 'think, pair share' brainstorming. Small groups worked on the following questions. The questions were drafted by Principal in a pre-meeting planning session:

1. *What's good about Matterslea School?*
2. *What needs improving at our school?*
3. *What do you want for your children from their experiences at Matterslea?*
4. *What do you want "Matterslea School' to convey in terms of our reputation and image?*

(*Mayday*, 14 April, 1997)

The questions were addressed by pairs. They then checked overlaps and aggregated the lists. Fours did the same, then eights and finally the whole. The eventual list was preserved to be shared at future school-as-a-whole (SAW) deliberations. This information, along with the strengths and weaknesses ideas, would be taken forward to help inform our priority definitions and Vision-forging.

Issues raised through the *Buy-in* step

Transparency

Even at this early stage, transparency showed an educative function (awareness-building) and a political function (as a credibility and confidence safeguard). Instead of a shared understanding of the 'status' quo at Matterslea, the product of half-truths would be misunderstanding. While staff were seen to be listening as much as they were sharing, their straight talk disarmed those who were inclined to criticise teachers for all students' shortcoming. Some of the responses brought forth reactionary and 'back-to-basics' rhetoric

(from one male grandparent in particular) but the extreme nature of those few very conservative reactions helped to moderate the middle ground. Parents did not back away from their clear intention to have adequate academic basics as a minimum capability in their children. They were faced with a choice to accept the challenge as a school community or to throw it back in the faces of those staff who had been the first in the school's history to expose themselves to potential ridicule for the children's sakes. What had threatened to divide actually united the member groups.

Participation and power

Over the entire 5+ years of the research, the challenge of how to draw a greater response/input from the school's families was to occupy considerable attention. The history of poor numbers of families making input to the core school program was to the forefront of teachers' minds. Those who wanted a rapid change were reticent to "waste time and energy" in what they saw as an "artificial" soliciting of unengaged families. They preferred to draw them in as the project gained momentum. Others claimed to the contrary that inclusiveness would prevent 'white-anting' and backstabbing by any negatively inclined parents who might want an excuse to pull down the project. Only later in the renewal process, after the visit of Texas-based educator Ruby Payne, was the equating of 'involvement' with 'support' to be challenged. Payne had written a book, *A Framework: understanding and working with students and adults from poverty* (1995) that influenced the Principal and me considerably in 1998.

Important questions were raised at this juncture where certain faces were appearing at all meetings and many never did. Questions were asked at (and after) meetings concerning "Consensus by whom?" and "What represents a 'fair chance' to have a say?" The principal was concerned to probe, "What level of participation makes you a *member*?" and "Where did having to be invited stop and proactive inclusion begin?" Both staff and community members rather swiftly resolved that literal participation was the key criterion of ownership and effective empowerment in school affairs. This notion was tested repeatedly by the Principal in SAW circumstances – especially when the whole community meetings began to attract fewer community members of over time. While there was some sense that a contented community will be tempted to leave the work to those who are doing it well enough already, a sense of unease grew concerning some later meetings that were (relatively) poorly attended by parents in 1999 and 2000.

The relationship of stake-holding and participation is developed toward the end of the section on 'governance' later in this chapter. Within the question of participation and 'ownership', the communication of options, community-brainstormed ideas, agendas, moot issues, inclusiveness of forums, and agreements reached, all became symbolic of the 'new process's' principles and intentions.

Representation and self-inclusion

The conundrum of gender and sub-group balance in school matters has remained constant, but is arguably subsidiary to overall community participation levels. The issue is addressed in a later chapter under the heading of 'Community Learning'.

6.4 Step 2: *Preliminary Taking Stock – Building a Shared Picture*

Rather than embark on gathering 'Taking Stock' data about measures not yet agreed as important or even understood between member groups, Matterslea's implementation utilized modifications designed by South Carolina ASP developer, Finnan (1996) to make articulating a *whole-school vision* the first priority. With only scant empirical school-based data available on Matterslea's student performance and little data on equity groups' relative outcomes from the school's program, it was agreed that Finnan's notion be followed: look to the forward , creative thinking early, and assign the *taking stock* activity to the appropriate forums of the Inquiry process (i.e., the *cadres*). This accorded with the Principal's inclinations. His vision-centred *modus operandi* was what had prompted me introduce Finnan's modifications to him and the interim steering committee.

Two notable variations from the orthodox pathway are described in following comparison of processes. First is Matterslea's early rehearsal and entrenchment of consensual, collective decision-making, outlined earlier by the Principal in his statement at the first staff meeting. The second departure from the orthodox ASP sequence involves the development of a shared understanding early in the implementation, as a foundation to effective decision making. The sequence focused more attention to exploring the school's own educational philosophies and practices, even to understand each others' constraints in educating Matterslea's children before committing to a shared Vision and to targets related to that Vision. This was important for staff as well as parents.

Figure 6.4 Comparing Matterslea's set up process to the ASP orthodoxy

Accelerated Schools basic Set-up process		Matterslea's modified set-up process
Taking Stock (Building a detailed data-rich baseline of strengths and weaknesses via member surveys, documentary analysis, test data)	↓	***Establishing democratic, inclusive process*** Early establishment of participatory decision-making with broad consensus as prime arbiting benchmark
Taking Stock Committees do all-domain data gathering.	↓	Building a ***Shared Picture*** of strengths and weaknesses – utilising direct face-to-face input and member surveys; Gaining *common educational understanding* in community articulating best practice;
Vision Forging imagining the ideal school	↓	Agreeing on a ***Shared Vision,*** the first 'decision' of the SAW as peak body
Priority Setting (based on disparity between taking stock data and Vision)	↓	***Priority setting*** (comparing strengths and weaknesses with Vision)
Creating Governance Structures Instituting the SAW as the paramount forum	↓	***Establishing Cadres*** (working parties) inquiry-based action on priorities with ***Baseline data*** developed, (through cadres) according to priorities set by SAW.
Establishing Cadres (working parties) inquiry-based action on priorities	↓	

Linking 'Shared Picture' to 'Vision'

The school had begun to construct a *" shared vision...From this shared vision we can find out what our priorities are, stocktake on these, and start to change our school to what we want it to be, not what 'others' want it to be"* (Principal's Report, *Mayday*, April 16th, 1997).

Data from the Little Launch, and separate staff, parents and class brainstorms were typed up and multiple copied for use at a Big Launch. Only eight parents participated in the April 28th 'big launch'. Two were males. The parents were essentially the ones who had attended the first evening PTA meeting on the ASP process, and they were all PTA regulars except for the men. Of ancillary staff such as teacher assistants, cleaners and office staff, only one teacher assistant attended the meeting. All full time staff and two part time staff came, as well as the District Superintendent. Though there was a sense of disappointment on all sides regarding the lowered community numbers, the 'Big Launch' meeting of thirty participants evidenced a high degree of positive energy. The meeting was introduced with several perspectives of 'where we see ourselves' – these were brief pictures given by spokespersons for the various member groups - the parent leader, a few staff, the District Superintendent, myself.

The main object of the meeting was to draw together broad community input to what would eventually form a 'wall of strength' and a 'wall of challenges'. The red and white 'bricks' of the wall were pre-cut cardboard blanks, ready to take phrases that the meeting condensed from the aggregated and collated brainstorms of parents, staff and students. The red were for 'strengths', the white for 'challenges' perceived.

Brainstorms gave safety to participants through agreed brainstorming rules that ensured *acceptance of any suggestion.* Suggestions from non-attending families and one volunteer community member were also included along with the typed lists of 'good' and 'needs improving'.

One request was made that short-circuited the common phenomenon of rushing to judgment. When naming up problems, *all* participants were asked to refrain from offering *solutions.* The ASP literature calls this "solutions in problems' clothing" (Hopfenberg et al, 1993). Solutions were to be part of the *inquiry process* (or action research) conducted later by teams of decision makers following the establishment of a Vision, Priorities and a new school governance structure. For the moment, perceptions, not propositions were the currency of discourse. This was an immensely difficult mindset to hurdle in many people's approach to 'problem-solving'. My journal observation afterwards (my main role had been in videoing the meeting) was that *"As people came to appreciate the difference between 'Naming up' and 'blaming', the brainstorms caused more listening, and defensive body language changed to edge-of-seat contribution"* (Coach Journal, April 26*).*

Working in nominal groups (mixed stakeholders), the big launch meeting worked to examine the three lists (parents, staff and students) to narrow down the strengths and challenges by eliminating duplications. The process gave participants an idea of concordance as it existed among the member groups.

The results were attached to large boards one-by-one as a 'bricklaying' exercise. Duplications were noted and just the one brick per point was 'laid'. There emerged a graphic image of a community's individual perceptions distilled to a collective picture (Appendix H). The group as a whole spent half an hour tentatively clustering the bricks, presaging, as later records show, the focus of the various *cadres* or working teams when they eventually formed at the end of that first year, 1997. From the April 28th Big Launch, the emergent clusters in the eyes of the SAW were:

(1) Community Involvement;
(2) Higher educational outcomes;
(3) Safe, Supportive school;
(4) School reputation and image; and
(5) School Environment and Equipment" (*Mayday*, May 7, 1997).

After being 'fed back' to the community via the *Mayday*, these notions were 'held in store' for later analysis towards a collective '*Vision*' and for the *priority-setting* process which would follow the community interviews and other *taking stock.*

Shared Picture: Communicating contemporary practice

Having invited broad community input to the 'preliminary taking stock' or 'shared picture' exercise, and having achieved much higher levels of interest in school affairs than had previously been the case, attention then turned to raising community awareness about what the school program did and what the various members considered most effective and most desired. Two initial courses of action were planned accordingly by the interim steering committee:

(a) *workshops* would be run for parents and staff (some combined) to help articulate what is or may be powerful learning for students at Matterslea; and
(b) *interviews* with a semi-random sample of families to determine the demands and constraints around their children's learning and the parents' contribution to the school life.

Following early disappointments with response rates from *Mayday*-inserted surveys and clues in the early community interview data, a third key strategy was planned through the interim steering committee:

(c) *videos of classroom teaching and learning* accompanied by a related survey to probe parents' perceptions of current classroom practices.

Community/Staff Workshops

Three workshops were organized within my coach's role to help take the school community's thinking beyond the school's established pedagogical practice into a zone of the 'possible'. Both the Principal, senior staff, and some of the classroom teachers felt, as a generalization, they were not sufficiently cognizant of social class differences between teachers and families, and that some of that ignorance was holding back the curriculum.

Conversely, many, if not most of the families were not aware of contemporary pedagogical purpose and practice.

Literacy and critical socio-cultural theory

The first was a workshop run during May 1997 by Prof. Peter Freebody, of Griffith University, one of the co-authors of Australia's National Literacy Policy. His recent work had been with urban disadvantaged schools whose communities were thought by central authorities to be lacking in literacy because of 'print-deprived' home backgrounds. Freebody had participants (who included teachers from two other N. Tasmanian 'disadvantaged' schools) explore critical educational praxis: socio-cultural assumptions; working from the applied back to the fundamental[2]; teaching literacy explicitly within integrated learning areas; multiple literacies (honouring home experiences and communication modes as starting points); and pedagogical intervention[3].

Freebody shared his findings from a Sydney Metropolitan-West collaborative action research project conducted in the Western suburbs of Sydney (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn,1995). For all but one teachers (and certainly for all of the parents attending), it was their first reasoned exposure to critical literacy and educational theory-in-practice. Freebody interactively addressed four main topics. First, Freebody challenged participants to consider four roles of a literacy learner: code-breaker; participant; user; and text analyst/critic (Freebody, 1992) with a view to a possible reversal, to place meaning and function of a concept ahead of its written and 'spelled' artifact. Second, Freebody raised the benefits of building inexperienced readers' interest through the text-analysis process with their own texts (parking fines, school notices, TV programmes etc.). Third, he challenged teachers to intervene only for pedagogical reasons, using language such as "John, chatting with Jimmy is slowing down your short story writing – your goal this week was to see it published". Finally, the focus fell to teachers' skill of maintaining explicit focus on certain language or computational skills while working within an engaging life-relevant theme Freebody et al's (1995) research had shown that it was difficult for many learners from 'plain-talk', transmissive-learning home communication backgrounds to deal with 'mulched' curriculum.

[2] The frame used in this instance was the Four Roles of the Literacy Learner (Freebody & Luke, 1994).
[3] Treating disruptions as challenges to effective learning and effective goal-achievement, rather than becoming sidetracked into a non-productive focus on students' problematic behaviour.

For Matterslea's teachers who were ideologically immersed in whole language and integrated learning, the message was sobering. For parents, who had made several early pleas in sharing forums for attention to 'basics', the 4-roles message from Freebody was also cautionary. His research suggested that 'basics', if always used as starting points, could turn off children's motivation and undermine schooling's relevance. The effect of the afternoon was to broaden participants' notions of literacy, offering alternatives to the 'either/or' dichotomy of basics versus ambitious curriculum. It strongly reiterated Delpit's (1986) claim that "[if] minority people are to effect change which will allow them to truly progress, we must insist on skills within the context of critical and creative thinking" (p. 385).

Numeracy as applied mathematical understanding

The term 'numeracy' was new to many parents. With the term becoming commonly used in Department policy and press releases, teachers felt a workshop might help parents and teachers reach common terms on the relationship of 'applied mathematical thinking' to the parents' previous limited identification of mathematics as tables and algorithms. The second combined workshop was run by a senior Tasmanian Department of Education officer in the area of mathemetics. It followed an introduction to numeracy that I ran two weeks earlier with 18 Matterslea parents (all female, for reference sake). In the combined teacher/parent session, the presenter first responded to one parent's 'question-on-notice' asking how Matterslea students had in the past performed in maths testing and what the recent picture was. It was made clear with OHT tables that, as averaged, Matterslea students had been steadily falling behind their prior record and the state average, but that many individual students continued to do exceptionally well. The workshop emphasised the problematic effects of a 'basics' mindset upon children's mathematical motivation, confidence and progress. Because the preliminary and combined sessions were hands-on (deliberately 'constructivist' in approach), the parents' reactions to the workshop were positive.

As early as June, the school's 1997 Professional Development program had been advertised through the *Mayday* as available to any parents who wished to attend. Though there was only a moderate attendance by parents to the teacher-focused workshops, mainly by the PTA active members, through this gesture of open invitation, the transparency 'ethic' was again maintained. Attendance at parent-focused workshops was significantly greater, with thirty plus participants in activities such as reading assistance and hands-on numeracy workshops.

Community interviews

For many of the families interviewed it was the first time they made direct input of any sort concerning the school program or school affairs. This included parent/teacher interviews around the single purpose of sharing information about individual children's progress and adjustments. The proportion of those interviewed who were 'having their first say in school afairs' was estimated by the Principal and the PTA President (of two years) to be around 50%. Four of the 28 families had to be 'door-knocked' to ensure the interview actually occurred and were considered 'evasive' by the interviewers who had negotiated the interviews from the list of every fifth family provided from school office records. Five of the families volunteered both parents in the household for interview. This gave a total of 31 adult contributors. In addition, through several of the interviews a partner was present but did not proffer comment.

As the Methodology Chapter explained, a 'collective analysis' of the interviews was conducted with the prime aim of including parents and teachers alongside each other to make sense of the data and to provide cross-checks on the interpretations drawn from the transcripts. The pairs of teacher + parent were charged with the responsibility to find:

(1) Salient Points (things that stand out)
(2) Gender differences (between respondents ideas)
(3) Quotes (a person's statement that captures the essence of a position)
(4) Overall impression - one paragraph

A voluntary 'expanded steering committee' of six parents and six teachers was convened for the purpose bringing together data to be presented to Vision and priority setting-meetings to be held at the end of Term II (around August, 1997). Six female community members responded to an invitation in the *Mayday* for participation. Three were active PTA members or office holders, three had previously had no formal parent roles but had classroom help experience. The data they would assemble and collate included the 'strengths and challenges' brainstorms from each stakeholder category (parents, teachers, students) the outcomes of the family interviews, and any other relevant data such as Powerful Learning questionnaires (Appendices T, U) conducted a with staff members.

The data were shared at regular weekly meetings among the 'expanded steering committee'. These were first real instances of 'participatory' research process and built in member-checking at each point of analysis. Through it, the tacit objective of transparency was

ensured, building a strong contribution to the 'shared' nature of Vision and priority-setting desired by Matterslea's ASP's advocates.

Family interviews with thirty-one interviewees of the first round were held between August and September, 1997. This was before the Vision or priorities had been set, and well before the governance of cadre and SAW operations had begun in early 1998. In that sense, the opinions were something of a baseline community percept. Collective analysis was collated and summarised in agreed statements penned by whichever of the pairs agreed to scribe. Three of the reporting 'scribes' were parents, three were staff. Following its compilation on November 3, 1997, the collated overviews were multiple copied and cross-checked across the twelve participants. The key issues of inquiry for the interviews were parents' perceptions of the school's qualities, how they received information, their knowledge of ASP and various educational terms, and their capacity for a more participatory role in school affairs. The summaries collectively written (not the raw data) were later distributed with other data one week prior to the November 1997 Major SAW priority-setting meeting.

Interview quotes from parents are selected here and italicized in the following analysis, while the words of the collective analysis by the expanded steering members are in quotes, not italicised. The transcripts showed all but two families expressed qualified satisfaction with their school's performance and with their current levels of input. Some 60% had family members who had themselves been school students at Matterlsea, and remember the school of their time as *tough but enjoyable*. The school's size was appreciated as "manageable", camaraderie easier because *most people know everyone else.*

Less than one in five families "had more than limited involvement in the school" but all claimed to "read every *Mayday*" (the school newsletter). Though there was "a minority of parents who have no desire to be involved in any capacity", the great majority of parents "are interested in what goes on and would like to be more involved". Representative opinions were *[I 'd like] just feeling that you're talking to another person on a level basis rather than looking at a school teacher* and that *the schools hours are sort of, reasonably restrictive, but I'm always willing to help if ever I'm needed. I only have to be asked.* The comments suggest parents at Matterslea don't normally make the first move, and appreciate the school's leadership in parent involvement. To a direct question about the warrants of greater involvement from the community's men in the school, "all respondents supported an

enhanced role for men in the school". The majority of school affairs roles were considered unattractive, but work was the greatest obstacle.

Asked "How Prepared, Willing and Able are you to contribute to school decision making?" the 31 parents interviewed (including three fathers) rated themselves on a scale of 0=least; 10 = most. *'Prepared'* was explained by interviewers as "having gained sufficient knowledge, skills or experience for the task"; *'Willing'* meant "motivated to do so"; *'Able'* signified "feasibility, manageable in time, transport and such". The averaged figures are representative of the individual emphases: *Prepared* 6.47; *Willing* 7.50; Able *6.37.* Among those who were more commonly in the school for meetings and classroom help, there was a natural inclination to give higher ratings on all three dimensions. The averaged figures show that parents are generally more *willing* than they are *prepared* or *able.* The direct reason most mentioned centred on work commitments and child-rearing. Younger parents (mainly in the early childhood section) tended to be more positive and idealistic about involvement generally but also had the most difficulty freeing themselves from toddlers to attend. The notion of involvement was generally supported, with belief in the particular value of parent knowledge: *I think there is a need to involve parents ... because the parents are the only ones who are in the world and know what is going to be expected of their child.* Several responses showed a class consciousness in their notions of involvement, encapsulated by the claim that :

> *the teachers, they're still in the system. Most have come straight out of university, go into school, so they have not experienced working, you know day to day living, your jobs going to be home, working in the rush hour, all that stuff, just getting through the day on a limited budget. So they tend to have a certain mind set if you like.*

A handful of the interviewees revealed a belief that *no-one would listen* anyway, though more believed it was not their place to *intrude: teachers .... they would resent parents coming in and like giving ideas and cause they'd like pretty well how their work's set out.* There were three who indicated the PTA was sometimes seen an *insider organization of power players.* Clearly the school needed to make involvement options more accessible, better understood and less 'threatening'.

Parents were evenly distributed on whether they were "happy with [their] understanding of how schools deal with teaching and learning these days". Almost all wished to be "further

informed". Few "understood much about the ASP project" but most were keeping themselves up to date through the *Mayday.*

Parent interviewees were asked about their understanding of educational terms commonly used by teachers in reports and general conversation. These were: *"responsible learners; invented spelling; co-operative learning; behaviour management; risk-taking in reading; integrated curriculum;* and *supportive school environment.* While some parents were confused by the terms, "about half had what a teacher would consider accurate interpretations". The strongest understanding came with those terms that have had *"plenty of 'airplay' in* Mayday, *parent workshops, school reports and children's programs (Supportive School Environment, Behaviour management, Risk-taking and Invented Spelling".* There was generally a *"poor understanding of Responsible learners (Children taking conscious and sometimes leading roles in their own learning) and almost no comprehension of the terms Integrated Curriculum (blending subject areas such as maths and language, or science and the arts)".* The texture of parents' knowledge was very uneven throughout the community, with variables of parent ages, their children's ages, class program involvement and attendance at parent teacher contributing to the differences. Of any area, the understanding of *insider talk* was difficult for parents to directly broach and clarify without sounding *pushy or ahead of yourself.* Teachers reported less than 25% of parents had been meeting their 'parent/teacher' obligations prior to 1997. It appeared it would be up to the teaching staff to facilitate better communication and understanding.

A key question probed parents aspirations for the school. These were crucial later to the Vision framing. They were asked to complete the statements, *"(a) I want a school where learning is (b) From being at Matterslea, a child should be able to ...; and (c) I want Matterslea to be a school where I ... ".* The overall desire was for "challenging activities but related to their child's interests", to *be able to hold their heads high anywhere in the big world*; and that the school be *a place where I am welcome and I know my kids are safe.*

The collective analysis of the community interview data was made available to all previous participants in whole school meetings of the year and, as offered in the *Mayday*, was distributed to any and every inquirer who sought a copy at the school office. The data itself was considered in the drafting of the school's Vision and was presented for consideration at the Priority-setting meetings of the SAW.

The interview analysis showed staff and the process-engaged parent members that there was a wide range of opinions underpinning a generally positive tenor in parents' perspectives. There was an inclination to greater involvement and knowledge, but organizers needed to be aware of the practical constraints on parents and to 'outreach' more. Old biases against involvement as 'busy-bodying' or as unwanted by teachers still affected some in the community. Men's involvement was acknowledged as 'needed' but unexplored in terms of learning. The newsletter *Mayday* was the most used source of third person communication, but families with at least one person in a participatory role in the teaching and learning program had significantly greater awareness of options and terminology. Parents wanted a better insight to current practice but had difficulty achieving that. Jargon was, if unquestioned or without context, appeared to be an obstacle to clear communication. Of equal importance to the messages from the community provided, the interviews' collective analysis brought teachers (all of whom were engaged in the collective analysis alongside one or two parents) a grounded awareness of the caring, desires and constraints on parents' parts in the community/school compact. For the parent members of the analysing team, the exercise demonstrated the school's readiness to include them at a greater level of ownership, and as potential leaders in their community, those parents were included in professional discourses around issues of responsibility and communication. The collective analysis team's concluding discussion brainstormed possibilities for raising families' awareness beyond the limitations of *Mayday*. A suggestion of a video of day-to-day classroom activities throughout the school was taken up and put to the staff as a possibility to consider.

Video as an outreach tool

The suggestion to make a classroom practice video for families arose from the confluence of three experiences. The first was the bizarre response rate to the first community questionnaire on parents' aspirations for their children and themselves from their school. Six of a distributed 185 had been returned. The second was a related encounter with the local manager of the corner store (adjoining the Matterslea School site). Asked whether he might insert fliers advertising ASP community meetings into the newspapers sold at the store, the storekeeper laughed and pointed out that "*nobody buys newspapers around here any more – you better get your meetings advertised on TV 'cos that's all people use their eyes for. I 'd be stupid to carry newspapers." (Coach Journal, 4/5/97).* These 'messages', coupled with the mutual communication needs of parents and teachers expressed in the first round of

community interviews, prompted the video idea. Having mooted the idea to the 'collective analysis team' of teachers and parents, I applied to the University's research board to obtain support for a small study on the effectiveness of video as a school-to-home communication tool in Matterslea

The successful small grant application allowed me to contract a video student from a local tertiary course in communications to manage the technical side of the video production. Staff agreed to the proposal at a regular staff meeting, requesting only to know roughly when the camera would be 'around'. Given that proviso, everything was to be 'candid', unrehearsed and not overdubbed. Inclusion in the video production was voluntary for teachers, and the idea gained early exposure to families through the 'permission' form sent home prior to 'shooting'. To enrich parents' knowledge of their particular children's classes, it was agreed among the staff to make three videos of twenty minutes, each covering three classes in early childhood, middle primary and upper primary sections. In total there would be a little over an hour of video in the three final products. Parents would be able to chose which 20 minute videos were most relevant to their children. The video professional advised that the 'recommended' attention span for documentary material was optimal at 20 minutes.

Video-recording procedures

No teachers declined having their classes videoed. This indicated a high degree of confidence in their curriculum practices and their behaviour management, as interruption and disruption would be likely from a cameraman and a 'researcher/coach' making note of the various activities. Nothing was staged, and the students did not react in an over-excited way to the camera's intrusion. Staff afterwards expressed surprised at this. However, we surmised that video cameras were an increasing part of community life, especially at celebrations. Home videos were common in contemporary homes.

The shooting of the video footage took three weeks of July, 1997 and the editing of some six hours of digital tape to the eventual three twenty minute tapes was completed by September. The editing cameraman ensured the images were not strung together too professionally for fear viewers might wrongly assume the events captured were 'produced and staged'. So the final product sat somewhere between a good home video and a director's cut professional

video. There was no commentary offered to steer viewers' interpretations of the candid footage. Text titles simply named the classes and the activity, where appropriate.

Fifty copies of the videos were made using best quality tapes from the government store as the school thought it useful to have the option of re-using the hour-long tapes, later adding to the twenty minutes of footage on each. There were five cassettes per class (each at the appropriate year levels, and students undertook to borrow the tapes in turn until all had viewed it *with* their families. The steering committee felt this request was important as it allowed families to engage in discussion at the time and to clarify the practices using first hand participants. As a community learning exercise, the sharing of images and messages was surmised to be helpful. A further important factor was the inclusion with each video of a family questionnaire (Appendix I), asking for parents' responses on just a few relevant issues:

1. *How does anything you've seen differ from the way your class was when you were a young person at school?*
2. *Are there things you would like to ask a teacher about any of the learning being done?*
3. *How do you feel about what you've seen?*
4. Each teacher added their own, examples of which were:

   (P/1H) What do you believe is essential that a child has learned during the year?
   (4/5C) What do you understand about co-operative learning? What are its advantages?

Prior to distribution of the videos, around 95% of students had reported that their families had video players (VCRs) in their homes. This encouraged us to be sure that families would have no trouble accessing the messages. What we failed to ask was how many of the VCRs actually *worked!* When it came time to distribute the videos, a number of families confided that they either had to visit other families to view them or responded to our offer to show the videos after school on certain afternoons. In most cases of breakdowns, the repair bill was at least half the cost of a new machine, and hence did not rate as a priority in the restricted budgets of many households, given too that free to air television is still available in Tasmania.

Discussion of the video study results, September 1997

Although the feedback represented in the survey returns revealed much to corroborate and extend the understanding of parents' perspectives, perhaps the most significant result of all is in the response rate. Considering that the most recent printed questionnaire to families had

received a response rate of 3.2 % (N=6 from *one hundred and eighty* forms), the response from this video plus questionnaire exercise was incomparable. One hundred and sixty responses were received! This represented a response rate of 86%.

The imaginations or motivation of the community appeared to have been stirred by the videos or by the effort to reach out to them in their own 'language'. The positive response rate was matched by the positive tenor of the responses. In fact, the range of responses was from very supportive (88%), to outright condemnatory (two very critical responses by those strongly in favour of 'tried and true' transmission). Some 11% percent of responses were mixed or ambivalent, generally displaying a degree of skepticism about videoed activities that showed child-centred, ambitious curriculum. A handful of respondents questioned the representation and selection of activities and images. Each teacher digested their respective anonymous returns over a fortnight in order for the responses to have a desired 'feedback' effect. A majority of Matterslea's teachers reasoned that even if the non-respondents were ambivalent or even critical (rather than apathetic as was most likely), the positive eighty-eight percent of the160 responses meant 140 out of 185 community families were positive towards Matterslea's classroom practices, or at least trusted the teachers' pedagogies.

An overview of video questionnaire results was distributed to all school families through the *Mayday*. It reported, '"the great majority of responses included open statements of appreciation for the opportunity to 'see what happens' in a classroom. The major positives noted were students' co-operation and in their respect of each other, and a friendly, relaxed way of teaching in which teachers 'get involved' with the children. Some parents mentioned concerns the video suggested a lack of attention and time given to 'basic' knowledge and skills. While many parents confirmed that behaviour had improved markedly a concern for learning standards has now come to the fore".

It was true some classes' snippets didn't show 'formal' work. Most teachers had talked to their class about what activities, if videoed, would give their parents' an understanding of the class learning program. The result reflected weight of importance attached to various activities by students *and* the chanced timing of the camera's visit. The aim had been to use the three or four classes of each video to obtain the spread, rather than within each class.

Just over half the parents noted several differences from their school experiences: no lines of desks; more movement around classrooms; more opportunity for communication with the

teacher; less whole class and more small group learning; calculators; computers; no "yelling at the children"; and no dominating blackboard. Surprising to staff, just under half noted few if any differences. Teachers discussing the point reasoned that many of the young parents of early childhood students were only six or eight years out of contemporary high school life themselves.

Some of the responses made to Question 3, '*How do you feel about what you've seen?*' make a compelling case in this direction:

- *Great opportunity for the kids to see themselves learning, for parents to see how their kids behave within the class unit. And they can be looked at in the years to come –*
- *I think the video idea's great. The whole family can sit together and discuss the video and get a glimpse of what's to come in higher classes. Also the children love to see themselves at work.*
- *The setup was good but I would have liked to see a video just on my child's class – so we could see what activities they do all through the day- but the video was a very good idea.*
- *I never would have known what went on inside the classroom. I work full time. The children seem to have a lot of confidence.*

The use of the medium was clearly a success and the families had some quite insightful ideas such as the fact that it is an effective 'involvement' tool, one that is capable of drawing family together or providing a busy single mother with realistic school knowledge. One child responded to the questionnaire (although not requested to do so), said '*I feel famous*'.

Some 38% of parents commented on social competencies being taught, an example claiming *the class is set out so that everyone is in groups to help each other, everyone plays a role not just a person sitting at a desk,* another that *classes have worked hard on working together in team things.* The importance of positive climate of classes was observed: *Anyone who hasn't been in the classroom in the last ten years might get a shock! Teachers have to have the respect of their children in this freer style of class.* 'Goal setting', introduced in early 1997 as a whole-school initiative, was frequently commended as a sign of maturity and change.

The survey gave space for parents to note questions they had in response to the videos. Representative responses to academic issues include: *What time does learning tables start?*; *How does Flying Start work?*; *How useful were calculators in the classroom?*; *How can children monitor each others' accuracy?*; *How much time is, or should be, spent on reading*

writing and maths?; *Is rote learning being phased out?*; and *What's wrong with the way we used to learn?* Some criticisms were practical: *I had a hearing problem as a kid, and I don't think I would have kept up if I had the noise and individualized style I've seen in this; I needed the others near me so I could tell how I was going.* Some were out of context: *I'm unhappy my daughter is still cutting coloured paper shapes in Grade 5/6 – hasn't she learned anything since Kindergarten!?* [the footage referred to showed an exercise in Escher's tessellated transformation method]. Largely though, the queries were seated in a lack of awareness of current pedagogies: *The children seemed to do so much of their work without the teacher, it made me feel uneasy* and *Not pleased to see calculators being used by such young children—technology can make you lazy.*

Stimulated by the videos, several parents demanded of interviews with the Principal to 'sort out' issues they had with classroom practices. The quoted father was a pertinent example. His complaint was heard and he was invited to spend time the following week in his daughter's classroom, where he discovered that what her teacher was attempting was well beyond the geometry he had been offered in Grade 6. His opposition disappeared and his daughter's self esteem and goal-achievement rose markedly.

Teachers particularly valued the more contestive responses as fruitful bases for planning parent-teacher interviews and community learning, discourses in which mutual understanding could begin. The high response to the videos from the community lifted the staff morale, and attending to both the conservative and socially –leaning learning preferences of parents, two directions of professional learning ensued. Methodologically, the overall insight shown by families' comments indicate the videos were viewed closely and critically by the majority of families, elicited valuable organizers for further communication and had a positive effect on transparency and trust between professional and lay members of the community. Risking 'exposure and comment' had a net positive benefit to all members.

Summary effects of 'building of a shared picture'

Taken together, the hands-on pedagogical workshops, interviews and video study represented two-way communication, and beginnings of a reversal of the expert/novice relationship (Graves, 1983).

Shared Picture before Vision-statement

ASP principles about 'powerful learning' could be explored in respect of the Matterslea context *before* decisions were made about the school's *shared* Vision and a set of priorities for school working teams (cadres). The time being taken was leading to a more grounded notion of changes needed, based on families' improved knowledge, rather than scores and 'opinions' disembodied from the real classroom and community context. Finnan's (1997) modified Taking Stock procedures allowed Matterslea to involve participants very early in the envisioning exercise, through opportunity for each member to examine their own and their interest group's perceptions and aspirations. Such a process promoted awareness building rather than doctrine acceptance.

Teaching and learning

Both explicit and ambitious methods were prompted by the discourse. The Senior Teacher initiated team writing of collaborative 'multi-layered integrated curriculum' (MLIC), and teachers planned further literacy and numeracy hands-on workshops for parents. From 1997, attendance at parent teacher sessions went to over 70% and workshops drew a half dozen parents per grade, especially strong in the early childhood section. As noted later in Chapter Eight, parents' direct involvement in classroom programs also improved from this time.

Communication: transparency and empowerment

The tensions between (i) the broad desire for more engagement of the whole community and (ii) the reality of a limited capacity on their part to make regular face-to-face input, brought the issues of communication to the fore. In communication, the knowledge available to members and decision variables were made contestible. Transparency (as exposure and risk) maintained trust and extended participation. Multi-directional feedback was the basis of a new opus of cultural awareness for staff concerning 'how the other half' live and think and care. The use of external and internal 'exposures to practice' ensured a sense of coherence to members of the internal to the external trends and initiatives.

6.5 Step 3: *Forging a Shared Vision*

Early in October, 1997 the 'expanded Steering Committee', which included the Principal, met to organise all the available material, the interviews' collective analyses, the stakeholder groups' brainstorms and feedback from questionnaires accompanying the videos. The

important next step in the ASP process was to firm up a vision, against which the strengths and the challenges could be contrasted and the resultant 'gap' described in a set of priorities for working parties (cadres) to pursue. A meeting was advertised for Monday, October 27, 1:00 to 3:00pm for school families (i.e. parents, guardians, grandparents, involved friends) to review and condense the collected points from the brainstorms, at 3:00 when the staff would join the parents for afternoon tea and complete the 'forging of a shared Vision'.

Several factors led to the vision-formation's not being a fast-tracked event. Much data had been gathered in pursuit of a 'Shared Vision', and that data required considerable treatment in collating, reviewing, consolidating and member-checking before a statement could be framed. It was several sets of data that were to be distilled, not a single visionary leader's ideas. Furthermore, the Principal had made public, published commitments to a shared input and decision making process necessarily 'slow'. Mulford (2002) characterises this as losing time to make ground. According to the ASP *Resource Guide* (Hopfenberg et al, 1993)

> it's up to every single person in the school community to internalize the vision and ensure that it becomes a reality. The vision's first step off the paper into reality is its foundation as a basis for setting priorities and as an organiser for school activities. (p.81)

The Principal's opinion was that the Vision statement should be concise. An example from the *ASP Resource Guide* was offered as a Vision that was 'parent unfriendly' in its density and phraseology:

> Our students will acquire the cognitive skills which will enable them to participate successfully in the educational mainstream through extensive emphasis on language development, literacy and critical thinking skills. (Hopfenberg, et al, 1993, p. 75)

The half-staff/half parent expanded steering committee which had only just assembled its collective analysis of the 28 community interviews, agreed with the researcher/coach that the collective analysis for Q. 6 would be particularly appropriate for the vision-drafting task:

Question 6:
(a) I want a school where learning is ....
(b) From being at Matterslea, a child should be able to ...
(c) I want Matterslea to be a school where I ...

The 'salient points' summarising the thirty-one interviewees' sentiments showed that, as an expressed ideal, their school would (a) be safe and fun, success-seeking and encouraging; (b) prepare children for any school they may go to after Matterslea; and (c) be approachable.

The PTA had sought that each member group would have the opportunity to firm up its own 'ideal' *before* the school should attempt to forge a combined vision. Teachers asked that support staff (teacher assistants and office staff) might have a chance to make input to the vision. A forum during working hours was arranged for support staff, their time absorbed by teachers and parent help.

The steering committee's parents proposed it would help inform the community prior to the SAW if all families received (a) copies of the Vision (once framed), the collated brainstorms from the four groups (as the Red and White brick 'wall' of strengths and challenges), (b) the community interviews' summary statements and (c) a one-page summary of the video feedback (provided by the ASP coach). This was argued to add a more participatory nature to the overall data gathering, and it was reasoned that those who had participated (at least 160 families, 14 teachers and several support staff) would feel encouraged to see how their contributions had been treated (and valued).

On Monday Oct. 27, 1997, parents (N=24) first gathered to articulate (via circle summaries, brainstorm and ranking) to 'key-point' families' aspirations. All meetings in this round of Vision-forging based on the shared picture data was framed around "what everyone in their ideal school would '*do*', '*reach for*' and how everyone would '*feel*'" *(Principal, Mayday, Oct.14)*. As predicted by the video responses, community folks' desires came down to being confident that: their children would have adequate basic learning to ensure their 'survival' at high school; that children feel happy and safe at school; and that there be an inviting atmosphere for parents in the school. The meeting, supported by child care, was conducted from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm.

Staff met straight afterwards to establish *their* position, based on their previous brainstorms and the better informed situation following the interviews and other data. Their hopes fell students' and families' raised educational horizons, an enriched curriculum, up-to-date professional development and effective parent/teacher partnerships, particularly for students with learning difficulties. In the following days a meetings of support staff met and 'envisaged' mainly better work conditions , especially dedicated preparation spaces. This

was the support staff's first ever foray into open-ended school governance input. (Their only previous dedicated forum at school had been an industrial stoppage called by their national union).

Students in each class, even the youngest, brainstormed a Y chart of *'do'*, *'reach for'* and how everyone would *'feel'*, before two student meetings on Oct 29th for 'voted' representatives of Grades Three, Four, Five and Six, formulated their key 'envisioning' points. Their perspectives revolved around safety in relationships (*vis à vis* such issues as bullying) and the improvement of playground resources.

The expanded steering committee met on Nov. 5th to "meld the four viewpoints of parents, staff, students and support staff into the 'shared vision'" (*Staff Meeting notes*, Oct 21). The group comprised all but one staff, four parents and the Principal. With the Principal scribing, it authored the following statement:

MATTERSLEA VISION

- *Matterslea students will be confident, capable achievers in society.*
- *Our number one priority is 'teaching and learning', in particular for literacy, numeracy and social skills.*
- *Matterslea is a safe, caring, and happy environment for everybody.*
- *The school community embodies families, staff and community. We are a positive, collaborative team in decision making.*
- *Matterslea acknowledges everyone's individual gifts and develops them to the fullest potential.*

This tentatively worded vision statement was used as a covering page to the 'data summaries' (Appendix W) and accompanied an invitation to all families to attend the most critical "Whole School Community" (SAW) meeting of the first year of ASP development in Matterslea, the Nov. 17. The *Mayday*-borne separate sheet invitation, headed *'Setting our School Priorities'*, signaled that "our major task will be to decide by consensus just which areas will be targeted for funding in 1998 and beyond". In a significant addition, it also noted "a second issue to be addressed is a suggested organisation of School Hours to ensure staff and community adequate working time on school priorities"[4].

[4] The suggestion was being floated by the teacher second-in-charge to the principal. He had been researching, via the ASP list-serve[4], US schools' methods of 'capturing time' by, for instance, extending school hours on certain days in order to reduce contact hours on another, specifically for collective planning purposes.

The tentative vision statement, though published, still needed broad community endorsement. As the SAW of Nov. 17 was open to all member groups (including two students from each of the senior classes 'elected' as representatives of the student body), the steering committee was persuaded by the Principal that endorsement of the Vision by all attending the open meeting should be the first item on an extended SAW agenda. To give the greatest number of community folk the best chance possible to attend, two measures were put in place. First, a small bus was consigned to bring non-driving families from nearby suburbs. Second, children's activities were made available for families wishing to attend the SAW meeting. The provision of after-school activities during school planning meetings became standard from this point.

From the Vision-forging process

Benefits of a shared picture

While each member group established its own aspirations, their decisions were framed against an enriched visual and textual background of a 'shared picture' that spoke to parents' perceptions and wishes, teachers' practices, student and ancillary staff's desires, and up-to-date big picture perspectives on literacy and numeracy from 'external' experts. The informed vision is likely to be more powerful and feasible than one 'out of the blue'.

Leadership

A spirit of open-ness was generated in this stage by the school's leadership, in particular, the Principal. Evans (1993) has highlighted the role of leadership in communication:

> Authentic leaders are strongly biased toward clear communication. Many are eloquent, but all convey their goals through their very consistency. And they are eager, respectful listeners. Their bias toward communication is reflected in steps that facilitate information sharing and constructive feedback at all levels" (p. 22).

The establishing Principal matches Evans' 'authentic' category. Without a sense of 'adequacy' in the data-gathering generated by inclusion, consultation and communication, it is doubtful that the community would have been supportive of the coming stage of priority setting, a stage that was to set the school's central planning agenda for the immediate and middle-term future of the school.

6.6 Step 4: *Priority Setting*

By the time of the SAW meeting of Nov 17th, virtually the whole school year had been taken to establish an agreed picture of the school (take stock), to state a shared vision and frame suitable bases for agreeing on a set of priorities which would drive decision-making in the school over at least the next year, and possibly the next five years. This was a remarkably patient approach, given that the staff was in full knowledge of the three month 'Partnership' process actually occurring at several ASSR schools locally and in other parts of Tasmania. Fifty four participants attended the evening meeting: all teachers, two ancillary staff, around twenty parents (including five men), the District Superintendent, and seven peer-elected students. The strong attendance rewarded the school for its attempts to attract more participation.

Following a unanimous endorsement of the Vision statement, the 'work' of reaching a set of priorities for the coming year's work was begun. The Mayday explains the process. Using the 'bricks' and summaries as starting points,

> *As mixed groups of around seven participants we brainstormed the 'differences' between where we are and where we envision being in the future. The trick was in naming up the problems or hurdles without being drawn into giving solutions, yet. The solutions are for the cadres to determine. It was great to see groups so involved and so 'smart' in working together.* [The District Superintendent's] *group had* [one of the Grade 6 students] *recording and driving the process – good for him, (and probably an education for* [the Superintendent]) ...
>
> ...[this gave] *an array of well argued problem-as-challenges. After each group decided on its 'top 5', these were put into categories of ideas that fitted each other. From these groupings it was clear that four priority areas emerged: (1) Teaching & Learning; (2) Communication; (3) School Image; (4) Supportive School Environment.*
>
> *Everybody who contributed to the process should be proud of the work we've done. The priorities, along with the Vision statement that will guide our work, are first class foundations for achieving our aims. There can be no doubting now that our priorities and our vision are 'owned' by the whole school community. People at Matterslea have mattered!*
>
> Mayday, Number 31, Nov. 19, 1997

The meeting responded positively to the suggestion from a PTA member that the list of suggested 'top 5' challenges be distributed to participants at the meeting for one further round of treatment to prioritise challenges within each 'basket' or theme. Accordingly a

'questionnaire' to rate the items was distributed the following week to each participant of the Nov. 17 SAW (Appendix X). The final top 5 of each 'category', shown in Table 6.3 (following), set the order of priority for each challenge to be addressed by the working teams (*cadres*) from the beginning of the upcoming 1998 school year.

Table 6.3 Priority Questionnaire results – Teachers' and Community's priorities compared.

PRIORITY AREAS and Challenges	SURVEYED GROUP					
	Teachers		Community		OVERALL	
	n = 14		*n = 19*		N = 33	
TEACHING AND LEARNING	**Raw**	***Rank***	**Raw**	***Rank***	**Raw**	***Rank***
• enriched curriculum with input from all	28	*3*	31	*2*	59	1
• students moving through without basics	28	*4*	42		70	5
• limited horizons of students	26	*1*	41		67	4
• time (for PD, teamed planning etc.)	26	*2*	34	*3*	60	2
• staff stability	35		27	*1*	62	3
• resource adequacy, efficiency and effect	29	*5*	41		70	5
SCHOOL IMAGE						
• School's esteem in the wide community	18	*2*	33	*2*	51	2
• positive portrayal of the school	16	*1*	31	*1*	47	1
• fund raising	*30*	*3*	*42*	*3*	*72*	***N/a***
COMMUNICATION						
• understanding of teaching and learning	35		29	*2*	64	4
• reporting 'the whole story' to parents	35		30	*3*	65	5
• parental expectations	27	*4*	37		64	4
• family/tchr partners for learn'g difficulty	24	*1*	23	*1*	47	1
• family involvement in learning, school and home	26	*2*	32	*4*	58	2
• parent/teacher/student communication	28	*5*	33	*5*	61	3
SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT						
• maintaining and improving our SSE	26	*1*	35	*4*	61	2
• transitions class to class & high school	43		30	*5*	73	4
• bullying and peer pressure	28	*3*	27	*2*	55	1
• vandalism.	34	*5*	32	*3*	66	3
• outdoor equip and qual. of school envir.	*24*	*2*	*36*		*60*	***N/a***

Note: The 'raw' figure is the total of rating scale scores for each item. As the questionnaire's scale ranged from '1' for most important to '5' as least important, the *lower* the 'raw' total, the *more importance* is attributed to the item by the respondents. The '*rank*' is the item's relative position of importance (by raw score) within the priority area.

Because 'school image' had a limited number of challenges relative to other areas, and because there was a strong 'topical' consonance between *School Image* and *Communication,* early in 1998, these areas were consolidated into one working team that

attracted by far the most interest and participation from the parent body. The high importance given by the community members to the challenge of '*understanding of teaching and learning*' reinforced the rationale behind production of the first video, '*A Look Inside Matterslea*", and perhaps underscored the success and impact of a 'fly's-eye view' of classroom operations.

Note that Table 6.3 shows two fairly highly ranked priorities were deemed by the Steering Committee not to *directly* bear on student learning outcomes. These were '*raising funds*' and '*outdoor equipment and quality of school environment*'. As a consequence, the relative priority of the other elements in the priority area was shifted upwards. It is important also to consider compromises between parents' and teachers' priorities that were 'transacted' to achieve the final priorities. The data in Table 6.4 show some disparities and consequent 'sacrifices' flowing from the various stakeholders' priorities.

Table 6. 4 Comparison of community and teacher priorities for Matterslea.

PRIORITY	*Teachers n=14*	*Community n=19*	*Overall N=33*
	rank	rank	rank
enriched curriculum with input from all (T&L)	*1*	*2*	*1*
students moving through without basics (T&L)	*4*		*5*
limited horizons of students (T&L)	*1*		*4*
staff stability (T&L)		*1*	*3*
whole community participation (C)	*3*		
parental expectations (C)	*4*		*4 or 5*
transitions class to class & to high school (SSE)		*3*	

Note: Capital letters in brackets signify the priority area relevant to that particular 'challenge'.

'*Whole community participation*', for example, is accorded high priority by teachers but not by community respondents. The item, as such, did not gain targeted priority in the first year of action research. Conversely, '*transition*', though attributed a high average of 1.58 by the community, failed to make it into the overall priority ranking because of its lack of importance in teachers' eyes (only one teacher respondent actually ranked it number one). Again, it should be remembered that the *lower* the rating, the higher the importance to that stakeholder group.

The '*transition*' item's result from teachers stands in contradistinction to the community's 'average' for the item. It shows a greater importance than the top priority of the Teaching

and Learning area (*'enriched curriculum with input from all'*). One rather interesting difference lay in the community's emphasis on *'staff stability'*. Teachers must have felt complimented by such support from the parents. In almost a corollary, the teachers placed high importance on *'whole community involvement'*. This failed to become a priority of the first order because, ironically, community support for that item was lacking.

Having greater numbers of contributors, the results *could* have been markedly skewed towards the community's opinions. Yet, by retaining a participatory criterion for the 'final say', a balance was allowed which afforded teachers a proportional capacity to influence outcomes (as shown in the 'sacrifices' illustrated in Table 6.4). It can be seen that statistical treatment of qualitative opinions, especially as means, does not necessarily give a 'true' priority in all cases.

School Hours

The final agenda item for the Nov. 17 SAW meeting was consideration of the Senior Teacher's suggestion that school hours be altered to add fifteen minutes to Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday's classroom hours, thereby allowing school to finish on Wednesdays an hour earlier (at 2:00pm). School planning team meetings (cadres) and/or Professional Development sessions would be conducted from 2:15 to 4:00pm on Wednesdays. The proposal received unanimous support from the meeting but because of its potential effect on each school family (concerning parents' work commitments, bus timetables and after-school care) the meeting decided to put the notion to the school community, inviting those who objected to signal their disagreement in a simple note to the Principal. If more than 13% of the community saw difficulties in it, the idea would be brought to the next SAW for adjustment or wholesale revision.

In the response period to follow there was only one objection from the community. That one parent had misunderstod the rescheduling of buses that would allow her child to take normal procedures to arrive home after 2:00 pm., and consequently agreed to the notion. The proposal was clearly successful and had the highest possible level of consensus. This single shift in workplace organisation was to have a great impact on governance function, professional learning and work climate of the school. These effects are explained in depth in Chapter Seven's section dealing with *Workplace Organisation.*

Priorities settled

The final priorities areas and the ranking of challenges for the cadre teams of the following year, 1998, were published in the *Mayday* and on the parents' bulletin board. Though the 'top 5' order of attack was determined, challenges that did not make it from the 'raw list' onto the overall ranking list were retained as important follow-up challenges on each cadre's agenda. As over time the 'ranked' challenges were met, the unranked priorities would be taken up for action research. This was notwithstanding reviews of priorities that might by consensus modify original priority-settings. A tentative review of priorities was mooted for the end of the first year of cadre operations, that is, at the end of 1998. However, there was general agreement that it was unlikely all of the challenges ranked as priorities would be 'met' in the first year. Some flow-over was envisaged by the Steering Committee.

Platform established for Steps 5 & 6 of the early implementation

The priorities that the *cadres* (multi-stakeholder/member teams) would target had been made explicit. Logistically, only three cadres could be sustained by the staff and parent numbers available: *Teaching & Learning*; *Communication & School Image*; and *Supportive School Environment*. The one crucial matter needing attention before the close of the school year was to enlist cadre members. Recruitment for these multi-stakeholder working teams was advertised in December 1997 in the *Mayday*. Primary students (Grades 3-6) chose to select their own representatives early in new school year. Participation from the staff was assumed to be part of the teaching role, but community members were to be voluntary or 'self-selected'. If the community had the wherewithal and will, it could, by engaging in the cadre work, exert substantial influence on the school agenda and related decision making.

The cadres' memberships were established early in the following year, 1998, after families had given themselves the summer holiday period to consider their commitment to the fortnightly two-hour meeting schedule. Their involvement would be complicated by the fact that cadre meetings would be held in part after school hours (2:00 to 4:00pm). When cadres meetings did begin in March of 1998, the general configuration was three parents and one student, alongside four teachers in each team. Two of the nine parents were male. Senior staff operated on an equal footing with other members of the cadres. The coach would sit in on each cadre's session, helping mainly with logistical or procedural advice.

6.7 Indications from outcomes of the *Establishment* phase

Early signs of cross-cultural compatibility of ASP

Few if any significant obstacles to ASP's successful implementation appeared during the establishment phase. In fact many parallels between struggling Australian and American schools and their communities became evident in the period. Circumstances and attitudes expressed by parents in interviews and survey responses showed similarities to American families described by Payne (1995) and Epstein (1996). Most US schools have strong historical and taxation links to the locality (Petti,1999). Matterslea too has a longer history than many, with a stable enrolment base to its. Though its size, average by Tasmanian standards, is small by American measures, similarities would seem to outweigh differences.

One obstacle anticipated in American ASP implementation is resistance from some teachers steeped in traditional transmissive teaching, passive learning and deficit perspectives toward remediation (Finnan, 1996). It is possible that the constructivist principles underpinning much of Tasmanian teaching culture and training reduced the ideological barriers that the central players might have raised to the change process. The changes for Matterslea's teaching culture were more towards realizing ideals than the wholesale reshaping of them.

Formative fidelity

The chapter's description of stages one to four of the early implementation of the ASP process (Figure 6.3, p. 133) demonstrates Matterslea's faithfulness to elemental Accelerated Schools procedures. The evidence provided so far in respect to the important reform quality of fidelity (Cuban, 1998) has relied mainly on a chronicle and commentary of step by step events. There can be no doubting that Matterslea's focus on the establishment was thorough to the level of painstaking. Phase 1 had resulted in the setting up of the schools' governance structure. In enthusiastic readiness for the start of the new academic school year, 1998, the basis for focused action by the collective wisdom of the school community was established: priorities were well documented; along with a Vision to guide decision-making style and substance; cadres inclusive of all member groups were set to meet regularly to target the priorities through data-based Inquiry; a representative group to steer procedures in accordance with the Vision, the Steering Committee was operating, albeit on an as-needed basis; and the self-selected School-as-a-whole (SAW) was established as the peak, consensual arbiter of school direction.

Embedding ASP principles in practice

Although the successful instituting of structures and 'agendas' for schoolwide governance had been a significant outcome in itself, of equal importance is the manifestation and embedding of ASP principles in the school's emerging 'renewed' culture. *Unity of purpose* was shepherded by attributes the ASP's initial principal and parent leader's had infused into the process. The inclusion of all member groups on the basis of self-selection had provided 'universal' access and opportunity to contribute. Thoroughness in reaching a shared picture through consultation on community members terms had established a collective identity that expected voice but accepted the consensus as a unifying benchmark for decision. Unity was given practical support through transparency established very early in the process. The transparency in turn set the foundation for trust between teachers and parents in particular. The evidence that unanimity was more common to the year's decisions than contested consensus (evidenced in the 'capturing time ' decision indicated the depth of groundwork put into decisions like Vision forging and Priority-setting.

Empowerment with responsibility was promoted through members' real voice in data gathered, as well as members' inclusion in collective analysis, formally in the case of the interviews, but informally in the whole school forums. Voice and choice were central to the approach taken in setting up not a 'representative governance' but open, participatory governance structured to deal with issues representative of the whole school's aspirations.

Building on Strengths was given an early impetus through the careful structuring of questions (to reveal not just problems but 'assets' first). The use of video capitalised on preferred information modes of parents. Preferences on meeting times were also sought from community members and acted upon. Building on strengths suggests affirmation as a precursor to transformation. The vision forged by the community spoke as much about the community's self belief as about its expectations. Resilience was already evident but the school's ambitious intentions, supportive climate and participatory empowerment promised to generalise and extend resilience through individuals and member groups as they engaged by communication or direct experience in the ASP process. As social capital, Matterslea's strengths could be lost, maintained or developed (Falk & Harrison, 1998b). In Phase 2 of the implementation, judiciously named *Consolidation*, the problem posing and problem solving of ASP governance would shape which direction Matterslea's organisational and learning capacity would move.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Outcomes regarding school governance and workplace organisation

7.1 Introduction

The range of outcomes concerning Research Question 2:

> ***How has the implementation of the process influenced outcomes in the areas of (a) School governance (b) School organisation and (c)Teaching and learning.***

This section of the chapter addresses outcomes regarding changes to Matterslea's governance and organisation (situational conditions of the work environment). The inter-dependence of all aspects of comprehensive change is supported in the literature, however the relative importance and contributions of governance, school organisation and pedagogy is more problematic. By diffracting the outcomes to the main domains, certain factors can be identified (albeit, hypothetically) as discrete 'drivers' or 'levers' before being understood for their synergism with other domains. Governance is about decision-making forms and functions, balances of power, mechanisms for problem-posing and problem solving.

7. 2 Challenges to distributed ownership of the school agenda and change processes in the consolidation phase

Because the initial Principal was in 1997 already an avowed devotee of Sergiovanni's (1990) 'bottom-up' transformational leadership style, principal and senior staff distribution of leadership was not the hurdle it might otherwise have been to reform. The principal's egalitarian practice helped bring a governance set-up (or 'form') to a unified Matterslea, but big-picture and localized challenges still presented as constraints to coherent and empowered governance ('function').

A further potential problem was avoided through District and State concessions on central planning details. Through the negotiations of University of Tasmania and State and District

department representatives, substantial practical freedom had been agreed by the State and District, thus reducing 'isomorphic' pressure for conformity in planning. Having received a waiver to become, for the project's life at least, the State's only *non*-ASSR school, Matterslea became an outrider amongst its 'peer institutions'. Even so, the permeability of school boundaries saw certain compromises. Aside from a requirement from 1999 to produce an annual 'school plan' in department format[1], and sign a brief 'Partnership Agreement' with the District and the community, Matterslea continued in 1999 and 2000 to focus all its planning and programming action to ASP-formulated priorities and processes.

The main member groups at Matterslea each faced certain challenges to empowered roles and each challenge relates in part to empowered experience or lack of it:

1. Matterslea's teachers having: little experience of autonomy or participatory democracy in school governance; a crowded school day with few structured hours of teamed opportunities
2. Families having: very limited avenues to empowered school participation and little or no experience of it; diminished self-belief, and dependency on government agencies; near non-existent response rates to community surveys;
3. Students with: no experience of school governance input, nor explicit learning through either participatory or representative democracy.

As mentioned, the Principal was experienced in distributed approaches to power through previous appointments in which he explored Sergiovanni's (1990) leadership principles. However, even he was inexperienced in the particular processes embedded in ASP. Before looking at how members' challenges were over time met by Matterslea's ASP-based governance, a brief summary of the issues within each challenge may be helpful.

Families' lack of experience in empowered school participation and poor engagement in community surveys

Matterslea School's parent input to school governance had been virtually non-existent before 1997. The only parent forum was the PTA which had the single role of raising funds for the school. It did not debate school management issues. With no defined avenue to table recommendations and no status to do so, its active membership comprised six hard working mothers. The PTA's President occasionally made comments to the Principal (s) prior to 1997, but the conversations were informal and non-binding. Indeed, from the interviews conducted

[1] This was to allow the Principal to qualify for a bonus under the structural agreements embedded in government policy umbrellas called Directions.(DECCD, 1997)

in 1997 with 28 Matterslea families, it is evident that many of the parents were 'scared of getting involved', either through having poor school experiences themselves as youths or through their perception that they had not enough time free of children and jobs to make a consistent input. Shift work in particular was an irregular inhibitor of involvement. Even though a number of families were willing to have an active role in decision-making, that capacity had been given no practical opportunity prior to 1997.

The general level of awareness among parents concerning contemporary curriculum and instruction was very low. This was clearly evidenced in feedback from parents in 1997 following the distribution of videos showing Matterslea's classrooms in action this is discussed later in Chapter Eight regarding Learning Outcomes. The low awareness was also evident from responses to questions on educational terms asked in the 28 parent interviews. These showed a considerable knowledge gap between the few parents who visited classes regularly and the greater majority who didn't.

Matterslea community's chances of empowered development were not helped by divisions about law and order issues in the locality. At the time of the appointment late in 1996 of the new Principal to Matterslea for 1997, the Matterslea community was experiencing a vigilante community reaction to youth and young adult vandalism, assault and lawlessness. Community members who were not actually taking the law into their own hands against thefts and intimidating acts (including arson) were appealing for greater presence of law and order, as the local police station had been downgraded in terms of numbers 'on the beat'. The affair was 'big' in the regional newspapers and on the talk-back shows. It reinforced 'public opinion' that Matterslea was a spawning ground of crime. With the beginning of the school year in Feb., 1997, and the use of police from other sectors (on a temporary basis) things quietened somewhat. However, Matterslea School started into ASP with a large maintenance bill to repair windows and buildings damaged in the summer of relative lawlessness. Apart from deepening some families' 'feuds', the episodes left the community more dependent on external control, demanding of law and order and distrustful of its own capacity to manage community affairs effectively in its own right.

Over the years of ASP implementation, the number of broken windows per year has dramatically reduced. In the long summer break prior to the succession of Principal (1) in 1997 , there were ninety four repairs made to windows and louvres at Matterslea Primary School. The high level of vandalism had been noted by Breheney, Mackrill & Grady (1996)

in their book, Making Peace at [Matterslea]. The authors relate high levels of " vandalism of the school, particularly the daily breaking of windows, and teachers' cars in the car park being scratched" (p. 5). However, on the pattern of figures for the most recent three years (1999, 2000 and 2001), school records of reports to the Central Office maintenance database show that over the period of ASP renewal, the repair bill for broken windows has dropped remarkably:

- $3215 for 1996
- $1500 for 1999
- $1100 for 2000
- $550 for 2001 (Budget Manager's Reports, School database).

The figures now suggest the school can expect only four to six window 'calls' per summer break, and only incidental breakages during the academic period. This is a significant cost reduction but more importantly, it signals a marked improvement in community and school relations. While Matterslea maintains a relatively low incidence of vandalism, it frees funds for more curriculum-related resource ends. By Schneider et al.'s (1999) 'Broken Windows' analysis of the relationship between schools' states of repair and school enrolment growth, Matterslea stands a better chance of maintaining enrolments. Factors associated with ASP's effect on the school's image and culture help explain why Matterslea has, against the trend of schools around it, held its ground in student population over the past five years.

Matterslea's teachers had little experience of participatory democracy in school governance

In the school's previous management experience, with staff besieged by extremes of behaviour management demands, school policy and initiative decisions had largely been made at an executive level, particularly by the Principal. This was reasoned on one hand as defensive or protective of teachers, on the other as needed to push teachers towards new and supportive classroom and playground pastoral practice. Rationales and descriptions of this 'proactive authoritative' style are found in a book co-authored by the outgoing Principal (Breheney et al., 1996). According to interviews with teachers in 1998 and 2000, most of Matterslea's 1997 ASP-engaging teachers had been in schools where genuine decisive input was not invited in areas other than curriculum or pedagogy. Against Tannenbaum & Schmidt's (1973) *Continuum of manager and non-manager behaviour* (see Fig. 4.1, p. 73), few staff had experienced anything in schools other than low-middle empowerment in

which (a) the "Manager presents decision but must respond to questions from non-managers" or (b) the "Manager presents tentative decision subject to change after non-manager inputs". Teachers had spent the majority of their professional non-class time meeting around issues associated with operating and maintaining a Supportive School Environment (Breheney et al., 1996). This may have been why 'time' became such a high priority for teachers in the Taking Stock outcomes that defined cadres' tasks for 1998.

Students had no experience of school governance input in either participatory or representative democracy

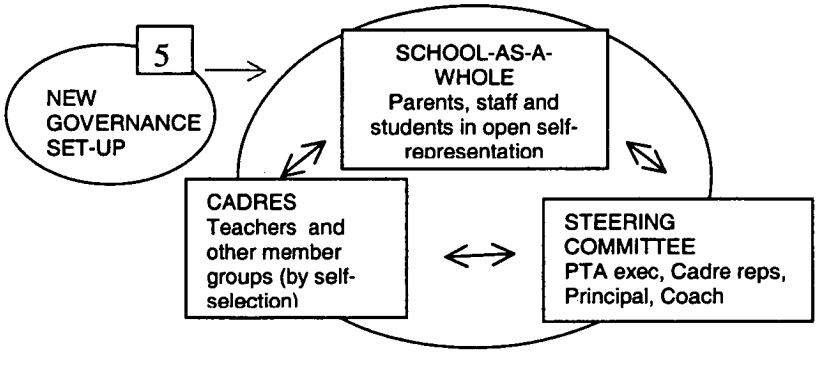
Although it did have an effective playground Peer Support program, Matterslea had no structure of student representation on schoolwide issues. There were no elected student leaders through whom even informal representations could be made, and most importantly there was no Student Representative Council. Students' involvement in decision-making was restricted to ad hoc classroom meetings, of which some teachers had none. Others did involve their classes in brainstorm-style inputs (such as Y-charts) to help define classroom rules. Student voice was, even in this limited form, restricted to the classroom, largely serving teachers' classroom management purposes.

7.3 The work of Matterslea's school governance

> ...the school needs to see the importance for having a governance structure. Only then is systematic change possible. Otherwise, you get piecemeal change dependent on a few charismatic people. (Finnan, 1995, p.16)

The key forums in ASP governance had been set up by the end of 1998, the first year of full governance function. It saw the three bodies operating in clear relationship:

Figure 7.1 Basic configuration of Matterslea's ASP governance set-up, (end 1997)



The 'way' governance is set up to function is important in modeling and establishing philosophical assumptions or expectations that participants will carry forward into the day-to-day business of school governance. Phase 1's *Establishment* showed how decision making steps may be infused with the school's culture in philosophical or ideological values. Those values (such as inclusivity, strengths over deficits, large 'S' self-belief) define the character of the reform's 'process forms' for the persons involved. Hence inclusivity determined the appropriateness of the resultant Vision and priorities, which in turn set the agenda content for governance meetings (cadres and SAW). In Matterlea's case, the *values* led the *functioning* of the *form*, in that order. Coherence for Matterslea has been a powerful alignment of principles, protocols and practice. Yet form and function are not necessarily co-extant or coherent. There can be function without discernible form, and there can be form without action. The *Consolidation* (Phase 2) is about Matterslea's application of the ASP process.

The priority given to governance over development of curriculum and instruction

A number of school reform initiatives have targeted school governance as the primary vehicle to reform, for instance the Chicago Schools reform of the 1990s (Bryk et al., 1998; Bryk, Camburn & Seashore-Louis, 1999). Because it is so focussed on the sharing of responsibility and decision-making, democratic processes such as consensus, ASP is arguably of the Chicago variety of governance-led school renewal processes. However, ASP does not demand 'ascendancy' for community, rather, their open inclusion, participation, and voice. The collective (SAW) is the peak body of ASP schools.

As a 'model', the procedural *form* is a primary requisite of ASP implementation. One could expect to see less difference between ASP schools' governance *forms* than between their governance *functions*, largely because contextual demands and conditions shape the school's ongoing behaviour and identity.

From form to function: ASP Benchmarks

Throughout 1998, Matterslea worked through the three cadres on its priorities. Every alternate week staff used their 'captured time' to pursue priorities. Towards the end of 1998, the staff and parents working on the cadres were asked to collectively rate Matterslea's ASP performance on 'ASP Benchmarks' a scaled set of semantic descriptors addressing seven ASP areas of activity: Powerful Learning; Unity of Purpose, Empowerment Coupled with Responsibility; Building on Strengths; Values; Inquiry; and Governance. It is part of the

ASP's in-house 'Evaluative Toolkit'. To achieve a 'moderated' and discursive outcome, each of the three operating cadres consensually agreed on a rating for each questionnaire item. The three cadres' sets of ratings were then overlaid, shared and an 'agreed' view of the school's ASP performance was consensually determined by the combined cadres. The complete item range and the analysed results are offered in Appendix Y. They show Matterslea 'getting there', rather than having fully arrived at philosophical and practical 'ease' with the ASP process. The items of relevance to Matterslea's fidelity are shown in Table 7.1. The 'Benchmark' statement given represents the participants' consensual response. Option ranges are in square brackets *[...]*:

Table 7.1 Results from 1998 *ASP Benchmarks* collective questionnaire (items relevant to 'fidelity' in Matterslea's ASP *Establishment* phase)

Use of consensus decision-making (around 90% agreement)
The consensus decision-making process ***is becoming*** an integral part of our school's culture. *becoming; is not yet, is not]*
Outcomes of consensual decision-making
On ***even the most difficult issues***, we are able to come to consensus as a school community and move towards our vision. *[even the most difficult issues; on most issues; on many; great difficulty]*
Taking Stock (in 1997 we took time to find out where we were at)
Taking stock succeeded in ***two*** of the following three areas: • Actively involving the *whole* school community to identify strengths and challenges. × • Producing a report that provides an adequate comparison point for setting priorities and baseline data for cadres. ✓ • Building a sense of ownership and responsibility. ✓ *[all; three; two; one; none]*
Integrating Inquiry into all aspects of school life
Inquiry-driven decision-making is used ***periodically*** throughout the school community. There is still a tendency jump to solutions and not to consider relevant inside and outside data and experiences when developing soluti *[in all; periodically; limited to cadres; not yet]*
Using inquiry to make progress
The use of the inquiry process ***often*** allows us to identify the root causes of challenges and generate action. *[always; often; sometimes; never seems to]*
Effectiveness of inquiry
Inquiry ***often*** leads to action that truly addresses the challenge. *[always; often; sometimes; rarely if ever]*
Broad participation in school decisions and management
Most school community members (including parents and students) have participated in setting the priorities of the school and ***some*** are a part of the accelerated schools governance structure (i.e., cadres, steering committee, and SAW). *[almost all; most; some; few]*
Cadre focus on primary priorities (from our SAW decisions)
Each cadre ***has*** a clear focus and is developing a comprehensive understanding of its primary challenge area. *[has; is developing; is aware of; is struggling with]*
Cadres' use of Inquiry
Each cadre has been trained in inquiry and is applying it, ***with varied success***, to address its challenge areas. *[comfortably; with varying success; with difficulty; off-track]*
Consensus decision-making (90% agreement before go-ahead)
The SAW ***has defined*** procedures for consensus decision-making and a timeline for implementation. *[has defined; is developing; is aware of; is struggling with]* ***Most*** members of the school community feel an active part of a governance (decision-making) structure that is focused on the realization of the school's vision. *[all; most; lack of clarity; no changes]*
Communication
The SAW ***has successfully developed and implemented*** procedures for keeping all members informed of developments and outcomes of cadre, steering and SAW meetings.*(note SSE cadre said "are being developed") [has successfully developed and implemented; is implementing; are being developed; are still needed]*

Taken at the end of eight months of ASP governance and inquiry process, the probe's results show commitment, balanced reflection and a desire to improve and widen members' inclusion in the process. Not only has the school established the decision-making mechanisms, it has embedded them into daily practice and its members are informed and cautious in their judgments about their application of ASP with continued 'fidelity' to the ASP process.

ASP Questionnaires

A finer grained instrument was applied also at the end of the first year of ASP cadre operations, 1998. The ASP Questionnaire using Likert ratings of *Strongly Disagree* (score 1) through *Strongly agree* (5) is much more specific and its items apply from an individual (though involved) perspective. Cadre members were given the Questionnaire at the end of 1998, 1999 and 2001[2]. In 1998 and 1999, almost all teaching staff had more than three years at the school, with a mean teaching experience of over 18 years. Three parents had two years continuous cadre experience. To 2001, at least 10 of 14 teacher had over two years in the ASP development, but staff turnover from 2000 reduced that to seven. Eighteen respondents (14 of 14 teachers; 4 of 6 parents) returned questionnaires in 1998 with similar proportions in 1999 and 2001. The questions do not seek open-ended comment that would also be very helpful to school level evaluators (Appendix Z bears a complete analysis — it should be read in conjunction with the items in Appendix R). The following results focus on items relevant to overall school reform coherence.

Table 7.2 ASP Questionnaire items 1998, 1999, 2001, relevant to program coherence

Number and Item of ASP Questionnaire:	1998 (mean)	1999 (mean)	2001 (mean)
5. The consensus decision-making process is an essential part of our school's culture	4.4	4.6	3.8
6. There is a 'we' spirit at this school.	4.4	4.7	3.9
7. It seems very clear that everyone at this school is striving towards the same goals.	4.2	4.2	3.9
25. I feel informed about issues facing our school.	4.8	4.8	4.1
33. I feel proud of our vision statement.	4.7	4.5	4.3
34. I think our vision is an accurate reflection of the hopes and dreams we all have for the children at this school.	4.8	4.7	4.6
35. On the whole, I think that the staff uses the vision in many active ways: to guide cadre work, to focus curriculum development, as an informal assessment tool, etc.	4.3	4.1	4.3
53. My cadre consults resources internal to our school e.g. members of other cadres, parents and students, about our challenge areas.	4.4	4.4	4.1
54. My cadre actively consults outside resources like district staff, teachers at other schools, and community experts about our challenge areas.	3.3	3.4	3.8

[2] 2000 was the change-over year for principalship and the new principal was just entering the school at the end of 2000. With a number of staff leaving and attention firmly on teacher focus group interviews, cadre parent interviews and a revision of the priorities and the Vision, I decided it would ease pressure to to use the ASP Questionnaire in 2001.

The response data conveys strong overall rating for ASP's identified coherency attributes. The first two years of cadre operations, 1998 and 1999 are particularly strong, with consensus as a unifying dynamic in the school culture. The Vision is the central, effective point of goal coherence. Items 33 and 34 show a remarkable solidarity to the Vision. Members were well engaged by the Taking Stock deliberations and had, after nearly two years with the process, anything but 'work-a-day' attitude.

Cadres in the first years were prone to focus very much on internal resources for information (items 53 and 54), particularly with 'community involvement' issues to the fore, and cadres' use of community interviews and video survey data to inform program design. The use of contextual information remains strong throughout, but as the school becomes more confident in its understanding of local factors.

Yet the overall mean ratings for most items show a general drop in 2001. This coincides with principal succession and the data express two challenges in schoolwide reform: staff turnover and adjustments to a new principal at the end of 2000. The literature is clear on the difficulties these presents in almost all cases (Ogawa, 1995; Davidson, 1998) but less is known about loss of experienced input as teachers or parents leave schools. The following items relating directly to governance show ownership and empowerment are strong foundations in Matterslea's renewal, and that internal changes can both challenge and build a reforming school's organisational resilience.

Table 7.3 ASP Questionnaire items related to governance, 1998; 1999; 2001

ASP Questionnaire Item	*1998*	*1999*	*2001*
4. We've focused decision-making on the students' needs.	4.7	4.6	4.5
51. The members of my cadre, including myself, feel comfortable using the inquiry process.	3.7	3.1	3.5
52. In my cadre, we carefully analyze challenges and discuss possible root causes before taking any action.	4.3	4.1	4.0
58. Even after an action plan from my cadre has been adopted by the SAW, we continue to monitor its effectiveness with systematic evaluations.	4.0	3.4	3.4
60. My cadre is productive in addressing its challenge areas and in moving the school closer to its vision.	4.7	4.5	4.1
61. An inquiring and reflective approach characterizes decision-making through this school, not just in cadres.	4.1	4.2	3.5
63. Each cadre has a clear and comprehensive understanding of its primary challenge areas.	4.6	4.5	4.3
64. Our SAW meetings give equal voice to each cadre; no one's concerns are trivialized.	4.7	4.4	4.4
65. Staff and administrators try to deal with conflict constructively; differences of opinion are discussed openly.	4.6	4.5	2.9
67. In general, I think we make important and concrete progress in our meetings.	4.6	4.4	4.0
68. In general, our school works hard to make sure that there is adequate follow through on cadre recommendations.	4.6	4.5	4.1
69. Our current governance structure promotes democratic decision-making.	4.3	4.5	3.2
70. Our principal is not an authoritarian leader; s/he follows the governance process consistently.	4.6	4.7	2.9

The one governance factor that stands out amongst a bevy of positive indicators in Table 7.3 is the difficulty experienced by cadre members in the Inquiry Process (item 51). The ratings show that there *is* a problem without explaining *why*. Several reasons for members difficulties with the painstaking problem posing and problem solving method in ASP cadres' Inquiry Process were revealed in teachers' focus group interviews at the end of years 1998 and 2000:

- the 'work' requires suspension of judgment and 'deferred gratification', behaviours that frustrate members impatient for outcomes;
- extensive data sets often require time and attention from members outside set cadre times the complexity of the Inquiry Process can confuse and isolate members, especially parents and teachers;
- with these difficulties affecting cadre processes, teachers tend to feel they carry the burden of decision-making.

Teachers' comments often addressed the point. One female teacher, with four years experience in cadres, said:

> *I think the most frustrating thing in our group is the lack of tangibles ... when what you want to see is a result.*

And another, newer to the school, noted:

> *I honestly get frustrated at the fact that it seems to be the teachers in our group that are trying to come up with the ideas and there doesn't seem to be much passion from parents in the group ... frustrating.*

Levels of difficulty differed from cadre to cadre. The more socially focused School Image and Communication cadre appeared to draw more input from community members and identified a strategy of taking on fewer challenges:

> *In our cadre there is a genuine feeling of good communications between parents, working on the image of Matterslea, and that is certainly improving, I think we floundered a bit this year - it will be a lot better next year I think, in our group in particular we haven't done as much as we could have better if we just take on fewer things.*

An experienced female middle primary teacher saw a need for more lay members to distribute the load, but felt the process provided empowering opportunities:

> *To do more there needs to be more of them [parents]. All up though, a really good thing is that parents do know that they have a voice, I mean they do know that the school is a whole and there <u>are</u> different meetings going on that they <u>can</u> be involved in.*

The school image and communication cadre became known as the 'popular' option and, following 1999, rotation of staff was recommended to help 'turn over' the cadres' make-up. The general feeling about the Inquiry Process is encapsulated by one male staff member:

> *I think there is an easier and surer way. With some of the broader issues the full-on inquiry process works fairly well, but with some of the easier decisions, when we use the Inquiry process, it seems to drag on and no-one is able to go to the decision, all those little balloons floating around to pull together.*

In the same year, the president of the PTA made some salient observations in her interview. She felt cadre discussion sometimes "*went over people's heads*", particularly students, and that although the cadre parents were "*clued up*", their experience in education and Department affairs "*lost*" parent participants. Despite these pitfalls of "*jargon*" and insider knowledge , all ASP meetings were "*very open and no one is heard any more than anyone else, no-one gets any sort of fairer go than anyone else, everyone can say what needs to be said, what they feel*". The attribute most valued by this parent leader was 'opportunity':

> *[E]veryone knows they have the opportunity to be involved if they want to and they know that it [their input] is welcome ...You couldn't be made to feel more part of it, in my way of thinking.*

It appears that parents and teachers may seek quite different participation and outcomes form the cadre experience. While parents are empowered in the knowledge they are gaining insight to the core school agendas and educational issues, teachers are very task focused and outcomes oriented. Frustration comes from a perceived 'slow' action research frame and the sometimes daunting complexity of the cadres' decision-making process. My observation in cadre sessions over four years was that the rush to action was a persistent dynamic and that teachers could often prepare parents (and children) better for the language and matters coming up for deliberation. Other directions from the data were taken up following the interviews and enacted over time, such as constituent rotations and faster-tracked Inquiry Approach[3] (rather than full-blown Inquiry Process) for non-complex or short-term problems. The pitfalls of language codes were brought to the fore in teachers' minds, considering parents and new staff. As one teacher expressed it, "*it's not a difficult language, its just that teachers have a language which is developed around the work that we do*" (Prim. Focus Group, 1998).

[3] Data-based but from information largely at hand, collectively brainstormed, consensually agreed and decided sometimes on the day by the cadre. Leaders may find they have decisions through the day or week that require *their* seeking, discussing and deliberating data-based decisions

7. 4 The range of outcomes from governance/cadre activity

Over the year 1998 and 1999, each of the cadres' major three or four priorities were successfully addressed, albeit with some aspects of a few still requiring ongoing attention, such as improving parent involvement in the learning program. The following examples of outcomes from SAW and cadre planning, listed on the school notice board April 21, 2001, help explain the connection between ASP governance process and the broad school organisational and, most importantly, Teaching and Learning program. Outcomes have been in:

- *"Bringing families into key decision-making roles in the school;*
- Establishing a whole-of-community, *agreed Vision*; part
- *Capturing time* for PD and Team-based planning – a first for the State;
- Developing *Integrated Curriculum (MLIC)* in PD, resources and planning approaches across the school resulting in a rich, sequence of integrated studies;
- Giving a stronger say to students through establishing the *Student Representative Council;*
- Ensuring a *safer and happier school* through an effective *anti-bullying program* supporting taught programs of the school's *Supportive School Environment;*
- *Building community pride through our Hall of Fame and Art Gallery;*
- *Focusing the school curriculum through structured literacy and numeracy processes;*
- Developing the school as *a cutting edge site for Information Technology (computer) learning* with students in Gr 5/6 two years above age/grade standards of the KITOs (Tasmania's Key Information Technology Outcomes benchmarks);
- *Improving reading performance* substantially for all ages, especially in early childhood areas;
- Exploring school-wide *understanding of numeracy in applied maths;*
- Reviewing and reframing our *home/school communication systems especially the Mayday;*
- Setting *interdependence* as a benchmark of working relationships among students and raising this attribute to student awareness as part of daily student work habits;
- Creating *home/school videos* to inform and stimulate community talk about learning and developing teaching approaches to build independent and team-player strengths in our students."

(ASP notice board, April 21, 2001).

A number of these outcomes are addressed in depth in the following chapter's discussion of Teaching & Learning, but here they clearly show the Inquiry-based governance process had

produced a wide range of outcomes targeting the school's specific priorities. Some had taken three years to accomplish. Short term time-frames for action planning may not have allowed some such as interdependence and goal-setting processes to emerge. The Inquiry process underpinned all the cadres' planning. The starting point of the Inquiry was the priority statement (framed as several challenges) such as Home School Communication *[area]*: Parents are unaware of recent classroom pedagogies *[challenge]*. The veracity of the challenge statement was then probed through argument informed by Shared Picture data and new surveys such as phone-surveys. This was the revised *Taking* Stock of Finnan's model (1996). Statements that 'held water' through such interrogation by the cadre were pursued or 'run down' by action plans that engaged some or all stakeholder groups, usually classes. 'Solutions' were an end product, not early fabrications, and often required several weeks, even months of data gathering. Plans that were significant redirections in policy (even the devising of policy) or which required funding reallocations were put to the School As a Whole (SAW) meetings at term's end.

It is tempting to attribute all the broadly stated outcomes above to cadre processes, but analysis should also acknowledge the part played by all ASP actions in the *Establishment phase*. The thorough, unhurried and inclusive effort involved in coming to the Vision and appropriate priorities, the evidence that the priorities were 'right' — without that focusing work, the cadres could conceivably be 'barking up the wrong tree'. Many on-the spot classroom floor decisions were guided by the Vision and messages from the preliminary taking stock (Shared Picture) period. We don't really know much about the links between incidental innovation and the ASP processes. The outcomes listed above represent a significant proportion, but not all, of the actual program/practice output of Matterslea Primary School in the 1997-2001 period. Strengths (in certain programs running) tend to used for 'solving' wider problems, but rarely are celebrated in reform literature as 'outcomes'. In this way we can see *maintenance* (Hopkins, & Hargreaves, 1990) of school development is equally worthy of reformers' attention. Ongoing and recurrent programs at Matterslea that 'didn't need fixing' include the Peer Support Program that engages some eighteen students weekly throughout the year in playground game coaching/modeling and mediation. This program was in place before the school undertook ASP and has not required 'reform' activity to maintain it. 'Goal Setting' was also introduced by a teacher who successfully modeled the process and infused it throughout the school. The cadres used goal

setting many times as an example (in that sense, building on strengths) for work on independence and interdependence, as well as reporting to parents, but it should not take credit for 'creating goal setting in the school.

Student input to governance

The establishment of the student Representative Council (SRC) is an interesting point in case. Had students' experiences in the cadres been wholly successful, the SRC may have been a longer in arriving. However, after the first year of cadre operations, students were reticent to volunteer for cadre places. Even more than parents, students had found issues being discussed were over their heads. In 1999, following the establishment of an SRC to boost student voice, two Grade 6 SRC representatives were interviewed concerning their expectations and roles. One male student was also part of the Teaching & Learning cadre, at his teachers' open request. Asked about the differences between the SRC and the cadres, the students replied:

> *Well in the cadres, it's more of a parents and students and teachers and in the SRC so I find the SRC a bit more important. And it's just, you get a better say in the SRC and it's more to do with school, what we do at school [male, Grade 6].*
>
> *And in the SRC the students have a say in what we do and we can come up with our ideas and we can negotiate what we want to do and if someone else doesn't like it we can change it a bit or we can mix the two ideas together. That way you don't just take one idea from a student and then just say 'yep that's good' [female, Grade 6].*

The SRC, representing Grades 3 to 6, has continued for four years as a weekly event with decisions mainly around fund-raising. The SRC mentor is a teacher who models agenda setting and role taking. Classes are involved through their representatives. One representative explained in interview how they saw the SCR's working process:

> *In our class meetings reps write people's ideas down on our pads and take it into the staff room when we have the meetings and we mention it and if the SRC agrees we get back to the person , even if they don't we still get back to them and tell that they didn't want to.* (Male SCR rep., 2000)

The SRC meetings are reported back to students; to staff pigeon holes, after *"two people [students] write out the minutes during the meeting and then they'll be done on the computer and given to each of the SRC reps and then they'll be discussed with the class".* (Female, SRC rep., 2000)

Although the SRC has become effective in providing a voice to students, it is not a clear influence in the main decision-making forum for the school priorities. In 2002 there have

been no students self-selecting to the cadres. At primary level, if the Inquiry Process is acknowledged as an obstacle to student input to forums like the cadres, ASP must reconsider some of its assumptions about the range of member groups actively represented in mixed forums.

With students *not* currently participating in the cadres' problem-solving sessions (by their own choice), there is much work ahead of the school to extend student input to more empowered levels, beyond Level 6 of Rafferty's ladder of involvement, cited earlier in Chapter Four:

Figure 7. 2 Rafferty's (1997) Ladder of Student Participation (after Hart 1992)

1. Manipulation
2. Decoration
3. Tokenism
4. Assigned but informed
5. Consulted and informed
6. Adult-initiated, shared decisions
7. Child –initiated and directed
8. Child initiated shared decisions with adults

Policy as an outcome of governance activity

Policy is a genre of output that has emerged from Inquiry work of the Matterslea cadres or Inquiry teams. Policy for Matterslea is not simply a received set of protocols. Matterslea's school policies formed in the ASP years have taken shape in a context concerned primarily with addressing its *own* local realities. While not an exclusive set of drivers that totally ignores broad social and system expectations, policy in Matterslea's terms is self-stated and incorporates the bigger picture, rather than the reverse which would see state and central mandates controlling the decision-making agenda, with mere interpretive reflections from Matterslea concerning its local needs.

Policy is non-negotiable, published and enacted (i.e. it would only be 'policy' if it was done.) Rules, curriculum agreements and procedural sequences in behaviour management are fixed and published, literally so they can be consistently applied. Over the five years of ASP governance, Matterslea has produced many policies including 'Bullying', 'Homework' and a

number elements of the 'Supportive School Environment' (student welfare curriculum and process). There have been some twenty policy statements deliberated, moderated and published. It is almost as though the procedural predictability of the ASP processes has inspired a similar need for transparent, accessible 'certainty' to guide teachers and other school members through challenges and conflicts. In an interesting twist to the regulation or institutionalising of certain 'ways' and processes (like 'goal setting' or 'IT access'), the Principal (1) made strong moves in the cadre he was working with (Teaching and learning) to so construct the policy statements that they were applicable as curricula. Rather than functioning only as rules to 'fall back on' in times of need or crisis, the policies were to be 'taught' — that is, to be framed as teachable actions and orientations.

Ways: principles in practice

Such policies are different from 'ways of doing things' or tacit protocols. Agreed or developed informally over time, 'ways' affect meetings, planning and workplace roles and responsibilities because they become part of the school culture. For instance, at Matterslea there is no 'playground duty *policy*' – those responsibilities are negotiated under expectations traditionally built up over years of local and cross-fertilized teacher experience. Activities such as the ASP processes, counseling methods, in-school suspension and 'time-out' protocols, even such 'formal' roles as reporting and enrolling of students, are all prone to modification during the school year. Matterslea's incoming (or 'succeeding') principal mentioned in interview the strength of the "Matterslea Way" – the unspoken customs that guide communication, support and grievances, among other issues:

> *[I]t is certainly the Matterslea way. It is certainly something that is being promoted in the district. We do this in that Matterslea way. Even if it is not necessarily the Matterslea way, but it is not a bad way to get the school and school community to understand, particularly in terms of school management student support. I am talking about how we support students with their learning. (Principal, 25 July, 2001)*

A 'way' is not policy, but it is powerful because it reflects participants' expectations. The matters raise questions about institutionalization in contexts that have histories of 'ways' rather than policies. As mentioned, ASP procedure is not 'policy'. However, many of the products are, instanced by policies generated from cadre activity, including Matterslea's bullying policy, its homework policy and grievance policy. A 'way' becomes a policy when it is published, accepted by the members affected as binding and necessarily transferred from year to year unless altered or dismantled by the relevant school community sector. In the

case of an Accelerated School, policy relating to student learning and to the Vision is the concern of the School-As-a-Whole.

Form and function made moot

Throughout the *Consolidation phase* Matterslea's decision-making forums operated on the initial configuration, with self-selected cadres meeting fortnightly to use the Inquiry Process (and the Inquiry Approach[4]) to attack prioritised challenges drawn from consensual whole-school deliberation. Actions and policies which demanded funding or strategic adjustment (i.e. would set precedents for future administrative or curricular practice) were taken to the School-as-a-Whole (by open invitation , therefore also 'self-selected') for ratification on a consensus basis. Only the role of the Steering Committee changed in that period, mainly to limit the meeting frequency in the small and heavily involved active community. The 'watchdog' functions of the Steering Committee were accounted by having a 'combined cadre' sharing session at the last 15 or 20 minutes of Cadre meeting afternoons in order to keep all active members abreast of various proceedings and plans, as well as to prevent duplication.

Toward the end of 2000, a review of governance functions (specifically, meeting cycles, processes of priority review and the continued relevance of the current Vision) was conducted by myself in the role of coach, at the request of a 'combined cadre' meeting. The questions addressed were devised briefly at a regular 'housekeeping' staff meeting:

1. *What do you think about the suggestion to move to a three weekly cycle (with weeks one and two having the first hour for cadre work and the second hour for PD, with week three devoted to PD alone)?*
2. *In your view, are two cadres sufficient to address the school's agreed priorities?*
3. *Should we rename the ASP jargon and, if so, what needs changing?*
4. *Has the Accelerated Schools process outlived its useful life?*
5. *How can we include ancillary staff and student voice more in the cadre's work?*
6. *Are we in need of new priorities?*
7. *Do we require a new or reviewed Vision?*
8. *Do you support a refocussing of Vision, Priorities and processes at start of 2001?*

The salient outcomes of the survey (Given complete in Appendix Q) are as follows:

- According to SAW members, ASP had *not* outlived its useful life at Matterslea, but did require revitalization;

[4] A more 'fast-tracked' version of data-based action-planning that utilizes the collective wisdom at hand in the cadres or the available records. The 'approach' still hypothesizes, tests hypotheses but depending on time, may not take the two weeks of data gathering that might be required by the full 'Inquiry Process'.

- That the PTA could be given a stronger role as a conduit for community opinion;
- That a wholesale reprioritizing was not necessary but that fresh priorities should be considered collectively;
- The Vision was effective and, while not requiring wholesale change, deserved review and celebration to keep it current and relevant;
- There was broad support for a general 'refocusing' of Vision, Priorities and processes in 2001.

These were strong affirmations of the ASP process for both new and old staff. However, three other recommendations signaled a beginning of self-authoring of the ASP process by active members:

- A suggestion by staff to try a three weekly cadre cycle was adopted (on the reasoning that professional development was critical to student learning and that teachers' Individual Professional Learning Plans (mandated by Central Office) were not being fulfilled by current provisions;
- Two priority areas were deemed sufficient in the face of current and foreseeable human resources, consequently the *School Image and Communication* cadre was coalesced with *Supportive School Environment* cadre to form one 'School Life' cadre;
- A de-jargonising of ASP terminology (such as *cadre) was recommended* (the term 'working team' has become commonly used since).

The shift to a one-in three meeting cycle meant that the meeting cycle went from:

Wk 1=Cadres, Wk 2=Professional Development (including community learning activities)
to
Wk 1=Cadres; Wk 2= PD/IPLP activities; Wk 3= section team planning.

The overall results of the 'Cadre Questionnaire' show the ASP on one hand clearly popular as an 'operating system' for the school's development planning. The survey was specifically designed for that moment in time when a crossroad had been reached: a new leader, new staff members on the way and several years of ASP under their belts. The survey represented a distinct opportunity for those who so wished to opt for a motion to the SAW that the school withdraw from the ASP process. However, this did not occur, and a further two years of ASP process have ensued. The process was 'reconfirmed' but needed to be reinvigorated and some few procedures modified to suit the context's needs, most particularly those of teachers' professional learning. In truth, nothing was literally changed except the frequency of the meetings. This is a simple but substantial adaptation that can be viewed as either a watering down or an umbilicus thinning. The issue is taken further in

Chapter Ten. For the moment, the reasoning of active members regarding the governance model and its 'functioning' can help offer a rationale the self-authoring that is occurring at Matterslea Primary School as this thesis is being written.

Change through the eyes of the changers

The evaluative perceptions of teachers are given more personalized colour in data collected by teachers when interviewed as section focus groups shortly before the 'Cadre Questionnaire' analysed in the previous pages. After four years ASP involvement, including one year of establishment in Vision and priority setting, and a further three years of ASP process, what I have characterized as the 'consolidation' phase, focus group interviews with teachers and individual interviews with cadre parents reveal the cultural impacts of ASP on Matterslea and in particular its teacher members. The following early childhood teacher's reflection is longer than most I have cited but well represents the overall teachers' perspective concerning outcomes over time:

> *I think we've come a long way, we do more than we used to, our actual output is more, When we first started ASP we used to maybe think a bit more about what we were going to do but I don't think we have enough time to be able to go through the full inquiry process so much. Now that we're a bit more relaxed through the whole structure of the process, we're actually getting to the hands-on, we're actually seeing more what we're doing. We did sometimes wonder why we were coming in every fortnight, we were doing stuff but we didn't actually have a lot to show for it. Now we've got things up and running and we've got more confidence ... all up we seem to be included a lot more through the cadres. (Dec. 7, 2000)*

The 'more relaxed' sense has come only *after* some years of experience in the rigorous elements of process, and for this three-year ASP member, the fruits of the labour have reduced frustration and boosted the sense of effective participation. The term 'we' is used reflexively and powerfully by this teacher and by others in the focus group interviews. Despite members initial struggles with the cadres' Inquiry Process, by 2000 ASP was being identified as a *collective*, cohesive factor. Through members' knowledge and confidence in the process and 'results' ASP was embedded in the school's organisational culture. Its benefits were building capacity, year by year.

Teachers were asked whether the school was moving closer to its Vision. Examples of their responses show a positive analysis. One teacher addressed teaching and learning in respect to the vision:

I think it definitely is going achieve some of it, from a teaching and learning perspective, by far a huge priority has gone to literacy and numeracy ... It's still going, still an ongoing thing, the vision stays ahead of you.

Another member of the SI & C cadre focused on climate and inclusiveness:

We're trying our best with the involvement with parents, and I think we've done as well as anyone has probably ever done here, trying to get people in and doing things and certainly everything is leaning towards the vision being achieved.

Both operational and ideological levels are apparent in these responses. At the 'engine-room' cadre level of agenda-setting and decision-making in ASP renewal, participants were expressing the three ASP principles of *Unity of purpose, Empowerment with responsibility, and Building on strengths* in rationale and action.

The overall picture from the focus group interviews showed a division of purposes between the cadres' work and the alternating use of 'captured time' in *professional development.* Cadres represented collaborative, task-focused effort towards shared outcomes, while *professional learning* time addressed more individual learning needs of teachers and to a certain extent, pedagogic capacities of parent members. It appears the Inquiry process was the more demanding, being tightly coupled to the Vision, priorities and consensus. Cadres accounted for contextual needs, whereas PD in large part had generic, portable outcomes for teachers.

Empowerment and distributed leadership

Leadership style is raised in the literature as a fundamental factor in school reform. The initial principal's democratic role has been repeatedly lauded by teachers and parents throughout the ASP questionnaires and two rounds of interviews. It is perhaps instructive that despite teachers' own claims of being empowered and having a significantly distributed ownership of the school agenda, the ASP-founding Principal was not satisfied they had taken as much power as he would have liked. Interviewed in September, 2000, the Principal confided,

Personally it's been good. The only drawback I've had is that teachers haven't taken on as much power as I would have liked, as much as they could have if they'd wanted to ... they've had the permissions and the wherewithal to do whatever and be very powerful, yet they've still preferred to be led rather than being the drivers. It's because of the demands of the modern teaching now, but we could have had a more flattened administrative structure if they had wished it to be so.

The independence associated with the ASP is seen as a key to opportunity and the Department's 'permissions' are valued:

> *ASP has not allowed us to take a middle of the road position – it has led us to bottom-up ways. [Doing ASP] has given us permission to develop ... within the ASP umbrella our own processes protocols while going through the rigours of things the department asked us to do, like the school plan and IPLPs (individual professional learning plans). Everything they want we've done, our own way, and it has suited us and it's been successful. So it's the permissions within a very democratic collaborative consensual framework that have been so good ... [the] power is all given our way, without the department riding rough shot over us to ensure other things happen.*

His commitment to the process is backed up by the results, even though 'outrider' status sometimes sticks:

> *we're considered mavericks and different, however, we don't see ourselves like that. It's important for us to go our own way and if we're considered mavericks or rebels so be it, but we have the outcomes to validate what we're saying. But the challenge is, 'never believe your own rhetoric'.*

The process itself is given credit for change:

> *the real power is the conversion of the priorities into the inquiry approach problems, that's the real power of what happens at Matterslea. SAW is a* fait accompli *[rubber stamp] now whether that be good or bad I don't know but SAW meetings tend to be a bit lack- luster.*

The principal's comment about SAW's rubber stamp quality reflects, more than anything, the community's trust in the staff. The peak of SAW activity was during the establishment phase, but after that, termly meetings sufficed for governance purposes. The Principal's perception was that *"if the staff seem to be doing a good job [parents] prefer to leave us alone ...if you're not stuffing up then you don't fix it".*

Community interviews of both the 1997 and 1998 rounds showed that logistics were perhaps a greater factor than the Principal was ready to acknowledge. The great majority of parents appear to take a supportive/reactive position in protection of scarce time and to maintain flexible casual work availability. However, teachers at Matterslea have been positive in a 'power-sharing' with parents, best exemplified by the cadres. The following train of responses from the 1999 Teacher Focus Group Interviews gives a representative picture:

> *Tr 1: ... they're often more down to earth and realistic than we are...*
> *Tr 2: They haven't developed jargon but they know what they want to say and*
> *Tr 3: It develops the school community unity, it's not just us, it's parents and teachers*
> *Tr 2: and primary students.* (Primary group, 1999)

Teachers repeatedly cite work overburden as hindering their effectiveness. The following comment from a 2000 interview with the Early Childhood group of teachers at Matterslea highlights this perception. The female teacher had three years in the ASP program:

> *The thing is ... it's a small school and we have got so many priorities like if anything I'm like snowed under by all these different things that have been put on us and we're all so busy, and because there's so few of us. If there's going to be a library meeting well then you know, basically everyone needs to go, if you're going to have a social you know, it's such a small number of us that we all have to go. You know, we're pushed to the limit, we're stretched as far as we go, we don't have a lot more to give.* (ECE group, 2000)

Workload was seen as complicated by interacting closely with parents:

> *Tr 1: It's hard being with a parent as well in our cadre, they, I think they expect us to do more and they ask us more things.*
>
> *Tr 2: No, they haven't jumped at the opportunity to take a leadership role with the cadre, with the food fair, not when they're asked to take on an up-front role or co-ordination* ... (ECE, 2000)

'Teacher empowerment' has been described as simply a euphemistic way of saying the responsibility for outcomes is more wholly owned by teachers (Smyth, 1991) — and the response of one male parent in the first round of interviews shows a similar suspicion may be held by some parents in the Matterslea community Teachers are in a bind when they want to form a responsibility-sharing partnership with the community but still doubt the capacity of many families to make positive contributions. A positive corollary to parents' lack of expertise in pedagogy is that, despite some teachers' perceptions of the inadequacy of parent input, there is no evidence of Matterslea teachers feeling threatened by parents who 'think they know better', a phenomenon that became a central contention in the Chicago Schools project of community ascendancy (Bryk et al, 1999). When interviewed in 2000 about what she had taken from her four years of experience with Matterslea's ASP cadres, the retiring secretary of the PTA showed her growing empowerment and belonging:

> *I've become able to speak more, and from the PTA, too. That's taught me computer skills and skills as a secretary. Being in the cadre lets me know what's going on. I can identify as a learner ... the Teaching and Learning Cadre is more focused [than the School Image and Communication Cadre] – more demanding on thought, your input. It got a bit over my head, I didn't have the background to the issues as much so I wasn't able to make as much input. Now I've gone into the other cadre and that's easier to get into.* (Cadre Parent, Interview, 2000)

Leadership and colleague changes

It is to be expected that in any school there will be changes in leadership and teaching staff, arguably more the case in 'hard-to-staff' schools. Schools and models they use for renewal must be able to accommodate these pressures that can represent significant losses of committed personnel with significant accrued experience of the particular reform model. Matterslea coped well with the eventual changeovers of staff and principal that occurred. By 2000, it had embedded the ASP process's democratic principles of governance and consensual, deliberated action research on shared priorities. Teacher turnover was minimal for the establishment phase and for most of the consolidation phases. So, when over the period from 2000 to end 2001 some half the staff moved on through the State's transfer system, the new staff were met by committed and experienced others.

To promote their understanding of the model and their commitment to the school's purposes in it, a whole-community review of the Vision's currency and the priorities was conducted. Of all the factors within ASP, the Vision-forging and the utility of the vision over time are mentioned by the Principal as most important to the success of school renewal:

> *Almost everything we do has been ... true to our vision rather than a Department one so, yeah, the ASP has been still the core of us, and it has enabled us to achieve our vision, what we have, yes, you know, that's been the umbrella. Our leadership must be from our values and the vision and our ability to influence people with leadership rather than with the carrot and stick mentality.* (Principal 1, Interview, 2000).

The Vision-checking and re-prioritising exercise is more closely examined in the following chapter's section concerning organisational learning. In the coach's mind-frame, I was intent that opportunities for ownership by new members were provided, but also that the consensual and transparent nature of decision-making in the school would be modeled to new staff. As will be shown, even the continuation of ASP itself as the school's development model was thrown open to help the 'old guard' of experienced Matterslea members either recommit to, or reject, the model. In short, the 'review' reaffirmed the Vision and gave new teachers and families an opportunity to put fresh directions into the reform agenda, assessing which priorities remain current and which challenges were now most pressing. Again, transparency and inclusive participation advanced the sense of ownership in both new and experienced members.

Late in 2000, a new principal was appointed to fill the temporary vacancy at Matterslea when the principal of nearly four years was seconded to a District-wide appointment. The

changeover was necessarily quite rapid because the secondment had arisen because of a traumatic accident to a Principal ASSR officer. The new principal to Matterslea came brought an appreciation of the ASP model's centrality to school matters, but had no District guidance on whether or how to continue Matterslea's ASP process. Having been appointed on a temporary basis, she had little time and preparation to pick up the nuts and bolts of the ASP process, and no real knowledge of what long-term stake she might have in the reform's success. Early in Term 3, 2000, when the likelihood of a principal change was mooted, primary teachers were asked, in a focus group interview, what might happen in the school with respect to ASP if the current principal was to move from Matterslea. Teachers were agreed they did not wish to see their empowerment dissipated. If the ASP process was wound down, they were convinced they would '*lose power*'. The following response exemplifies teachers' fears:

> *You'd lose momentum and that would be a shame, after having it work, and without it, you know, there might be some people who would then just go through the routine processes.*

The 'power' potentially lost was not 'positional' or hierarchical weight, but grounded in the ASP process and the relationship with the leader. At risk was trust and candour: "*with* [the current Principal] *you can be fairly open but if whoever came wasn't that sort of person then...you'd do more tongue biting*". Despite their trepidation, there was a degree of understanding shown by teachers of the task ahead of any new principal:

> *It's going to be hard on them though, if they don't know anything about the process, to come in and ...if they' weren't going to have the same understanding and same passion for the school ...still, you have to see if they can look it this way.*

Although clearly attached to ASP and democratic leadership as an empowering combination, teachers remained open to change as shown by the early childhood teachers responding to the same probe:

> *it's a lot easier to keep it on and then later on if you wanted to change, if you didn't like it and wanted to change things, well fair enough and you've given it a go.*

The Primary teacher focus group indicated there was a strong 'self-winding' attribute to the school around ASP, and that in procedural terms, succession could be an effortless event if the new leader so wished. The governance processes did not depend at all on executive input:

> [Principal (1)] *doesn't have a key role in it so if the person who comes in is happy to sit back like and let it run like it does, and, and you can if you've been there a long ... you know, it needs someone to be a bit enthusiastic about it.*

The succeeding Principal acknowledged when interviewed (July, 2001) that the reception had been convivial, indicating a positive school climate:

> *Certainly coming into the school you couldn't ask for a more welcoming staff who were wanting to work with a new principal I never at any time felt any sense of "Here's a new person, what can we do to put her into the Matterslea way". But it is certainly the Matterslea way.*

In parents' views, the ASP was an under-utilised but highly valued open door to the school's decision-making agenda. When interviewed late in 2000, a retiring PTA executive member (also an active cadre participant) gave insights into the community's perception of ASP:

> *Four year on I can say it's been a major boost for the school. ASP and Paul started at the same time, I wonder if it has been ASP the Principal or both ...things are happening and that's good to see.*

To this parent spokesperson, the success of ASP was indistinguishable from the leadership style of the principal. It appears a democratic Principal will benefit from having a governance structure that releases him/her from the driver's seat, the power-broking and managerialism that such a role can entail. Conversely, a model such as ASP can only achieve its potential with well-informed, leadership committed to democratic process. In her 2001 interview, the current principal expressed an open mind to the ASP process:

> *Certainly I was aware of that whole issue of the poverty culture and what that looked like at Matterslea and I was certainly excited about what I had heard about the collaborating processes ... I was a bit daunted by the notion of what ASP meant because it formed a framework of all decision making in the school and how the school operated ... how I would be able to keep that process working in a school that had already made quite a strong commitment to it.*

The reflection shows the context into which the new principal entered was one that had internalised and institutionalised the principles. The Vision had been reconfirmed just prior to succession, and there was a firm history of distributed leadership involving multiple membership groups. Time had led the succeeding principal to understand more of the process and struggles her staff were having with reviewing it:

> *I guess I am now more comfortable with the ASP process initially given the fact that I didn't know much about it, and it took some time to get up and moving ... getting to the school community asking them the questions, taking quite a bit of time to get the responses back. When you're new to a school you are energized and ready to move and want to do things, so there was frustration for me and possibly a few staff.*

The ASP Questionnaire results of 2001 and related interviews show that while personnel turnovers pose a challenge to maintaining social capital and reform momentum, the nature of

ASP governance is such that it does not require a whip hand or 'executive intervention' to keep it in train. In simple bureaucracies, the transitions are arguably not as complex as in comprehensive schoolwide reform, but with ASP, collective responsibility and agreed Vision would appear to provide stability through its predictability and transparency. Though not reducing complexity, it deals with it methodically and with distributed capacity.

The coach as a player

The coach's role is central to ASP implementation, largely to help the school find its way through the Establishment phase's many-stepped pathway to agreed priorities. I found that once the process of comparing the current baseline against the ideal has translated to a Vision and a well-grounded set of agreed priorities, the 'leadership' aspects of coaching ASP were done, and the 'guidance/troubleshooting' role began, mapping and modelling the language and procedures of the Inquiry process in particular.

The two stages of coaching were fairly distinct in my experience. In the early implementation, particularly the preliminary taking stock and helping structure the collection and analysis of data through brainstorms and interviews, for example, I found I was able free the Principal of the perception that he was driving the process. He was visible as offering ideological or 'moral' leadership or encouragement while I manipulated the human resources and timetables of meetings and data gathering and allowed him to maintain focus on the day-to-day role he had with parents, teachers, discipline issues etc. At SAW meetings with staff and with families, he was able to make clear his confidence in the process, in peoples' ability to take new roles and in the school's capacity to run against the tide of top-down initiatives that might be identified as irrelevant to Matterlea's circumstances. I was then able to 'take over' the conduct of the meetings as the problem-posing and data-gathering began, much of which directly reflected on teachers' and the leadership's professional orientations. Encouragement was a valid '*subjective*' zone for the principal; but in data gathering, the interpretation or categorisation of school members' opinions, and the framing of the resulting priorities, he had to be and be seen as *objective*. The agenda could only be effective if collective in spirit and fact. So while he acted as the pastoral minder of the renewal, I, along with the senior teacher and parent leaders went about the pragmatic aspects of the model's procedural implementation.

Interviewed some years after the Establishment phase, teachers were asked about factors that had been helpful or had hindered the renewal and what advice might be offered to schools in

similar situations. One experienced Primary teacher with five years at the school spoke for the group:

> *I think you need a coach to start you off, get us on our way, and I think the way you did it was, I don't know of any other way you could do it, I think your role was justifiable, kept us on track.* Tr, Primary group, 2000 Interview.

The 'justification' referred to my role as a sometimes inflexible organizer of the process. The principal had a different perception that focused more on my role in the Consolidation phase. He saw that the constant tendency in his school was to adaptation and that *someone* was indeed needed to keep the very human process 'on track' with the model:

> *If we hadn't had a coach we would have mongrelised the ASP to suit our specific purposes. I think it's important to have a coach to keep you true to form, because if you don't, you will amend, adapt, make easy, fit time parameters, not go back to your vision as much, not seek your previous priorities, you'll go to other priorities, be driven by the here and now rather than the long term. So I think the coach has been very important as far as that's concerned.*

The stability and maintenance of process focus afforded by having a coach was also affected by turnover of staff. Over the last two years of my study period, I had progressively had withdrawn from a directive coaching role for the process. I had thesis writing to complete and a full time lecturing role to fulfil. Under conditions of a stable and experienced staff at Matterslea, my 'fading' worked well. My expectation was that the withdrawal process would hasten the emergence of an 'internal' ASP coach from staff ranks. Principal (1) had suggested that remote coaching (by an off-site-based person who was 'on-call') would work as things stood in 2000, but that in the event of principal succession a hands-on role by an external coach would be required again.

When asked directly about succession issues, teachers did not believe that in the event of a new principal they would be well placed to fill that role, as relationship building must precede the trust needed by a staff member-as-coach. Teachers raised 'release time' as a critical condition of having an 'internal coach' drawn from the teaching ranks. As the budget was collaboratively set in the school, they knew how little money was available for coaching as a recurrent cost. An even greater deterrent was in staff's reticence to change the egalitarian esprit de corps they shared with their peers. They claimed this would naturally be lost if one of them undertook the role of 'coach'. Because I took a deliberate 'objective' (not neutral) position, emphasizing data-based, authentic and well-represented (i.e. inclusive) decisions, my other role as researcher was a compatible one. By the time I withdrew more

to assemble and analyse the outcomes, there was a strong sense of ownership of the process in the members and the account was one the teachers in particular wished to see told. As mentioned in Chapter Five, almost all the data gathered for my study served first for the school's decisional bases (baselines and priorities), cadre Inquiry and periodic priority resetting exercises. Certainly it should be noted that once a coaching or related role in change agency is taken with a school by a researcher, the data gathering and the data must be treated as collaboratively owned, and the interpretations must be accessible, transparent and tentative before the group. To do otherwise in the context of participatory renewal would cause irreparable loss of coherence, empowerment and authenticity from the project.

7. 5 Summary of governance outcomes through the Consolidation Phase (Phase 2)

The consolidation phase had successfully embedded ASP governance process in the school, centred on the cadres' work. In the face of volatilities like principal succession and staff turnover, the model's processes had offered key resources of transparency and stability towards building the school's resilience. Many school challenges in policy and practice had been met, and teachers and parents valued the process's effectiveness, although certain problems of efficiency had emerged with the Inquiry Process central to ASP reform.

Matterslea's consolidation phase is characterized by its operationalisation or institutionalization of the inclusive, participatory governance processes central to ASP. Continued outreach to community in the cadres' data-based work gave practical, ongoing significance to the notion of the 'School-as-a-Whole'. The unity and empowerment felt by teachers and parents arguably had its roots in the inclusive, trust-building activities of taking stock, vision-forging, priority-setting during the Establishment phase. In particular, the Vision has been a keel to the *Consolidation* phase's journey.

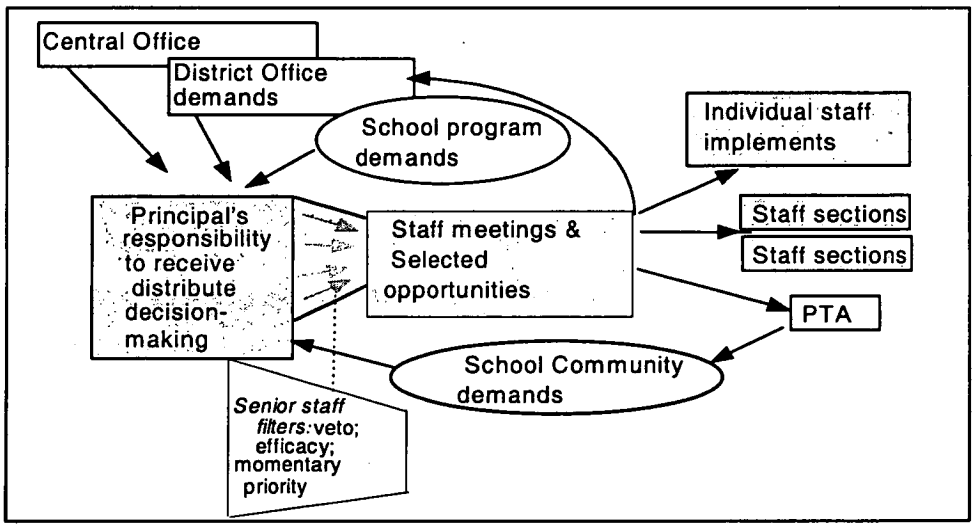
Over the *Consolidation* phase of 1998, 1999 and 2000, it emerged that the single most powerful forum for decisions at Matterslea was the *cadre*. In the Establishment phase, the SAW had been the active 'peak body', but as the school became caught up in action planning and associated professional development, the SAW reduced in functional importance while the cadres 'did the work'. The practical ethic is a strong validator in teachers eyes, it appears, especially when already the Vision and the priorities were acknowledged as grounding points. In the beginning phase, when platforms are being laid, and changes in direction are large, the SAW had become almost fully engaged and an important source of

information and inspiration. In the well insitutionalised phase, the tendency from cadre level and leadership was to communicate progress but not to seek approval or distraction.

A pre-and post picture of Matterslea's governance

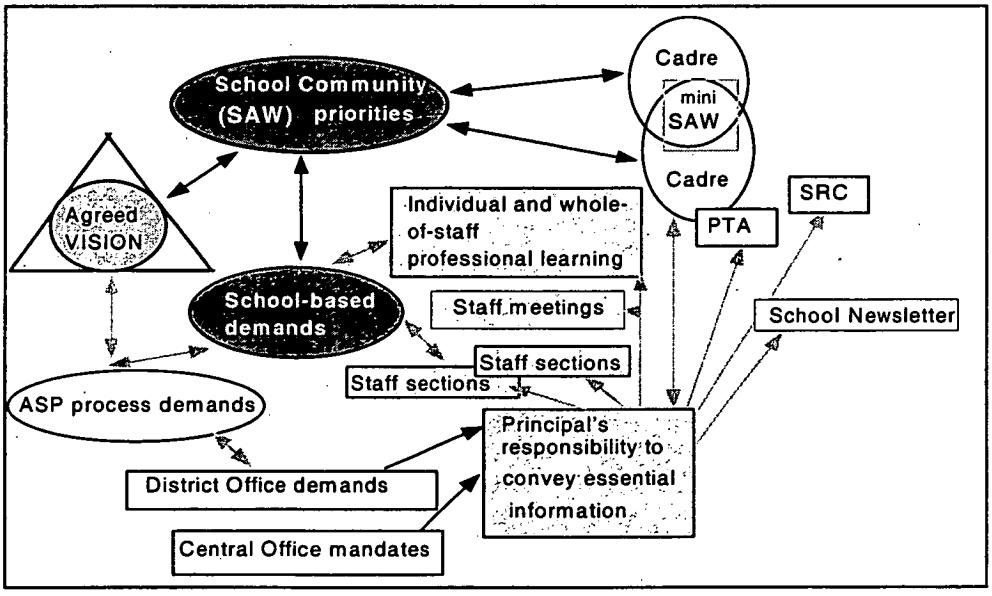
Towards the end of 2000, I constructed the following diagrams (Fig. 7.3 and Fig 7.4) to compare my perceptions of past and present school governance structures and functioning at Matterslea. I presented the diagrams to be 'member-checked' with teachers and cadre parents in the last ASP Cadre meeting of 2000 (Nov. 25). Each was endorsed by the staff as being accurate in itself (*Coach's Journal*, Dec, 2000).

Figure 7.3 Matterslea's Decision processes *prior* to 1997



The centrally directed picture of Fig. 7.3 is contrasted in Fig. 7.4 with the 2000 established after three solid years of ASP process:

Figure 7.4 Matterslea's decision-making processes at Nov. 2000



The pattern described in the first diagram, Fig. 7.3, conforms closely to the management-directed style described by Owens (1998) and Tannenbaum & Schmidt (1973). By contrast, Fig. 7.4 shows a significantly more distributed decisional responsibility. The notable advances in the 2000 'picture' are: (i) a greater number of active member group forums (arguably with greater input opportunity levels); (ii) an inversion of the dominance of external office influences; and (iii) a change in the Principal's directive role to one of facilitative responsibility.

Evidence offered in the section confirm the following developments from Matterslea's governance under ASP process:

- *Inclusiveness* through: community-member self-selection; giving time for a shared picture and ongoing school/community reflexivity; *Transparency of process* and rich *communication towards understanding and trust-building* -
- *Equity in decision-making participation* through: hands-on participation as the primary opportunity; membership as a right to participation, consultation and communication;
- *Consensus* (the pervasive criterion of appropriate decision-reaching), - in Matterslea's case, rich shared picture-building and information sharing was an investment of time at one foundational end to save time at the deliberative end (consensus was usually very quick to achieve);
- The School *Vision became a reference* point or criterion in a wide range of decisions; it was highly valued by leadership and teacher members in particular, but only active parents seem to have had continuous regard for it;
- *The use* of *data-driven Inquiry Process* has had four years as the only constant central procedural technique of team effort on priority challenges; it has effected many priority-meeting actions and according to ASP Questionnaires, is a generalised approach to addressing problem solving (i.e. data-based, rather than expeditious 'tasking').

Several unanswered challenges have also arisen in Matterslea's governance practices:

- *The Inquiry process is The use of the 'fast-track' Inquiry 'approach'* – a policy or transparent guidelines required to manage when and how streamlined decision-making should occur.
- Improving the process participation of *marginalised and self-marginalising member groups including men, indigenous community groups, Casual, ancillary and part-time staff*;
- *The appropriateness of the Inquiry process* for meetings including larger numbers of student and community members;
- *Student voice*- how to improve its impact on schoolwide core agenda decisions.

After the *Establishment* phase's extensive, community-unifying exercise of Vision and priority setting, the *Consolidation's* week-by-week governance process presented strong

challenges for each key member group. Most of the difficulties centred on the complexity of the Inquiry Process of the cadres. While teachers emerged with an attachment to the empowerment they had gained through distributed leadership and direct input to school agenda priorities, students had required a forum of their own, and parents' ownership was coming more from being 'reached' and 'included' than through broad-spread participation as it had been in the *Establishment* phase.

By 2001, the school had embedded an ASP-centred form *and* function in its decision-making forums. It had reviewed its governance practices thoroughly at the end of 2000 and 2001, and decided to move ahead with the existing ASP configuration, although the frequency of meetings was reduced to one cadre meeting in every three weeks. It was beginning through questioning such challenges as those above, to re-author or, rather, self-author the ASP process to its own contextual requirements. An important aspect of those requirements was the logistical, day-to-day demands of schooling. Time constraints had been shown to influence meeting arrangements; externally mediated curriculum structures such as the trailing of the PASS (Program of Additional Support) *(see Glossary, p.350)* required time for Professional Development to set up the Centrally sponsored program, and considerable time to assess students using Clay's (1993a) Running Record before the program could be fully implemented. These time-and-timing issues were, like those of communication, central to Matterslea's challenges reasoning in workplace and program organisation.

7.6 Changes in Matterslea's Workplace and School Program Organisation

The operational aspect of organisational culture: School as workplace

The second research question emphasises organisational culture, positionally bridging governance and learning, asking: "How has the implementation of the process influenced outcomes in the areas of (a) School governance; (b) ***Workplace and school program organisation***; and (c) Teaching and learning?" If changes in Matterslea's governance forms and functions did not affect the way Matterslea school went about its teachers' roles and the institution's interactions with its community constituents, the model could not be claimed to have altered the school's organisational culture.

The Literature Review indicated that school restructuring is a subset of school reform that focuses on the programmatic and formal resource arrangements of schools' work. Members'

literal roles and the operational supports (resources, time, spaces) of those school-as-workplace roles must be acknowledged in any analysis of a *comprehensive* school reform. Semantic problems of the term 'workplace' are obvious when it is used to describe a community-inclusive context or a very public organisation. It can cause difficulties in conceptualising the 'working environment' of practice and possibility for the broader range of member groups in schools. A more useful semantic approach to the school as a situation that engages the labours (professional and 'labours of love') of the collective school is Hopfenbeg et al.'s (1993) use of the term context to describe the supportive elements of classroom, school, District and the broader community of business agencies and tertiary education interests. Hopfenberg et al (1993) list four elements of schools' 'organisation':

- The availability and use of material, financial, and informational resources
- The physical environment
- The creative organisation and use of time and timing
- The social environment (p. 252).

These situational factors at Matterslea have surfaced as logistical 'cartilage' between governance and organisational learning. When summarizing an extensive investigation of the Chicago Schools reform that hypothesized the positive association of school governance devolved to the community and the school's learning capacity, Bryk et al (1998) asserted,

> The common rhetoric today, that states and districts set the goals and leave it up to schools to achieve these goals, glosses over the very real consideration that how to get there is the problem. (p 269)

The elements of (i) *communication resources* and (ii) *time* are central to this thesis' contribution to the plea made by Bryk et al. (1998). Governance, as decision making simply can not be treated as superficial to democratic, participatory, emancipatory, inclusive reform. The fear that a focus on governance will distract from learning is founded on a misconception about the focus and content of decision-making and the centrality of pedagogy to the school's main decisional agenda. However the connections between governance and learning have not received convincing or grounded explanation in reform accounts to date. In this section and in the following two chapters, the roles of communication as an enhancer and time as a potential impediment to organisational learning capacity are given greater clarity and prominence in school renewal's synergy of governance and learning *through* the important mediating roles of organisational factors.

'Communication' as outreach

The study's account of The Establishment phase demonstrated the impact of Matterslea's schoolwide distribution of video information on classroom practice. That and other deliberate improvements of information sharing had a clear influence on school/community trust (transparency), building the shared picture for more 'grounded' collective deliberation, and a remarkable leap in feedback rates from the community. The phase saw 'insider', program-active members reaching out in a visual medium popular with families whose members may not always have the involvement in school that they would prefer. The unspoken message was a commitment: we (teacher) share; you tell; we listen; we *all* act.

The inclusion of the broader school Matterslea community required attention to the participation difficulties expressed in the Establishment phase's community interviews. More willing than able, the parents had work and young, potentially disruptive children to account for, as well as a lifetime in many cases of aversion to schools they identified as beyond their 'rightful' place. Though many of the barriers were internal to community members, rather than realities of the contemporary situation, they were nevertheless potent.

Much early communication in the ASP process was devoted by teachers and active parents to getting community along in numbers to make critical decisions on the school's future priorities. The very first Matterslea meeting to which both parents and staff were invited in 1997 had attracted the 'usual six' family representatives, all of them women.

Against an apparently intractable situation, a new strategy was employed. This involved drafting personalised invitations, with students writing their parents' names on notes given our individually (rather than a notification in the school newsletter, the Mayday. The effect was significant. The number who came from the community to the next combined meeting of the school community was around 40. This strategy was repeatedly employed until the cadres were operating, though with diminishing response over the time 1997 to 1999. The diminishment was natural in so far as those who wanted to have their say or 'input' into the new agenda had done so, and those who wished to take an implementation role (to act *upon* the agenda), or even to continue to shape the agenda as the ASP process allows, did so through their involvement in *SAW*, *cadre* and *Steering Committee* involvement.

A number of communication innovations were developed to broaden member groups' inclusion in the process. In part that inclusivity was an end in itself. But there were practical

benefits as well as ideological reinforcement. For instance mixed-member analysis teams of parents and teachers work to collate and interpret transcripts of community interviews, conducted at the two intervals (1997 and 1998). This example of 'distributed cognition' improved the validity of the analysis as well as giving each member group and insight into issues of importance to families and teachers respectively. While some of the data was quantitative, the greater part was qualitative, open commentary. Such collaboration is ideal for extending discourse and deliberation.

It is a significant fact that more than half of the parents who participated in the shared analysis teams went on to become cadre members at some point over the following three years. Consultation is a valued condition of inclusion. It was such members as these who had made the observation given earlier in the chapter, "*You couldn't be made to feel more part of it*" regarding the ASP's implementation. For them, an "*equal footing*" with professional educators was not inhibiting, but stimulating. Further, responding was one level of empowerment; digesting and analyzing their peers' anonymously represented views raised their empowerment to a level of trust and responsibility.

The Taking Stock period of the *Establishment* had provided similar opportunities to the community in the context of School-as-a-Whole meetings. With the deliberative focus shifting to cadres in the consolidation period, a challenge presented to extend community participation at more analytical levels of participation. The expansion of social cognition placed a greater onus on school/community communication, which it was able to accommodate.

One important contribution included the establishment of an ASP notice board in the main corridor. On the initiative of the School Image and Communication cadre, minutes and notices were made available there, as well as summaries of planned actions that went in the *Mayday*. As with most communication initiatives under ASP, this strategy served to inform the community as well as ensure transparency. In the second round of community interviews held in 1998, one mother claimed to appreciate the notice board being there even though after three months she had not yet read it!

A second set of videos was produced late in 1998 on the initiative again of the School Image and Communication (SI &C) cadre, to show parents in particular the range of involvement opportunities presented by ASP forums (SAW and cadres) and more general avenues such as

classroom help, social events and tutoring. This distribution of multiple-copied videos also was accompanied by a questionnaire, the results of which are discussed in Chapter Eight. At this point in the argument, suffice is to say the methods' success as a feedback generating mechanism was confirmed. Ninety-two responses were received from 180 distributions. While this was down from 160 returns of the first video's questionnaire, it was still strong given the fact that very few children featured in the footage, and hence held less curiosity appeal. It was produced for an adult audience, to promoted adult involvement addressing quite a different set of motivations to the classroom 'fly-on-the-wall' viewpoint of the first video. It was pressing the limits of community capacity.

Communication emerged in this period to be as much an imperative as a priority. In school renewal, especially in communities where involvement in the school program can more often mean a revisiting of awkward experiences, demands of speaking in public, 'acting the expert' or assuming an equality with professionals, effective one-step-removed forms of communication are important bridges on the way to a more comfortable engagement within the school site. Communication also accounts for involvement obstacles as child-rearing (not always one's own) and the vagaries of casual and shift work. In this sense, communication *is* empowerment, engagement and ownership.

The mechanisms behind school and community communication processes have been shown clearly in this study to affect each domain of governance, organisation and pedagogy. An inescapable conclusion that this study asserts is that communication is the oil in the machine of renewal. The appropriateness and reciprocity of communication has been not been attributed the importance it warrants - it would appear from this study that communication links the schools three operational domains more than any other 'condition' of reform or general school activity. The key examples in the Matterslea case are its video communication and the rich shared picture building of the Establishment phase. The case study has 'tracked' these exchanges from consensus building for Vision-led priorities to parent-teacher exchange, through to schoolwide capacity, including family learning, to student learning outcomes and organisational resilience.

Time and Timing

As in so many organisational change situations, time and timing have been evident as important logistical considerations in the Establishment phase and governance developments at Matterslea. Time has proven to be a key factor mediating the difference between working

class parents 'willingness' to participate ' and their being 'able' to do so. Shiftwork and non-access to child care impinge on 'availability'. Scarcity of time is not a concern held only by double-income middle class families. Surveys at Matterslea show that 'more' community members can attend during the hours of 1-3 pm; however that precludes many men and a group of women who study or work full time. Time's scarcity has also seen the Steering Committee largely coalesce to a combined cadres/ mini-SAW sharing meeting held following Inquiry Process work. Time influences 'inclusiveness' of the ASP process at Matterslea, as students are reluctant to stay 'after school' for cadre participation. Therefore, the effective and sensitive utilization of time has emerged as a key issue in this thesis.

Program re-organisation through 'captured time'

Perhaps the most significant organisational change since the inception of the ASP process at Matterslea has been the 'capturing of time' to free up Wednesday afternoons for cadre and PD purposes. Matterslea's strong consensus on supporting the reconfiguration of the weekly school timetable is described earlier in Chapter Six. Matterslea was the first school in Tasmania to achieve cost-neutral school development planning time by employing the method of working fifteen minutes longer on four school days to shorten the school day by an hour on , in Matterslea's case, Wednesday of each week. Staff and community could work on cadres' Inquiry Process or structured professional learning from around 2:00 to 4:00. No substitute teaching time was required, and staff could be home at their usual hour, reducing stress that might otherwise be built up through 'overtime' in an already crowded school week. The idea had come from an ASP email exchange, reported through the Missouri ASP network, and was championed by Matterslea's senior teacher of 1997-99. Staff at the school have embraced this idea as part of the 'Matterslea Way'. Responding to the question, "What suggestions do you have for would be ASP schools?" teachers in a Primary focus group interview responded, "*I think you definitely need allocated time to achieve what we do*" and "*You couldn't do it otherwise, it would be too much to ask, this way you can manage it and it works well but unless you did that I think you'd be struggling*".

Some four years after Matterslea first re-organised to 'capture time' for planning and development, several schools Tasmania have attempted to follow Matterslea's example through various versions of 'time capturing'. There is currently a conflict in which a Tasmanian government school, supported by its Minister, is at loggerheads with a group of its parents over teachers' motives and values in a proposed captured-time 9-day fortnight.

State guidelines for school hours re-organisation have recently been formulated by the teacher union, DoE and parent bodies, but reaching the agreed 75% approval from the particular community's parent population has 'sparked widespread controversy' (Sunday Examiner, 2003, p. 12). One school in a middle-class suburb, for instance, has established a regimen in which it 'banks' time to allow it a student-free day once every few months. This suggestion would be less popular at Matterslea because partnership possibilities for parent/teacher teams (cadres) would be limited by it. As an 'outcome', Matterslea's 'time-capturing' shows that innovation in a system prompts schools to think beyond the bounds of their experience in school program organisation. In a more highly regulated, tightly isomorphic system, such innovation would be improbable.

The balance of time devoted to cadres' Inquiry Process and professional development

In Matterslea's collective decision making processes, Professional Development has become a central consideration in program restructuring. The timing and content of structured professional learning has influenced ASP process to a great extent. No investigators of school reform should be surprised by the 'potency' of professional learning as a factor. It has been the subject of a whole 'movement' of reform thinking, especially school improvement and school renewal advocates (Darling-Hammond, 1993, 1995; Hargreaves & Evans, 1997b; Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1994; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Stoll, Reynolds, Creemers & Hopkins, 1996). Each situates teacher competency as the most critical factor in school reform for student learning.

Matterslea's emphasis on teacher development has resulted from both personal and the technical motives in teachers' work. On one hand teachers recognize that they are impermanent elements in Matterslea's context—they will move on and their CVs must carry evidence of appropriate (up-to-date) professional learning if they are to be competitive in promotion. On the other hand, they have entered what Stoll et al. (1996), citing Fullan's (1991) change forces work, refer to as a period of "destabilization" (Stoll et al., 1996, p. 143). In Matterslea's case, teachers have been drawn into a discourse through the *cadres* and related professional development (largely in-school) that has rendered as problematic their assumptions about effective learning. Suspension of judgment concerning 'solutions' to prioritized problems is basic methodology in the Inquiry-based cadre teams. Hence, the staff have been placed in a condition of professional learning where their knowledge base

has been opened to change by the demands of their context , while a continuity of practice (relative to other schools) has necessarily been forced by their vocational circumstances.

This has surfaced at a school program level in two ways. First the staff has, with the consensual agreement of the rest of the community, shifted from a fortnightly cadre meeting cycle to a three weekly cycle. The mixed motives of teachers were reflected in interviews and questionnaire responses towards the end of 2000. One full-time teacher wrote in the questionnaire: "*[We] have to ensure cadre [time] does not encroach on professional development time*" (Tr. Cadre Questionnaire, 2000). However, only one teaching member placed continuing professional development at 'highest priority' in the collective (SAW parent/teacher) priority review planning session held in December 2000. It is possible that teachers are sometimes reticent to be seen placing their personal professional needs ahead of what might be identified as more 'whole school' priorities.

At the end of 2000 there was a clear division shown in Cadre Questionnaire responses (Appendix Q) between staff who thought a cycle of every second week was appropriate and staff who favoured a three-weekly cycle. In the latter model, structured Professional Development would absorb two weeks of 'captured time', albeit on developing more powerful learning programming in the school, while the third week of 'captured time' would go to ASP cadre meetings. More on the reasoning that 'nothing ventured, nothing is gained', the consensus of cadre members supported the three week model, and gained SAW agreement to begin early in 2001. However, some active parents felt that the three-week a cycle might cause families difficulty in planning care.

The reaction from teachers to the changed process has been shown to be one largely of frustration. Both early childhood and primary sections claimed in interviews that, despite the increased professional development focus and time devoted to it, their Individual Professional Learning Plans (IPLPs), principal-negotiated capacity-enhancing targets asked by the Department from all teachers in public schools, have not been sufficiently fulfilled by the two PD weeks' sessions.

The Inquiry Process, already noted by teachers as difficult in its pacing, is further strained by the incursion of tangentially related professional learning activity at Matterslea. On retiring midway through 2001, a staff member who had been involved full time throughout four years of the ASP project at Matterslea wrote in a thank-you card to me, "*I am sorry to leave*

the cadre and I'm sorry it's not held often enough to be more effective, because like it is, it takes too long to effect changes" (August 2001).

Time is a scarce commodity, and for a small staff that must multi-task and 'be everywhere at once', time-and-motion economies will occur. The same pressures were at play when in 2000 the three cadres amalgamated into two. Many studies have been conducted concerning teachers' and students ' use of time in the classroom, but much less is known of time's uses in schoolwide organisational activity.

7.7 Synthesis of governance and organisational outcomes

Form and function: governance and organisation in relation to external and internal regulation

Bottom up reform initiatives are founded on the premise that academic and organisational 'solutions' are best conceived within the context of implementation. Paradoxically, Matterslea has used a renewal model that was designed well beyond its social and cultural boundaries, but which resonates well with their own emancipatory and contextual challenges: thin financial and intellectual capital; depressed educational horizons; scarce, crowded curriculum and planning time distracted by behaviour that is sourced beyond the classroom walls. The transferability of the values and forms inherent in ASP is confirmed by the use made of them in the Tasmanian public education context by Matterslea. The facilitating factor of democratic and vision-forging leadership seems to have escaped few participants. Without such encouragement, the members acknowledge little could be achieved even with the rigorous process. ASP's form is a vehicle that appears to offer room for distributed ownership and self-authoring of goals and related strategies. So while the governance form is a stabilizer, it is also a platform. Guided by learning-centred, inclusive ideals, the *functioning* of the model is where the context stamps its mark of ownership more fully on the interventions that spring the platform of thorough, whole-of-school shared picture building.

The chapter's analysis of Matterslea's outcomes in governance and situational conditions has implied that the interactivity of the form and function is found in patterns of communication. Social transaction is the dynamism that builds, designs, broadcasts, moderates and evaluates the interventions or 'strategies' expected of reform. At both the decision-making and implementation end of action planning, transparency is needed, but more importantly,

appropriate communication forms. Video is clearly a favourable format; however, ensuring culturally appropriate information flow within the cadres remains a pressing problem.

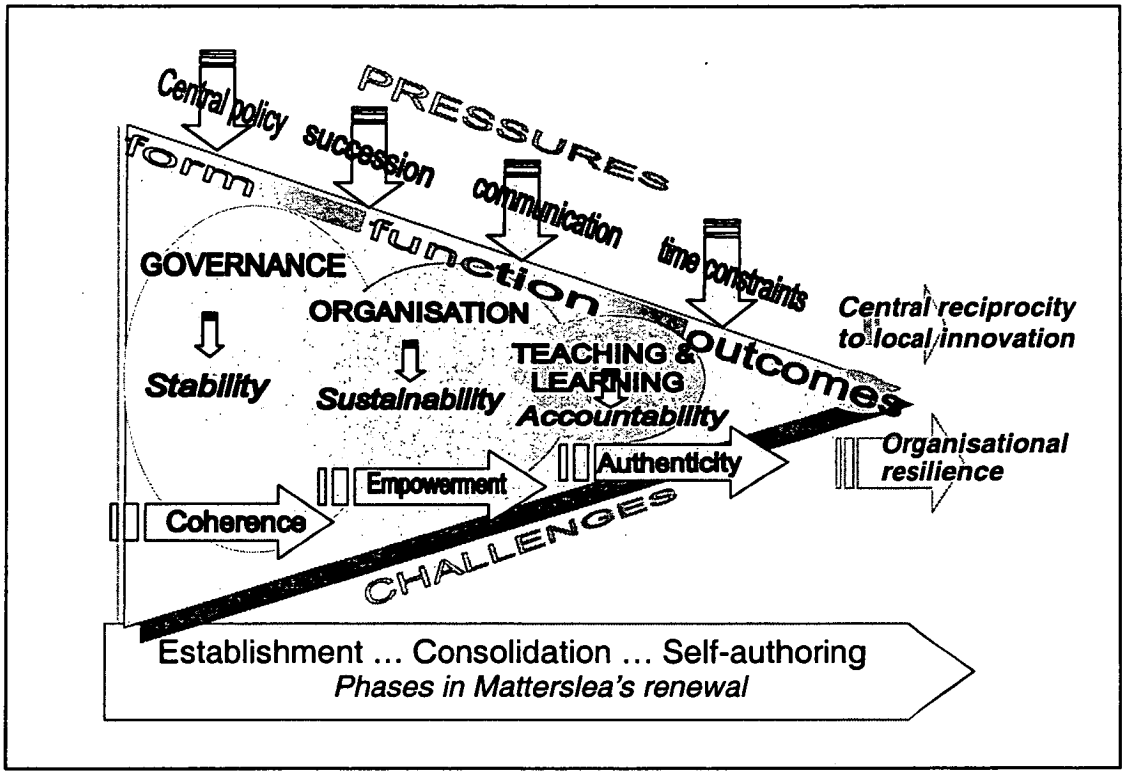
The 'compatibility' or coherence and alignment of the democratic form and participatory functioning affects the behaviour of the members. The active roles and functions have been described by Hutchison (1994) as the "dynamic reality of the organisation' (p. 10). The more distant the regulation of the 'form', the less interactivity or effect might be assumed to result from it. The *Consolidation* phase at Matterslea has revealed that the model, once embraced, is not distant, but is changed from its adoption towards ownership. The creative tensions of bottom-up and model-borne capacity are shown in the demands from teachers in particular that the change process (in both form and function) remains subject to contextually referenced adjustments. Stability in the form is complemented by adaptability in functions such as timing and communication.

In an example of system-wide, central policy, Matterslea is affected by the Tasmanian Department of Education's requirement that teachers will teach 2 hours of dedicated literacy time in a day. The impact of the central initiative and its reinforcement in the PASS program undertaken by Matterslea from 1998 to 2001, has in a number of ways conflicted with ASP's curricular and pedagogical constructivism of "powerful learning", as have some remedial aspects of PASS. As the following chapter explains, the tension has demanded compromises from Matterslea's teachers, particularly in respect of their development of Multi-layered Integrated Curriculum (MLIC). Yet teachers' creative accommodations do not seem recognized by Central Office through its evaluations or transparent feedback to schools. This is an illustration of what might be termed a one-way isomorphic dynamic of top-down initiatives.

The responsibility of central authorities to promote and sustain innovations from the context-up is heightened by the scarcity of time and energy in 'disadvantaged schools'. There are important opportunities for top-down and bottom up reciprocity of influence at the conjunction of school-level reform and Central policy, to act on the overlapping demands of school development planning (such as ASP or SIR) and state-wide curriculum reconceptualisation in the *Essential Learning Framework* (DoE, 2002).

The dynamics of form and function over time in renewal are noted in this chapter as having been generated through ASP deliberations and actions in response to context pressures and reform challenges. These are represented in Figure 7. 5:

Figure 7.5 Relationship of form and function to governance and organisational activity at Matterslea



The *challenges* of generating coherence, empowerment and authenticity are shown in the diagram as having been successfully addressed, and though not fully 'met', they have been brought into conscious engagement through the school's Inquiry actions. Authentic outcomes in organisational learning and resilience conditions are more fully addressed in the next chapter. The pressures are portrayed as both externally and internally sourced, while the challenges are largely dealt with through proximal, contextual actions in the ASP process.

The proximal/distal dialectic has been often raised in discussions about accountability by a number of system-advising educational organisation theorists such as Hargreaves (D) & Hopkins (1991), Fullan (1993b), Macpherson (1995), Hopkins & Lagerweij (1996); and Mawhinney (1995; 1998). The model in Fig. 7.4 might go some way to explaining how schools, in what is variously known as local school management, site-based management or

school-based renewal process, might be encouraged into a dialogue of praxis (Freire, 1972) with District and, ultimately, State offices. The loose-coupling of system-to-school in matters of curricular and pedagogical development has frequently been bemoaned (Cohen, 1995; Rossi & Montgomery, 1994) but has also at times been celebrated (Perrow, 1986; Martin, 1993). Accounting for this, the model intimates the promise of *school-led* articulation of proximal/distal links of practice *to* policy. Graves (1985) would acknowledge this expectation as a system-level 'reversing of the expert/novice relationship'.

Organisational response as a basis for sustainability of the renewal process.

We might judge that both governance and dynamic organisation of human and physical resources have been responsible for Matterslea's continued regard for ASP as its model of whole school renewal, if we employ Cuban's (1998) 'adaptability and longevity' as the practitioner's yardstick of success in school innovations. It is important that the school community's staying with or dropping ASP is viewed as a *choice,* hence, response. There have been no binds or coercion to the implementation, save participants' knowledge that in 1997, stakeholders agreed to attempt a six-year commitment. Few only of the witnesses to that informal commitment (which has no dollars embedded) remain in the ranks of those currently making such choices. Nor has there been any obligation placed upon Matterslea through funding linked to ASP. To the school and its District, ASP has been a cost-neutral engagement.

Adaptability has been evident in school organisation, shown through Matterslea's capturing of time, and the ability of the school to reconfigure its meeting frequencies without losing sight of the purposes set for those meetings. But that has been dependent on decision-making processes (governance) that could achieve change *with* full member involvement in a genuine consultative chain and *without* rancour , through consensual procedure. Further flexibility has been applied through the cadres' dual modes of action: the full Inquiry Process; and the faster-tracked, but still collectively moderated, 'Inquiry approach'.

Longevity is difficult to confer on an innovation, but at Matterslea it is significant that, even though no original staff from the initial buy-in stage remain and though its District Office has no mandate upon the school that it has ASP in place, it is still choosing to move ahead with the process. After six years of engagement in the model, and more than three of those spent in consolidating and institutionalizing the governance and workplace elements of ASP

organisational culture, there is strong evidence to conclude that the school *has* explicitly embodied the tenets of the model. However, a self-authoring stage is currently in place. Flexibility has been a characteristic of the Matterslea implementation from its inception, and marks a level of priority given by the Matterslea school to immediate, proximal concerns. Cuban's (1998) 'flexibility' criterion for success in reform has been evident in the school's organisational learning, rooted in a functional and productive process. It is on that basis that the organisation's exploratory behaviour has been able to function.

7.8 A synergy to governance and organisation

Governance serves a role beyond its 'ballast' function of providing regulation. It represents the whole that facilitates the sum of the parts, and is itself reflective of change. Every decisive point, every springboard to action, even every action, operates within the frame of governance. As curriculum design is to classroom programming, governance 's planning behaviour is to the total school program. Extending the analogy, like curriculum, it has form and function; like curriculum, design and delivery demand coherence.

Matterslea's governance is framed by the ASP form, but its function has been shown in the chapter to rely on the values of the members, brought to a working consciousness by a deliberately 'unsettling' leadership, to achieve action (or 'function') that is aligned with the democratic and authentic 'model'. The ASP process as a whole is supported by the members as producing significant changes in learning and member empowerment, although the Inquiry Process itself can present as an obstacle to non-teaching members' inclusion in agenda-setting (problem-posing) and action design (problem solving). The challenges for particular member groups noted earlier in the chapter have in great measure been met. Parents have gained access to decision-making power and opportunities on their own terms. Communication and transparency are their avenues to either direct or one-step-removed ownership of the school agenda. Appropriate communication has been revealed as a key to improving feedback and response rates to surveys.

Students have more difficult challenges than adults, because of the greater gap between their traditional 'status' and experience, and that of teachers and their families. They also suffer early lack of confidence in discourse, and interpreting the professional language codes of teachers. The use of class meetings and SRC meetings, alongside individual and group goal-setting, advance students 'voice' at Matterslea well beyond token involvement (Rafferty,

1997). However, full governance engagement is yet to be realized for Matterslea students. There is little research knowledge concerning primary age students' empowerment in core school agenda. Because ASP places a premium on students' governance input, and because Matterslea's evidence of cadre 'burn-out' for students matches observations of elementary ASP schools in California and Texas (Andrew, 1998), student voice in ASP would appear to warrant a place in the research interests of the ASP Center (University of Connecticut) and regional ASP 'satellite' centers.

In terms of empowerment and ownership of the school change agenda, teachers appear to have gained more than other member groups from the ASP governance processes. Theirs is almost a 'saturated' engagement. Problems have been noted in the balance of time devoted to their own PD and ASP forums, and for lay members particularly, there are serious challenges in the pacing of the Inquiry Process. Nevertheless, clear expressions of positive outcomes in empowerment have been offered broadly in teachers' interviews and their three ASP Questionnaire rounds and in interviews with cadre parents.

Participation in the core decision-making forums of cadres and to a lesser extent, SAW, was framed early by the Principal as the benchmark of empowerment and ownership for school members. Yet communication is shown in the Matterslea case to be critical to broader community involvement in whole school change. In communication, a coherence of democratic principles and the practice of is found.

In terms of pressures on the process, time has emerged as a key dynamic that influences values and practices of the change effort. Although it has been shown in the Establishment phase that 'spending time' can 'make time', especially towards a shared picture, the scarcity of time demands flexibility from a reform model. Matterslea's adjustments for time and timing have included the capturing of time by changed school hours, spacing cadres to one in every three weeks (after 2000), and using the last section of cadre afternoons to combine for swifter sharing of action agendas.

The nature of a school's organisational culture has emerged as differentiated along a continuum from implicit and 'understood' to explicit and formally instituted. The Matterslea 'way' exemplified in such culturally appropriate practices as inclusive and transparent decision-making, has accorded with the ASP model at the less formal 'implied' end of the spectrum. The middle ground is occupied by deliberated, context-referenced strategy, while

an agreed Vision sits at the most explicit and consensual end. Time has again been shown important as it is through experience that members gain an understanding of the 'way' a school will respond to crises or challenges in a variety of situations. Matterslea's organisational learning is shown to be an interaction of the 'experience' represented in the model itself, and the experiences of those who participate in 'meaningful decisions' around relevant school community issues. In an inclusive and transparent organisation, learning goes beyond the professional and the academic to a capacity argued in the following chapter as organisational resilience.

Chapters Six and Seven have emphasized reform challenges in maintaining coherence of reform goals with the school's governance and organisation in the face of many day-to-day challenges, and the 'outcome' of empowerment in the members undertaking the ASP process. The following chapter clusters outcomes from Matterslea's ASP implementation under the broad domain of 'teaching and learning'. Within that aegis, student learning, professional learning and community learning are each considered before the parts are analysed as the greater 'whole' of organisational learning, for which the current chapter has set the scene.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Developments and Outcomes in Teaching and Learning through Matterslea's ASP renewal

8.1 The scope of teaching and learning in renewal

Scholars of distributed cognition and social cognition assert that learning is primarily a social activity with a collective outcome, rather than simply an individually-bound phenomenon. As Moll (2000) was cited earlier as noting, "Human thinking is not always reducible to individual properties or traits" (p. 238).

It is the deliberative part of making decisions that takes learning to learn beyond early paradigms of learning through habituation and conditioning. Learning, as a means of emancipation has been a central tenet of counter-hegemonic education (Freire, 1972) and critical pedagogical theory (Carlson, 1993). Recent definitions of learning include the activity of the learner as critical to learning: learning is "a relatively permanent change in behaviour that results from practice or experience" (Vasta, Haith & Miller, 1995, p. 40). When discourse activity (or contestive conversation) becomes central to learning, and decisions become creative opportunities rather than simple choices, learning is more wholly conscious and purposeful than socialisation or even isomorphic patterning. Taken in terms of community development, emancipation is self-determined learning and reform is only appropriate when owned by those doing the reforming (Healy, 2000).

If socially distributed cognition is identified with learning through discursive experience, the mediating role played by a 'model' of reform (change) such as ASP is central to a school's identity as community of learners. In Rock & Ham's (1999) terms, ASP is a "process-oriented reform" (p.1), rather than being internally accountable solely for its academic outputs. The reform 'processes' are both formal and contingent: the formal aspects are conditions set up to guide change; the contingent aspects are operating conditions that

emerge from the more formal structures but are not less important, simply because they are the enacted decisions, where policy turns to praxis. Matterslea's organisational culture has evidenced a variety of process conditions on a continuum: cultural 'ways' through inquiry-generated policy through formalised governance procedures. However, ASP has also been seen in the previous chapters to be first and foremost an expression of values, and that those values or principles hold the immediate context of the school a the most important reference point, over and above ASP orthodoxy or Central mandates. The 'model' is a framework rather than a recipe or a routine. Each new connection in the scaffold structured by the ASP model to be a deliberative, collective and consensual point of discourse and decision.

Where Vygotsky conceived learning within a scaffold progressively constructed by a more experienced 'other' so that the learner can advance in challenging but achievable leaps (Smagorinsky & Fly, 1993), more recent metacognitive praxis has continued to shift towards learners as the primary initiators of learning. The collective environment of democratic and inclusive governance redistributes the expert/novice differential so that every individual member of the learning community is both learner and scaffold builder. In large part, this is the sense of ASP's principle of 'building on strengths'.

In whole school development, learning must be conceived on both individual and collective dimensions. Whether the content is academic or social, the learner can't be limited to 'student' - and the learner can't be considered 'solely' as individual members. Johnson & Johnson (1994) and Brody (1997) have showed how promising, but also how complex is co-operative learning, especially with novices in collaborative practice. Learning to learn makes thinking and other learning behaviours (including motor skills) amenable to conscious navigation, in an action learning cycle of inquiry, behaviour, and reflection. Goal-setting, attendant strategies and collective evaluation are the heart of learning process in the collaborative learning environment of ASP cadres and co-operatively operated classrooms.

Joyce & Calhoun (1996) suggest "the most important long-term outcome of instruction may be students' increased capabilities to learn more easily and effectively in the future, both because of the knowledge and skill they have acquired and because they have mastered learning processes" (p.6). If the "students" in this reflection is more inclusively defined as

'the learning community', the role of the model in facilitating discourse, focus and action is revealed as an important scaffold to organisational learning. The learning organisation is one that keeps its capacity growing. Made explicit by inquiry structures (cadres) and sharing structures (communication means), organisational learning extends the scaffold or framework in a wider can be tracked forward and backwards. Mastery in this sense is not simply benchmarked accomplishment; it is capacity built on the ability to understand, manipulate and where necessary adapt the learning processes. The discourse inclusive of all member groups (not necessarily simultaneous, all-in-one-place and all-at-one-time) is a condition of ASP's style of schoolwide comprehensive reform.

Many schools in low-income areas cannot take the resilience and self-righting capacity of their students and the whole school community for granted. They do not only seek outcomes of intellectual capital; they also have a responsibility to build 'process-oriented' social capital. Without the change conditions of adaptability and risk-taking, the maintenance conditions of stability and sustainability can't be supported. The weight of argument around a more socially and ambitiously purposed schooling has led a bevy of authors to conclude that the efforts of schools, teachers, students and families are devalued when governments rely on reductive, de-contextualised assessment of 'learning' (Apple, 1996b; Carlson, 1993; Hargreaves, 1997a). For accountability to contribute coherence to both central and local-context agendas, it must give attention to both individual and socially mediated outcomes, and to both intellectual and social capital. Schoolwide reforms such as ASP do not shirk the issue of student performance; indeed they hold such outcomes as paramount. However, they recognize a more comprehensive set of learning conditions than those 'measured' by conventional systemic instruments.

This chapter looks first at students' academic outcomes in the context of Matterslea's ASP-based renewal. It looks at how well students have progressed in the period of the study, but also how pedagogic considerations have been developed and applied within the aegis of ASP Inquiry Process, powerful learning developments and central initiatives. The chapter then moves to an analysis of organisational learning at Matterslea, holding the model and the 'whole school' accountable for the authenticity of its learning outcomes.

8.2 Matterslea's curriculum development and purpose

Three understandings should guide any evaluative interpretation of curriculum development and learning outcomes from the ASP renewal effort at Matterslea:

i. First, Matterslea has not set a solitary focus on student learning. Its Vision includes but does not inflate the importance of academic achievement. Rather, considerable time and resource is dedicated to students' broad, community-related competencies. While literacy and numeracy are identified as occupying a place of highest priority in teaching and learning, social skills are given equal priority;

ii. Second, the school's identity encompasses teachers, parents and the whole 'school community' and has identified learning as both a process and outcome for each member group. For example, significant school resources of time and money are devoted to teacher professional development, with each teacher required by the Department of Education to devise an Individual Professional Learning Plan (IPLP);

iii. Last, a breadth of learning areas is publicly claimed in Matterslea's Vision to be worthy of serious attention, with explicit acknowledgement of the school's responsibility to foster individuals' strengths *beyond* the level of basic exposure.

The challenge of appropriate accountability

Matterslea's initial ASP Principal was skeptical of the narrowing of curriculum emphases, and the way funding systems could be coercively used to control the curriculum. Some two years after a 1998 visit to several US ASP schools in California and Texas, the Principal retained a defiant stance on external review:

> *[The US schools we saw in 1998] stood to be judged on the baseline data that they had from their testing. We've had that, but our department[DoE] hasn't keyed funding in directly to our results so, until they do, we'll be doing our own thing, rather than directing all our energies to making absolutely sure we're value-adding. We believe we are but we're quantifying almost the unquantifiable based on our values and the behaviour aspects. [Our] kids' outcomes have risen dramatically in areas that aren't quantifiable in the Tasmanian Educational Department ... Our outcomes have risen in ICT and the MLIC units and the personal development and relationship aspects. We can see them as exploding exponentially upwards.* (Principal, July, 2000)

The Principal felt that in Tasmania, the ASP model was less compromised by external accountability than in the US, largely because "*until it's money driven we don't have an issue to direct our energies there [to testing] as yet*". Compensatory funding is not linked to test score improvements. Rather, there is a semi-public availability of on-line school level performance data on statewide tests, should community members wish to access them. At Matterslea, the home on-line rate is very low compared to middle class areas, so, with Tasmania refraining from using newspapers to list comparative performance, the impact of what Slee & Weiner (1998) call 'naming and shaming' is less of a market issue in Tasmania. Matterslea's community relies on transparency in the school's reporting processes. Given a threefold increase from 1996 to 2000 in the numbers of families attending parent teacher interviews, Matterslea is in a position to claim success on that front.

At no point in the entire study was there any evidence that Matterslea staff or leadership directed explicit attention to test preparation for statewide testing, although, encouraged by its leadership, teachers did maintain both internally and externally-monitored data on academic and other student learning achievements for the entire case-study period. Teachers kept indicator-based records for every student's learning in literacy and numeracy[1], as well as replicable formative and standardized measures of reading and spelling[2], and were thus able to give a more appreciable personalised picture to parents regarding student learning. As students became adept at using information technology, the use of Powerpoint presentations by senior classes to report their goals and achievements on them enhanced the reporting events. More recently, as confidence has been growing that the school's 'measured' academic performance is markedly improved on its pre-ASP period, the aggregated achievements have been more boldly broadcast to the community through assemblies and the *Mayday*.

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[1] Key Intended Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes (KILOs and KINOs)
[2] Marie Clay's Running Records and Waddington Tests of Reading and Spelling.

Curriculum and Instruction within ASP

'How you teach is what you teach" (Chenoweth & Kushman, 1996, p. 166) encapsulates how in ASP thinking, 'pedagogy' is a conflation of curriculum and instruction. However, for the purpose of analysis, the following sections look at Matterslea's development of both curriculum and instructional processes that are targeted to student learning over the study period. Curriculum development under ASP is first described and considered against the background of prevailing norms in Tasmanian schools. The instructional processes engaged by Matterslea's teachers are then considered. My rationale is that without an understanding of how pedagogy was developed and applied at Matterslea, the 'outcomes' of teaching and learning are 'disembodied' and de-contextualised.

8.3 Curriculum development at Matterslea

The underlying presumption in ASP literature is that schools engaging disadvantaged populations have rigid, remedial curricula that emphasise transmissive, passive pedagogies (Levin, 1995; 1996a). However, the curriculum at Matterslea in the years leading up to ASP's introduction were characterized by two approaches. The first was a strongly constructivist pedagogical philosophy that had been developed and maintained in the Tasmanian system, particularly in primary schools, by such documents as the *Report on Primary Education (COPE)* (Education Department, Tasmania, 1988), *Our Children, the Future* (DEA, 1991) and *Framework for Curriculum Development* (1993). The second was a curriculum focus on social skills in schools with high numbers of disruptive students, such as Matterslea (Breheney et al., 1996). The major influence in this direction had come through the *Supportive School Environment Policy* (Education Department, Tasmania, 1989), from Tasmanian guidance personnel's *Becoming Responsible Learners* (Dalton & Collis, 1990) and Murphy's (1990) work on *Behaviours of Serious Concern.* The common thread to each of these compatible perspectives was that learning was predicated on a positive attitude to school, and that an active curriculum in social competencies was needed to support pastoral care and student welfare, and that such learning was a an entire-school community matter.

The early and developing curriculum picture at Matterslea.

Both the constructivist and the 'responsible learners' approaches were ostensibly embedded practices at Matterslea before ASP was introduced (Breheney et al., 1996). As a 'coach' whose task it was to promulgate 'Powerful Learning' in the ASP school, I felt daunted by the thought of preaching to the converted. 'Powerful Learning' is the ASP jargon for student-centred, experiential, constructivist pedagogy. All curricular and instructional practice comes under the umbrella of the term. Powerful Learning experiences are described in ASP literature as those in which:

> In which each child is treated as gifted; higher-order and complex activities are stressed; content is relevant; and children actively discover the curriculum objectives in a safe environment, rather than passively going through textbooks and filling out worksheets. The safe environment for learning extends far beyond the classroom into every aspect of the school, home, and community.
> (Finnan, et. al., 1996, p. 300)

Of these, only 'treating every child as gifted' seemed outside Matterslea's (or any Tasmanian government school's) orthodoxy. Philosophically the notion could be entertained. Practically, with classes' great disparities of ability, particularly in the access-affording area of literacy, teachers had few tools with which to enact the philosophy. Given Matterslea teachers' prior experiences with constructivist practice, I was very reticent as coach to preach to the converted and risk offending teachers' professional sensibilities.

The issue of differentiation at Matterslea was not that some students were treated as gifted while others were treated in a remedial fashion. Rather, I felt the classroom programs generally treated all students as 'at risk'. At best, the teacher taught to the middle. This potentially led a non-ambitious curriculum, with the emphasis on classes being 'settled' rather than challenged. Withdrawal or individual programming was a behaviour strategy rather than academic remediation. While there was considerable curriculum attention given to student interests, practices around notions of multiple literacies (Auerbach, 1995; Gallego & Hollingsworth, 1992) and the use of home experiences as stimulus points (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn, 1995; Luke, 1993) were not in evidence. Typical of working class schools, home life in Matterslea was considered by many of Matterslea's teachers to be problematic; by some, home circumstances were pejoratively conceived as 'dysfunctional'. A belief that

parents of whatever SES background really cared about their children's learning was something that emerged only during the ASP establishment phase of 1997, following the community interviews, school community meetings for Vision and priority-setting, and as mentioned in Chapter 6, the opting by staff for the sharing of data regarding Matterslea students' low academic status in the State.

In order to test my perceptions of teachers' educational philosophies and practices, I chose early in the first year of establishment (1997) to use a section from the ASP survey instrument, the ASP Questionnaire (Appendix R) to seek teachers' understanding of their teaching against benchmarks of Powerful Learning practices. The Powerful Learning section of the survey was given to all 14 staff and the results showed what I expected: a strong attribution of constructivist rationale and, on paper at least, little requirement for conversion to Powerful Learning pedagogies.

For this reason I did not rush to 'advocate' Powerful Learning frameworks and strategies to staff and community members. Rather, I allowed senior staff to become familiar with the ASP literature on the subject, and proceeded to place primary emphasis on reaching a consensual outcome in the 'Shared Picture' process, towards effective collective governance according to a representative Vision, and priorities set by genuine, whole community consultation. Matterslea was fortunate to find its senior teacher (AST2) was devoted to authentic learning. Because his leadership on curriculum was wholly compatible with ASP process, the school was able to finds its curriculum development leads from within, rather than from me, as an 'externally-sourced' coach. Around June, 1997, with the intention of gauging teachers' notions of best practice and educational philosophy, Matterslea's AST2 distributed a one-page questionnaire to the twelve full time teaching staff. It also asked what teachers understood to be the key aspects of 'Powerful Learning'. Teachers showed that, in their thinking at least, there was a clear constructivist basis to their pedagogy. The notion most common among early childhood and primary teachers was of the student becoming responsible in their own learning. Within that caveat, responses ranged from more student centred to more teacher-led positions. For the former 'camp', best practice was "*Teaching the child, not the subject*" (Early childhood teacher, female). Another teacher asserted it as:

Empowering the students to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour, encouraging students to have a go, take risks, choose to do well; establishing a wide program of goal-setting in the context of a democratic classroom (Female, primary).

Explicit teaching was also affirmed, as in a middle primary teacher's belief that "*Children need to be 'taught' —they don't just absorb knowledge like a sponge*". Acknowledging "*Curriculum and relationship/social skills are interdependent*" the benefits of certain structures and routines were raised by teachers who sought to provide "*creative challenges for my students within the guidelines of regular routines*" and "*a balanced curriculum, but with focus on literacy and numeracy* [which] *needs uninterrupted learning time , builds on what is known and leads to further exploration*" (Primary, female). The issue of unwarranted interruptions was raised at a staff meeting later in 1997, with a request that the Principal refrain from visiting classes early in the day to "encourage positive days from would-be recalcitrants" (Staff meeting, September, 1997).

Teachers' responses regarding how children learn best showed the influence of a long tradition in Tasmania of process focus in teaching and learning. The learning environment teachers idealized was "*bright*", "*happy*", "*fun*", "*welcoming and challenging*". Interestingly, these conditions matched the positive climate that parents in the first round of interviews claimed they wanted from their child's school. The pedagogical experiences that teachers favoured for optimal learning were distinctly constructivist and technically well-considered:

- *Children learn best if the topics are relevant to their lives and if the information is able to be applied, not just stored, when they are approached/engaged at their level of ability and slightly higher.*
- *Through several areas of multiple intelligences and using Bloom's [taxonomy] to structure challenges; Learning must flow - progression from known to unknown areas must be smooth to ensure interest is excited and anxiety is avoided.*
- *When they have the opportunity to experiment, compare, discuss, review.*

A general realism among staff acknowledged that "*Expectations of each child must be high but achievable*". A few proposed that the quality of students' learning stood to be enhanced "*by experiences which lead children to question and challenge their ideas, with opportunities enabling children to develop initiative and to work independently*".

Teachers' definitional thinking around Powerful Learning had come from only limited exposure to ASP literature. This 'professional development' had amounted to one staff meeting and a distributed précis of Powerful Learning's (PL's) five characteristics (*authentic; learner-centred; interactive; inclusive; continuous).* Even so, the compatibility between their root beliefs and ASP's Powerful Learning are evident. Teachers conceptions are exemplified in the two following responses:

- *Students are active participants in the learning process, they should have some control over what they are learning. The curriculum should be challenging and take students from what they know to a much deeper level of thinking. Learning activities should be presented through or be completed through multiple intelligences.*
- *Co-operative learning geared also to individual needs, using a relevant curriculum in which students learn by exploration or doing; multi modal. It's negotiated learning between student/teacher in a learning environment that harnesses children's enthusiasm.*

The responses confirmed my reticence to approach teachers with a 'new broom' approach of Powerful Learning. The range of ideas they shared showed at least a practical understanding of the five Powerful learning elements. Combined with teachers' notions of optimal learning conditions, on the surface Matterslea was well placed to embrace the philosophical elements of PL and probably well ahead of comparable first-year ASP schools in the US. Tasmanian public schools had abandoned text-book instruction over a decades earlier, and its tertiary preparation complemented a string of Department publications that expounded child-centred developmentally appropriate, constructivist processes[3]. The data gave encouragement to the Senior Teacher for a professional development agenda to establish what he called Multi-Layered Integrated Curriculum or 'MLIC' as the major curricular and pedagogical program in the school. The approach would make Powerful Learning more explicit than the anecdotal examples used by ASP literature (Hopfenbeg et al., 1993; Levin & McCarthy, 1996).

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[3] Education Department, Tasmania (1988); Department of Education and the Arts, Tasmania (1991; 1993)

The AST2's pedagogical questionnaire did not necessarily dispel questions of a possible disparity between teachers' *beliefs* about pedagogy and their actual practices at Matterslea. Knowing staff had a fairly accurate notion of what ASP meant by 'Powerful Learning' (PL), I distributed a section of the more formal ASP Questionnaire dedicated to teachers' practices regarding Powerful Learning. The results, and those of three succeeding years are presented in Table 8.1. The overall picture speaks of a firm PL practical standpoint in 1997, strengthening in 1998 and holding ground after that, with perhaps a slight falling away in 2001. The 2001 sample included just under half who were new in that year to ASP. The ASP Questionnaire data represents Likert-type scale scores from 1=SD through 5 = SA:

Table 8. 1 Questions from Powerful Learning section of ASP Questionnaire: Matterslea teachers' self-rating from 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2001 surveys

	1997	1998	1999	2001
	n=10	*n=12*	*n=14*	*n=13*
Item	M	M	M	M
36. In my classroom, most students are motivated to do more than the minimum requirements. They take responsibility for their own learning.	3.9	3.8	4.0	4.4
37. I try to foster students' initiative, independence, and interest by giving ample choices and frequent discussion in supportive groups.	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.5
38. I consistently provide students with opportunities to set their own goals and plan and monitor their own work.	3.7	4.4	4.5	4.3
39. I think that this school offers students powerful learning activities not just in classrooms but in a variety of school-wide activities.	3.7	4.3	4.4	4.6
40. It is important to make the classroom curriculum relevant through strengths, experiences, cultural background, and identities.	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.5
41. I often work with other staff to develop curriculum that builds on engaging, interdisciplinary themes.	3.9	4.5	4.3	4.0
42. All academic and extracurricular programs are the product of careful review of "best practices."	3.4	4.6	4.5	4.0
43. I expect 90-100% of my students to complete their work successfully.	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.4
44. I use assessment methods that allow me to accurately and creatively capture each of my student's strengths and achievements.	4.6	4.2	4.1	4.1
45. Working in cooperative groups is an important part of the learning process for my students.	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.2
46. It is important to give students the opportunity to edit and rework their assignments.	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.4
47. I have been able to use ideas and skills learned through professional development activities in my classroom.	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.4
48. When I plan my classroom activities, I do not distinguish between "accelerated", "gifted", "remedial".	2.7	2.6	2.7	3.1
49. In general, I have the materials and other resources I need to take risks and use innovative curriculum and teaching strategies.	3.3	3.8	3.7	4.0
50. Staff at this school are active learners, read current research, attend conferences, and are involved in professional networks.	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.3

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Somewhat disagreee; 3 = No opinion; 4 = Somewhat agree; 5 = Strongly agree.

It is reasonable to surmise that the discourse that ensued in professional development around MLIC over the next two years fostered greater awareness and a greater level of agreement about 'best practice' in teaching and learning.

The ASP process can be argued as having its peak of coherence and activity in 1999 and 2000, prior to the founding Principal's departure, when the inevitable adjustments have occurred under principal succession and higher than previous staff turnover. The sample is small, therefore statistically volatile and is potentially skewed by the extremities. The range is considerably wider in some items in the 1997 data, but thereafter narrows, suggesting a convergence of opinions and perhaps practices. It is possible the respondents were giving what they thought I wanted to hear, but the differences between items and the range of responses within items (greatest in item 48 with a range of 1-5) suggest this was not the case. Further, ratings item to item are fairly consistent, particularly across the three initial years when staff changes were minimal (with a resultant continuity of respondents). I have highlighted four items for closer consideration. Items 38, 39 and 42 show the greatest change between 1997 and 1999 scores. The introduction of goal setting and MLIC at the end of 1997 would explain the improved perception of learner responsibility, deliberated best practice and the generalisation of PL into non-classroom contexts. For instance, the Peer Support program took peer-led social learning into the playground and a computer lab was set up, in part extending ITC skills through MLIC topics.

Item 48 is very interesting for ASP reflection. The item asks whether teachers differentiate between advanced or slow students in their planning. Over the four years surveyed, the item stands out in its wide response range and its relatively low mean score. Only three of ten responding staff 'agreed somewhat'. Several staff had expressed in the AST2's questionnaire on PL a belief in differentiated provision, albeit within a class program context. One male specialist teacher put it in the following way:

> [the program] *should be based on a balanced mixture of students' strengths and needs in identified learning areas, and what teachers know are good and appropriate practices. Children's abilities and needs should be continually monitored and reviewed through both formal and informal means and the teaching program altered accordingly.* (Male Tr., Powerful Learning Questionnaire, 1997)

This inclination among Matterslea teachers to individualization has remained consistent over ASP time at Matterslea, and has consciously defied the anti-remedial tone of ASP's PL fundamentals. The result demonstrates what, in the light of the difference in educational culture, must be recognised as a significant difference between the orthodoxies of Tasmanian mainstream pedagogy and ASP 'Powerful Learning, even though both claim constructivist underpinnings. It is my experience from visiting schools in Texas and California that US schools in the ASP movement do actually work in 1-1 and withdrawal circumstances with struggling students. I saw several schools using Reading Recovery in withdrawal groups and heard intervention rationales that insisted intersession (extra semester summer-school) programs were essential for acceleration of children so far behind. The difference of mindset from traditional remedial or 'special' learning programs would seem to come in the fact that ASP practice disagrees with casting children forever in the remedial category and applying 'watered down' solutions. Rather the intensive work of teachers, families and students to 'catch up' is borne of a resilient expectation and belief in what has become a platitude of equity programs: *All children can succeed.*

Judged by Matterslea's ASP Questionnaire results and by some comments borne out in the home-made survey used by Matterslea's Senior Teacher, Tasmanian teachers, at least those working in schools with low socio-economic profiles, accept specific or explicit intervention of learning difficulties as good (even 'best') practice. To such teachers the notion of 'student-centred' pedagogy does *not* preclude, and may even presume, individualization and 'remediation'. Nor are enrichment or extension for 'gifted' students proscribed from teachers' pedagogies. Before looking more closely at the development of Matterslea's version of powerful learning, Multi-Layered Integrated Curriculum, it is prudent to examine how and why in 1998, Matterslea teachers incorporated the centrally-sponsored curriculum intervention, the Program of Additional Support for Students into their pedagogical repertoire.

The Central Initiative of the Program of Additional Support for Students PASS)

Early in 1998, Matterslea was offered an opportunity to join a state-sponsored trial of a program of additional structured support (PASS) (DoE, Tasmania , 2001a). The program comprises elements of literacy learning in a dedicated time format (usually

occupying the first teaching block of the day, i.e., 9: 00-10: 30, prior to recess). The authors of Victoria's equivalent *Early Literacy Research Program* (ERLP) identify the key elements as:

- a two-hour, uninterrupted daily literacy block for all students;
- the setting of rigorous performance standards and associated targets that seek to have all students performing at a high standard by the end of their second year of schooling;
- a focus on data-driven instruction with assessment of all students at the beginning and end of each year on a full range of measures, plus ongoing monitoring on a regular basis throughout the year;
- the use of Reading Recovery as a one-to-one tutoring program for all students in Year 1 who are not making adequate progress.

(Hill & Crevola, 1997)

Some teachers believed the PASS structure offered a balance to constructivist methods that rely on independent and interdependent learning capabilities, skills that many weaker learners had yet to develop. The PASS funds offered by Central Office to schools for PD were relatively attractive. Totaling roughly $500 per teacher alongside a budget for material resources such as 'leveled' books and book sets appropriate for guided reading/shared or group novels. Matterslea staff, led by the Principal's recommendation, chose to engage in the trial. The reasons most mentioned by teachers in interviews concerning the original motivation for taking up the PASS offer were that the professional development offered was too valuable to miss and that the inclusion of Matterslea in the initiative might maintain a connection to other schools not directly afforded by their loner status in ASP. Further, Matterslea's early childhood teachers valued the support offered through state funds to gather early baseline data on students' literacy behaviours through Clay's (1993a) 'Running Record'. The support would provide them with scarce one-on-one assessment time using suitable monitoring tools to demonstrate their pedagogies' effectiveness or otherwise. Freebody's (1995) notions of authentic but explicit teaching through socio-culturally valid content may have influenced teachers to consider the proposals early in 1998 from the Department of Education to join several other schools in trailing 'PASS'.

Following three months of baseline assessment and PD in PASS classroom methods, Matterslea implemented the structure in early childhood classes. In 1999 the teaching staff

decided to trial an extension of the PASS structure to middle primary classes (to Gr 4.). Over 1999/2000, a number of dedicated time elements also became infused into Grades 5 and 6.

Throughout the whole of Tasmanian government primary schooling PASS processes such as guided reading and shared writing have been subsumed into the continuing Flying Start program. At Matterslea, teachers used the PASS processes as a structure to bolster students' attention to foundational skill-building. The direct structure is a trade-off with more broadly integrated learning and skills. These take longer to develop than some of Matterslea's teachers individually find comfortable. In order to test my assumptions of Matterslea teachers' educational philosophies and practices, I chose early in 1999 to use an ASP informal survey instrument to seek teachers' understanding of their teaching against benchmarks of 'powerful learning' practices. The 'Powerful Learning' Rubric survey (Appendix W), a copy of which was given to Matterslea's Principal and me by the ASP National Center on our 1998 study tour of US ASP schools, was conducted with all 14 Matterslea teachers. The results showed a high level of constructivist thinking. On paper at least, the staff hardly needed further conversion to 'Powerful Learning' pedagogies. However, three staff wrote that their ratings described their "personal beliefs" and position rather than the "actual" situation in the school. Clearly they had discussed the point together before responding. These respondents estimated that on all items the reality was close to the mid point. When interviewed in late 1999, teachers revealed that the discrepancy was caused by several constraints. The most prominent among these were:

- the demands of the PASS process, (in which "*curriculum is presented part to whole with emphasis on basic skills*")
- students' difficulty with articulating their conceptions (speaking about abstracts, where "*teachers seek students' points of view in order to understand students' present conceptions*"): and
- many students' poor capacity to work independently, making it hard to have a program where "*students primarily work in groups*".

The last of these constraints, students' lack of learning autonomy, had become a major focus of the Teaching & Learning cadre in 1999 and 2000, with a whole-of-school thrust through the use of goal-setting and positive reinforcement methods to move children from *dependency* through to *independence* to the ultimate goal of *inter*dependent action.

Alongside the use of Y-chart brainstorms[4] on the way each condition looked, sounded like and felt, the specific understanding and use of those terms was fostered in classes and direct feedback at individual and whole group levels was given to students to help them gauge and articulate how responsible they were in their own learning.

Multi-Layered Integrated Curriculum (MLIC)

As already noted, prior to 1997, curriculum at Matterslea had assumed a 'supporting role' to student conduct and student welfare. Acknowledging this, the new Senior Teacher of 1997 shaped his role as one of educational leadership and set about the professional development of staff towards an ambitious (as opposed to a 'containment') curriculum. The vehicle for this curriculum invigoration was coined by the Senior Teacher as 'Multi-layered Integrated Curriculum', building on the thinking of Murdoch (1996) and Coil (1996).

Before looking at the initiative of multi-layered integrated curriculum, reference should be made to effects from two workshops held for staff and parents combined. As described in Chapter 6, the school's experienced members recognized a need to broaden the socio-cultural understanding of Matterslea's teachers and to expand the pedagogical horizons of families, particularly amid the potentially confusing discourse of a media reporting Commonwealth claims of a basics 'crisis' and the ASP's call for a more 'liberal', constructivist approach to teaching and learning.

The sum effect of the Freebody and Reeves workshops was to bring the perspectives of the teachers and staff into closer alignment –away from simplistic 'basics' but towards a recognition of the value of explicit teaching. Jargon (used by staff among themselves and in report writing for parents) such as, 'risk-taking', 'collaborative learning' 'numeracy', 'critical thinking', 'explicit teaching', 'approximation', 'estimation', 'number problem' were given applied explanation through the workshops. There was a clear need to explore avenues to demystify current educational language and practice for the immediate

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[4] Y=Charts are brainstorming frames that require participants to suggest what the phenomenon (e.g. 'bullying') might look like, feel like and sound like. The Y is simply a device that divides the brainstorming sheet into three sections.

community. One further outcome was a reduction in the 'back to basics' pressure that was mounting in the absence of an explained contemporary position on 'numeracy' and 'literacy'. Matterslea teachers garnered credibility from the fact that the explanations were coming from reputable 'outsiders' with system recognition.

Still, Matterslea was a context that was finding for itself a context-grounded curriculum voice and practice. Its educational leadership was coming strongly from its Senior Teacher, and all teachers were being challenged to articulate best practice and to work together to uncover what that meant in the Matterslea context, and how that aligned with ASP notions of Powerful Learning. Under ASP, all children were ideally treated as gifted. As multi-layering was a well-acknowledged means of addressing the full range of learning abilities (Bridge & Jacob, 1996) a curriculum approach structured around integrating tools such as conceptual taxonomies (e.g. Bloom's) and non-subject domains (such as multiple intelligences) was a logical and creative means to an ambitious yet explicit learning frame.

Through the professional development (PD) processes that occupied every fourth staff meeting in 1997 and many (though less regular) of the 1998 PD in-school times, teams were established at grade levels to collectively plan integrated units of work, largely using a matrix of Gardner's multiple intelligences and Bloom's taxonomy, although several other matrix axes were investigated. As an adjunct to this work, the school undertook to set out a statement in which staff had deliberated what topics were designated to what grades. This was to prevent repetition on certain topics.

In the 1997 period (prior to the introduction of the PASS program in 1998), the integrated units were run as the core business of the daily learning program. By late 1998 teachers had experienced early implementation of both MLIC and PASS. At this time the Senior teacher asked teaching staff to estimate what proportion of their week was 'dedicated' to specific Key Learning Areas (such as English and Maths) or 'integrated' across subject boundaries. In the main, around 70% of class time was 'dedicated' and 30% undertaken in 'integrated' mode. A separate questionnaire sought teachers' curriculum delivery, comparing whole class, group and individual organisation of teaching and tasks. The results were uneven. Nevertheless, they showed in all cases a reasonable spread between whole class, grouped

and individual organization. The overall situation of social vs. individual learning was described by teachers as being weighted heavily to individual work:

- Competitive 3% [test-oriented; quizzes; grade-position as a direct outcome]
- Peer assisting 7% [helping classmate complete work partner marking; tutoring]
- Co-operative 20% [collectively produced and owned learning outcomes]
- Group learning 25% [guided reading; same-task focus groups; maths games]
- Individual 45% [solo research; task pursuit; focus/silent reading]

The 'assay' was anonymous, hence there is not a gender or section breakdown on the figure, rather what is conveyed is the overall sense of curriculum delivery structures at Matterslea early in the *Consolidation* phase. Although the picture is possibly more diverse than a formal or traditional classroom, the rough data suggested that more skills were needed by teachers in developing group learning processes and that there was considerable room for increase in integrated learning time.

To support the team planning and piloting of MLIC curriculum units, many resource references were needed, and library and teacher reference budgets in 1998/9 were nearly wholly absorbed by MLIC-related purchases. With considerable PD funds freed up by the Matterslea's 'captured time' initiative, the whole staff attended professional development events run by integrated curriculum practitioner/authors Murdoch (1996) and Coil (1996). Throughout 1998 and into 1999, the school's PD and team planning in MLIC ran parallel to all other curriculum initiatives, in particular the PASS program in Early childhood classes. It was like two sides of the one coin, with dedicated, explicit literacy and numeracy focus one side and integrated studies on the other. MLIC, under the program title of 'Powerful Learning', was highlighted in the school's 2000 'education plan'. The benefits of the approach are described in the document:

- *It is inclusive; the program takes into consideration students' different learning styles*
- *It encourages children to grow from dependence to independence to interdependence*
- *It assists with the crowded curriculum*

- *Encourages collaborative and cooperative learning*
- *It encourages development of interpersonal & interpersonal skills*
- *Promotes higher order levels of thinking*
- *It is so entered towards the success of all.*

2000 Matterslea Primary School Education Plan

Supportive School Environment

Matterslea's ASP-founding Principal stated at a 1999 principal's training conference seminar that the school had prior to ASP had been a place "where the rhetoric did not match the practices ... the curriculum was stilted, survivalist, individualistic, not systematic, not continuous or connected across K-6 ... the emphasis was on Supportive School environment rather than the academic curriculum" (Principal, 1999). Yet despite this, the processes and skills based in a *taught* student welfare and behaviour management curriculum were maintained as a designated strength of the school, a strength noted clearly by parents and staff in the Taking Stock and priorities deliberations of 1997. From 1998 thirty minutes a day recommended daily dedicated teaching of such skills was maintained on as Goldstein's Skillstreaming social competencies or counter-bullying assertive behaviours. The 2000 School Education Plan described the purpose of SSE (as *curriculum*) in the school as "to assertively make the culture, climate and conditions of teaching and learning optimal ... Allied to these notions, teachers are skilled up not to be participants in any violence cycle; they don't bully and are able to turn power struggles and other roadblocks to learning into positive experiences for all" (Matterslea Primary School, 2000).

Over the six years I have spent in ASP coaching at Matterslea, the major tension I have observed in the school's curriculum contention has been between social and academic skills. In 1997, Peter Freebody of Griffith University had challenged Matterslea teachers and those of 'like schools' to focus their classroom behaviour interventions on students learning rather than on their attitudes or demeanor. Over the following four years processes such as students' goal setting, explicit social competency curriculum time and a focus on independence and interdependence as characteristics of mature learning have moved the school away from preoccupation with 'behaviour learning' to one that spends most of its

time and energy developing students 'learning behaviour'. Although the ASP-founding principal has criticised the rhetoric of Matterslea's leadership prior to 1997, he was able to use the community's understanding of contemporary school behaviour management (encapsulated by SSE) to establish clear, negotiated and firm discipline protocols based on mutual respect for students and adults. These procedures, internalised and made more automatic through applied professional development, further allowed Matterslea staff to focus on productive learning because they minimised time and nervous energy lost to infractions and conflict. Within the practical philosophy that success for all reduces alienation, rebellion and generalised distraction, learning to learn is more engaging and learning to behave. In the context that serves families in adversity, the tension between social and academic purposes will never entirely abate. Up to 30 percent of students are mobile from school to school. The need for social skills component for many of these learners can't be denied. Nevertheless, where oppositional or imploded personalities enter a learning culture as Matterslea is endeavouring to become, rather than a culture emphasising behavioural conformity (as it was), there is arguably more likelihood of those personalities being drawn out of circular conflict into identities as learners. One of the key refocusing strategies in the curriculum towards building independence and responsible learning has been the process of 'goal setting'.

Goal setting and other curricular/pedagogical influences

'Goal setting' was introduced as a tentative process at Matterslea early in 1997 by one of experienced upper primary teachers but was so successful that it became a core individual student learning behavior throughout most of the primary classes, and in some early childhood classes goal setting was implemented as a whole-class phenomenon. Its success was in its ability to 'devolve' the locus of control in learning to students. Freebody (1997) had raised before staff the notion of 'pedagogical intervention' that meant teachers would not redirect students to 'better behaviour' but to 'better task focus'. Goal setting was a pre-emptive, advance organizer of this same dynamic with its rationale in the ideas of Davies, Cameron, Politano & Gregory (1994). By mid July in the first year of ASP Establishment, 1997, staff reported that "goal setting evaluation is now the centerpiece of our Supportive School Environment". The process of projection and reflection was used by students to record

aspirations in short and long term, indoor and outdoor, personal and interpersonal dimensions. The impact of the process and its uptake at a number of levels in the school was argued by staff in cadres to be that students of all abilities benefit in both academic and 'intrapersonal' metacognition from the thirty minutes per week taken to establish self-expectations and the slightly shorter time taken at week's end to evaluate their achievements. The recording of goal-setting and students' own evaluations of their achievements against their projected baselines have served as the basis for much of the parent/teacher interviews conducted since 1998. No extended in-school evaluation of the 'measurable' effects of the students' goal-setting processes has been conducted, but the practices appear to warrant further investigation and explanation, particularly in association with a marked rise (over 300%) in families' attendances at parent teacher interviews since 1997 that is discussed later in the chapter.

Information Technology

Another larger more formal 'powerful learning' impetus emerged when, in 1999, Matterslea began to focus significant curriculum development, infrastructure and learning technique in the area of information and communication technology. The initiative was begun by the initial ASP Senior Teacher (AST2) but redoubled through the personal interest of the succeeding AST2. By the end of 1999 senior students were each producing Powerpoint Slide Shows to showcase their year's goals and achievements to their parents. Using skills coached in lab sessions, students were able to use classroom terminals to pursue research, publishing and creative contributions to integrated work.

In 2000, considerable budgetary support was given to building a laboratory with enough computers for one-to-one use by the smaller early childhood classes and for at least a two-on-one ratio with larger primary classes. The networked computers carried a full range of word processing, graphics and adventure-learning software. Some of this infrastructure was funded by a DoE Tasmania information technology project. The school had to source the staffing of this laboratory from within its own budgetary limits. .Matterslea's school education plan of 2000 focused on six elements: Professional Development (PD); Multi-layered Integrated Curriculum (ML IC); Supportive School Environment (SSE); Information Communication Technology (ICT); Literacy; Numeracy. The ICT program was designed

> to incorporate ICT into the regular literacy, numeracy and integrated curriculum studies at Matterslea. To move the children using constructivist methodologies to the highest levels they can possibly attain. Using a 'take one -- teach one' [peer tutoring] process to teach ICT, our emphasis is on the children rather than that teachers. Nevertheless, the aim is for teachers to achieve at least the first three modules of the department of education computing competencies.
>
> (2000 Matterslea Primary School Education Plan, p 2).

The target set in that year was for 70 percent of students to be at or above age level KITOs (Key Intended Technology Outcomes, benchmarks established by the DoE, Tasmania). It was reported to the SAW meeting of December, 2000, that over 90 percent of grade six students had surpassed that level and that all other grades had exceeded the benchmark expectations. Incidentally, though arguably as a result of student presentations, laboratory use by family members was requested and undertaken by twelve enthusiastic parents.

8.4 Students' academic learning

This section turns its attention to outcomes pertinent to the traditional learning objectives of schooling. In particular, because the first three years of cadre work at Matterslea have been very much focused on literacy development and within literacy, reading in particular as a key to cross-curricular access, the data reflect that zone of interest. While numeracy gains have been only mild in the research period, literacy overall has surpassed expectations. The thesis does not seek to attribute all progress to Powerful Learning, nor to the complementarity of PASS processes. The combination is important: without engaging, independence- and interdependence-building curriculum, teachers can not be expected to have the liberty to leave 'controlling' their classes to attend to individual learning needs. Conversely, without some sense of routine, those students who demand the most I-I time will not be able to self-engage and allow teachers extension level input for an enriched class program.

Over the decade leading to 1997, by comparison with Tasmanian Statewide test averages, Matterslea students were left with ample room for improvement. Prior to the introduction of the ASP model at Matterslea, the school was performing in the bottom fifth percentile of public schools. The Office of Educational Review provided the following statistics to

Matterslea early in 1997. The 10R reading test was conducted across Tasmania until 1993 at sporadic intervals, as was the 10N mathematics assessment. So said, there was a year-on, year-off staggering of the tests for reading and mathematics (largely number skills). Over time, although the tests themselves changed, several questions were retained from test to test to provide at least some longitudinal comparison. Because of the changes in instrument items, Z scores have been calculated to bring greater comparability to the state and school samples. They show how many standard deviations from the State mean was Matterslea students' mean score. Some 1500 students were assessed across the state. According to the OER, the Matterslea sample of ten year olds had reduced its total (N) from 62 in 1979 to 33 in 1990 and 28 in 1992:

Table 8.2 Comparison of Matterslea's means with statewide means on standardized tests for 10 year-olds in reading (10R) as raw differences and z scores

Year	10R Matterslea students	10R State students	Items in test	State standard deviation	Matterslea vs State	Z score
1978	28.31	29.04	n/a	n/a	-0.73	n/a
1981	25.47	28.17	n/a	n/a	-2.70	n/a
1988	25.8	30.69	43	9.26	-4.89	-0.53
1993	26.58	30.5	42	9.10	-3.26	-0.36

Source: Office of Educational Review, DECCD, Hobart.

These data, though they suggest a significant shortfall in Matterslea's reading scores against State norms, show the school had in fact improved on the R10 over the years 1988 to 1993. With the statistics available to the school at the time of ASP's introduction, Matterslea was in early 1997 unable to calculate z scores and even less well able to communicate their meaning to parents. The raw 'gap' between the State average and their students' own performances was bracing enough. A similar pattern of chronic relative underachievement emerges from the tests of number skills (N10):

Table 8.3 Comparison of Matterslea's means with statewide means on standardized tests for 10 year-olds in mathematics (10N) as raw differences and z scores

Year	10N Matterslea students	10N State students	Items in test	State standard deviation	Matterslea vs State	Z score
1979	25.71	26.5	n/a	n/a	-0.8	n/a
1982	24.8	27.1	n/a	n/a	-2.3	n/a
1986	16.1	22.6	33	6.49	-6.5	-1.00
1990	13	18.1	34	7.96	-5.1	-0.64
1992	16	19.9	34	7.64	-3.8	-0.49

Source: Office of Educational Review, DECCD, Hobart.

After 1992 the 10 N test was no longer appropriate in content and was discarded. Notwithstanding the test's shortcomings, Matterslea's profile is one of weak by comparison, but improving. The Statewide use of the 10R and 10 N tests was replaced in 1996 with a nationally standardized test distributed by the Australian Council for Educational Research. However, only literacy was tested. A more authentic mathematical assessment was being sought. At the time of Matterslea's taking up the ASP process, the reading performance was (on raw scores) very low. The relative strength of the Matterslea students lay in the more interactive elements of speaking and listening and in the expressive element of writing:

Table 8.4 DART Statewide Yr 5 Literacy Monitoring Program: 1996

Element	Matterslea	State Cohort)	Difference
Speaking	7.5	8.5	-1.0
Listening	14.5	17.4	-2.9
Reading	9.0	15.1	-6.1
Writing	7.5	8.8	-1.3

Source: Office of Educational Review, DECCD, Hobart. (Standard deviations not avail.)

On the strength of these figures, is not a surprise to discover reading skill has assumed a central importance in Matterslea's literacy and overall academic development planning.

It has been noted earlier in Chapter Six, Matterslea parents were, in 1996, under-informed about students' relative academic performance on State measures. The courage and responsibility shown by staff in 1997 to share the potentially 'damning' news with families

should not be underestimated, nor should the context within which leaders at Matterslea School had previously allowed the issue to remain tacit. Two reasons can be logically proposed. First, Matterslea School, under its Principal of 1990-1995, had directed the majority of its professional development time and attention to building a 'whole school approach to behaviour management' (Breheney et al., 1996) in which "managing and teaching appropriate behaviours was given highest priority" (p. 30). Understandably, unless highly co-ordinated planning was facilitated to integrate literacy and numeracy into the social competencies/behaviour program, academic aspects of learning could receive limited attention. Second, the State test scores offered no guidance on the school's outcome priority and its related curriculum focus of positive and effective student behaviour. The general irrelevance perceived in statewide comparative data was a potential distraction for families who were being focused to the role they had in supporting students' behaviour through awareness of the school's Supportive School Environment program (Breheney, et al., p.39).

The Statewide test scores also offered no solace to teachers whose experience had been "trying to survive rather than being able to put into effect sound teaching and learning programs" (p. 5). A handful of the staff who in 1997 revealed the school's weak academic standing to parents had been committed with the then Principal to the task of 'making peace at Matterslea' and bringing it out of its 'era of darkness' (p. 12). It was they who in early 'courtship' meetings of Phase 1 were most vocal for a participatory and generative school relationship with the immediate community.

The priority given to literacy, particularly reading.

The authors of the most recent comprehensive and independent evaluation of school effects from ASP implementation used Grade 3 performance to interpret ASP and other models' academic impact because "[Grade 3] grade marks a critical point in the development of basic reading and math skills" (Bloom et al., 2001, p.1). In terms of funding, professional development in and out of the school, and the directing of voluntary assistance, Matterslea's primary focus in student academic learning through the years 1998, 1999 and 2000 has been squarely on literacy. Cognisant of the fact that a relatively small staff could not simultaneously attack pedagogical development on multiple fronts, the core skill of literacy

emerged as that skill most likely to generalize throughout the wider curriculum for greatest benefit. It had potential associated spin-offs in information technology and any other subject area that was accessed through print. Importantly, the priority given to in the Matterslea context to reading most strongly reflected parent concerns after the 1997 sharing of data. It also accorded with curriculum development priorities of the Tasmanian government school system, with the majority of its support program trials angled to literacy.

Matterslea's major program changes, outside MLIC (Multi-layered Integrated Curriculum), have been the Flying Start initiative, the PASS program (extended from early childhood (lower primary) grades through to Primary grades, and Spalding trials in the senior primary classes (Grades 5/6). In 1996 the Tasmanian Department of Education (then the DETCCD) introduced the Flying Start program, which added half a day of extra teacher time to all government school's Grade 1 and Grade 2 classes. In 1997, Statewide sampled assessments conducted for the Flying Start program by the Office of Educational Review (DETCCD Tasmania, 1998) showed that for unseen passage comprehension, the proportion of all Government school students at the end of Grade 2 in the state 'at or above' a Reading Age (RA) of 9.0 was 17.8 %. This was derived from averaging the percent of males (15.6%) and females (20.0%) who had attained that level on the tests. RA 9.0 is considered by Marie Clay (1993b, 2001) to be a marker of 'independence' in reading. The median chronological age of a child *completing* Grade 2 in Tasmania is around 8.6 years. When sorted by socio-economic status (as indicated by the Educational Needs Index) the data show that, for students in socio-economic circumstances such as those of Matterslea, the proportion reaching RA 9.0 (passage comprehension) by the end of Grade 2, 1997, was only 2.6%. It is important to note that the proportion of the State's Grade 1 at RA 9.0+ was 2.4% (DETCCD Tasmania, 1998, p. 8). Years or cohorts of students do vary.

From 1998 to the present, class teachers, *Flying Start* teachers and teacher assistants have been engaged in assessing students' reading levels using Marie Clay's (1993a) leveling techniques. The levels are determined on students' comprehension of unseen texts. 'Unseen texts' represent passages or books students have not previously met. In 1998, Matterslea and several other housing commission and low-socio-economic suburbs' schools got together to establish reasonable targets for their students undertaking the PASS program. The levels

they set for the next two years were: End of Prep year – *Level One*; End of Grade One – *Level Eight*; End of Grade Two – *Level Fifteen*; End of Grade Three – *Level Twenty Six.* Marie Clay's 'independence' level of RA 9.0 is reached at reading text level 28 to 30.

Effects measured in association with the PASS program

In 1998, Matterslea and other schools involved in the PASS program established reading level targets for each participating grade. Matterslea had Prep, Grade One and Grade Two directly involved, with the Grade Two continuing the process into Grade Three for 1999. The levels revolved around Clay's (1993a) claim that students who reached 'independent reading level' (equivalent RA 9) were able to continue to derive sense from almost any text and had enough semantic and syntactic awareness to solve most text 'problems' they would meet. The level of *independence* was reasoned as around 'text level RU 26-30'. Hence this was set as the endpoint benchmark for Grade Three students. Working back through the grades, a target for end Grade 2 was set at RU 15. For Grade One the target set was RU 8. In more affluent areas where students were entering the program with higher initial RU levels, the expectations would be higher, say, for RU 26 to be achieved at end Grade 2. For Matterslea teachers and schools in similar socio-cultural circumstances, it was considered prudent to maintain less ambitious (therefore more achievable) targets in the first years of the trial. These would be revised following the first cohort's completion of Grade Three (Grades Prep to Three inclusive were the PASS focus grades).

The following table (8.4) provides proportions of Matterslea's students assessed with Marie Clay's (1993a) instruments. It gives both the target achievements and proportions of Grade 2 students at or above RA 9.0. It should be borne in mind that in Tasmania, students generally reach chronological age 9.0 yrs mid way through Grade 3. The data are drawn from individual assessments with all students Prep to Gr 3 inclusive (sample totals n=36 Prep, 35 Grade One, 22 Grade Two and 36 Grade Three students):

Table 8. 5 Matterslea Primary School: Progressive summary analysis of reading levels at end school year 2000 for PASS program Grades 1, 2 and 3.

		1998	1999	2000
Target Unseen Text Reading Level		***RU8***	***RU15***	***RU26***
		Grade 1	*Grade 2*	*Grade 3*
1998 cohort *n=35*	% At/Above target	84.4	82.4	77.4
	% Below target	15.6	17.6	22.6
	% at/above RU 28-30 (RA 9.0)	0	39.1	59.4
1999 cohort *n=24*			*Grade 1*	*Grade 2*
	% At/Above target		69.2	86.4
	% Below target		31.8	13.6
	% at/above RU 28-30 (RA		0	37.5
2000 cohort *n=35*				*Grade 1*
	% At/Above target			80.0
	% Below target			20.0
	% at/above RU 28-30 (RA 9.0)			-

This data carries both heartening and challenging implications. At November, 2000, over three quarters of Grade Three students at Matterslea were reading 'on target'. The results show a strengthening 1999 cohort. The initial running records showed that two thirds of this group began Grade One *without even RU1*, that is, could not read *any* unseen texts. The overall picture from Matterslea's internal academic monitoring one of progressive acceleration in reading skills for intake groups that tend to come in underpowered or unprepared for early reading. The impact of improved early intervention, Kindergarten and Prep. Year programs has been evident. Where only twenty six percent of 2000's thirty-four Grade 3 students were at RU Level 1 when they began Gr. 1 in 1998, by comparison, 76% of the 2000 Gr. 1 cohort were at RU1 early in 2000 (April).

If Matterslea's 2000 data is compared to the Office of Educational Review's Statewide figures from 1996 (DECCD, 1997) for like-schools (based on the Educational Needs Index), the development among the younger grades appears encouraging:

Table 8.6 Matterslea Gr 2 at RA 9.0 (equiv) on Unseen text comprehension: 1996 estimate to 2000

Tasmania State Schools Grade 2 *% at RA 9.0 1996*	Tas. Low-socio-economic indice schools Grade 2 *% at RA 9.0 1996*	Matterslea Primary School Grade 2 *% at RA 9.0 2000*	*Matterslea Improvement* Grade 2 1996-2000
17.8 %	2.6 %	37.5%	*(a) +31.9% against like-schools;* (b) + 19.7% against Statewide sample

On current trends, the proportion of 'below-target' readers at Matterslea will have halved by the end of 2001 to under 13%. Currently, the great majority (over 80%) are benefiting, showing that there is something well worth maintaining in the program. The pattern of reading skill is improving for each incoming year. However, throughout the early childhood and lower primary sections of the school, internal assessments show around 17% of students overall are failing to meet the internally deemed print literacy standards. It is not possible to predict with any certainty what solutions to this problem might emerge in time from the Inquiry work of cadres. However, as the introduction of PASS processes has not diminished the proportion of strugglers (but rather, has boosted the 'above-expectations' numbers), teachers would have reasonable cause to explore more of the ambitious measures recommended by Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn (1995) and family-based literacy development that promise improve incoming skill levels (Auerbach, 1995; Cairney & Ruge, 1997; Lareau & Horvat, 1999).

It should be recognized that the 'strugglers' are brought more to light by internal monitoring than by Central measures. Against Statewide measures taken in the same year, 2000, only 4% of Gr. 3s scored 'under par' on overall literacy. This suggests the internal measures used by schools such as Matterslea, particularly those using 1-1 assessment techniques (Clay, 1993b; Waddington, 2000) are more stringent than those of Statewide testing.

The credit for a strong improvement in early childhood literacy must be shared by ASP-derived and PASS-derived factors. Inputs flowing from cadre work and professional/ community learning afforded by ASP's capturing of time include collaborative work by staff to design and implement learner-engaging integrated units; the upgrading of teaching

resources and reading materials; the use of information technology to laterally apply reading skills, with skill transfer and generalisation that ensues; a vigorous library program; and some (by no means enough) improvements in parents' awareness of reading assistance strategies and their input.

At the end of 2000, Matterslea and another 'like school' (given here the pseudonym, 'Hawkspur' Primary) in a nearby suburb found justification in their student results to revise upward their expectations on the basis of their students making more than satisfactory progress. Hawkspur set, for example, a target of 50% of their Grade *Two* (completing) students to be at RU 28 in 2001 (Hawkspur's Senior Teacher, 2000, Pers. Communication). By 2000, Matterslea had already achieved that level and in liaison with Hawkspur, argued for and gained agreement on an even higher benchmark than Hawkspurs's tentative suggestion.

Broader comparisons of Matterslea's literacy gains

The early childhood area's successes are evident from Statewide test scores for the Grade 3 cohorts in 1998 and 2000. The 'overall literacy' scores aggregate reading, writing and spelling results. Results given are for the State average at each level; schools in the same Educational Needs Index (ENI) category as Matterslea; and for Matterslea School. The levels relate to indicators which have been moderated across all Tasmanian government schools. These KILOs (Key Intended Literacy Outcomes) are gauged from students test responses and the levels correlate, though imperfectly, to Grade levels:

L1 = *Insufficient information available to determine KILO level*; L2 = *Is working towards KILOs. Lev.1-2*; L3 = *Has achieved KILOs. Lev. 1-2*; L4 = *Has achieved KILOs. Lev. 3-4*; L5 = *Has achieved KILOs. Lev. 5-6.*

The data in Table 8.7 show an appreciable improvement from 1998 to 2001, particularly in its progressive reduction of the very low achievement scores. Note that DoE benchmarking includes L3 in its 'on target' statistics. For the Year 3 cohort, such a picture suggests 100% achievement. As this is an unrealistic interpretation, I have used L4 as amore challenging parameter/indicator.

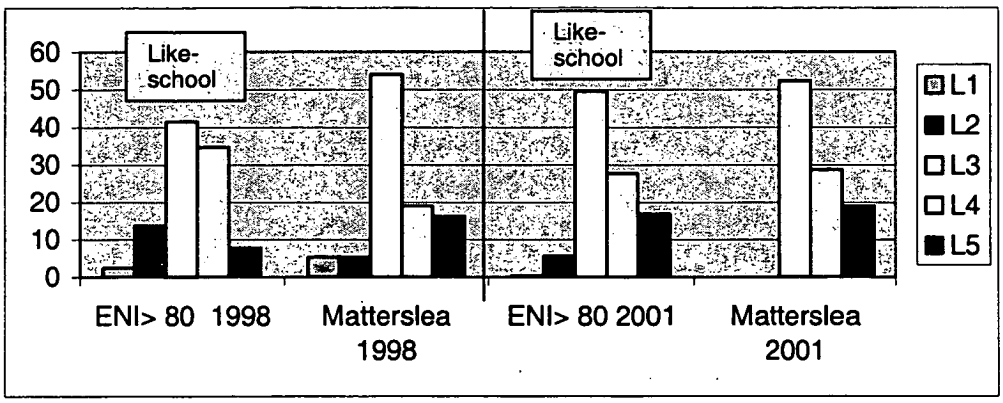
Table 8.7 Results of Grade 3 'Overall Literacy' in Statewide testing 1998:2001 (State, Like-School and Matterslea) Percent at each Performance Level

Level	State 1998	ENI> 80 1998	Matter. 1998	State 1999	ENI> 80 1999	Matter. 1999	State 2000	ENI> 80 2000	Matter. 2000	State 2001	ENI> 80 2001	Matter. 2001
L1	1.9	2.5	5.1	5.4	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0
L2	5.2	13.7	5.2	5.4	2.6	5.7	2.8	4.6	3.4	2.8	5.7	0.0
L3	29.3	41.5	54.4	54.1	31.0	42.9	30.9	38.3	31.1	31.1	49.5	52.4
L4	45.2	34.6	19.3	18.9	37.2	33.1	28.3	27.0	37.9	29.0	27.6	28.6
L5	18.5	7.8	16.7	16.2	29.0	18.1	37.9	29.8	27.6	37.0	16.9	19.0
	63.7	*42.4*	*36.0*	*35.1*	*66.2*	*52.2*	*66.2*	*56.8*	*65.5*	*66.0*	*44.5*	*47.6*
	% at or above Level 4											

In 1998 only 36% of students scored at or above 'grade'. By 2000, that proportion was up to 65%, less than one percent below the State average, and significantly ahead of like-school comparator figures. Matterslea has progressively 'eliminated' the number of students (10% in 1998) scoring well below age norm. The strength of the school's early intervention program for pre-school students and the intensive focus on early childhood monitoring and guided reading would appear to be evidenced in this result. Against the 2001 figures, 2000's scores appear aberrantly high. This could be a cohort characteristics phenomenon or, in keeping with the findings of the Manpower Study (Bloom et al., 2001) of renewing schools' academic gains, that program initiatives generate early years' surges in test performances that subside or level out over time. The cohort scores look generally higher, so it may be a Nevertheless, the improvement in Year 3 scores shows Matterslea teachers and parents can justifiably expect improved literacy capacity in their students.

Over time Matterslea has improved its position relative to other 'like schools', having since 1998 raised its 'above L4' proportion by over ten percent. The data show a clear reduction in lower end performance and a commensurate rise in higher achievement levels. In chart form, the change from 1998 to 2001 is clear:

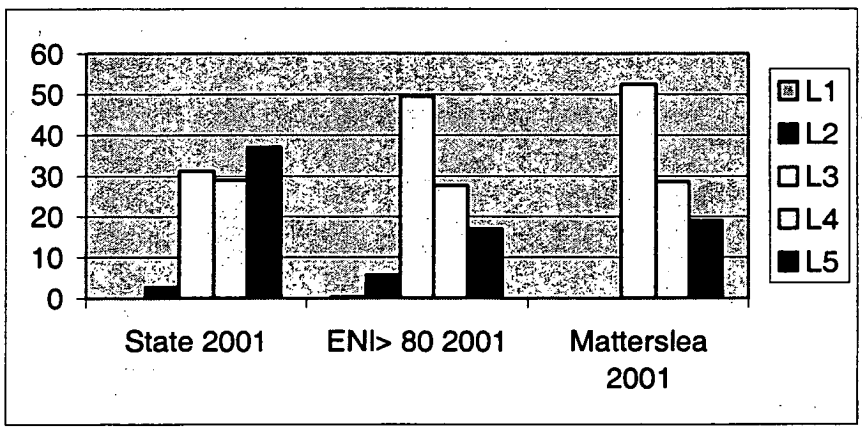
Figure 8.1 Matterslea Gr. 3 Overall Literacy, compared with those of 'like schools' (schools with similar levels of disadvantage in Tasmania) 1998-2001



1 = Insufficient information; 2 = Is working towards 1-2 KILOs; 3 = Has 1-2 KILOs.
4 = Has 3-4 KILOs; 5 = Has 5-6 KILOs.

For the purpose of achieving a performance profile closer to the statewide average, the emerging challenge for Matterslea appears not so much in bolstering basic foundational performance, but in extending the more advanced capabilities of students. Figure 8.2 compares Matterslea with State and like-school Gr. 3 scores:

Figure 8.2 Comparison of Gr 3 Statewide Overall Literacy 2001 for State average, (Like schools and Matterslea) – percent at each level



1 = Insufficient information; 2 = Is working towards 1-2 KILOs; 3 = Has 1-2 KILOs;
4 = Has 3-4 KILOs; 5 = Has 5-6 KILOs.

Although the literacy progress of Matterslea's for the upper primary groups has not been as dramatic as for early childhood and early primary cohorts, compared with State and 'Like school' averages, the picture is one of steady improvement :

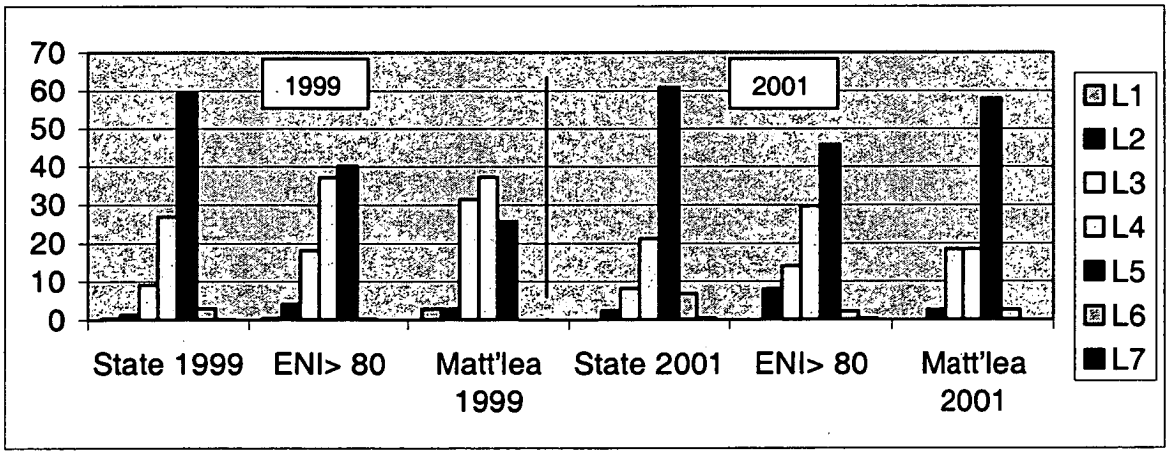
Table 8.8 Results of Grade 5 Statewide testing 1999 – 2001: Percent at each Performance Level

Level	State 199	ENI> 80 1999	Matters. 1999	State 200	ENI> 80 2000	Matters. 2000	State 200	ENI> 80 2001	Matters. 2001
L1	0.3	0.4	**2.9**	0.2	0.2	**0.0**	0.0	0.0	**0.0**
L2	1.3	4.1	**2.9**	2.4	5.2	**7.4**	2.5	8.1	**2.6**
L3	9.1	18.1	**31.4**	8.4	18.2	**18.5**	8.2	14.1	**18.4**
L4	26.9	37.1	**37.1**	20.5	29.0	**37.0**	21.1	29.7	**18.4**
L5	59.3	40.1	**25.7**	61.2	46.4	**37.0**	60.9	45.7	**57.9**
L6	3.0	0.2	**0.0**	6.8	1.0	**0.0**	6.8	2.2	**2.6**
L7	0.1	0.0	**0.0**	0.5	0.0	**0.0**	0.4	0.3	**0.0**
	62.4	*40.3*	*25.7*	*68.5*	*47.4*	*37.0*	*68.1*	*48.2*	*60.5*
	% at or above L5								

The level descriptors are:L1 = Insufficient information avail. to determine KILO level; L2 = Working towards KILOs. Lev.1-2; L3 = Has achieved KILOs. Lev. 1-2; L4 = Has achieved KILOs. Lev. 3-4; L5 = Has achieved KILOs. Lev. 5-6; L6 = Working towards KILOs Lev. 7-8; L7 = Achieved the KILOs Lev. 7-8

The 2001 Gr. 5 scores show Matterslea as doubling the number of Grade 5s at or above the L5 benchmark. The charted form shows the State average and the Like school profile has remained essentially unaltered, while Matterslea's profile has improved markedly (L5 indicates a student has achieved Grade 5/ 6 markers and is hence 'on target' for Grade 5):

Figure 8.3 Comparison of Statewide reading scores 1999 and 2001: State average; like-schools; and Matterslea (percent at each level)



The relatively static progress Tasmania-wide of Grade 5's compared with that of its Gr. 3s was apparently noted by Tasmanian Education Minister Wreidt, who made a lengthy press

statement in 2001 that highlighted Gr. 3 accomplishments while omitting from mention Gr. 5 performances (Wreidt, 2002, http://www.media.tas.gov.au/release.html?id=6079).

Matterslea has cause to celebrate literacy development in its early childhood area since 1996. The credit must be apportioned to several factors, only one of which is ASP's particular pedagogical approach of Powerful Learning which is best identified in MLIC. PASS, Flying Start, Early Intervention, all should be recognised as directly associated with the progress. Further impetus has come from the development of parent assistance skills and a range of school climate supports that raise students' sense of belonging, well-being and confidence, supporting the higher expectations from adults around them. The facilitation of these conditions is an outcome of the process-oriented nature of ASP. The increased consonance of teacher and community perspectives, real and realistic priority setting, and collective action research in the Inquiry teams (cadres) to pursue academic and school climate changes have all been directly and explicitly advanced by ASP process. The flexibility of ASP in accommodating PASS has been an achievement in itself that increased the confidence of staff and coherence of the school's teaching and learning mission to the State's broad accountability and curricular reforms. It should be remembered that only literacy progress has been analysed here (although the numeracy data carries some appreciable, though less dramatic development). Numeracy has had less time as a curriculum focus so far, and space precludes its being a particular point of attention here.

On the evidence gathered at school and state levels, Matterslea's ASP process and teaching and learning promoted by it has resulted in four years of improvement towards the goal of academic performance at least commensurate with State overall expectations. Certainly, if we were to treat the governance/student learning nexus as something of a null hypothesis, the data would suggest the school's outcomes challenge the assertion that no causality can be proposed between school governance and workplace development and student academic achievement. The pedagogical and curricular approach at Matterslea has altered markedly since 1996, particularly in placing student learning as the defining goal of organisational learning, and most notably in the cadres' Inquiry Process/action planning. To achieve the changes, all member groups have increased their capacity in teaching and learning. The capacity is in part a result of conditions of learning, an enhanced learning environment of

physical, intellectual and social capital. Along with a student learning focus, ASP has also brought a broadening of community members' scope of learning, and the synergy of various member groups' learning activity. Teachers' growing pedagogical and socio-cultural capacity as a facilitative outcome is broadly captured in the notion of professional learning.

8.5 Professional Learning

As differentiated in the previous chapter, professional learning encompasses both formal and informal, structured and incidental. Departmental documents acknowledge the 'institutional' dimension related to school planning and the and 'individual' dimension "associated with being a competent teacher in the sector ... assigned [and] includes elements of on and off the job training, spaced learning, reflection, relevance" (DoE, Tasmania, 1999c, http://www.education.tas.gov.au/o278/issue/996/iplp.htm). Much of Matterslea teachers' professional learning activity has already been addressed under 'curriculum development'. Since ASP brought the broad the school's agenda into collective deliberation, teachers have experienced a continual process of inquiry around not only their classroom practice but also their participation as colleagues in curriculum planning, school program and resources organisation, and school/community interaction. Some attention is warranted for professional development where it has been explicitly made a focus of the decision-making process. The decisions have affected outcomes in for institutional and individual dimensions of professional learning.

Individual Professional Learning Plans

The DoE has required of Tasmanian schools since 2000 that Principals oversee the negotiation of Individual Professional Learning Plans with each staff member. Matterslea's teachers participated in the IPLP requirement from 1999. The DoE's protocols ask that IPLPs attend to learning relevant to individual teachers, school-specific priorities and system initiatives. However, because the cadres moderate much of the professional and community learning related to ASP-processed planning, Matterslea's IPLPs have not required specific appropriateness to the school's Vision or current priorities. For their part, the community has no input under the aegis of IPLP procedures into what particular areas of capability or

pedagogical skill are targeted by teachers for their own development, for the school and its students' learning (let alone their community's needs).

The impact of teachers' intentions within IPLPs at Matterslea should be understood. There is a parallel in teacher learning to the goal-setting actions of students. Professional goals are both personal and institutional, perhaps even relating to particular equity groups such as indigenous or disabled persons, or commitment to public schooling more broadly. The interactive nature of professional life is not as simple as might be imagined—teachers are quick to tell you that *"(our) working time is isolated to our rooms—there's hardly any time to look in on anybody else's work"* (Primary Tr. Group Interview 1998). Isolation, hurried exchange, competition for scarce teaching resources and living in distant suburbs are barriers to teachers' deliberative. The consequence is a raised valuing of interactive planning time, particularly of sections or grade-levels and of professional development opportunities, whether these be on site or off-campus at District arranged sessions. Time and funding (for release from teaching) are limited. The capturing of time mentioned in Chapters Six and Seven provided no-cost, out-of-class time during ordinary school hours without reducing students' learning time. But cadres and SAW meetings had to compete with professional development for that precious commodity.

Teachers were, however, ambivalent in their initiative to shift to a three-weekly cycle for cadre meetings when they responded to a cadre-specific questionnaire at the end of 2001. While some teachers were reticent to allocate less time to schoolwide planning, most were frustrated by the failure of current arrangements to meet their learning needs via their IPLPs. The sharing that occurs in the cadres is valued by staff in particular, as they are able to kep pace with the full range of curriculum and management initiatives in other grades and levels of the school - the cadres offer opportunities to *influence* other teachers and sections. As one male teacher put it, *"we need to keep touch so we don't lose the plot"*. However, *meetings* were seen by some staff as talk-time, while much of the work that needed to be done was in hands-on activity of the *"cut, paste, type, find, publish, build, write-up"* sort. These too needed time and collaboration. Action plans from the School Image and Communication (SI&C) cadre had added two new 'evening' commitments into teachers' work lives, the *Hall of Fame* evening (recognizing past students who were good role models for students) and the

Art Gallery, displaying and selling students' pieces. In addition to these, numbers of parent teacher interviews had tripled and educative training for parents had required extra input from teachers. It was noticed by a parent leader that "*there seems to be a no-no on any more evening events*". Teachers in 2000 were disappointed that "*parents won't come at running the special things themselves, nights that have fallen to us, like the Hall of Fame, and that's the only way we can see ourselves being freed up to do any more after-school events*" (ECE teacher, 2000 Group Interview). Extending and distributing leadership capacity among community members has not been targeted by cadres to this date. At the end of 2001, a suggestion was made in the SI & C cadre that the school should investigate a cross-agency funded community liaison officer who might foster such expansion of community capacity.

Teacher communication and cultural differences

The in-school professional learning undertaken by teachers in the area of appropriate communication and appropriate curriculum for Matterslea's students has been very much a discovery process. Understandably, many staff have, almost as a socio-cultural mindset, worked in the understanding that the gulf between teachers' and families' mores, education experiences and expectations of classroom practice is too hard to bridge. It surfaces as considerable differences in social class identifiers such as language codes, dress, recreation resources and practices. Until ASP's Taking Stock exercises, the evidence was that teachers expected parents to grow towards their constructivist, technical savvy, almost as a natural progression from unsophisticated to complex understanding, or from naïve to apprenticed developmentally appropriate practice. There is no evidence prior to the 1997 community interviews, video surveys and collective Vision/priority setting deliberations that the professionals had reached out to listen and hear lay perspectives. Freebody's (1997) workshop had begun a reciprocal exchange of values between the largely working class families and middle class educators. The voice of parents in cadres is a vital dialogic factor in teachers' culturally appropriate development of practice.

There *are* families who are upwardly mobile, who have experiences of successful education at many levels of learning, who have perhaps made a sacrifice of social capital (friendships, insider identity) from one class milieu in order to establish in a more socio-economically

rewarded milieu (Payne, 1993), moving to adjoining 'brick housing' areas, yet still within the general bus vicinity of Matterslea. These exceptions do not make the rule, however. They simply broaden the range of strategic demands for teachers and supporting professionals such as social workers and speech pathologists who base their work on communication and exchange.

The very process of ASP has afforded Matterslea staff a wealth of authentic staff learning experiences: cadres' action research processes; staff and community questionnaire analysis; in-school professional development and professional teaming. Not all have had direct impact upon student learning. However, the isomorphic factor is apparent on at least a procedural plane. The rationale for the students' timetables being as they are (with a shortened Wednesday program) is explained to families as necessary so that teachers and families can team better for meeting students' learning needs.

Reporting to parents about student progress

Another important aspect of Matterslea teachers' effects on the families lies in the development of candour in evaluative communications. Honesty is an important aspect of any discourse, as is the quality of information available as bases of decision-making. While the ASP is explicit in its rhetoric concerning data-based inquiry as the foundation of sound planning and action, teachers are in privileged positions when it comes to sensitive data. They alone have, through the principal, access to student performance data, school expenditure in curricular areas and so forth. Parents are acknowledged as desiring explicit information on their students' learning behaviour (Australian Council of State School Organisations & Australian Parents Council, 1996). However, it gets down to teachers' trust of parents and their honouring of parents' rights to that knowledge. A point raised in the early sections of this chapter is that teachers proactively *chose* early in the ASP experience at Matterslea (1997) to inform parents that Matterslea's students were performing far below what was generally believed. Beginning with this disclosure, the parent body experienced the stages outlined by Kubler-Ross (1969) sequence of responses in circumstances of grief:

1. Denial (avoids confronting the reality)

2. Anger (usually a question-rich time – *Why?*)
3. Depression (anguish under the impact of reality)
4. Bargaining (return to the 'good old days')
5. Acceptance (coming to terms with loss and moving on)

(cited by Terrence Deal, 1990)

Over time, parents have let go of their existing socialised beliefs about teaching and learning, to replace them with more progressive understandings, more aligned with what their school is actually doing. The videos of Matterslea's classroom practices, distributed through the classes to families, had a remarkable effect in drawing out into the open the 'orthodoxy' residual in the community. Given that a large proportion of the community had taken their primary schooling at Matterslea between fifteen and twenty years earlier, two things were understandable: first that their ingrained ideas about what the curriculum and instruction entailed would be out of date and second, that because of the continuity (it was the 'same' school they thought they knew) of their situation, they would not be 'expecting' an altered set of learning conditions. The 'bargaining' stage has been an extended one. Many families have retained a belief in 'back-to-(their) basics' processes, while others in the community have supported 'modern' methods. The younger parents are more supportive of contemporary practice than parents of upper primary students, possibly having had more recent school experiences, particularly the 'language experience'[5] methods of the mid 1980s.

In this way, the Matterslea community had to accept the loss of some beliefs in order to progress the community 's towards a contemporary partnership in learning:

i. *that Matterslea's satisfactory academic achievement was perennial and*

ii. *the conviction that 'what was good for Mum and Dad' was good enough (or best) for today's learner.*

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[5] 'Language Experience' was a whole language approach that used reading-through-writing; collaborative book-building, big-books; writing-based spelling development, shaped writing and natural children's literature. It was , until the return to an outcomes-driven Australia-wide agreed curriculum, the prevailing style of literacy teaching across Australia.

In 1999, following the second video exercise, I sketched a matrix to represent the dynamics of the potential clash, to convey the pitfalls and promises of certain reporting styles as they intersect with certain parent attitudes:

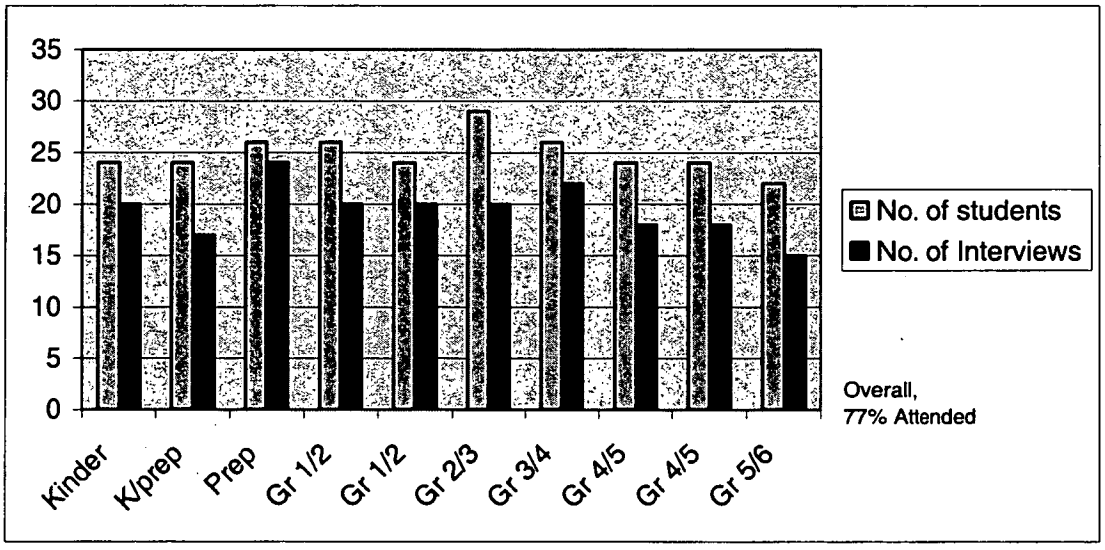
Figure 8.4 Apparent results from a teacher and parent responses from the reporting of student academic or social behaviour/performance

Teacher's effect in reporting to parents	Parent/guardian's response style on school issues		
	PASSIVE	**PLANFUL**	**REACTIVE**
ALARM	*Withdrawal*	*Looks outside school situation for course of action*	*Outrage and demonstrative withdrawal*
ALERT	*Worry*	*Supports teacher, sees student as owning learning*	*Urges prevention or intervention*
ALLAY	*Out-of-sight, out-of-mind (ignorant bliss?)*	*Confidence or Skepticism*	*Restless, fearful, undermining/ white-anting*

The cells of the matrix represent outcomes likely from the combinations of teacher-generated effects and a range of parents' response styles. Parents' responses to the 1997 and 1998 rounds of community interviews support my perception that Matterslea's parent body felt alerted, rather than alarmed or humoured, and developed a *planful* orientation to school issues.

Transparency, access and the ensuing trust can be seen as important to defining parents' reactions. Parents have come to value the information provided to them by staff. The evidence from parent/teacher interviews of 2001 indicates a significant rise in numbers attending, compared with less than 25% (overall) who attended in 1996 (figures collated at April 13 Staff meeting, 1997). The following chart shows the consistent interest shown across the grades by parents in 2001:

Figure 8.5 Numbers attending parent/teacher interviews in 2001



The opportunities for learning presented in such exchanges are significant. From 1999, upper primary students developed Powerpoint presentations for parent/teacher sessions, an extension on the 'portfolio' record of achievement model used in many Tasmanian schools. This was built into the Information Technology criteria set up by Matterslea's senior teacher. Primary grade students also used their goal-setting records to help explain their activity and learning achievements through the term. It is possible that these personalizing measures, coupled with the classroom practice videos, improved community readiness to meet with teachers, in the knowledge that the school was reaching out in media that engaged them.

While these techniques enhance the quality of information shared, there still remains the challenge for community members to develop skills and language useful for gaining key information from teachers, and negotiating support processes such as homework and reference materials. Cairney and Ruge's (1997) Australian study found homework to be the major link or 'common ground' between home and school contexts.

8.6 Community Learning Outcomes

The bottom line is, there is a strong commitment to making a difference in student achievement and learning outcomes ..... that's what I was really pleased about [in coming to Matterslea] .....'cause it underlies everything I believe about why we are here; it's to support students in maximising their learning potential, and the important part of that at Matterslea, is working closely with the families, and on being pro-active and getting out there. They don't come to us, we go to them.

(Principal in succession , Interview, 2001)

Teachers' learning behaviour is of vital importance in a 'community' context when the community is identified at least in part to be a 'community of learners'. In this context, teachers are models and the students are apprentices in the crafts of inquiry, research, discourse and critique. As has already been argued, the domains ought not be identified as only academic—the aesthetic and social modeling of adults, including parents and ancillary staff, are just as potent. In an educational environment accepting of the verity of multiple intelligences, such cultural immersion is equally valid and important.

Multi-member, multi-dimensional development

The collective, collaborative nature of teachers' learning culture at Matterslea has been represented to the students in a number of ways. For instance, the re-organisation of the school's timetable (to 'buy time' for collective Inquiry, teacher professional development and community learning sessions) has required a practical weekly adjustment on students parts, with every Wednesday afternoon an early finish. This reinforces the importance of teachers' ongoing learning. Similarly, parents' efforts to attend planning sessions are further adult models of community learning behaviour, especially SAWs where students (particularly SRC members) are likely to participate. It is not necessary that students see their own parents as regular contributors; so long as they recognise the parent community as contributing in a way that expresses high expectations, aspiration, desire and pursuit of the school's Vision. When parents engage in literacy skills afternoons and numeracy exploration s and demonstrations, students are necessarily immersed in a community learning environment. As opportunities have expanded for both individual and common 'voices' to be heard, expertise is being distributed. So doing, parents and students at Matterslea regain and affirm a self concept as contributors.

In MLIC, the best opportunities have presented for the co-engagement of teachers and students in learning behaviour. Particularly at upper primary levels, the sense that knowledge comes from students' and teachers' mutual researching (using hard copy, community searching and ICT sources) is an important modeling of interdependence and collaborative learning. Further the explicit examples students see in Matterslea teachers' language and process-use in the conflict resolving aspects of behaviour management is consistently transparent and articulated. The mapping of antecedents, listening to all sides, clarifying the validity of consequences and setting repair goals is a school-wide practice.

Teacher-parent modeling is very effective in the cadres. A parent member in one of the teams responded under interview, *"Being in the cadre lets me know what's going on. I can identify as a learner"*. Such learning behaviour directly affects only small proportion of the community but interviewed parents indicate that the grape-vine (or 'ripple-effect') is very likely to extend that influence throughout the relatively small community. We can only surmise from comments such as those of the Principal (2) (2001) that the *indirect* implications of shared Inquiry, where parents are equals in problem-solving teams with teachers and school leaders, are that families know their input is invited:

> *... I think just about every parent, you could say, makes contact with the school, whether it's in relation to a concern to work with their children in the classroom, or within other classes, on the PTA, on the canteen, putting notices in a newsletter, because they are participating in a sporting group, coming to have a bit of a grumble... The open door is there and I think that is a really positive thing that they feel that they can come in at whatever level.* (Principal, Interview, 2001)

The relative absence of males from governance and other school involvement

When lower participation rate of my males became apparent during the taking stock meetings of 1997, I began to gather data to help ascertain the extent of adult males' input and boys' outcomes at Mayfield. At the end of 1997 while teachers were allocating students to the next year's classes, I noticed their use of a colour-coded card system. Although for them it was mainly an exercise to ensure students were matched with appropriate peers and teachers, I saw it has a graphic representation of gender, achievement and social orientations of students. Spread out on the staff room floor were posters under the titles of teachers and

grades for 1998. A red dot was added to the name card of any child considered by their teacher as likely to behave oppositionally with any teacher in the school. The poster-size sheets gave a neat all-school student sociogram through the eyes of teachers. The pattern shown by the Mayfield class allocation data (Table 8.9) raises the hypothesis chorused by many writers (Biddulph, 1997, Gilbert& Gilbert. 1998 and West, 1997a; 2001) that male students' school outcomes of academic and experiential natures are suffering from schools' failure to sufficiently engage men as role models and schools' un-necessarily sedentary curriculum:

Table 8. 9 Mayfield Class teachers' placements of students by learning and behaviour criteria for 1998 Gathered Monday Dec. 1, 1997

	GIRLS			BOYS		
	Behaviour difficulty	All-round advanced	At-risk in learning	Behaviour difficulty	All-round advanced	At-risk in learning
Grades 4-6	*2*	*12*	*10*	*12*	*16*	*23*
Grades P-3	*0*	*20*	*17*	*5*	*16*	*21*
OVERALL	***2***	***32***	***27***	***17***	***32***	***44***

It appeared that boys who begin school on the wrong foot or who find school difficult to cope with are unlikely to improve their circumstances in terms of conflict or academic performance. Boys are greatly over-represented in behaviour difficulty and, in the upper primary especially, in learning breakdown. Data at this point of gathering did not discriminate the extent of overlap between behaviour and at-risk learning. Given low participation rates of male parents in school affairs and the teachers' beliefs expressed in their class allocations, the temptation to pursue the connection between men's input and boys' outcomes was too great to resist. Wearing the dual hats of coach and researcher, I suggested to the School Image and Communication Cadre that within its priority of improving parent involvement we might advertise a men's get-together at the school one evening and see what they believed was useful and feasible for men's' input to school life and children's learning. Advertised in the Mayday, the first meeting attracted a dozen men. The group met periodically over two years but did not sustain internal ongoing organization. In the couple of months that the men were deciding how to use their collective wits towards

the school's and their children's benefit, I asked for grant money from the University to research Mayfield men's perceived and practiced roles in their children's learning.

Fourteen men, including nine of the men's group were interviewed by male research assistants using a semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix AA). The results showed a wide tenor of responses from an equally wide, though relatively small sample. Respondents included an unemployed homemaker; a single father, a step father, a fathers of girls only, indigenous men, a primary caring grandfather and a university student training to teach. Some had lived in Mayfield all their lives, some were (in their own words) 'blow-ins'. The only clear patterns to emerge were a predilection for sport as the favoured involvement opportunity , and a resignation to more immediate involvement by their female partners in core school help. Work was seen the primary constraint, particularly irregular hours, with one suggestion offered in that the school should emphasise fathers' involvement in the summer months when men will have 'more daylight hours' for outdoor and practical pursuits with children. The school was seen to "*have the parents covered by the Mayday*" in so far as it "*brings us up on what's going on ... especially with sport and excursions* [field trips and community visits]". Manual skills were frequently suggested as avenues for male input, but a few men noted the loss of the school's 'workshop' and responsible staff that had for some years offered bench and tool access to students. Though the majority of men interviewed had not made a 'success' of their own schooling, they were generally positive towards school retention and further education. Admittedly these men had volunteered to speak, and could be considered 'active' parents. Yet, amongst the positives were sprinkled some strong criticisms of the school's organization and its learning culture. Interestingly, most of these had not emerged during the Taking Stock surveys that had occupied much of the year of interviewing, 1997:

- "*Cliquiness and hierarchies turn men off*";
- Two men perceived the school "*pandered to the needs of single mothers over families*" (not specified);
- The practice of giving reluctant learners 'time out' or internal suspensions for behaviour infractions was seen as self-defeating and "*playing into the hands of avoiders*";
- Homework demands on children were too light with a consequence that families had insufficient structure for their desire to help children's school related learning; and

- The '*unisex*' curriculum (sic) failed to foster boys' engagement and "*give them something that I belong here*".
- There was a perception that a direct and unabashed approach to correcting children's conceptions would be frowned upon by teachers: *"If the kid's made a mistake you tell him 'you've made a mistake'. I don't believe I'm putting him down if I'm telling [child] 'You've spelt phone book wrong' and tell him how it's spelt.*"

The effect of men's relative absence from school affairs is being pondered in many contexts, especially communities like Matterslea where there is a predominance of female-headed single-parent households. Difficulties for females in mobile and sometimes unstable households have also appeared at Matterslea. For instance, internal assessments of reading showed in 2000 that of eleven Matterslea Grade 1 students who scored as 'advanced' readers, only two were girls. Indeed, the interface of low-income regional urban culture and Matterslea's school culture is yet to be adequately investigated.

Celebration, pride and identity

'Success' stories, whether academic or otherwise, will generalise through the community where information systems promote awareness of the success stories. A contextual example is Matterslea's tactic of celebrating a 'Hall of Fame' of successful past-student role models. The Hall of Fame arose in cadre 'solutions' search regarding lack of pride and the school and community's poor reputation in greater Launceston, of which Matterslea was the black sheep suburb. A high school in another cluster of schools had been noted as having a corridor with some graduate's photos mounted to celebrate their getting jobs or tertiary training after graduation. Matterslea's cadre members took the idea one step further to look at ex-Matterslea students in their maturity, those who might provide role models for the current students, and to celebrate with them their achievements. The action plan and the execution of the Hall of Fame became a major 'project' of the School Image and Communication Cadre. It has been a yearly event since 1999.

The emphasis in the nomination process was not simply on academic learning, indeed a high proportion of the inductees had only modest success at best at school, but have achieved excellence in their respective fields of endeavour, whether in small business, sport or community service. A deliberate gender balance has been structured by the cadre in charge

of promoting the Hall of Fame. As a number of the inductees have moved on to live in other states or countries, some have been difficult to track, but some have returned from interstate for the occasion. Now having had its third 'induction' of 'successful' adult Matterslea graduates, the *School Image and Communication* cadre's yearly public relations exercise demonstrates in concrete terms to the community that Matterslea *has* 'grown' good product and that high expectations or aspirations are not discountable as fantasies. In terms of ASP process, the *Hall of Fame* is a direct action-plan outcome of the School Image and Communication Cadre, and demonstrates a clear line of effect from the Vision statement's point 1: "*Matterslea students will be confident, capable achievers in society*"; and point 5: "*Matterslea acknowledges everyone's individual gifts and develops them to their fullest potential*". The inquiry aspect of the action planning took the school beyond its own imagination and the outcomes has been a public relations success, with over eighty invited guests at each function, hosted by the school's Student Representative Council. Inductees are invites to return to the school and give motivating presentations to the students through classroom sessions.

In one particular way, the Hall of Fame solution to the identified challenge of 'poor school image' highlights the risk-taking and long term action involved in school renewal. Some immediate outcomes of the cadre's action plan have been materially evidenced, in the dignifying stretch of photos and captions mounted in the school hallway. However, the long-term benefits of parents' and students' belief in themselves is difficult to capture adequately in quantitative terms, and very imperfectly by qualitative means; it is an intangible outcome of hope. Equally difficult is the ascertaining of changes in the broader community's perceptions of the school. A majority of those community members interviewed in the two rounds of community interviews believed the broader community's poor opinion of Matterslea as a suburb was being markedly altered for the positive: "*They say that about some other schools but not us now. We have a good spirit and we're holding our ground, but some of the others* [schools] *are shrinking*" (Female parent, Round 2 Interviews, 1998).

A community learning about changing

ASP has embedded the learning process into its governance through a structure demanding that (i) all priorities are derived by agreed by the range of stakeholders through consensual and inclusive means – a collaborative and participatory frame; *and* (ii) an Inquiry-based process of meeting those needs (rather than by directive from school management).

Developing the process as a school culture has, like improving student academic achievement, not been an overnight phenomenon. And, because Matterslea was not held to the ASP by its District or State offices, behaviours and concomitant beliefs could not be imposed or downloaded onto the school community. As indicated in earlier in this chapter, Matterslea's passage into ASP implementation was deliberately at an unhurried pace. Such real-time accommodation accords with the constructivist learning 'orthodoxy' that characterises most Tasmanian teachers' "theories of practice" (Department of Education, Tasmania, 1999a).

The implementation phase of the project utilized two main probes of community perceptions of learning: the twenty-eight semi-structured community interviews; and the survey of families accompanying the multiply copied classroom videos.

The congruence of participatory learning and participatory decision-making is potentially very powerful, but the messages from both sets of community interviews (1997 and 1998) indicate that, at the level of individuals and individual families, there is a wide range of desired and actual outcomes from school renewal. Participation is most evident as the factor that generates the difference. There is a wide difference in the ability of those who become cadre members and those who remain involved largely 'from a distance'. From the 56 interviews (two rounds of 28), the impact of engaging in the discourse with staff was clear: (i) the only (four) parents to use the terms 'literacy' and 'numeracy' were cadre members, who had in-depth exposure to the jargon used by staff; (ii) phrases such as 'making children responsible for their decisions' were used unprompted by the active interviewees. One male aboriginal parent (a cadre member) asserted:

> *I believe that since we've been involved in this cadre thing, we've got to know the teachers a lot better, understanding, and before we didn't. That's why I believe that more parents should get involved, because there are different reports about teachers, but once you get to know them they are just as good as the next person ... we've got a*

great communication thing with the teachers and the students that we've come across.
(Round 2 Interviews, 1998)

A female parent cadre member, interviewed in 1998 believed,

parents need to be more involved in decision making as regards the school ...that should help with the kids; if the parents are involved more then they are not kept out of anything. (Round 2 Interviews, 1998)

She perceived the ASP process was '*just trying basically to get the public to think better of the school*'. Informed by her work in the cadres, she was able to be specific about '*the sorts of issues students should help decide*'- she specified '*goal-setting* [a specific technique to give students responsibility for their attainments], *anti-bullying techniques, and swimming, because they seem to want to do more swimming.*' The language used and choice of focal issues by family members showed the 'discourse' was having an impact. The anti-bullying policy was set in 1998 as a priority challenge by the Supportive School Environment cadre, and had engaged all students through classroom brainstorms and families through incidence-and-severity- surveys and solution searches. Goal setting had been an early focus through the Grade 5/6 home-distributed classroom practice videos.

Extending the impact of video communication: a second video and questionnaire

In the following year, on the initiative of the School Image and Communication cadre, a second video was put together concerning involvement opportunities for community members, ranging from governance through classroom and school event support. Titled 'Matterslea, Where People Matter', the style used on this occasion was more descriptive and used a combination of voice over and informal captioning to explain the various opportunities in sequence. The system used for multi-copying and distribution was similar to the previous video exercise. Except for archival copies, the first video's cassettes were re-used. Again, a questionnaire accompanied each video-cassette homewards (Appendix J).

Ninety feedback sheets were received from one hundred and seventy families. The questionnaire response rate (52%) for the second video exercise was a little weaker though, by comparison with the ordinary questionnaire returns (between 3% and 20%), but still very pleasing. The demographic spread of respondents showed 56% with four or more years involvement with the school as parents. Forty-three percent of respondents had their

partners share in filling out the response sheet. The medium appears able to prompt families into collaborative exchange. With 33% males responding, this was by far the most vigorous survey feedback f to date from men in the community. The first video survey (*A Look Inside Matterslea,* 1997) had not included gender as a nominal descriptor, hence a comparison is not possible. Nevertheless, with a near non-involvement of male community members in day to day school affairs, the medium again confirmed itself as an effective tool for family/school engagement. The results show a community more engaged in home learning input than in direct school governance or learning assistance roles.

Table 8.10 Responses from Video Feedback Questionnaire accompanying the 1999 'Matterslea Where People Matter' videos. N= 90 (raw tallies)

Video Feedback Item	*very*	*fairly*	*a little*	*rarely*	*not at all*
1. How active do you feel in your child's learning at home?	39	34	15	1	1
2. How active are you in decision making at Matterslea?	5	10	16	31	27
3. How active are you in helping in the learning program at school?	5	8	20	21	30

While 54% claimed to be 'happy' with their overall involvement in their child's school life, a significant number (40%) were unhappy with their level of input into children's school lives but felt they were 'doing their best under the circumstances'. As the family interviews had revealed over the previous two years, it was not so much that families were ignorant of the opportunities. Rather, they were constrained by work and childcare circumstances from engaging much further than they did. Ninety percent of respondents claimed to read the *Mayday* 'every week', with the 'sometimes' balance largely represented by male respondents.

Table 8.11 (following) shows the attractiveness of extra-curricular events to Matterslea community members. In response to the question 'What sorts of family/school involvement attracts you?" , thirty-four of seventy-one comments specified sports, parent teacher sports events or social gatherings, while a further seven identified assemblies and class concerts as attractive. Clarifying points offered some practical bases as well: *"I like sports because I can bring other children along*". Twelve noted 'helping to

learn/learning to help', 'parent help' and 'homework' as engaging, and seven showed alignment to a 'learning' focus with their noting of parent/teacher sessions as important and attractive. Hence, though not necessarily of highest attraction, teaching and learning was still a main draw-card for around a third of the respondents.

Table 8.11 Frequencies family involvement interests: Video 2 Feedback *n*=74

Sport (students) and parent v teacher sports events	27
Learning to help/helping to learn/ parent reader sessions	8
Assemblies/special events/concerts/class days	8
Parent/teacher sessions/ info mtgs on student progress	7
Socials/men's evenings/family gatherings/socials/discos	7
Fund raising	3
Not sure, happy with everything	3
Excursions/camps	3
Homework	2
Parent help	2
PTA	2
Tuck shop (canteen)	1
Helping in decision making and getting the best education for my child	1

School governance activity was not a key engagement for families. Just one parent claimed an interest in "helping in decision making and getting the best education for my child", with another two noting PTA engagement. When asked "What sorts of things make it difficult for you to be more involved in your child's school life?" respondents perhaps nominated work and family/community commitments as the major constraints:

Table 8.12 Parent/carers' major barriers to more involvement in child's school life

Work	33
Busy with volunteering; time; single parent	16
Children at home	14
Lacking personal awareness/skills	4
Time and space clashes (not specified)	3
Own children's attitude	3
University studies	2
Transport	2
Nothing	2
Health	1
Unsure who to contact re involvement	1
(Not addressed)	9
	n=90

Of the four parents who expressed a lack of confidence, one wrote, *"I didn't learn very well at school when my son can spell words that I can't I also have a one year old son"*. Some staff had interpreted weaker levels of direct engagement from parents as a lack of interest, but there was no substantive evidence in this direction either in the community interviews of 1997 and 1998, nor in any of the video responses. Though of course, disdain or lack of interest is not likely to express itself in survey returns, the clear message from the responses was that the vast majority of parents were hamstrung by logistics, not attitude. The School Image and Communication cadre interpreted the data as suggesting social events do have an important role in improving family/school relations, but that the sharing of information and skills for home and school learning remains a priority.

Video appears a very effective and engaging instrument for sharing and receiving information. As a research tool it has enormous potential, offering a more concrete set of understandings upon which to respond. It is important to control the verity of the images and avoid manipulating the medium. Were community (citizens' frequency) television to become as accessible as community radio in Australia, the potential for a range of information exchanges around school matters would rise, and for the education system or subsystems like Districts, could result in communications more accessible and cost effective than video production and reproduction. As a research tool, video's ability to stimulate more vigorous community response (from respondents arguably better informed on specific topics) is once more indicated within this study as a methodological and ethical avenue that highly warrants further inquiry.

Participation by the members of the community of learners

During 1998 and 1999 Matterslea staff, led by the action plans of the School Image & Communication Cadre as well as by the overlapping interest of the Teaching & Learning cadre, began literacy and numeracy assistance workshops for parents. The sessions attracted large numbers of parents, upwards of thirty six to each. From these a number of parents volunteered for training to be regular contributors to the school's *Macquarie* and other one-to-one reading assistance programs. The parents who have maintained

their involvement made a significant impact on the new Principal of 2001. Her comments indicate a large change from the circumstances of 1996 when staff highlighted poor parent support as their major motivation to go with the ASP project:

> *The comment that is often made there aren't many parents coming to the cadre meetings, so we don't have much participation at the school level I think is erroneous. I don't think I have been in a school community that has had more parent participation which runs from nine o'clock when the parents bring their children in, and there is a strong sense of community, with parents from kindergarten right through to grade six bringing their children in meeting together. Fairly informal groups in the quadrangle out the front of the school, talking about school based issues or as general supports, we have a strong commitment of parents in classrooms in supporting their children in the classrooms. They are constantly coming in and out if they have concerns.*
>
> Principal, Interview July, 2001

The authors of the National Strategy for Equity in Schooling (MCEETYA, 1994) described the cycle of participatory learning well when they espoused a three-part process for genuine equity: without *access*, no participation was possible; without *participation*, access was tokenism; and without participation, *outcomes* were not owned and were therefore counter-productive. For Matterslea's community, all three 'parts' were facilitated by the ASP. While many parents become involved in other schools' learning programs, those who become involved in ASP decision-making experience what is arguably a more mature level of learning than those who partake in the usual 'school help' activities. One could use the analogy of family-based learning. Where parents engage children in choice-making and other decision-making as open-ended, discussed, deliberated and agreed, the participants' learning is more likely to include aspects of background data, members' needs, finances/budgeting, time management and a host of other skills relevant to personal and family conduct. The more that each member is given an 'equal' status in the deliberations, the greater the potential for learning. Conversely, where decisions are met by children as received 'givens' or as a *fait accomplis*, opportunities for discourse-based learning fail to materialise.

Involvement, Participation or Support

Matterslea, in the spirit of much of the ASP literature, identified early in its renewal effort that the *number* of community members attending SAW and cadre meetings was the important barometer of community involvement. In the Establishment phase, participation was seen as synonymous with involvement. The community's direct input to decision-making was taken to indicate their improved empowerment or ownership of their school's affairs. Along with the staff and the active core of parents, I was elated to see thirty-six parents having a say at the early priority and vision-setting meetings in 1997. But following those highly engaging episodes of exchange, the levels of hands-on decision-making participation in SAW and cadre meetings (as distinct from surveys) dropped over the course of the study period. Theobald (1999) makes the observation that

> Perhaps the most serious error [in community action] is to assume that one must involve everybody within a group for change to be possible. In fact, the opposite is true. Change can be achieved only if one looks for the small proportion of people who are ready and then brings them together." (p. 2)

The error of expecting 'everybody' to participate directly was never made, and the data from interviews had shown the numbers of 'willing' were greater than those who knew they were 'able' or 'prepared' for participatory decision-making. In 2000, there were twelve parents one could 'expect' to attend the SAW meetings and six involved regularly in the cadres. Notably, at the end of 2000, only one cadre parent and one SAW attendee was a male.

On parents' parts, there are clearly perceived benefits of direct involvement in ongoing school decision-making forums such as the cadres and the SAW. One couple who were fostering grandparents of two children in the school, believed their experience of three years in the ASP was something more people should undertake:

> *any parents who want to be involved in any of that decision-making have a choice, to be able to do that I think is really good. There's not many parents at this stage involved but it's getting people to realise that parents* ***can*** *be involved in the final decision-making with the school and I think that's really important for them to know that and for the school as a whole.*
>
> *Cadre parent, Interview 2000.*

Parents didn't believe their will to make input was the problem: as the couple put it, "*They're not too lazy, they just don't know how to make commitments, a lot of parents*".

> *Perhaps because community learning events were optional (requiring no ongoing, regular commitment such as is required of cadre members), a substantial number of parents became involved during the Consolidation phase in 'helping' skills training sessions (an Inquiry Process challenge at the top of school priorities) showed that interest had been translated away form governance towards curriculum. Staff became used to having over thirty participants at teach of these sessions and were able to build a parent-aided reading program into their PASS processes.*

Parents interviewed in the two rounds of community survey believed that shift and daytime work by both parents, and caring for young children in the family were the greatest impediments to participation of any kind. One young parent's comments from a 1998 (Round 2) interview give a typical perspective to the difficulties:

> *We went to a couple of the accelerated schools programs but it was a bit hard. I'd like to be able to put, have an input, but having the three younger ones sometimes makes it hard for me to get along and put my points forward. If I had a babysitter that I could just call on whenever I needed to yes I'd probably get into it; the chance is there for me to do it , I just don't always take advantage of that.*

Although Matterslea organised activities for children of school age during the cadre and SAW sessions, costs prevented arrangements being put in place for toddler or baby care. Without external funds, it is unlikely that such a provision would be popular in Matterslea as the model of child-minding in the suburb is strongly an in-home, extended family process, not reliant on scarce and expensive placements in day-care centres. Even so, home/ school interaction with the school as a hub of inter-agency action has become more vigorous overall since 1997. The new Principal in 2001 notes in her June interview:

> *The school in a community like Matterslea is the centre of the support network. There is nothing there, so we are often working as a support agency directing people to hospitals, medical services, social work, to guidance, to support them ... I really delight in the fact that they feel comfortable that they can talk to me about those issues, so I am pleased from that point of view.* (Principal, Interview, 2000)

Matterslea staff frequently confront the realities of students leading the way in household literacies. Asked about helping her daughter with homework, a single female parent of an eleven year-old girl confided in a second-round 1998 interview, "*I just send them to school.*

She goes to learn. I don't help her with her work, she does it herself...No, she's brainy enough without me; no she helps ***me****".*

In mid 1997, prior to the implementation of ASP governance, parents interviewed (n = 31) were, on average, more *willing* than *able* to have a direct participation in school-based decision-making. Rating themselves on a 10 point scale, the figures were:

Prepared = 6.47; *Willing = 7.50;* *Able = 6.37.*

By the end of 1998, the self-ratings by the same interviewees showed a raised sense of informedness and intent, but a diminished logistical capacity to directly participate:

Prepared = 7.5; *Willing = 8.3;* *Able = 5.6.*

There is a high likelihood that respondents' embarrassment at their lack of change in participation over course of the year would explain the drop in their 'able'ness for input. In Theobald's (1999) terms, the proportion of the community actually making direct input are less critical than providing opportunities for those who *want* to be engaged in direct decision-making to do so. Parents show a pragmatic approach. While the avenues to control (or more appropriately, *empowerment*) are kept open, such as SAW and multi-member forums such as *cadres*, debate over the adequacy of participation, levels of involvement and support are, arguably, hypothetical.

Each member group at Matterslea has a unique set of demands and constraints: backgrounds, intentions and supports. Time, experience, maturity, roles and expectations all act to constrain fuller participation. The constraints do seem to source outside the ASP model, in the context. Home/ school interaction with the school as a hub of inter-agency action has become more vigorous overall since 1997. The new Principal in 2001 notes in her June interview:

> *The school in a community like Matterslea is the centre of the support network. There is nothing there, so we are often working as a support agency directing people to hospitals, medical services, social work, to guidance, to support them ... I really delight in the fact that they feel comfortable that they can talk to me about those issues, so I am pleased from that point of view.*

It is possible there will remain an elusive problem of defining and describing optimal 'involvement' against a single yardstick. Theobald (1999) anticipates such a dilemma:

> Measurement of mechanical systems is relatively easy and reliable. Measurement of personal and societal success is far more complex. The challenge of finding the correct measures is increased because we have inherited, and maintain, measurements which no longer serve our real needs. The 'Gross National Product' is one example, as are many of our ways of measuring the achievement of students." (p.2)

Senge (1999) also refers to the inadequacy of traditional measures and controls:

> Organizations [usually] revolve around someone trying to be in control. Complex systems aren't controllable. They can't be figured out. Systems thinking is a radical shift, and it can't be brought about by rational analytical tools. (p.42)

8. 7 Matterslea renewal activity as oranisational learning

The account to this point shows Matterslea as implementing the ASP model with a clear fidelity to the governance and inquiry-based school development processes of ASP. Now in its fifth year of implementation, the school has continued to employ the Inquiry Process to frame its major school-wide priorities. Its 'cadres' (multi-stakeholder problem-solving teams) have met every two or three weeks over the past four years to address issues of curriculum and school climate. Once a term the School-as-a-Whole (an open school forum) has considered, approved or redefined the teams' priorities and challenges on a consensual basis. Two thorough iterations of school priorities have been made following broad-scale input from members and member groups. The Vision, noted as central to the coherency-producing effects of ASP, has been reviewed by the whole school community and found 'worthy' of continuing as its philosophical and practical manifesto.

Pragmatic organisational outcomes are exemplified by the school's re-configuration in 1998 of its school week. Reiterating, this entailed lengthening four school days of each week in order to free up a mid-week afternoon of school time (2pm-4pm) for regular school planning meetings and for related professional development (PD). This workplace re-organization was critical to the school's budget (saving much relief time and money on PD) and to the ability of parents and teachers to have 'student free time' on a frequent basis for inclusive school leadership. The change was facilitated by a full school year of *Establishment,* based on solid relationship-building within the community, among staff,

students and parents, suspending the 'rush to judgment' in order to give members a voice. Patient foundation-laying was performed within the simple but powerful decision-making frame of consensus. The leadership's commitment to 'due process' was an essential condition for the distribution and growth of empowerment in the school community.

The re-organisation of the school program, despite all the employment, bus and child-care implications, received a 99% level of consensus from the community. The goal was regular, genuine non-pressured, alert reflective time as a community of learners, or more pointedly, teams of problem-solvers. The benefits of having teachers-as-learners and time for teachers and parents to share school level problem solving had been made transparent by the processes of communication in 'building a shared picture', a two-way exchange. Had the 'deeper learning' process of shared picture building not occurred, especially through outreach processes of interview and video-communication, the plan might never have succeeded. Mulford's (2000) reflection is apt: it is sometimes necessary to "lose time to gain time" (p. 135). The first school in the State (by some 18 months) to achieve a captured-time professional learning capacity, Matterslea has learned a great deal about rationales and rationalization of time. Its teacher offer succinct advice to intending school renewal implementers: *"Don't rush it"* (Primary Teachers Group Interview, 2000).

Learning through school culture

Hargreaves & Hopkins (1991) in recognizing the importance of school culture to the reform direction that a school takes, acknowledged 'school culture' is an imprecise term:

> Successful schools realize that developmental planning is about creating a school culture which will support the planning and management changes of many different kinds. School culture is difficult to define, but it is best thought of as the procedures, values and expectations that guide people's behaviour within an organisation. The school's culture is essentially 'the way we do things around here'. (p. 17)

Interviewed in July 2001, the new Principal of Matterslea recognized the palpable reality of a cultural climate that had developed over time into values-in-action:

> *Certainly coming into the school you couldn't ask for a more welcoming staff who were wanting to work with a new principal I never at any time felt any sense of "Here's a new person, what can we do to put her into the Matterslea way". And it is the*

Matterslea way. It is certainly something that is being promoted in the district. "We do this in the Matterslea way". (Principal, Interview 2001)

Enculturation is not necessarily 'coercive' isomorphic conformism. The combination of an openly promoted 'vision', democratic opportunity and most important, a procedurally enacted process for enacting a core development agenda (i.e. the cadre's work) is argued here as providing Matterslea's active members with a sense of surety or relative confidence. There is no need to protect territory by inculcating newcomers. The 'way' is responsive to members but it can only be change *by* the members. To Fullan (1993), an organisation's culture is both a driver and a product of change or reform. Seeing many schools' cultures as predominantly in doldrums of hierarchical stasis, Fullan (1992; 1993) conceived school leaders to be the primary means to collaborative cultures, and that courageous (but methodical) divestment of power is required for organisational culture to *drive* and sustain change, balancing, rather than protecting the school from internal and external demands.

The nature of decision making at Matterslea cannot be described as haphazard, nor as individually idiosyncratic, though it *has* proven to be insubordinate to the state mandated agenda (Andrew, 2000; Principal (1), 2000, pers. comm.). In a climate of considerable Centrally-driven accountability review in Tasmania, the insubordination can be interpreted as a deliberate, balance seeking loose-coupling mechanism. Paradoxically, although Matterslea chose not to have a 'remote control' change system in SIR or ASSR before it, an important part of its six-year reform history is that the shared understandings about the school's own independent 'covenant', its vision, came as a result of adopting an 'off-shore' system for generating shared authority. This was the Accelerated Schools process.

As a contribution to the field of school reform, Matterslea's 'action research about participatory action' offers actuality rather than an ideal. Beyond the account of its grappling with a voluntarily 'received' model of renewal, and how it came to adapt it, the implications are more context related than the meta-theory of organisational development and leadership can fully explain. To claim a (cautious) level of tranferability, the organisational learning described from Matterslea's ASP experience must first be 'relatable' (Sanger, 1994) to 'like-school communities.' The ASP is founded on the applicability of its process to low-income , educationally disadvantaged communities. Matterslea has many

demographics, attributes and conditions it shares with other low socio-economic schools/communities in Tasmania and throughout urban and regional Australia. Indeed, the Tasmanian Department of Education publishes "like-school" comparisons of student test scores[6]; it is reasonable to accept that a sufficient level of common conditions and demands exists and that Matterslea's reform experience will speak sense to those communities, or 'ring true' to them. Although it is not possible to empirically substantiate the claim, I would propose on the basis of observation and literature that students in Matterslea and characteristic ASP school contexts in the US share a multitude of similar challenging conditions.

Daily, in the experiences of their students, government schools in low income areas of Australia and the US field crises across a very similar range of problems.
Amongst its 'peers' in public education, Matterslea is situated on a continuum of participatory -to-pyramidal management (self-to-other direction is not an appropriate description of the situation because the principal can't be defined as of the 'other'). Without an assessment of the form and function of governance and curriculum in all schools, it is not possible to place Matterslea *exactly* along that continuum. However, it is reasonable to argue that, given its track record of five years' intentional democratisation of decision-making and the contingent outcomes described, Matterslea has moved significantly toward the 'left' end of the continuum, i.e. *away* from reactive, other-directed life as an organization. Its locus of control is, at least in terms of its members, considerably left of where it began the project. With Owens (2001) and many other organisational theorists claiming an inexorable trend to the distributed leadership and participatory governance end of the organisational continuum, there is ample reason to see Matterslea's journey as a valuable probe. It is worthy of close attention by its peers, many of whom might wish to move in the same direction along the continuum, perhaps under a 'model' of their own invention or selection. In practice, the term 'model' connotes strongly both noun and verb. What is practiced by staff is either magnified in being manifested in the practices of

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[6] http://statewidetesting.education.tas.gov.au/

students, for better or for worse, depending on the model. On one hand, consensus, participatory collective democracy and self-windingness can be integral to the organisational culture of the school, and hence rendered accessible to the learners as institutional learning of the most powerful, 'modeled' form. On the other hand, such attributes or 'learnings' can be negated by inconsistency, or, in a more negative interpretation, institutional hypocrisy.

Learning as a function of participatory governance and inclusive organisation

The argument that *governance* is the critical determinant of whole-school change is corroborated by organisational theory. The outcomes of the Matterslea study, in turn, support the self-renewing organization as favourable in generating appropriate curricular pragmatics for potentially un-empowered learning communities. In such a cycle, the better egg is function of a better breeding and/or hatching conditions, *not* the corollary. The bigger picture supports an improved context as the surest determinant of a better outcome.

The ASP newsletter of Fall, 2001, cites criteria of "engaged learning", as indicative of Powerful Learning when applied to "learning on computers". The criteria are drawn from the web site of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL):

- Students are exporters, teachers, cognitive apprentices, producers of knowledge, and directors and managers of their own learning.
- Teachers are facilitators guides and co-learners; they seek professional growth, design curriculum, and conduct research.
- Learning tasks are authentic, challenging, and multidisciplinary.
- Assessment is authentic, based on performance, seamless and ongoing, and generates new learning.

  (http://www.ncrtec.org/pd/lwtres/ewl/ew/_l.htm.) cited in ASP Newsletter, *'Imagine'* 2001 (p. 9)

Empowerment is not a compatible condition with what the Department of Education, Tasmania (1999) has labeled "conforming approaches" to education. And while a "reforming approach" (DoE, Tasmania, 1999) in the humanistic tradition lends itself to individual growth, freedom and self-expression, the full scope of empowerment in a community of learners (therefore both individual *and* collective) is only available through "transforming approaches". Transforming approaches are also identified by the (DoE,

1999a) as "critical education" or "education for empowerment" (p. 2). The circuit is complete where (i) a school's *governance* applies inquiry-based learning in its decision-making and action-planning; (ii) the school's *teaching and learning* (curriculum and pedagogy) reflects engaging, transforming approach; and (iii) the school's *organization* (workplace relations) are inclusive, transparent and distributed. The 'Outcomes chapters' provide an adequate basis for Matterslea School members to claim Matterslea has generated such a circuit through its application of the ASP. It has some way to go before it can claim a self–sustaining level of healthy isomorphism in its learning processes, from student through teacher through community. Here I am distinguishing 'healthy' from 'limiting' isomorphism. The former is system reinforcing integrity, counter-hypocritical and modeling of organisational principles through every level and domain of the organisation. Unhealthy, limiting isomorphism is where external patterns dominate, becoming imprinted on the local context, denying the local context its creative, responsive possibilities.

In Matterslea's case, the evidence is that the mutually supportive elements of governance and school organisation represent healthy system reinforcement. The strength of the organisational culture of the school appears to maintain a loose coupling to the larger, macrocultural elements, and buffers the school from some loss of autonomy the staff in particular value so much. Loose coupling is identified in some lines of organisational thinking as a healthy system attribute (Perrow, 1986; Martin, 1993). Loose coupling of central and contextual policy/practice is argued to provide institutions a level of immunity from macro-systemic effects such as and broad scale, multi-department government policy changes, as well as swings in dominant management theory (such as rationalist excisions of middle management) and crises like massive budget cuts or neighbouring schools' closures.

However, the isomorphic dynamic operates somewhat differently in the curriculum area. There the pattern-making arm of central curricular initiatives has maintained a tighter coupling. Matterslea teachers' concerns around the loss of arts elements of the curriculum were in reaction to what they saw as unnecessary subordination of the school program to literacy and numeracy objectives through more structured, non-integrated learning time. The benefits of PASS process were acknowledged, but the limits to functional curriculum were raised in the cadres. The focus group interview of 2000 and the 2000 reprioritising exercise

showed teachers' frustration with the relationship between dedicated time and the absence of music and visual arts from the core program. Asked "what is powerful learning in Matterslea's terminology and how does PASS or any other program fit into appropriate practice for kids?", teachers felt literacy and numeracy were " *narrowing a lot of other fields out of the picture*":

> *I think we miss out, we don't have enough in regards to the arts, we don't have enough focus on the music and drama and art as an outlet, so I don't think that we're really doing justice to the kids here, with their creative side.*
>
> (Early Childhood Teacher, Group Interview, 2000)

System reinforcing alignments are made more critical for renewal by the seamlessness of each of the elements of organisational learning. Each has a mutual impact and is arguably less loosely coupled to the others than is, for instance, District and in-school curriculum organisation, or Central and in-school governance. Though not hedged from the distal influences of District and Central Department policy and practice, Matterslea's Inquiry processes have targeted connective mechanisms in the school organisation, such as communication, inclusion and participation and teaming.

The evidence from the Establishment and Consolidation phases, and the early signs of self-authoring that are emerging in meeting cycle changes and priority-reviewing of 2001, place the members of Matterslea's school community in a much advanced position on Tannenbaum & Schmidt's (1973) continuum of management. Figure 8.5 illustrates this shift over time:

Figure 8.6 Continuum of manager and non-manager behaviours, (after Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1973) – Matterslea's positional shifts.

Executive decision-making characteristic of pre-1990's principalships			***Teacher-protective style represented in 'Matterslea' literature of 1996***		***1997***	***1998-2001***
Manager able to make decision which non-managers accept	Manager must 'sell' decisions before gaining acceptance	Manager presents decision but must respond to questions from non-managers	Manager presents tentative decision subject to change after non-manager inputs	Manager presents problem, gets inputs from non-managers, then decides.	Manager defines limits within which non-managers make decisions	Manager and non-managers jointly make decision within limits defined by organisational constraints

It is organisational learning that predicates such a shift in 'non-manager' capacity. The paradigm that produced Tannenbaum & Schmidt's model has been superseded by the effects of ASP thinking at Matterslea, in which the definition of leadership has been opened to make managers of members and members of managers. That is not to imply principals and senior teachers have simply titular roles. What is asserted is that within the main agenda-setting and action-planning framework of the school, 'management' and followers are united in a non-hierarchical, open and self-selected inclusivity.

8.8 Summary interpretation of the outcomes in teaching and learning

This study has analysed the Matterslea ASP project through its stages of *establishment,* and *consolidation* to its current early days of *re-authoring*. In the *re-authoring* phase, the school is forging adaptations upon the model; some of the adaptations are referenced to the 'greater culture' of public school reform, while others address the specific context of Matterslea and its abiding attributes such as smallness, independent thinking, parent self-effacement and so on. Some modifications attempt to accommodate Central isomorphic thrusts such as the dedicated literacy structures of PASS. The project has operated under cost-neutral terms. That Matterslea can have achieved so much change to its decision-making, organization and learning programs with little or no financial support is something for readers to ponder and to draw strength from, should resources limit their envisioning.

Through its self-examination, Matterslea has brought to the surface conditions which, left un-addressed, could well undermine the hope of substantial change. Information and experience are power. Its leaders, teachers and families have not only formulated for schools' key challenges. They have remained within the circle together to plan and carry out core program responses to those challenges.

The changes of behaviour that theory would identify as 'tell-tale' of learning have manifested in three main areas. First, parents have responded as a majority to school requests for candid feedback. The quantum leap in community response to the school practice videos demonstrates this. The appetite for a continued sharing of a common pedagogical picture is shown in threefold increases at parent/teacher interviews compared to

1997. Second, teachers have grasped leadership distribution in such a way that teacher empowerment is a valued attribute, capable of presenting an incoming new Principal with a 'delicious dilemma': not how to motivate empowerment with responsibility, but how to channel it and preserve it. Thirdly, in addition to their demonstrated academic progress, students have a voice in the school governance agenda and in personal and collective goal-setting for both academic and socially mediated learning.

Matterslea's organisational learning goes beyond particular membership groups to a distributed, social level of cognition. Teachers and parents have expressed appreciation of their interdependence in pursuit of the school's vision. The internal coherence of the Matterslea school program has clearly grown upon the foundation of its shared vision and communication that established that vision has continued as an empowering dynamic to include community members potentially marginalised by contextual constraints to their direct participation.

The ASP is not designed primarily as a self-serving organisation. Growth of the organisation is a collateral outcome of its most central goal of improved learning conditions and learning outcomes for students. Authentic learning is the outcome of experiences that link the growing capacities of all member groups in the school community. In a true synergy, change (learning) in any one party causes a change in other interdependent parties. The mutuality of shared experience, communication and reflection is focused on the common interest represented by the student.

The literature raised three key factors in generating resilience among youths at risk: caring, supportive relationships; high expectations held for them and communicated to them; and opportunities for meaningful decision making (Benard, 1997a). Inclusive, democratic, safe schools hold benefits for students' resilience-building. Using the vehicle of ASP process, Matterslea has institutionalized those conditions in its organistional and cultural environment. However, the synergistic effects of schoolwide process have generalised resiliency-producing factors at a community level. It has explicitly built: trust, transparency and support through its acknowledgement of interdependence and leveling of communication barriers; expectancy, broadened horizons, pride and celebration through such

outcomes as the Hall of Fame; and authentic involvement for all members through self-selected principles of inclusive governance.

Organisational resilience, like its individual form, is about overcoming adversity, threats and barriers. It is also about adaptability and mastery of the context, though not alone: a key outcome of organisational resilience is in expanding one's human resource base: teachers and parents in exchange; students trusting teachers; teachers trusting leaders. Matterslea is still at a very rudimentary level of bringing the advantages of community networking to a conscious and deliberative level, and will require non-education agency support for that to be more adequately fulfilled.

The following final chapter considers the theoretical and logistical possibilities presenting to Matterslea Primary School in the 'self-authoring' phase of its school renewal, and concludes the thesis by drawing implications for schooling reform more generally.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusions and Discussion: Implications for the practice and theory of school renewal

9.1 Reference points set for the study

Matterslea's Accelerated Schools project is a unique episode in the history of Tasmanian and Australian school reform for learners disadvantaged by social and educational circumstances. At a time when all government schools in the State have been undertaking a mandated school improvement review process, Matterslea chose to take an outrider role, applying an alternative change process in the ASP model, that was designed for US schools in similar socio-cultural difficulty. The main objective of the study has been to investigate the outcomes of the ASP's 'transplanting' to Tasmania.

Success is relative to its domains and to the perspectives of evaluators. Three domains have framed the outcomes: governance, workplace/program organisation, and teaching and learning. They represent the seamless scope of comprehensive schoolwide reform. At a summary level, the main evaluative standpoints are those of the three broad 'stakeholder' groups of (i) the school, (ii) model proponents, and (iii) the government education system. Matterslea Primary School's initial expectation from implementation was to escape the ineffectiveness of its fragmented school/community relationship and the absence of a relevant rationale for its inherited educational orthodoxies. The model bore the explicit intent to manifest "Unity of Purpose; Empowerment with Responsibility; and Building on strengths". These principles for practice focused on the essential outcome of students' 'accelerated' learning, to a par with their normative 'peers' in non-disadvantaged contexts, but with the proviso that learning remains authentic. The third stakeholder group of system-level planners utilise evidence of 'effectiveness' in evaluating reforms or improvements. The thesis also assumes central thinkers will have an interest in what implications the Matterslea application of ASP might have for the State's own School Improvement Review program. Because Tasmania is a regionalised state with a high number of communities troubled by

socio-economic conditions, particular interest should lie in what this study offers to the reform agendas of struggling schools. Framing these domains and perspectives, the overarching research questions for the study have been:

Q.1 To what extent has the ASP process been implemented at Matterslea?

Q 2. How has the implementation of the process influenced outcomes in the areas of: (a) School governance; (b) Workplace and school program organisation; and (c) Teaching and learning?

Q 3. What implications can be drawn from Matterslea's ASP experiences for comprehensive school reform in the Tasmanian context and beyond?

The literature review brought forward some key challenges that faced systemic reform and that comprehensive schoolwide renewal models like ASP must meet in order to be credible reform options. The challenges of coherence, empowerment and authenticity have been used as touchstones to conceptually link Matterslea's implementation with both top-down and bottom up reforms worldwide.

Cuban (1998) asserted that policymaking elites evaluate reforms against three criteria of *effectiveness, popularity* and *fidelity*, while practitioners' criteria of *adaptability* and *longevity* are less well publicised but perhaps better reflect schools' interests. Of these, fidelity, adaptability and effectiveness are explicitly reflected in the study's research questions, while Cuban's notion of longevity bears upon the model's sustainability in the context and upon the feasibility of Matterslea's self-authoring of the renewal process relative to State SIR mandates.

9.2 Research Question 1: Matterslea's trueness to the ASP form

Matterslea Primary School has traversed the *Establishment* and *Consolidation* phases of renewal with a high degree of fidelity to ASP principles, processes and practices. Matterslea was arguably even more thorough about the establishment than many American schools, as it was treading new waters led by a 'device' unlike anything the staff had previously encountered. The extra time invested has been time not wasted; as the outcomes have shown, consensus has been better assured, and the risk of an unsupported vision or inappropriate priorities has been averted.

Through six years, ASP teams have regularly met using the Inquiry Process to 'action' the agreed priorities in pursuit of Matterlsea's collectively stated Vision. Over the six years, three iterations of priorities have been negotiated schoolwide and the great majority of those priorities have been 'worked through' to policy and embedded practice.

Time, in its scarcity and its use, has emerged as a central issue in the school's professional community. The time needed by teachers for professional development and collaborative planning in a small school has led to a distribution of some cadre time to dedicated professional learning time. This is the most challenging adaptation of the ASP model, because it has the potential to distract the continuity of Inquiry action. For teachers this is less a problem because their professional development and planning activities tend to be related to the school's Vision, whether directly or (more commonly) by dint of the fact that developing Powerful Learning capacity is very much *their* responsibility. Cadre time is insufficient to achieve both the planning *and* the doing of reform. When Matterslea 'captured time' by re-organising its school week, the time had its most 'cost-effective' use in planning and development for teaching and learning, saving literally thousands of substitute teacher hours that were previously supporting teachers' professional development..

Another departure from the expected ASP process has been in the progressive waning of cadre team engagement from parents and students. My observation is that this is true of many mature ASP schools in the US too. The phenomenon questions the sustainability of the Inquiry protocols as they stand for mixed member school/community teaming. Matterslea has been able to overcome the difficulty through great attention to enriched school/ community communication and the use of a student representative forum to ensure ongoing democratic input from students.

Notwithstanding these challenges, it is a strong testament to the merit perceived by Matterslea's members in the ASP process that they have chosen to retain the model as their *modus operandi* over the six years. The stability provided by the process is valued, but its sustainability requires that it adjust to meet challenges in the Inquiry process, to make governance more family-friendly.

9.3 Research Question 2: Outcomes across the three domains of governance, organisation and pedagogy

On the strength of a six-year renewal process, Matterslea school has arrived at a threshold point in its learning history. Many, if not most, of the objectives it held in undertaking the ASP implementation have been fulfilled. If student learning is viewed through Cuban's (1998) policymakers' criterion of 'effectiveness', the measurable indicators suggest Matterslea students have 'accelerated' to draw level with their broad statewide cohorts. The most recent overall literacy figures (DoE, 2002), released just weeks prior to the completion of this thesis, show Matterslea's aggregated mean at state average. While student academic learning holds a primary importance in the outcomes of Matterslea's renewal, the school's resilience is of no less interest because it positions the school well to self author its continued renewal. Metaphorically, Matterslea has 'found its feet'. This does not mean abandoning the Accelerated Schools process. In fact, the ASP process itself is enabling the school to make its problem posing and problem solving more authentic, more deeply owned, more deeply understood.

It may be inevitable that a participatory whole-school reform will redesign, adapt and transform not only the school program, but also the model that is the procedural and ideological catalyst for that change. The model has, in Matteslea's association with it, served as both pattern and possibility. Over five years of experience with the pattern, the possible becomes more plausible. Confident in the pattern, and confident with itself as a learning organisation, Matterslea is well positioned to formulate a comprehensive schoolwide development process that will ensure it accommodates the State's new and pedagogically ambitious *Essential Learnings* curriculum framework in such a way that it satisfies its own members' Vision as well as the intentions of stakeholders at District and Central levels. Matterslea's unique example is a valuable model of organisational capacity-building and innovation for its system. To achieve its self-authoring capacity, the Matterslea's organisational culture has undertaken a comprehensive transformation in all domains of governance, school program organisation and teaching and learning (or pedagogy). Throughout the outcomes chapters, and in each domain, it has emerged that three synergistic dynamics have brought Matterslea to the capacity it currently has for sustained and coherent self-determination. They are leadership, participation and communication.

Leadership

Perhaps more than any other area of educational debate, leadership has been infused with much symbolic rhetoric (Humes, 2000). Leadership adjectives such as 'transformational' and 'visionary' can readily be attached to the example of Matterslea's initial ASP principal. However, the labels do little to explain the effects on the ground. In ASP change and any schoolwide comprehensive improvement initiative, change is across too many domains to be easily 'managed' by one person. The ASP process has shown itself in the Matterslea context to be a useful 'distributor' of power and responsibility. The value of having a model such as ASP through which to 'govern' change gave Matterslea's school leaders' confidence to problematise (Reitzug, 1994) all areas of school affairs. Over the study period, this occurred in two phases. In the first stage, in which a shared picture was being built between all member groups, the principal deliberately destabilised the time-honoured hierarchical relations of staff and community, while the senior teacher also problematised teachers' practice. In the establishment phase, the ASP process of vision forging, taking stock and priority-setting gave everybody an equal voice. Change, within the circumstances, represented an opportunity for parents, students and staff to be informed and to inform. Transparency and rich, appropriate communication was not automatic – it required deliberate, planned exploration and feedback.

Collective reflection takes time, trust and courage because through it the group is risking its self-concept and self-worth. Social cognition challenges the identity boundaries of members. A progressive use by individual staff of the pronoun 'we' showed an increasingly collective identity at Matterslea. The critical examination of teachers' practice was supported by the senior teacher's use of 'powerful learning' as a hypothetical but well defined benchmark around which teachers could make comparisons, articulate their practices and make explicit the values that underpinned them, especially as the taking stock period also made explicit the educational needs and wants of families and students.

If leadership is to be a distributed capacity, then it does well for each contributor to be informed. Under distributed leadership, in Barry's (1991) terms, "it is assumed that each member has certain leadership qualities that will be needed by the group at some point" (p. 32). Principal (1)'s disappointment with the 'take-up' of power on his staff's part, coupled with cadre members' consistent and emphatic endorsement of his democratic

leadership style, suggests there remains in the school a level of dependency on a front-runner. Democracy doesn't supersede leadership, rather it demands more of it. The Matterslea situation has seen a circularity of power, with *teachers empowering leaders* through their open communication, transparent practice and readiness for creative 'problematisation' of their roles and schoolwide relationships. Social capital theory would have no difficulty accepting that trust and entrustment are mutual generators of distributed power in a school. Seen in this way, 'bottom-up' empowerment is not a threat to school leaders; it is an asset.

Participation and voice

Participation is a concept that has emerged in the Matterslea project is being quite loaded with socio-cultural, professional and political meanings. In a small school such as Matterslea opportunities for direct participation by member groups might appear to be greater than in a large school. However, logistical obstacles and socio-cultural conditions have confounded this. A small teaching staff is a stretched resource. The cadre meetings shared the same 'captured time' slot as structured professional development, and were built into the teachers' working weeks. Self-selection has operated as a regulating mechanism in the balance of power at Matterslea. In a period that is relatively early in the history of teachers sharing authority with leaders and community members, shortfalls in language and knowledge around the technical aspects of teaching have caused Matterslea's families to be shy of responsibilities in governance and curriculum assistance. It has taken time for a long-term shared picture to be developed, for parents to be conversant with contemporary practice, and for the most politically active parents to gain team meeting skills. In the course of that time, teachers' anxiety about losing their 'professional autonomy' has had a chance to abate. If anything, there is frustration on teachers' parts that parents are too slow to assume more responsibility.

School community member sub groups like indigenous persons, males or ancillary staff represent a challenge for cultural inclusivity. On one hand, the principle of unity of purpose asks transcends diversity and particular identities toward an agreed or consensual position. On the other hand, in order for the most appropriate and equitable participation and outcomes, each member group and sub-group has a right to a voice (and a conducive forum for it). Respecting the cultural diversity of a school is critical to equitable community education. Cassanova (1996) cautions that "cultural homogeneity facilitates communication

[but] the opposite is true as well, and educators need to be acutely aware of personal assumptions and their consequences' (p. 32). Matterslea's Vision attempts to resolve the dilemma, using a statement-in-common that embraces diversity and community :

- *Matterslea students will be confident, capable achievers in society.*
- *Our number one priority is 'teaching and learning', in particular for literacy, numeracy and social skills.*
- *Matterslea is a safe, caring, and happy environment for everybody.*
- *The school community embodies families, staff and community. We are a positive, collaborative team in decision making.*
- *Matterslea acknowledges everyone's individual gifts and develops them to the fullest potential.* (Appendix U)

So said, there are many under-represented voices in the Matterslea community for whom appropriate avenues and forums are yet to be established. More particularly, those forums that do exist have not attracted sustained input from those groups. Among them are men, indigenous members, ancillary staff and allied specialist such as social workers.

Over the research period, leaders, coach and some members have appealed to inclusiveness and momentum in the term 'whole school'. ASP rhetoric is steeped in 'schoolwide' and 'whole school' reform language, but in terms of face-to-face deliberative events at which everybody who can claim to be a member of the immediate school community is present, few, if any, genuine appearances of a critical mass of school members, even half the whole, actually appear in one place at one time. Hence 'whole school' is really symbolic language. It exists, but it is as much an idea as it is a reality. Again, the mechanism used to bring about a practical unity is communication. It is no accident that the two abiding cadres at Matterslea are 'School image and Communication' cadre (now 'School life cadre') and 'teaching and learning' (now the 'Living and learning' team). Senge (1998) claims "The cornerstone of a truly democratic system of governance is not voting or any other particular mechanism. It is the belief that power ultimately flows from ideas, not people" (on-line; *Innovation*). Quite practically, the grapevine of local discourse at Matterslea has been fuelled with non-defensive, candid, high quality information. The effects show that the quality of decisions is proportional to the quality of information.

For public schools whose default governance is by tiers and where the system's management of schools is clearly hierarchical, to distribute professional authority is to risk 'maverick'

status or even dereliction of duty because it potentially interrupts lines of control that stretch from the desk of policy to the floor of the classroom. Despite academic and political support for devolution, teamwork and transformative leadership, it takes both courage and 'creative insubordination' (Bryk et al, 1998) for school leaders to even attempt shared authority and it takes commitment for teachers to assume the extra load involved in democratic and distributed leadership. Where traditional principals might meet resistance to executive style management, the Matterslea case has shown a distributive leader is just as likely to find resistance to the take-up of power, no matter how collaborative the roles.

It is not only the marginal of the marginalized who experience participatory obstacles. Even after several years of open governance at Matterslea, the voices of a *majority* of members remain feint. All groups have had input to decisions central to the school agenda, particularly in the establishment phase, but the appetite for sleeves-rolled-up cadre work and whole school deliberative forums such as the SAW meetings is not yet sufficient to command a majority - single parents, shift work and lack of experience are potent reasons, and as argued, only rich communication has been able to invite greater energy for the school's change agenda.

Communication and organisational learning

When questionnaires failed to engage the silent majority, interviews in 1997 demonstrated teachers' intentions to listen to the community, to reach out and risk transparency in their practice. The intensive exchange of information in the Taking Stock period and video responses was where teachers came to understand Ruby Payne's (1995) cautions that working class families show favour and concern in ways that are socio-culturally different to more demonstrable middle class displays of support. The video exercises of 1997 and 1999 were methodological eye-openers. Response rates Over 80 percent and 50 percent were received, respectively, up from a mere 4 percent for paper-alone questionnaires distributed through the newsletter. The message was received was clear: the key to involving a beleaguered community is appropriate communication. Schools must explore and information exchange based on the needs of the majority, not just those who are best able to directly participate:

> There is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication. [People] live in a community by virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common ... Consensus requires communication ... all communication

(and hence all social life) is educative. (Dewey, 1916, pp. 4-5, in Darling-Hammond, 1993, p. 761.)

Members have used the governance process to bring changes in the organisational aspects of the school program, particularly in the timing of cadres and PD, in communication through videos and the Hall of Fame. In turn, these changes have had significant effects on teaching and learning. With matters of time and communication central to it, the organisational domain has operated in the reform as an active bridge between governance and learning. The domain represents logistical compromises as in time capture and appropriate timing of meetings and staging of the change agenda, on one hand giving practical expression to governance and on the other, practical support to student and organisational learning. While governance infuses conceptual coherence through each of the other domains, it is workplace and program organisation that actually manifests seamlessness between the school's 'theatres' of renewal activity.

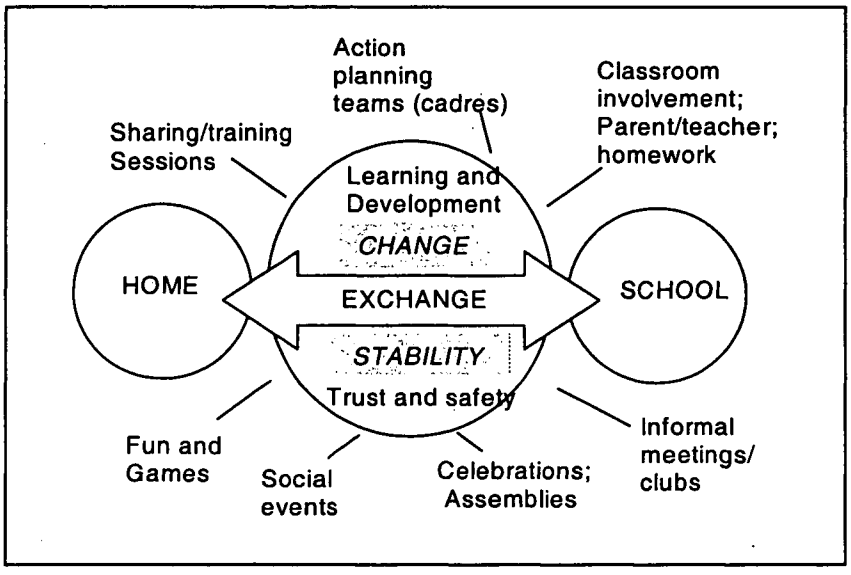
It is almost impossible to pigeon-hole leadership, participation and communication into any one domain because they are synergistic attributes of organisations. At Matterlsea, the founding of 'whole school' coherence has come from a determination on the part of the School Image and Communication cadre to find appropriate and effective means for information exchange. In the development of video stimulated exchange, the project has introduced a significant innovation not only to home/school exchange, but to school development planning, professional learning and community development.

Countering educational disadvantage: the purpose of bottom up renewal

School renewal or school-based comprehensive schoolwide reform at Matterslea has had to defeat a host of deficit conceptions. Some of the deficit notions are borne within the community, in the legacy many residents carry from their childhood and increasingly dispiriting daily searches for work. In order to diminish the deficit concepts and enhance the self-worth of the community, leaders, including in this sense teachers in the Matterslea community, have taken the ASP notion of 'building on strengths' seriously, and have built a foundation of transparency and trust upon which the creative destabilization of orthodoxies or preconceptions could be mounted. Fraser (1997) framed the dialectic as revolving around 'affirmation and transformation'. At Matterslea the dialectic has been shown to operate in the progressively shifting balance of stability and change. In the Establishment phase,

stability through the reliable and participatory governance process supported the 'risk-taking' behaviour of questioning orthodoxy. The biggest changes were arguably in people's self-concept and attitude, developed through the consensual building of shared bearings and direction. As the process consolidated, change was more expected, more practiced and, with more ownership of the process, more member-led. In my illustration of school dynamics in Fig. 9.1, communication is framed as 'exchange' to emphasise its multi-directional effects.

Figure 9.1 Dynamics of home and school partnership through Matterslea's ASP



The quality of participation is not identified in Fig. 9.1. The opportunity for voice is not the same as its use. As implied by Australia's *National Strategy for Equity in Schooling* (MCEETYA, 1994) access is not participation; participation is not outcomes.

Interviews with 'home-bound' family members and responses to the videos showed a majority were less involved than was their ideal, but that they were 'doing their best'. The intentions/actuality gap warrants research in disadvantaged communities. Although appropriate communication such as video-supported survey has been raised as a partial solution, alternatives need to be explored in participatory governance beyond on-site meetings. The balance of interest from the parent body has been shown over time at Matterslea to greatly favour curricular assistance. Capability in instruction or stimulating curiosity is closer to parents' daily domestic behaviour and building community pedagogical capacity has been well embraced. Governance participation, however, is a significant struggle. Given that the coming few years in Tasmania are destined to exert strong focus on

decision-making around school and community application of ELs, that focus might be exploited to bridge towards parents participation in pedagogically centred governance activities.

To help evaluate the 'quality' of participation or voice, in the following model (Fig. 9.2), I have aligned three typologies of participation for the whole school or 'learning community'.

Figure 9.2 A matched typology of Matterslea member groups' participation after Rafferty/Hart (1992), Epstein (1995), Tannenbaum & Schmidt (1973)

① **Rafferty's Ladder (after Hart 1992) Student Participation**	② **Epstein's (1995) Framework of Parent Involvement**	③ **Tannenbaum & Schmidt's (1973) manager & non-manager (Teacher) behaviours**	④ **Matterslea: *Learning Community* Participation noted in this study**
1. Manipulation 2. Decoration	1. Basic obligations of families (parenting)	*Executive autocracy* ("Manager able to make decision which non-managers accept")	***Housekeeping-*** Access passively given but not supported; one way pragmatic communication via newsletter.
3. Tokenism	2. Basic obligations of school	*Token teaming* ("Manager must 'sell' decisions before gaining acceptance")	***Nominal Inclusion-*** Attendance at assemblies; passive invitation to contribute comment
4. Assigned but informed	3. Volunteering	*Executive Veto* ("Manager presents decision but must respond to questions from non-managers")	***Non-empowered Participation-*** PTA given fund-raising tasks; fair roles.
5. Consulted and informed	4. Learning assistance at home		***Growth-*** Survey outreach, community interviews; 'voice' begins
	Community learning is not addressed in Epstein's model	*Co-option* ("Manager presents tentative decision subject to change after non-manager inputs")	***Reciprocity-*** Community education programs; exchange of values and perspectives
6. Adult-initiated, shared decisions (SRC; priority-setting)	5. Decision making, governance and advocacy (Cadres; SAW)	*Top-down inclusion* ("Manager presents problem, gets inputs from non-managers, then decides")	***Collaboration-*** Member groups included in effort towards teacher-owned goals and outcomes
7. Child –initiated and directed	*Reversal or suspension of the expert/novice relationship missing in Epstein's model*	*Organisational or caucus democracy* ("Manager defines limits within which non-managers make decisions")	***Empowered participation-*** Core agenda proposals and input through priority-setting, cadres and SAW on collective or shared goals and outcomes
8. Child initiated shared decisions with adults	*6.* Collaborative community	*Participatory democracy* ("Manager and non-managers jointly make decision within limits defined by organisational constraints")	***Ownership-*** (will be evidenced by a sustaining experience base among lay members in shared management & inquiry).

The numbers for items in columns 1 & 2 are those given by Rafferty and Epstein respectively while the italicised *levels* in column 3 and contents of column 4 are my constructions. I have highlighted boxes to indicate where students, parents, teachers and the 'collective' have progressed to in the study period.

The continuum suggested for the 'learning community' in column 4 of Fig. 9.2 does something that researchers have not to my knowledge previously attempted, perhaps because school communities have come to be treated as amorphous, virtual identities. My model here takes seriously the form and function of the 'school-as-a-whole'. Its 'uncertain' physical or human boundaries make it no more vague a notion than a 'state' or 'party' or 'movement'. In unpacking the collective or schoolwide phenomenon of participation, the analytical frame deliberately conflates governance and pedagogical actions, because in CSR-forms of renewal, they are interdependent.

The argued spread conveys the enhancement of member groups' participation and empowerment, with teachers having been most empowered by the process. It will depend on the perspective taken by the reader as to whether that is an appropriate state or not. My belief is that Matterslea's schoolwide participation represents an optimal outcome for a first overall episode (five-to-six years) of comprehensive reform. The learning history of families in organisational terms is perhaps young, and because what has been learned, lost or gained has been transparently articulated (and recorded), the renewal stands as a milestone and an empowering legacy.

Teaching and Learning

The third domain of outcomes, teaching and learning, suffers currently from a reductive pressure to 'measure' what Matterslea's principal (1) called the "unquantifiable". In the eyes of school renewal practitioners (including parents), the authenticity of data used in system evaluations of learning 'effects' is a shadow only of the total learning experienced through schooling. Present system-led evaluations fail to account for a large proportion of the teaching and learning undertaken by teachers in tough schools; it is metrically oblivious to community dimensions of student learning.

Comprehensive schoolwide reform is deliberate reflective, interpretive and instrumental work. At its core is organisational learning. From learning about itself, from intentional

social metacognition, the school begins to build capacity for its major business of advancing students' learning. Throughout this thesis, the ascertainment of 'effectiveness' has held that no matter what outcomes are extrapolated, the critical knowledge for practitioners and system leaders is in what processes or conditions have led to those outcomes. Doing well without knowing what you are doing is aesthetically charming but practically unhelpful. Knowledge concerning effective practice is valued 'at a premium' for teachers and learners in disadvantaged communities, as success is elusive for them and for their schools. More than any other group, teachers of 'at-risk' learners have had solution after solution sold to them at the cost of their time and stress. Yet, no matter how many remedial or exo-structural programs are employed, the State's 'test-score' criteria do not alter or adjust to accommodate the modified learning procedures. Unpacking 'success' is complex. ASP simplistically but accurately asserts that powerful learning is not what is taught, nor what and how learning is presented, but a synthesis of content, pedagogy and contextual factors such as school climate, communication and relationships (Hopfenberg et al., 1993).

On the evidence of progressive internal and Statewide measures of literacy, Matterslea's students have benefited from the combination of powerful learning and explicit pedagogical techniques employed by teachers. The contributions of home and volunteer assistance, of confidence, goal-setting and interdependence skill, among other influences, must be inferred. At one point in 1999, students requested more integrated curriculum and teachers have pressed to introduce more arts-related elements into the curriculum. The point for ASP's curriculum analysis is that a balance of structured *and* integrated learning has been 'effective' in system terms. Purism is not a trait many Tasmanian educators would apply to their teaching technologies.

The outcomes have also associated student progress with metacognitive activity. Students' individual and class-group goal setting has proven to be a valuable tool in raising learning to a conscious level of students' inquiry. In all, the ideological tension between foundational and ambitious curriculum has not created significant problems for Matterslea's teachers. It would appear that they (and the great majority of teachers in Matterslea's school district) are divided in their pedagogical intentions along lines identified by Henry & Taylor (1999). Their practice seeks either *procedural-based* social justice (that is, for schools to be more nurturing, democratically participatory and 'fair', or *attainment-based* social justice

(improved student performances). Although both sets of intentions appear to be well advanced in Matterslea's case, further study would help its community of learners to understand better, and in context, the mutual effects of the two approaches.

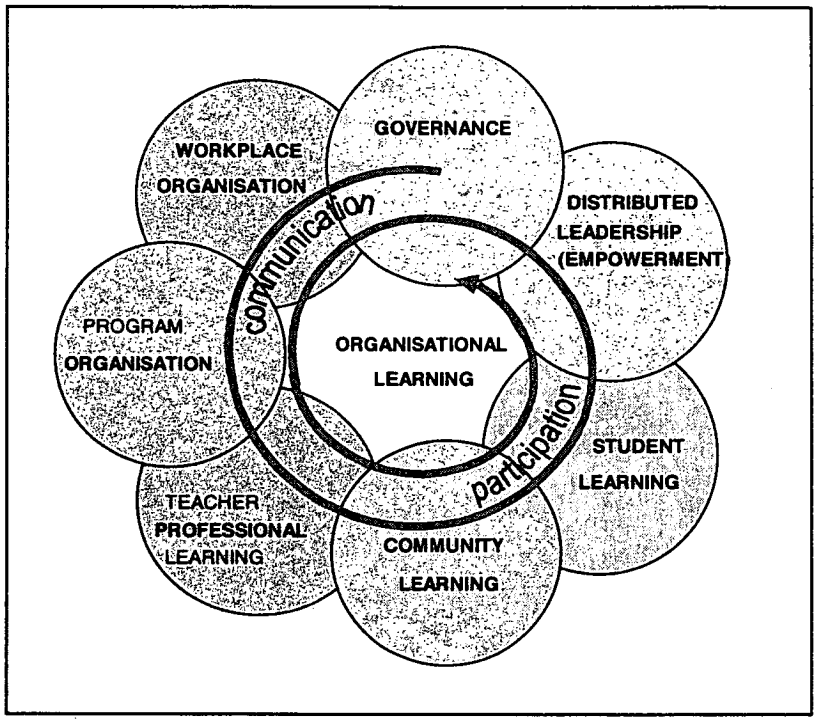
The introduction of the *Essential Learnings* curriculum framework in 2003 will provide an ideal opportunity for the school as a community of learners to interrogate again what is 'best practice' towards the school's collective Vision. Where the first 'Taking Stock' focused very much on classroom pedagogies that were productive or not, it is a sign of the school's organisational learning over the intervening period that 'best practice' will now undoubtedly include the teaching and learning beliefs and behaviours of the whole range of member groups. The expectation of collaborative learning practices between home and school is enculturated in principle and practice. The policy framework is also appropriately framed. For example Matterslea's homework policy was developed through the relevant cadre in 1999, and more recent work on a policy for reporting with parents has been completed. As with the dissemination of the ASP model, communication processes are also much better understood for the coming task of informing parents and other community members about the intentions and practices embedded in the new *Essential Learnings*.

9.4 Research Question 3: Implications for schools, model advocates and education systems

In this section of interpretive summary, the thesis extrapolates meanings of the study's practical and theoretical outcomes and for school reform in Tasmania and beyond. To do justice to the intentions of ASP, the implications drawn from the Matterslea reform, for all levels of application, should be referenced to eliminating educational and socio-cultural disadvantage.

Viewed in action, the components of reform operates seamlessly. On the basis of this study's description of the mutual effects of governance, organisation and learning, it is hard to conceive a comprehensive reform that is sustainable but does not engage or influence every member group in every domain, schoolwide. In Figure 9.2 I have construed each of the elements of Matterslea's renewal behaviour as linked by the critical dynamics of *communication* and *participation*. At the heart of the model, this interactivity creates the active capacity for organisational learning that sustains renewal.

Figure 9.3 The seamless synergy of renewal actions



Each seamless circle of renewal action is a 'contributing outcome' of program coherence. Each is essential to defining a school's renewal as comprehensive and schoolwide. It is tempting to place student learning at the centre of the model, because it is, of all the outcomes, most emphasised, valued and measured. However, it is not necessarily the most central contributor. It is part of whole school development, and is enhanced by the more generalized learning of the organisation. As a composite of all the renewal actions, organisational learning is the most difficult to measure or to treat as a discrete phenomenon, though it is represented in coherence, empowerment and authenticity of each renewal domain and action. It is what *capacity* is in the school for achieving goals and sustaining change.

9.5 Implications for the renewing school

Towards a self-authored process

As a case study, the six years have followed a developmental sequence of phases: *Establishment*, in which the process was initiated and set running in the Matterslea context, *Consolidation* which represented a maturing use of the model, and *Self-authoring*, where the reform process takes a more locally customised design. The outcomes chapters of the thesis

have explained adaptations to meet context demands. Most of these relate specifically to school level actions, but some have tested the responsiveness of the ASP model to Tasmanian educational circumstances. Argued simply, the major conclusions to be drawn from the study are that ASP does translate powerfully to the Tasmanian context, and that its implementation demonstrates the coherence, empowerment and authentic learning outcomes sought by systemic and comprehensive schoolwide reform. The third research question addressed by the thesis projects beyond the 'what' and 'so what' of the outcomes, concluding the thesis with a consideration of 'now what?'

Matterslea's capacities for self-directed planning and development, for whole school community learning and organisational resilience have been built on strengths within the context. Some of those 'assets' were identified by the taking stock processes of the establishment phase. The explicit assets include a vibrant Supportive School Environment, and social capital in the community's history undergirding families' loyalty to the school and the suburb, and a 'risk-ready' teaching staff who were prepared to embrace school/ community partnership even though it meant divesting some of their professional distance. Other assets have only become more articulated through the research processes associated with my data gathering that served in most parts to inform my thesis *and* the school members' Inquiry (data-based action research). More 'implicit' assets have been in (i) the empowering leadership style shown by senior staff, particularly in the early implementation, (ii) in the utility of the shared vision, (iii) the transparency and communication that afforded the unity in the vision, and (iv) the ASP process itself that provides a firm but authorable foundation for the necessary innovations.

No matter how school-based or autonomous the participatory process has been, it has not signified the obsolescence of leadership. On the contrary, teachers' and parents' appreciation of democratic, distributed leadership has been unwavering. Without such leadership trust and organisational resilience may fade, and with it Matterslea's self renewing capacity. Contestation around participation and learning must continue if the process is to remain pliable and if the outcomes are to be authentic. The school's decision-making processes must occupy a place of priority in design or planning. The ASP has provided the empowering model that has served as an umbilicus for the young learning community. The evidence provided in the three outcomes chapters suggests that Matterslea need not feel any continued

dependence on the model. It has made strong progress against state accountability standards, reaching an accelerated level in overall literacy. Community pride and pedagogical participation is vastly strengthened with enrolments holding firm in a competitive market.

As Matterslea moves forward to negotiate its future governance processes with its District and State offices, and to interpret ELs in practice, it takes with it an impressive track record in democratic governance, creative organisational solutions and authentically derived effectiveness in teaching and learning. It has shown how a reliable renewal process contributes coherence to all domains of the school program, how shared authority is advanced by appropriate communication-led participation, and how well suited comprehensive schoolwide reform is to developing resilience as an authentic outcome for its students and it school community.

The design for its new planning cycle must bear in consideration the naivete of its members in *Essential Learnings* and the demands of the State's review processes. The design opportunity will also help address several unanswered challenges that have become clearer to me as a coach, but perhaps even more clear since stepping back to gain some writing space for this report. The challenges are not deficits; they are potential priorities 'within range' of strengths already shown in the Matterslea context such as democratic process, transparency and appropriate communication:

- Men's relative lack of engagement in school decision-making and learning;
- The appropriate balance of teachers' time between schoolwide action planning and professional development — with consideration of their relative contributions to meeting Vision and priorities.
- Improving student and parent voice to the highest of levels of Rafferty and Epstein's typologies;
- Establishing a baseline of indictors of social capital in students and the broader school, indicators that can be used both authentically (in context and of the context) and more normatively among schools who share similar challenges;
- Effective development of participation opportunities for community members who are prevented by circumstances from on-site involvement.

Although they are issues arising from the Matterlsea context, and have more to do with the context than with the model, the challenges are argued to hold relevance to any socio-culturally disadvantaged school.

Articulating organisational selfhood

Matterslea will be better able to expand its community's capacity (or social capital) if it can articulate its 'way' to make it more amenable to informed community discourse. The Matterslea 'way' accords with much of what is reported as common among tough schools in Australia (Connell, 1993b; Hattam, 1998; Thomson, 2000). It represents values-in-practice: egalitarian status; consultative style; the desire to 'call one's own shots'; a disrespect for unengaged academia and management, and a respect for people's professional territory (roles and controls).

Because the 'way' is unpublished cultural understanding, it is inscrutable and therefore open to manipulation. The role of governance is to bring voice and shape to the way, and to make it transparent as 'policy'. Vision statements are not adequate in themselves to operationalise the social justice orientations embedded in 'ways' as cultural devices. Whether by good fortune or by genius, the request to cadres made by Matterslea's initial ASP principal to articulate and publish a comprehensive raft of policies has given great transparency and foundation to the school's decision-making processes. What this meant was that cadres participants were able to engage in educational administration through their building of policy, and to link it to their primary tasks of educational decision-making. By bridging policy design and pedagogical design, the cadres' work overcame a potential dilemma in participatory educational reforms whereby politics of the meso-system divided parents from pedagogy and teachers from management[1].

There is an ambivalence concerning almost everything that teachers bring to renewal at Matterslea. They are torn between ambitious, integrated learning and explicit methods; between functional academics and socially affirming competencies; between personal and situational professional development and between the surrender to following and the responsibilities of distributed leadership. The dilemmas are not the sole province of

[1] This 'dilemma' is driven by a confusion of the substantive 'politics' of discourse and meaning in the school program (both administrative and educative) with technical politics of school administration. Rizvi & Kemmis (1987, p. 201) note that superficial participation in decisions often masks the absence of real participation by school community in educationally significant school decisions for school-level reform.

teachers, although parents and students lack at fist the terminology to enter a mixed-member group discourse to place them in context of day to day school program and home-based learning. Teamed professional learning in both the cadres and structured PD has allowed teachers and lay members to feel each other out. The parents prefer to listen first. Students unfortunately have had to rely on the priority-setting and revising activities for their voice and the brief but meaningful times of preparing for parent/teacher sessions at which they share their goal-setting achievements and other learning reflections.

Matterslea's renewal outcomes affirm the ASP as an appropriate planning model through which to pursue academic and socio-cultural equity. There are many points of consonance and difference between current Tasmanian review processes and ASP that potentially offer creative insights to the future of the State's own development planning 'model'. And while the Matterslea implementation claims 'high fidelity' to the ASP prototype in the US, consonances and differences that have arisen for the practical and conceptual bases of the model have meanings and implications for the ASP organisation and developers of comprehensive schoolwide reforms.

9.6 Implications for the ASP model

Model as example vs *model* as recipe

In the organisational learning literature, isomorphism or pattern repetition was described as an inevitable consequence of institutional permeability. While it can be argued that a model might bind a school other-directedness, what has emerged from the Matterslea implementation is that the model (in this case, ASP) has freed the school from the potentially disempowering mimetic elements of systemic reinforcement. The model is not an inhibitor of inventiveness, but is rather a framework within which the school can 'find its own feet'. Growth through models is about seeing possibilities, trying them out and accommodating what works. Models used as recipes are hermetic, inflexible and not amenable to self-authoring by the 'user'.

The study affirms the value of an empowering renewal model in an environment of centrally designed school improvement review. It brings vitality to stability. The 'transplant' from the US to Tasmania has shown ASP to be a robust model, and sufficiently flexible to allow macro and local contexts to be accounted for.

The major weakness in the ASP model raised by the Matterslea study is in its apparent inability to sustain direct meeting-based governance input from non-professional members such as parents and students. Had Matterslea's Principal (1) and I not visited several mature ASP schools in California and Texas, I might have presumed that the progressive loss of parents from the cadres after 2000 was solely from school-based implementation factors alone. Many schools in the US had experienced the same phenomenon of 'parent burnout' and only in middle schools were students regular cadre participants. Further, interviews with cadre members including parents have confirmed observations made by myself and school leaders that the main problem rests with the Inquiry Process decision protocols.

The short-cut version of the 'inquiry approach' lacks sufficient rigour to serve as alternative planning base for the school program, and is only suggested in ASP circles for fast-tracking of incidental decisions. Matterslea's teachers have claimed that the full Inquiry Process is ponderous and time consuming for them, and for parents and children it is technical and with ends remote from the means at first passing as well as lacking the hands-on tasks that community members associate with 'getting somewhere'. For their parts, teachers have learned to suspend their judgment and have been able to master the protocols. Teachers are in a better situation to maintain touch with the meetings' agendas and ongoing tasks, the data gathering and classroom applications of a number of action plans that come from the cadre's Inquiry process. They acknowledge that the process has produced significant accomplishments on agreed school priorities. Inevitably, though, parents and students have lost appetite for the data-based logic of the cadre meetings. Because the Inquiry Process is central to the ASP governance, discussion should be conducted among member schools of the ASP network concerning possible adaptations or adjustments to its protocols.

In all other aspects, the ASP process has been found valuable, reliable and empowering. By bringing the main school decisional agenda within the cadres, and within the SAW's aegis, the ASP has given the distribution of power in the school a purpose at the core rather than in administrivia, peripheral social events, fund-raising or resource maintenance. Because from its inception in the school it was a model that explicitly assumed schoolwide input and set the unifying benchmark of consensus for its decisions, the model resonated well with the primary motivation on teachers' parts to bring families into play as a vital resource in moral and pedagogical support. To 'major stakeholders' in District and State departments, as well

as related agencies such as health and community affairs, the ASP effort at Matterslea offers a rare example of how a community's educative development will thrive when resources of time and reliable governance process are combined with encouragement and freedom from conformity.

The outcomes affirm the ASP as an appropriate planning model through which one Tasmanian urban regional school has found accelerated learning outcomes and more importantly, authentic school community development. Given that there are strong points of consonance and difference between current Tasmanian review processes and ASP, the outcomes of this study have a creative bearing on State's development. And as Matterslea shares many characteristics of other primary schools in low income areas across urban and regional Australia, the ASP network has reason to be encouraged that so long as cost structures are feasible, there are many sites in Australian government schooling who might use the ASP model *within* their state's school planning obligations. The critical condition for such extension of the ASP influence in Australia is the capacity or ideological preparedness of State education departments to accommodate more autonomous innovations into their overall development framework for schools.

9.7 Theoretical positions emerging from the study

Organisational resilience

The first theoretical proposition raised by the study is that the combined outcome of comprehensive reform's pursuit of coherence, empowerment and authentic learning is the capacity of organisational resilience. Resiliency studies have focused on attributes shared by individuals who overcome severe stresses or threats in their living environments. The notion of 'organisational resilience' suggests it is not only individuals that operate 'against the odds'; institutions also face adversity and threats to sustainability. Like resilient individuals, disadvantaged schools can be protected or protect themselves from failure.

Matterslea Primary School has, through its renewal activities and its 'learning history', furnished itself with resiliency-generating conditions detailed by Benard (1996). In building a shared, inclusive picture, it has articulated an effective Vision that expresses clearly the *expectations* that members will succeed. *Care and support* have been manifest in reversing

the expert/novice relationship, and transparent, open, user-friendly communication, and a focus on strengths rather than deficits. Finally, to maximize *opportunities to make meaningful decisions*, the governance processes of the school have been rendered inclusive, self-selected and consensual. Renewal is an apt term in organisational resilience, because it suggests an internally driven rather than externally mandated change. Schools undertaking comprehensive schoolwide self-organisation, expanding their internal, self-supporting capacity, are able to provide the greater part of resiliency-producing conditions for themselves. Self-determination of the school is dynamic in the wider context of 'support roles' played by the renewal model (in promoting process, unity, vision, and decision-making opportunity), coach (encouragement, process vigilance and group-work procedures) and District (providing autonomy, trust, professional learning support and performance feedback).

Appropriate communication

A second theoretical assertion I would forward from the outcomes of the study is that appropriate communication processes are the most essential organisational resources in equity-focused renewal. Through them, informed governance and pedagogical participation can be extended to maximise organisational attributes of inclusion, empowerment, transparency and consensus for a broader school membership; it reduces marginalisation. Without effective and appropriate communication, the reform is a loom for the emperor's new clothes. Communication processes should be given action-planning priority in building schoolwide capacity. While members' rights to operate at the margins must be respected in communities of adversity, in the cause of equity it is the school's responsibility to engage members at their optimum levels.

A third 'theoretical' consideration expresses the creative tension between fidelity to a reform 'model' and renewal as a self-authored process. It is the paradoxical proposition that a school reform model is only empowering *if* the stability and choice it provides leads to greater, not less autonomy in the institution. If the model is 'downloaded' onto an organisation, prescribing non-negotiable practices, it is coercively 'isomorphic' or system-reproducing, and will founder on the rocks of professional sensibility (Hattam et al., 1997). Lacking local ownership by school lay members, it will starve from neglect or resistance (Hargreaves, 1997). Sustainability is founded on stability but change requires risk and innovation. Where

reliable processes underpin decision-making, orthodoxies can be problematised, routines can be destabilised, conceptions challenged and arms freed for locally and system related innovation. For outcomes of 'empowerment' and 'authenticity', the change model must be adaptable or self-authorable by the members of the organisation. Paradoxically, for 'coherence' (of purpose, of meaning, of relevance), it should be sufficiently 'loosely coupled' from central mandates to limit distractive isomorphism. Comprehensive schoolwide renewal provides internal coherence to a school program. While system alignment is on the surface 'equalitarian', it is not automatically empowering. Coherence in a system should not be confused with compliance or conformity.

9.8 Implications for education systems

This study has been rooted conceptually and practically in government education systems' responsibility to bring equity to the schooling experiences and outcomes of students and their disadvantaged communities. The project exploited a window of uncertainty and flexibility that emerged between governments in Tasmania over 1996/7. Matterlsea's District and Central offices showed foresight in permitting the 'outrider' to take an alternative pathway in school planning. Although it has demanded very little by way of support from the 'distal stakeholders', the project itself owes its existence in part to the State system and its hosting District of Esk. A number of the study's implications transcend reform at the school level. With Tasmanian education dominated by system-wide planning and evaluation processes through SIR, and its nascent *Essential Learnings* being disseminated Statewide, democratic governance and authentic curriculum central to comprehensive schoolwide renewal such as ASP are timely points of reflection.

The literature pointed to persistent difficulties with broad, top-down reforms in obtaining coherence between the generic intentions and practices carried by central policy and the realities of the context. The literature also explained the lack of empowerment and authentic outcomes experienced by schools and members from standards-based and deficit-reinforcing compensatory reforms. The search for coherence across the multiple domains of school reform so central to Matterslea's renewal effort raises a need for central offices of education to acknowledge that the range of relevant outcomes from schooling goes beyond standards-based and statewide testing results. Although quantified outcomes are an important dimension of accountability, failure by central departments of education to recognise

schools' *comprehensive* developments and achievements may especially dispirit schools in disadvantaged circumstances who expend substantial time and energy to bring coherence across governance, organisational and pedagogical processes in their school.

The task of identifying useful indicators of whole school development has been begun in the US through its federal Comprehensive Schoolwide Reform program. However, it has not elaborated markers of such processes and outcomes as 'community participation' or 'student engagement' in terms suitable for either school-based or school-by school baselines. The checklist simply shows the presence or otherwise of the 'comprehensive' multi-domain elements. My suggestion here should be taken as assuming that *all* progress in empowerment, participation or resiliency-building should or could be accounted by finely scaled indicators designed for normative use. As it is with academic progress measures, there are balances of school-assessed and externally moderated perspectives. We are reminded by Stringer (1992) of the relative magnitude of contextual factors. He cites Simons (1988): "No two schools are so alike in their circumstances for prescription of curricular action to adequately supplant the judgments of those who work within them" (Stringer, 1992, p. 67). The greatest advantage of such a moderation of school-referenced social capital indicators would be in the broad educational community's acknowledgment that non-academic dimensions *do* count enough to warrant contested discourse. Much is yet to be known about how school development affects community development.

The chicken and egg nature of authentic outcomes and integrated development processes makes the identification of causation and effects speculative. The processes of renewal are in themselves outcomes. For encouragement, educators can look to investigations in other social science disciplines through which 'concepts' of social capital and resilience have become 'phenomena' acknowledged by such bodies as the World Bank and the World Health Organisation. Appropriate community development of social capital and resilience has shifted to a bottom-up and user-referenced design process (Woolcock, 1998; 2000). So too in the search for understanding about school renewal and authentic learning, the voices of disadvantaged schools should first be heard in a 'discourse' of their own. Of all schools in the government system, it is they who are constrained by their environments to put so much organisational and curricular energy into addressing priorities that do not on the surface directly relate to academic learning. The discourse would reopen topics which are, under the

taboos of political correctness, increasingly absent from educational policy. Included in these are social class, poverty and social justice. On the strength of examples like Matterslea, such a debate can be extended across the system in a positive, 'can-do' vein. The government system in Tasmania has shown itself quite capable of giving a school such as Matterslea its head to pursue contextually sound solutions and has reaped rewards of which its system should be proud.

Building system capacity for school renewal through teacher education.

Connell et al (1991) Marginson (1997) and Hattam (1998) have suggested that social justice in Australian schooling suffers from a folkloric myth of egalitarianism. As successes in their own field, most teachers must make significant leaps of imagination and suspensions of judgment to understand the widening gap between advantage and adversity, between their professional communities of practice and the communities in which they work. In Australia, tertiary education including teacher preparation continues with disproportionate enrolments from families of the middle-class and the dominant ethnic group (Dwyer, Harwood & Taylor, 1998; Abbott-Chapman, 1999). Of those, few have been educated in institutions where schoolwide participatory management, collaborative and seamless curriculum or school-based community learning are the norm. Yet these are the directions being made explicit in administrative and curricular policies of State systems across Australia, and broadly amongst the Western educational community.

The following suggestions are for content areas that faculties of education must address in preparing graduates for schools and systems with 'ambitious' agendas. They are topics and skills that would advantage any educator involved in the Matterslea renewal, present or future, and are worthy of inclusion in the further education and professional learning teachers. Smith (1999) maintains that there is no logical alternative to "the simultaneous renewal of schools and teacher education". This implies the competencies I am proposing should be developed *through* Inquiry-based and ambitious pedagogies built into tertiary teacher education courses:

- ***Social justice curriculum.*** Class activities to bring practical agency to students, including decision-making, skills of argument critique and discourse, language register

and code analysis, affirmative and assertive behaviours, leadership and membership, goal setting and data-based inquiry.

- ***New teacher roles under distributed leadership conditions.*** The range of responsibilities and practices experienced in renewal, participatory governance or collaborative community learning.
- ***Video-data gathering and use.*** Technical competence with cameras (including digital still), editing, copying and linking to multimedia forms; investigating video as a reflective communication tool in classroom and community learning.
- ***Meeting skills and protocols.*** Managing agendas and roles, recording outcomes, active listening, accounting for the range of members' language codes and registers
- ***Skills for inquiry-based action research in multi-member teams.*** Research (including survey construction), argument assessment, data analysis and presentation, report writing.
- ***Engaging pedagogical and governance participation from 'remote' school families.*** Strategies to enhance such areas as homework, communication, parent/student/teacher sessions, kitchen-group community learning development, video information and student-led home literacy.

Of all the educational resources available to faculties of teacher education for the task of building undergraduate and in-service knowledge of teachers' renewal roles, the greatest is teachers experienced in bottom-up whole-school planning and implementation. The 'models' of empowered team members and their collaborating leaders and their practical reflections should be promoted and supported by 'Faculty of Education' budgets.

Innovation

Systemic coherence should not be confused with conformity or homogeneity. The DoE has a published interest in promoting structurally innovative solutions in schools. Its website carries intentions to "Sponsor pilot schools who propose viable and innovative concepts to redesign their organisational and management arrangements to better incorporate community involvement" and to "Support and facilitate schools prepared to work together to provide more innovative services to their communities through sharing resources and

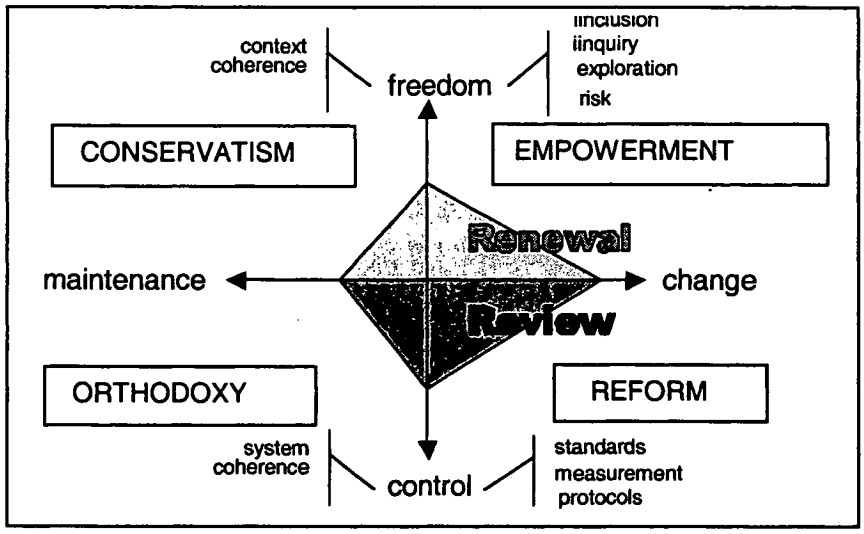
responsibilities". (DoE, 2001c, Current Emphasis, http://connections.education.tas.gov.au/Nav/Strategy.asp?ID=00000014).

The presence of innovation in a system cannot be taken for granted; to the contrary, the perspectives of Hargreaves (1997a), Senge (1998), Mulford (2000), Timperley & Robinson (2000) and Cuttance (2001) suggest that innovation within an education system must be proactively promoted. Despite the DoE's stated support for the idea of school-level innovation, apart from the Matterslea ASP, no experiments in whole-school reform implementation or design are in place. There is a clear possibility that the *new Essential Learnings* curriculum framework will be introduced in many schools as unconnected to school organisation or governance. If this occurred, and if the curricular reform was given a sense of top-down imposition, or a 'professional-only' mystique, much of the socially purposed intentions of ELs would miss its mark in the broad community of learners. Schools like Matterslea have communities not only who want to be informed about what their children are undertaking, but who want to know how to be engaged in related learning processes themselves.

The SIR school development planning model currently being undertaken by Tasmanian government schools will certainly call for school and community development of knowledge and capacity in ELs to be a part of every school's planning. In order for whole school cultures to embrace and manifest the values of the *Essential Learning Framework*, the comprehensive and schoolwide coherence of principles, processes and practices will need to be realised. This is precisely what Matterslea achieved with ASP's principles of *Unity of purpose*, *Empowerment with responsibility* and *Building on strengths*, and the values of acceleration 'operationalised' those principles: "equity; communication and collaboration; participation; community spirit; school as a centre of expertise; risk taking; reflection, experimentation and discovery; and trust" (Hopfenberg et al, 1993, p. 32). These accord with ELs' similarly ambitious set of 'values': "connectedness; resilience; achievement; creativity; integrity; responsibility; equity" (Department of Education, Tasmania, 2002). The results of this study suggest that an effective institutionalization of ELs will be more likely from a renewal approach such as Matterslea's ASP schoolwide reform than from current review processes that do not account for authentic school community learning.

To illustrate the difference between review and renewal, in Figure 9.4 I have posited two axes that represent continua from (i) maintenance to change and (ii) control to freedom.

Figure 9.4 Review and renewal in relative terms



Incorporated into Tasmania's school planing environment, renewal processes can make important contributions to SIR through their greater emphasis on innovation and context. On the other hand, review processes can, if conceived as supporting rather than dominating schools' 'freedom' or empowerment, can help ensure coherence among (not *to*) government schools that wish to, and are encouraged to, make their contextual issues a first priority in their planning. Such schools will inevitably include those serving socio-culturally disadvantaged communities. One response of the system to the prospect of a renewal-focused press for equity might be to offer 15% of schools the opportunity to design or employ comprehensive schoolwide models of reform. Alternatively, it could extend to all schools the right to balance Departmental priorities with their own, on a trial proportion of 25% PD time, for instance, to be directed to school-referenced priorities and the complement to system priorities. Whether through such structured liberties or through a demonstrated spirit of context empowerment, organisational alignment of an ambitious statewide curriculum such as ELs with schools' governance and organisational learning must receive both bottom up and top-down attention if system coherence is to be found and sustained.

Overall, the thesis asserts that ASP renewal as it has been implemented at Matterslea stands as a successful and appropriate model for disadvantaged schools in Tasmania and more

widely in Australia. Departments responsible for improving the capacity and outcomes of those schools have a well-recorded example to interrogate, observe and support through its transition to a more self-authored governance process. Coherence and authenticity are traits that exist in a creative tension and are desired both by systems and schools. Without them, a State's system of education will falter as a learning organisation; to foster them at system-wide and school levels, leadership must become distributed from the policymaking level to the context and its communities of learners, not as a conditional gift, but as an essential condition of equity. Equity is not something that is earned; it is learned. Learning to choose and choosing to learn, only an empowered community can truly own its outcomes.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE THESIS

Given the number of contexts, systems and related disciplines that influence the use of terms over time, this section offers meanings for the sake of *this* thesis, to help the reader 'see the mind' of the researcher. Some terms are best defined against their opposites. Where appropriate, some authors are cited as sources of the term or as having attempted to clarify their meaning. A section on acronyms/abbreviations is included following the explanation of terms.

Terms

Academic rationalism: The traditional curriculum of traditional disciplines characterised by transmissive knowledge production and pen & paper or multiple choice assessment. See Eisner, 1979 for discussion and criticism.

Ambitious curriculum: Higher order learning opportunities characteristic of gifted and talented programs; stimulating a shift in the learner from an unempowered state to one of emancipation and critical empowerment; See Knapp, Shields & Turnbull (1995); Carlson (1993); and Freebody (1992). Contrasted to 'basics' or a foundational syllabus.

Ancillary Staff: Describes non-teaching staff in schools such as teacher assistants, secretarial staff, groundsmen.

Authentic learning/Authentic pedagogy/Authentic assessment: Activity initiated by or engaging the student or students in active learning; drawn from or related to the learner's operative context; assessed through means that directly probe understanding through directly related activity or discourse (See Newmann, 1996); Contrasted to 'academic rationalism'.

Cadre: Originally a French military term meaning a permanent expandable unit, used in ASP to for a mixed member school-based team, comprising teachers, parents, students and community members who meet weekly or fortnightly to conduct action research to problem solve priority challenges through the Inquiry Process.

Consensus: The process and outcome of reaching collective agreement at a level of around 87%+, rather than through a majority vote of 51% carrying the day. A decision is not secure until 87% agree to support it.

Early Childhood Education (ECE): In Australia, this refers to the school and pre-school classes from Kindergarten (roughly 3-4 years of age) to Grade 2 (roughly 7-8 years of age).

Essential Learning Framework (ELF): Introduced to schools in 2002, the ELF is a new conceptualising of the curriculum, away from the traditional key learning areas (KLAs) such as 'Science' and 'English' to integrated 'big pictures' and associated 'rich pedagogies'.

Equity (in education): "the concept of equal access to school education and the fair and just distribution of benefits from the school education system" (DEA, 1995a, p. 7).

Flying Start: Program in all Tasmanian primary schools that places an extra teacher in early childhood classes for around two hours day, and has recently incorporated explicit teaching and dedicated time elements of the PASS program (see note in this Appendix).

Member: A participant with a daily interest in the school's affairs and a level of immediate participation, such as a parent with homework, a teacher in school related roles, or a community volunteer in the school library.

Part-time teachers: Casual or permanent, these teachers do not spend the entire school week in their school role. They may, however, have responsibility for a majority of a class's program, say over three school days.

Pedagogy: Approach to teaching and learning; the philosophical and ideological basis of instruction and curriculum design.

Praxis: The translation of theory into practice; practice informed by coherent ideology, research or theory. (Freire, 1972: praxis is "where true reflection ...leads to action"). See also Carlson (1993).

Primary School: In Australia and UK, primary schools are the equivalent of US 'elementary' schools, usually covering ages 4+ to 12, or Prep. to Grade 6. School is only compulsory from Grade 1, at age 6y.o. The early childhood years are nowdays mainly included in primary schools, rather than seen as separate management units. Many Australian public schools are Kindergarten–to-Grade 10 sites (ages 4+ to 16), and have 'primary' sections within them. Some K-10 schools also have 'middle school' sections that bridge Grades 5-8.

Renewal* (School Renewal): School-based reform sourced in grass roots action, inclusively constructed, with planned change in all domains of a school, conceived as an ongoing process of whole-school development. (See Goodlad, 1999)

*The following phrases, noted by the researcher in reading for the study, show a wide range of terms have been applied to comprehensive, schoolwide reform. Not all match or 'categorise' the ASP model, but all seek to extend the meanings and domains of reform *beyond* a singular focus such as the syllabus (curricular reform) or class sizes (restructuring):

'Entire-School reform models' (Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (1999)

'School Renewal' (Goodlad, 1999; Glickman, 1993)

'Schoolwide reform' (Lein, Johnson & Ragland, 1997)

'Comprehensive Schoolwide Reform' (U.S. Department of Education, 1999)

'School-based review' (DoE, Tasmania, 1999b)

'School Development Planning' (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; MacGilchrist, Mortimore, Savage & Beresford, 1995)

'School-directed improvement' (Rossi & Montgomery, 1994)

'School-site Reform' (Institute for Research and Reform in Education, 1997)

'Process-oriented school restructuring initiatives' (Rock & Ham, 1999)

'The self-directed school' (McIntire & Fessenden, 1994)

'School-based management' (Odden, Wohlsletter & Odden,1995)

'The Participatory Planning Process' (Hayward,1974)

'Whole-School reforms' (Rock & Ham, 1999); "*Whole-school change*" (Hill & Crevola, 1999);

'Research-based school reform programs' (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1998).

Resilience: the realised capacity to overcome social and educational adversity and to gain satisfactory levels of independence and interdependence in the community (Benard, 1997a)

School-as-a-whole (SAW): refers to "all administrators, all teachers, support staff, and parent, student, central office and community representatives. The SAW is required to approve all decisions that have implications for the entire school. It must approve decisions before cadres begin implementation of an action plan, for example" (Hopfenberg et al., 1993, p. 90).

Socio-cultural: having to do with social conditions influencing or resulting from cultural identity and practices, such as with ethnicity, social class or location.

Socio-economic status and social disadvantage: The report, Socioeconomic status and School Education (Ainley, Graetz, Long & Batten 1995), defines socioeconomic status – 'overall social position' - as determined by educational attainment, employment and occupational status, and income and wealth (p.ix). 'Social disadvantage' or 'disadvantage' is defined more broadly and refers to other attributes: ethnicity and language proficiency, Aboriginal background, gender, family structure, geographical location, and residential mobility (p. x, cited by Henry & Taylor, 1999, p.10).

Socio-educational disadvantage: inequitable participation and outcomes caused by adverse school and/or community conditions.

Stakeholders: Those who provide the resource stream that supports the organization – these are distinguished from organisational members by Mohrman & Wohlsetter (1994) "organisational survival is related to the value of outcomes as determined by the stakeholders, who provide the resource stream that supports the organization, not by the organisational members" (p. 5)

Steering Committee: A group comprising representatives of cadres, parents, teachers, students, leaders and if possible, District Office personnel, to help cadres stay on track with the Inquiry Process and ensure the entire school is moving in the direction of the school vision. It can be responsible for receiving or communicating process-relevant information from within or without the school.

Acronyms

ASSR and SIR: *Assisted School Self Review*; School Improvement Review, a three-yearly cycle of school planning development required of all government schools, using initial audits and surveys in school and community, with subsequent targets detailed according to state-mandated focus areas such as literacy, numeracy, information technology and behaviour management.

CSR: *Comprehensive Schoolwide Reform*; term coined in the US for school-directed reform processes that simultaneously address governance, program organization (incl. member relations and roles, and pedagogical/curricular development.

DoE: *Department of Education, Tasmania* (from 1998), formerly *DECCD* (Department of Education, Culture and Community Development) and *DEA* (Department of Education and the Arts).

DSP: *Disadvantaged Schools Program* (Australia's major compensatory reform from 1974 to 1996)

ECE: *Early Childhood Education*, (above).

ELs or ELF: *Essential Learnings Framework* (above)

ICT: *Information and Communication Technology* or info-tech, IT etc.

KILOs: *Key Intended Literacy Outcomes*, the moderated level (rather than age) benchmarked performance indicators against which teachers and families might compare their child's progress. Schools tend to attach some grade ranges to these indicators.

KINOs: *Key Intended Numeracy Outcomes*, as above.

KITOs: *Key Information Technology Outcomes*, as above.

KLAs: *Key Learning Areas* common to curricula across Australian schools (English; Maths; Science; Technology; the Arts; Studies of Society and the Environment; Health & Physical Education).

IPLP: *Individual Professional Learning Plan*, a compulsory agenda of individual professional learning negotiated between the principal and the staff member, moderated by District and State provisions in certain instances.

MLIC: *Multi-Layered Integrated Curriculum*, a learning framework for units of thematic teaching and learning designed on a matrix of, say, multiples intelligences on one axis with Bloom's Taxonomy on the other. Literacy and numeracy are tools via which to investigate the questions and phenomena inherent to the topic. The result is ideally skill, knowledge and attitude grounded in a more realistic inter-relatedness of learning disciplines than is possible through study the traditional disciplines of mathematics or languages in their own right.

OER: *Office for Educational Review*, a Central unit of the DoE responsible for monitoring student achievement through statewide testing of literacy and numeracy.

PASS: *Program of Additional Support for Students*, Introduced as a trial program in Tasmania, in which participating schools devote an entire teaching block, say 9:00-10:40am, to Literacy (mainly through guided reading and guided writing- see Hill & Crevola,1997), with 1-to-1 or focus group interventions targeted at the weakest 20% of students on Clay's (1993a) measures. The Department's literature describes the bases of the program:

> The PASS Program was established with the aim of: (1) building on the Flying Start Program (see above) in schools with high proportions of educationally disadvantaged students; (2) targeting students who were not making progress in literacy despite previous Flying Start initiatives; (3) providing professional development and school-level support to facilitate the use of specific interventions promoted by the Victorian Early Literacy Research Program (ELRP); (4) facilitating a whole school approach to literacy intervention in early childhood classes. (Department of Education, Tasmania, 2001a) (online at http://connections.education.tas.gov.au)

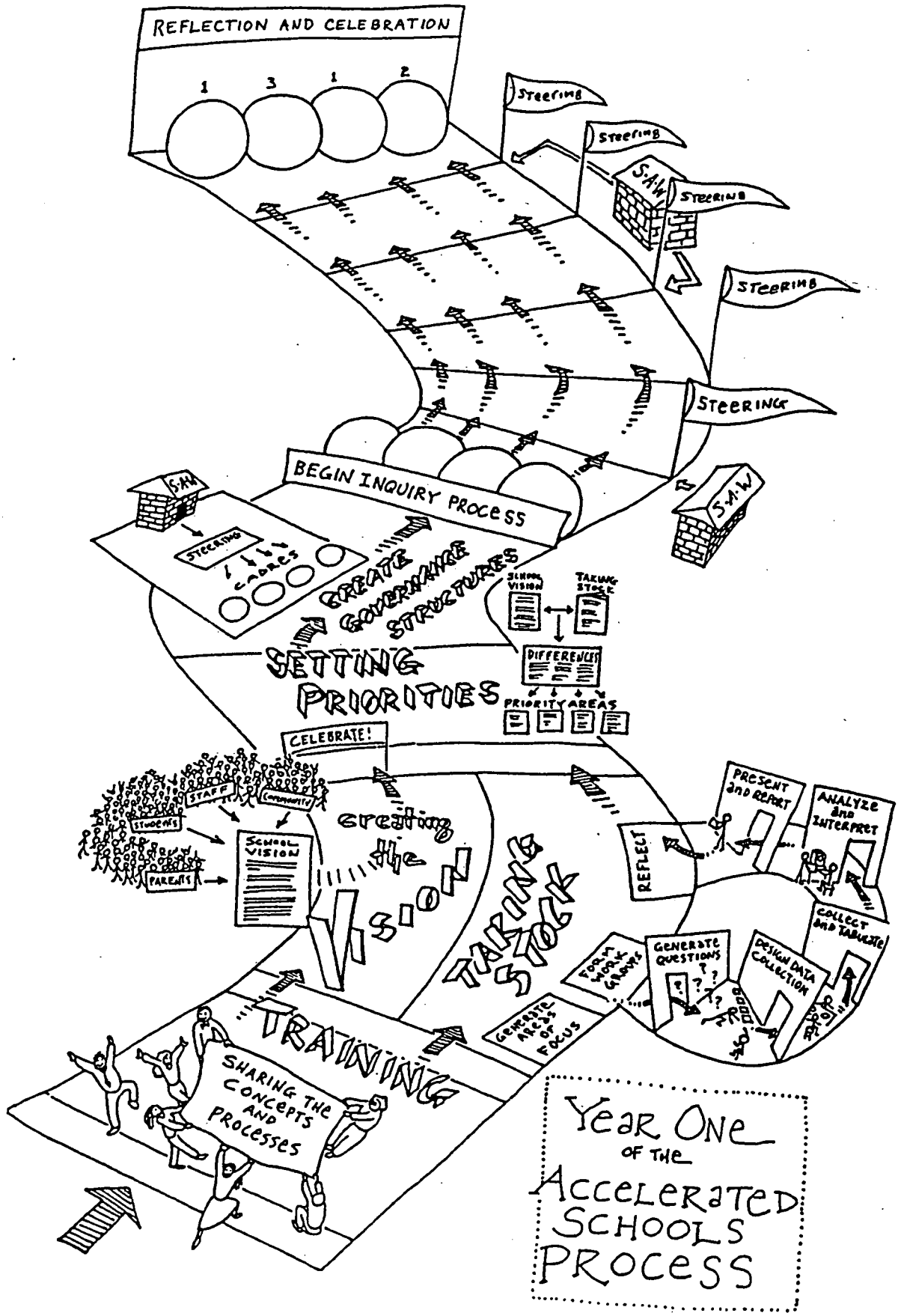
PD: *Professional development*, event-based and structured aspect of teacher development, including tertiary coursework; an aspect of professional learning.

SAW: *School-as-a-Whole*, (See above) all self-selecting participants of school community forums. At Matterlea, a 'mini-SAW' is sometimes effected through combining the cadres' teachers and parents as a deliberative team for short term consensus and communication purposes.

SES: *Socio-economic status*, in Australia, as in most countries, differentiated along measures of occupation and income. Commonly synonymous with social class distinctions.

SRC: *Student Representative Council*, at Matterslea two elected classroom representatives form Grades 2/3 to 6, meeting weekly under the supervision of a teacher.

APPENDICES


REFLECTION AND CELEBRATION
1
3
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2
STEERING
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S.A.W
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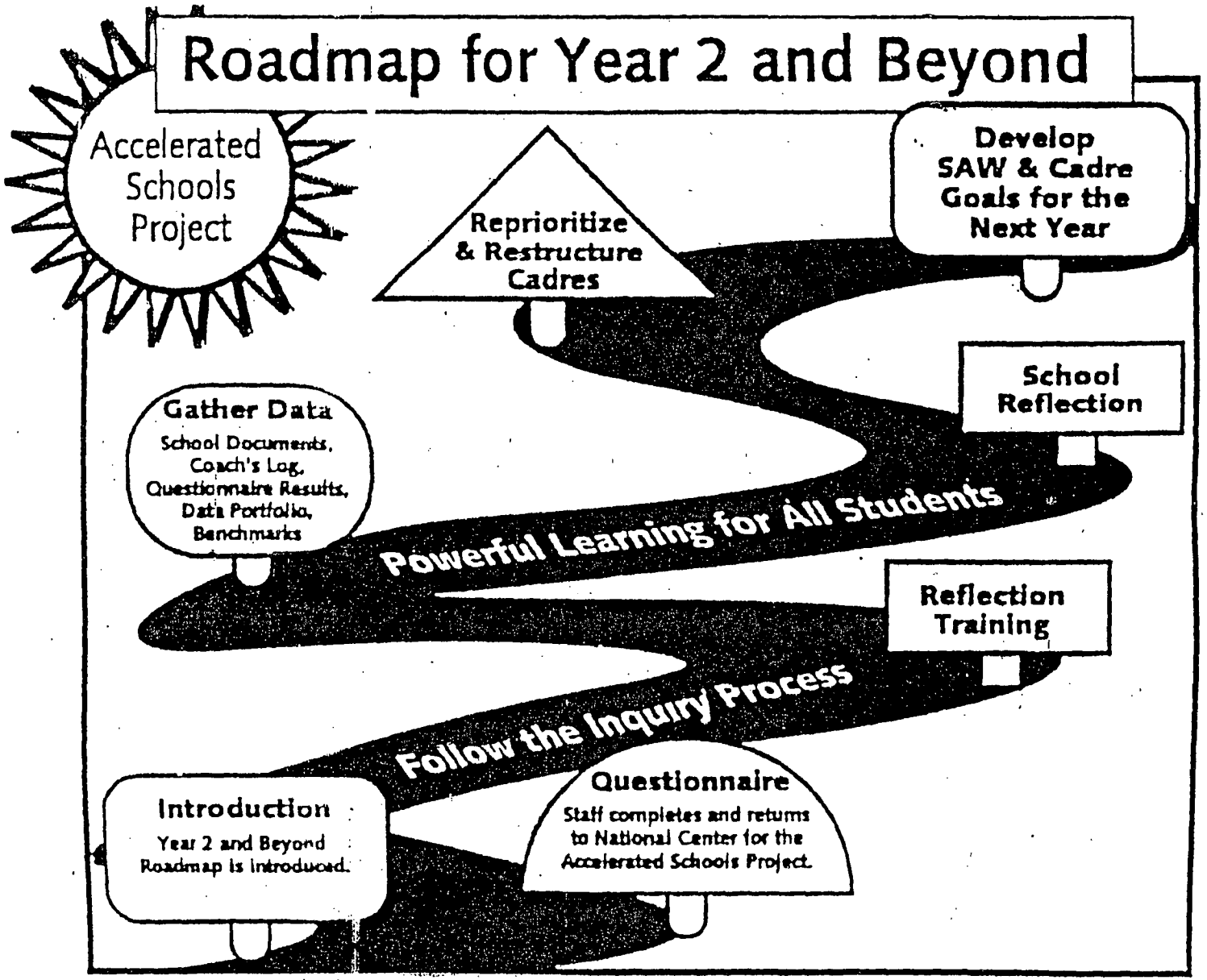
S.A.W
BEGIN INQUIRY PROCESS
S.A.W
STEERING
LEADERS
CREATE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES
SCHOOL VISION
TAKING STOCK
DIFFERENCES
SETTING PRIORITIES
PRIORITY AREAS
CELEBRATE!
STUDENTS
STAFF
COMMUNITY
PARENTS
SCHOOL VISION
creating the VISION
TAKING STOCK
REFLECT
PRESENT and REPORT
ANALYZE and INTERPRET
COLLECT and TABULATE
FOCUS WORK GROUPS
GENERATE QUESTIONS
DESIGN DATA COLLECTION
GENERATE AREAS OF FOCUS
TRAINING
SHARING THE CONCEPTS AND PROCESSES
Year One of the Accelerated Schools Process


Roadmap for Year 2 and Beyond
Accelerated Schools Project
Reprioritize & Restructure Cadres
Develop SAW & Cadre Goals for the Next Year
School Reflection
Gather Data
School Documents, Coach's Log, Questionnaire Results, Data Portfolio, Benchmarks
Powerful Learning for All Students
Reflection Training
Follow the Inquiry Process
Introduction
Year 2 and Beyond Roadmap is introduced.
Questionnaire
Staff completes and returns to National Center for the Accelerated Schools Project.

APPENDIX C

EDUCATION, COMMUNITY & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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26 September 1997

Janine Romaszko - (03) 6233 7026

Mr Rob Andrew
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LAUNCESTON Tas 7250

Dear Mr Andrew

RE: ACCELERATED SCHOOLS PROJECT

I apologise for the delay in responding to your application. I have been advised by the Departmental Consultative Research Committee that the above research study adheres to the guidelines that have been established and there is no objection to the study proceeding.

A copy of your final report should be forwarded to Janine Romaszko, Executive Support Branch, Department of Education, Community and Cultural Development, GPO Box 169B, Hobart 7001.

My permission to conduct the research study is given provided that each Principal is willing for the school to be involved.

Yours sincerely,

G Harrington
DEPUTY SECRETARY (EDUCATION)

c.c. All District Superintendents
Janine Romaszko
Professor John Braithwaite

APPENDIX D

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMUNITY SURVEY, ACCELERATED SCHOOLS PROJECT, [redacted] SCHOOL COMMUNITY.

August, 1997.

Rob Andrew
Faculty of Education
PO Box 1214
Launceston
Tasmania 7250
Australia

Accelerated Schools Project:

STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

[redacted] Primary School is participating in a school development project which is gathering information on the activity of various parts of the community in making decisions regarding the school's program now and in the future. The University is helping the school to do some research on this important part of school life. Knowing how and why people in the community make decisions about their children's school and schooling can help us to build better relationships between learners, families, staff and people in the broader community who offer employment, training and recreation beyond school.

Rob Andrew, a teaching staff member of both the University and Forester School District of the Department of Education (DECCD), will be conducting the study in partnership with members of the school community.

You, as a school community member or primary carer, have been chosen at random to participate in the study, subject to your approval. While the School has provided a list of names to select from, the randomly selected names will be assigned numbers and from that time on, the school will have no knowledge of the identity of the interviewed or observed persons. In the writing up of the results, no identity will be revealed.

The attached sheet is seeking your consent to have you and/or your children participate in the study. You may be approached by phone or through your child's teacher. The interviews will be conducted by Mr. Andrew or a research assistant (staff attached to [redacted] School) as part of [redacted]'s overall Accelerated Schools Project.

All information will be kept confidential and your involvement is entirely voluntary. There will be no repercussions for you or your child if you decide not to become involved or to withdraw at any stage. Any concerns about the conduct of the study and its ethical nature can be addressed to Chris Hooper, Executive Officer of the University Ethics Committee on 03 62262763.

If you are in need of further information, please don't hesitate to contact the following person/s:

Rob Andrew	[redacted]	[redacted]
School/University partner	President, PTA	Principal
Ph. 63 243252/[redacted]	Ph. 63[redacted]	Ph. 63[redacted]

Thank you for adding strength to [redacted] *'s growth as a learning community.*

The Accelerated Schools Project
Strength to Strength

A school community partnership of Forester District, [redacted] and University of Tasmania

Consent Form for: .....

.....

ACCELERATED SCHOOLS PROJECT 1997/98

As you know, M[redacted] school community is taking steps to make our partnership one that really works for our students. In order to keep tabs on how we are going, *we are asking you to give us permission to gather useful information.* As time goes by this will help us see how much progress we've made. It will not identify participants by name and will only be used to describe [redacted] 's *Accelerated Schools Project.*

All information will be held secure and totally confidential. You can see what we have typed from the interview with you at any time. Copies of the final evaluation will be available to you and the rest of the school community. Once again, *the interview info will be 'nameless'.*

Please 3 the boxes to show what is OK with you

Interviewing *you* ☐ and

your children ☐

about your understanding of how the school teaches and children learn, and what your roles in school decisions might be;

For your agreement:

I have read the information given here and agree to the information collection activities checked (ticked) above; (signed:)

*.....*Parent/ primary carer 1* *and/or*

*.....*Parent/ primary carer 2*

[redacted], Principal

Rob Andrew, School/University partner

The *Accelerated Schools Project*

Strength to Strength

A school community partnership of Forester District, [redacted] and University of Tasmania

Consent Form for family of: .....

ACCELERATED SCHOOLS PROJECT 1997/98

We are continuing our work to build a shared picture of how classes go about their teaching and learning at [redacted]. In an attempt to make the information more user-friendly, we are planning to video each class for a short period so that you can see and make comments about what your child's class is doing.

Teachers and children are deciding which lessons will best explain their work. The video shots will be used first within the school and may then be used at the for educational purposes in the school and in the Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania. It will not identify students or parents by name and will only be used to describe what has been developing in [redacted]'s *Accelerated Schools Project.* No commercial value is attached. However, as your child might be easily identified in the video, your permission is sought to use footage that contains their image or your own (if you are helping in the school). Children without consent will be taught in other classes for the 20 minute video period. All information will be held secure and will be treated with utmost confidence. You will be notified of the video's completion and initial viewing dates. Copies of the interim and final videos will be available to you and the rest of the school community. Later withdrawal of consent will not affect this particular production.

Please tick the boxes to show your consent for the images to be used.

Your names	Your signature for consent
Your children's names	

For your agreement: I have read the information given here and agree to my child's participation and the use of images of those listed above

*.....*Parent/ primary carer 1* *and/or*

*.....*Parent/ primary carer 2*

Please do not hesitate to contact 63 [redacted] for any further information.

[redacted], Principal **Rob Andrew,** School/University partner

Internal Assessment Toolkit Chart

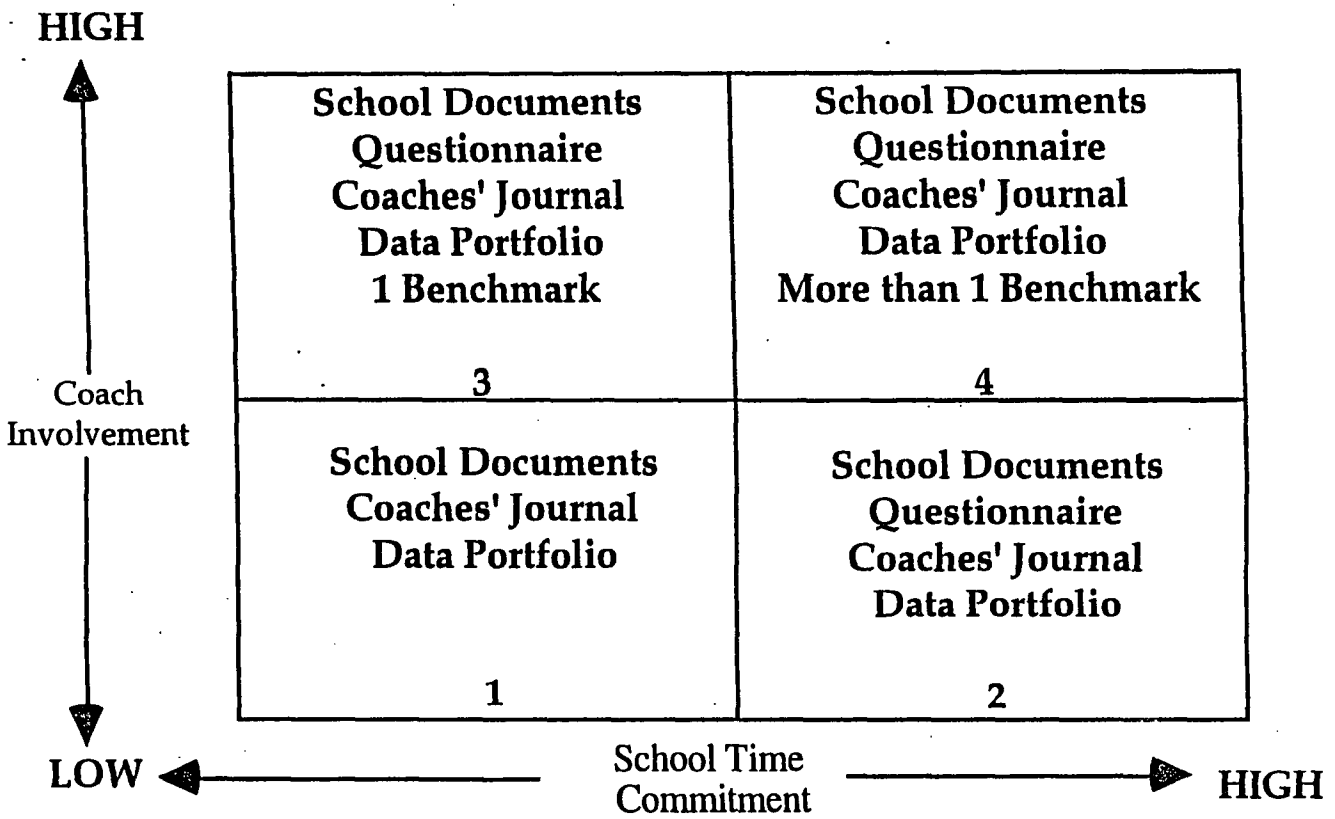
Below are some guidelines for using the internal assessment toolkit. Each part is different, in terms of the individuals at the school site that are responsible for implementing each piece, the degree of coordination required with other members of the school community, the period of time which is involved, the amount of time and effort that is required to implement each piece, and the type of feedback that each piece provides to the school community and the National Center.

	Data Portfolio	Questionnaire	Coaches Log	School Documents	Benchmarks
Implemented By:	Coach	Steering committee	Coach	Steering committee	Steering committee
Involving:	Limited school staff	Recipients of questionnaire		School staff	SAW or steering committee
Timeframe:	Collect at launch; then once per year.	Once every Spring.	Ongoing	Ongoing	At beginning of year, SAW selects benchmarks to use. 3-6 weeks before end of year, SAW reflects on progress with respect to benchmarks.
Time Required (all times are estimated):	3-7 person hours	1-3 person hours to implement; plus 3/4 hour for each recipient	30-90 minutes per week by the coach	10-20 minutes per week by one person	One hour SAW meeting at beginning of year. 5-10 person hours to collect and circulate materials prior to end of year reflection. One-two day SAW meeting at end of year reflection.
Type of Feedback:	Statistics, e.g., test scores, attendance, etc.	Survey data from recipients.	Coach's perspective	Documents, reports, etc.	Self-assessment with respect to benchmarks.

For additional information, please refer to the brochure titled, Evaluating Accelerated Schools, and the cover memos describing each part of the toolkit.

© 1996 National Center for the Accelerated Schools Project

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



HEADER: Mayfield Primary School,
WHERE PEOPLE MATTER

BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS

Mayfield is planning to hold some whole community meetings around the Accelerated Schools Project and four Workshops to build our community's awareness and skills for children's benefit. We need to know when the best times are for you to join in practical workshops and meetings so we can know more about what's going on and have a say in how it goes.
The workshops (1 to 1 $^1/_2$hrs) will be about:

- ***School Discipline at Mayfield;***
- ***Get friendly with our cutting edge: Computers and you at Mayfield;***
- ***Community goes to school: ways of helping in classes;***
-

Which of the following times would be most convenient for you?
Nobody expects you to attend *all* of them but of course you are welcome. That includes relatives and friends: (Please put a '1' for your first choice of day and time and a '2' for your second choice of time and day. If they're on the same day or same time, just leave it as a 1.

❒ **Mon** ❒ **Thurs** ❒ **7:30 *am* (Breakfast meeting?)**

❒ **Tues** ❒ **Fri** ❒ **9:05 *am*** ❒ **5:00 *pm***

❒ **Wed** ❒ **Sat** ❒ **1:30 *pm*** ❒ **7:30 *pm***

❒ **3:00*pm* (childcare if required)**

Parents and Teachers Association (PTA)

Because the PTA is encouraging more people to join in, it is seeking your advice on the best times for the PTA meetings, held once a month: (first & second choices, please)

❒ **Mon** ❒ **Thurs** ❒ **9:10 *am*** ❒ **3:00 *pm***

❒ **Tues** ❒ **Fri** ❒ **12:45 *pm*** ❒ **7:30*pm***

❒ **Wed** ❒ ***I would like meetings to alternate between daytime and evenings (Y or N)***

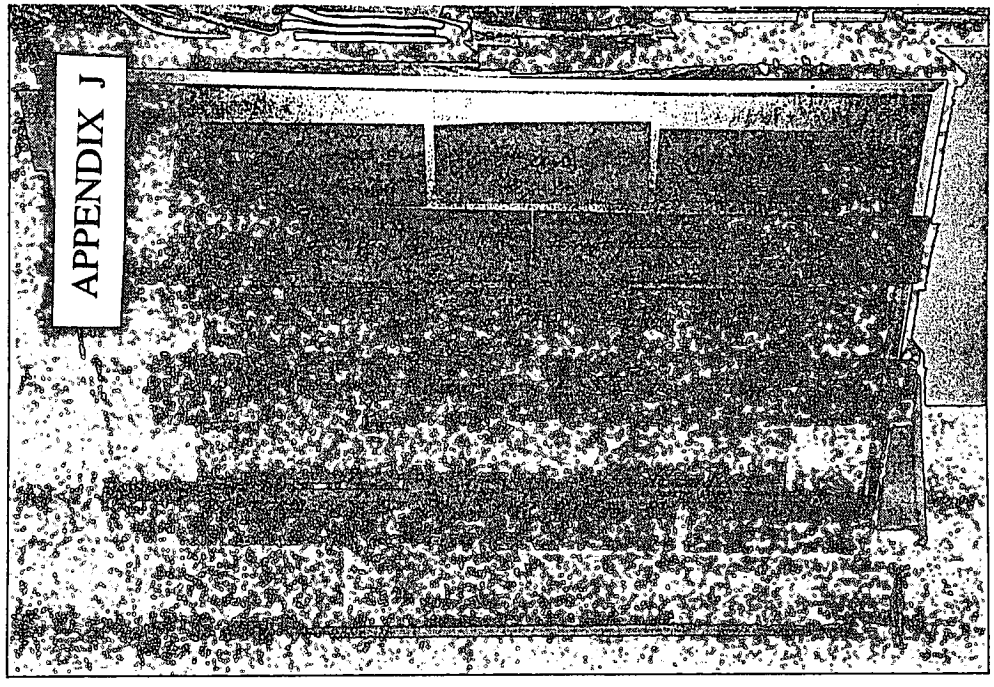
•The PTA intends to offer Guest Speakers at some meetings. Your suggestions for *speakers* or *topics* are welcomed below:

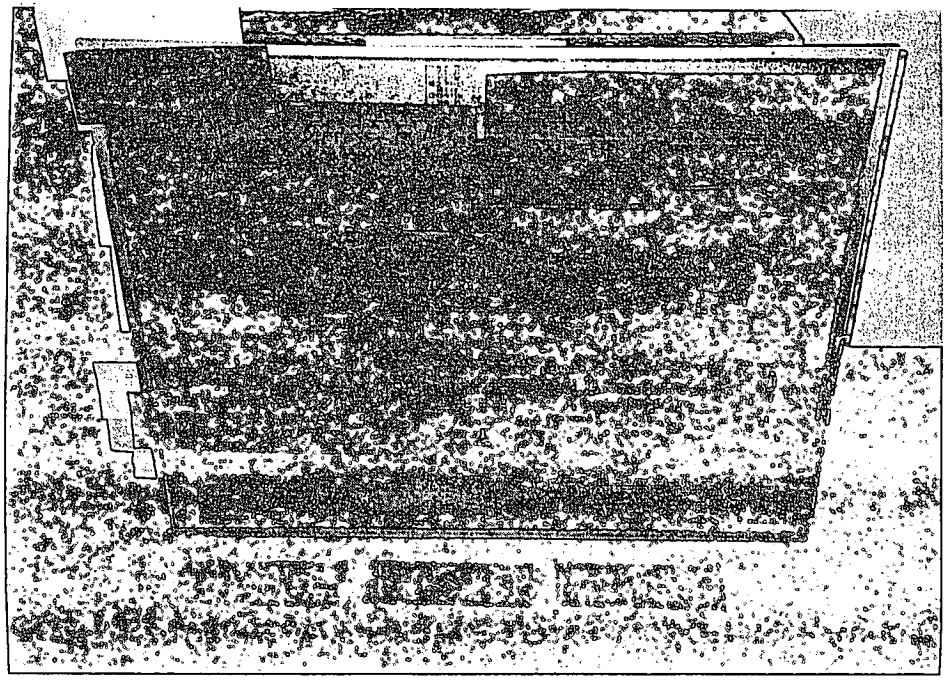
.....

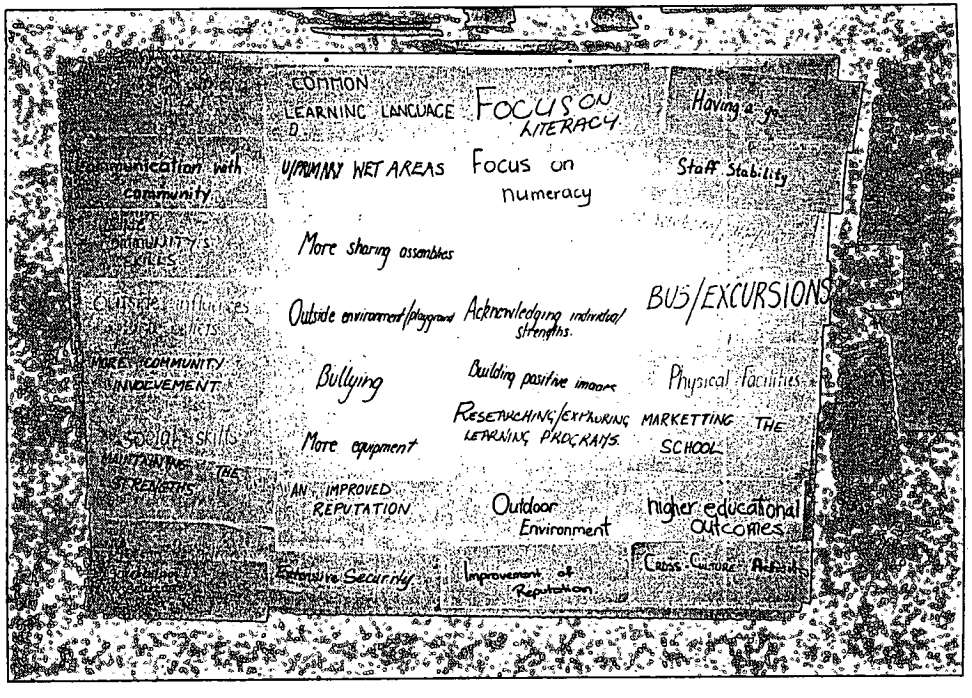
.....

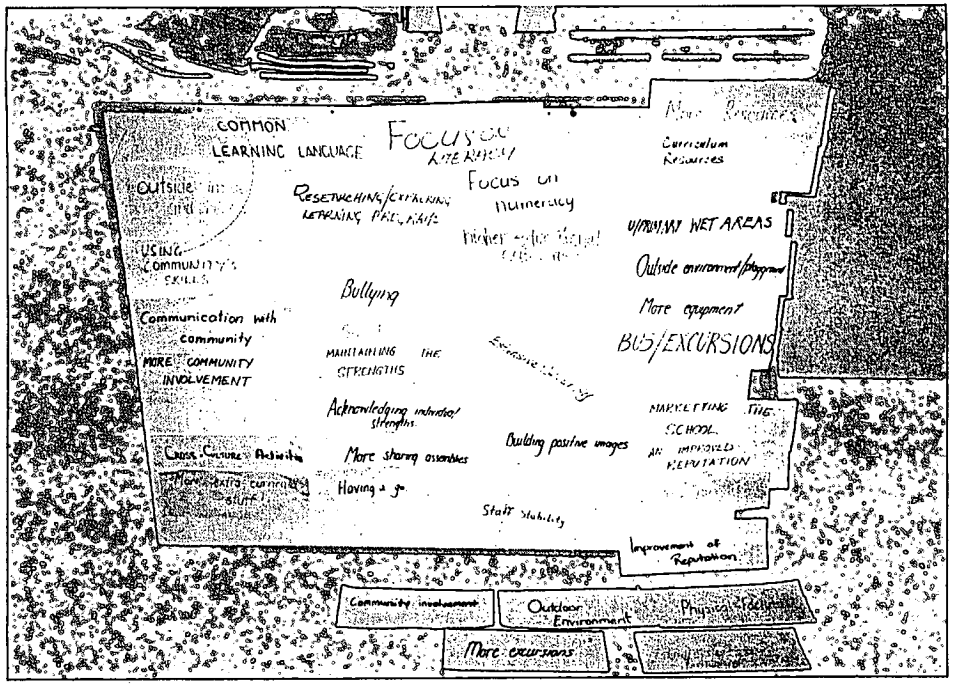
.....

APPENDIX J






COMMON LEARNING LANGUAGE
FOCUS ON LITERACY
Having a go
Communication with community
U/PRIMARY WET AREAS
Focus on numeracy
Staff Stability
More sharing assemblies
Outside environment/playground
Acknowledging individual strengths.
BUS/EXCURSIONS
Bullying
Building positive images
Physical Facilities
RESEARCHING/EXPLORING LEARNING PROGRAMS.
MARKETTING THE SCHOOL
More equipment
AN IMPROVED REPUTATION
Outdoor Environment
higher educational outcomes
Extensive Security
Improvement of Reputation
Cross Cultural Activities


COMMON LEARNING LANGUAGE
FOCUS ON LITERACY
Curriculum Resources
Focus on numeracy
RESEARCHING/EXPLORING LEARNING PROGRAMS
U/PRIMARY WET AREAS
Outside environment/playground
More equipment
BUS/EXCURSIONS
Bullying
Communication with community
MORE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
MAINTAINING THE STRENGTHS
Acknowledging individual strengths.
MARKETTING THE SCHOOL
AN IMPROVED REPUTATION
Building positive images
More sharing assemblies
Having a go
Staff Stability
Improvement of Reputation
Community involvement
Outdoor Environment
More excursions

'A LOOK INSIDE [redacted] PRIMARY SCHOOL'

4/5 [redacted]

Thanks for taking the time to watch the video of our classes. There are only four or five copies of each video per class, so it is important to return it the day after you've seen it. *BUT FIRST! Now that you've had a look in, please complete the HOMEWORK questions below while the video is fresh in your mind.* Please feel free to use the other side of the page if you want to say more than the space allows.

1. **How does anything you've seen differ from the way your class waswhen you were a young person at school?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. **What would you like to ask about any of the learning being done?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. **How do you feel about what you've seen?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. **What do you understand about co-operative learning? What are its advantages?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please return this sheet to your class teacher the day after you've watched the video.

VIDEO project: ***A SHARED PICTURE OF LEARNING*** [redacted]

Your Name: Class group:

Please take the opportunity to talk with your classes about this:

"IF we took a video of things we do in our class so that our families would have a clear idea of what we do in our classroom when we are learning, what would we video?"

Having done so, and having kept some notes on their responses, then nominate **two** times in a day or on two separate days when you think a five or ten minute snippet of video would show some 'good' or 'challenging practice for families to view. We don't have to have direct audio--we can dub your commentary or my commentary (or anybody's) over the images. If you think that a particular time slot in *any* day would do (or any of several days), please feel free to nominate 'multiple days'.

TIME	DAY/S	ACTIVITY (Give brief type of learning areas to be addressed)
1.		
2.		

Thanks for 'volunteering'--free make up and aspirin provided!!

Rob.

Video- "[redacted] PRIMARY SCHOOL -
Where People Matter"

for *Parents and carers:*

Thanks for taking the time to watch the video. BUT FIRST! before you return the video for other members of your child's class to borrow, *please complete the HOMEWORK questions below* while the video is fresh in your mind. Feel free to use the other side of the page if you want to say more than the space allows. THERE ARE TWO COPIES OF THIS SHEET FOR YOUR FAMILY: PLEASE USE *BOTH* IF THERE IS MORE THAN ONE PERSON INVOLVED AS A PARENT OR CARER.

---

1. How active do you feel in your child's *learning* at home?

very ..... *fairly*..... *a little* ..... *rarely*..... *not at all*
○ ○ ○ ○ ○

2. How active are you in decision making at [redacted]?

very ..... *fairly*..... *a little* ..... *rarely*..... *not at all*
○ ○ ○ ○ ○

3. How active are you in helping in the school learning program *at school?*

very ..... *fairly*..... *a little* ..... *rarely*..... *not at all*
○ ○ ○ ○ ○

4. What sort of family/school involvement attracts you ?

.....
.....
.....

5. Are you happy with your level of involvement in your child's school life?

❑ Yes ❑ No
❑ No, but I'm doing the best in our circumstances

6. I read the Mayday (School Newsletter)

❑ Every week ❑ Sometimes ❑ Rarely ❑ Never

/

7. What sorts of things make it difficult for you to be more involved in your child's school life?

.....

.....

.....

8. What things could be done to help you become more active in (a) school affairs

.....

.....

.....

and (b) school events

.....

.....

9. In the video, have you seen school activities that you didn't know about before? Y / N If so, what? .....

.....

.....

10. • I have been a parent at [redacted] for

❑ first year, 1999 ❑ 1 to 3 yrs ❑ 4 + years

• I am ❑ Male ❑ Female

• My partner also completed one of these surveys: Y / N

• I have a child in ❑ K-2 ❑ 3-4 ❑ 5-6

**Anything you would like to know more about?*

❑ *in the Mayday* or ❑ *from my student's teacher*

.....

.....

.....

Thank you ! Please return this sheet to your class teacher the day after your family watches the video.

If you are interested in seeing the videos of 1997 [redacted] classroom activities please leave your name at the office with Susan

ITEMS FOR ROUND 1 ACCELERATED SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

1. *Stem:* **What's the most important thing you want to say about [redacted] School and your children?**

2. *Stem:* **Why is it that your children are at [redacted] School?**
   Probe: • *Were there other options you might have had?*
   • *Do you feel your friends or anybody has influenced you?*
   • *How do you feel public opinion is about [redacted]? (Has it been changing?)*

3. *Stem:* **What sorts of direct involvement do you have in the school?**
   Probes: •*What might the school do to help your direct involvement?*
   • *How about the parent workshops?*
   • *What about working in classes with teachers?*
   • *How do you find the* ***Mayday*** *?*

4. *Stem:* **How would you feel about having more say in decisions about schooling at [redacted]?**
   Probes: • What say do you have about what goes on?
   • About children's learning?
   • About What the school budget is spent on?
   • Is there anything the school can do to help you become more comfortable with making school decisions?

5. *Stem:* **What do you think about male parents and male community people's involvement with school?**
   Probes: • Do men get as involved in schooling as women do ?
   • If not, why do you think that is?
   • How might men be encouraged to improve their involvement around school, in things like workshops and classroom help?

6. *Stem:* **Can you finish off these ideas for me?..**
   a) **I want a school where learning is...** (prompt: *what learning should be like; how kids feel about it, how they experience learning)*

   b) **From being at [redacted], a child should be able to...** (prompt: *do certain things, have the ability to do whatever...)*

   c) **I want [redacted] to be a school where I ...**(prompt: *what do* ***you*** *want to be able to do or feel when you are involved with the school in one way or another?)*

7. *Stem:* **I'm going to ask you about a few words used by teachers to describe some of the things kids do at school. Tell me what these mean to for kids in school:**

Probes: a) ***responsible learners*** d) ***invented spelling***

b) ***co-operative learning*** e) ***behaviour management***

c) ***risk-taking in reading*** f) ***integrated curriculum***

g) ***supportive school environment***

8. *Stem:* **Are you happy with your understanding of how schools deal with teaching and learning these days?**

Probes:
- Do you think your knowing about these things (or not) has any bearing on your child's learning at school?
- How do you think the school might help families to get a better handle on the latest teaching methods?
- How do you feel if your child asks you to help with homework?

9. *Stem:* **What do you know about the Accelerated Schools project at [redacted] School?**

Probe:
- What do you think about it? Have you been to any of the parents' workshops?

10. *Stem:* **With regard to decision making about school issues, how would you rate yourself --on a scale of 1-10?** (CIRCLE)

Are you :

a) PREPARED (enough experience or training) 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 . 9 . 10
not OK very

b) WILLING (motivated, interested) 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 . 9 . 10
not OK very

c) ABLE (time, health, mobile enough) 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 . 9 . 10
not OK very

11. **Is there anything we haven't asked about that you really think *should* be said?**

ITEMS FOR ACCELERATED SCHOOLS *ROUND 2* INTERVIEWS: [redacted] SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Please tell families doing the interviews for the second time that the first two questions (and one later on) are much the same as last year's interview- this is deliberate.

1. *Stem:* **What's the most important thing you want to say about [redacted] School and your children?**

2. *Stem:* **Do you or your family have a [redacted] background?**
   Probes: • *How does that influence the way you feel about the school and [redacted] generally?*
   • *How do you feel public opinion is about [redacted]? (Has it been changing?)*

3. *Stem:* **Did you get involved in any of the decision making that went on last year, about the school and its plans?**
   Probes: • *Would you like to talk about the way you see decisions being made at [redacted]?*
   • *Do you think parents need to be more involved in the decision making as regards the school? What sorts of things should parents have a say in?*
   • *What ways do you think the school could increase the input from families in making decisions at [redacted]?*
   • *Do you get enough opportunity to have a say in big decisions about [redacted] school?*

4. *Stem:* **Has anything much changed at [redacted] this year?**
   Probes: • *Are you happy with how the school is going?*
   • *What do you know about the Accelerated Schools Project at [redacted]?*
   • *How have you heard about it? Is M[redacted] the best way to get news out?*
   • *How do you think the change of school times has gone? (Wednesdays)*
   • *How clear are you on the way the Accelerated Process works, like the **cadres** and the **Steering Committee** and the **School as a Whole**?*
   • *What sorts of people should be in the Inquiry teams ?*
   • *What do you think about a notice board for Accelerated Schools business--what's being decided and all that? A good idea?*

5. *Stem:* **What sorts of things are you doing in the school this year?**
   Probes: • *How do you find yourself helping with your child's learning at home?*
   • *Do you feel welcome? How do you feel when you do or don't participate in school affairs?*
   • *Would you be attracted to sessions run at school to help you with your child's school work and home learning?*
   • *Any ideas that might just be fun for helping parents to know each other?*

- *What sorts of things would you most like to see done to help with these?*
- *When , where and how often would these best be held?*

6. *Stem:* **What do you think about the idea of using videos to let families know how classes are working at [redacted]?**

Probes:
- *Are there any problems for you with having videos used for sharing information about the school?*
- *Are there any other ways that you can think of using video for?*
- *How about for giving families a closer idea of how the Accelerated Schools process goes--and how it is working?*

7. *Stem:* **What do you thinks about students having a say in what goes on at school?**

Probes:
- *What sorts of issues should students help decide?*
- *Would students' input differ according to age?*
- *Would you like your child to have more say in what goes on ?*
- *The Accelerated Schools process puts a lot of emphasis on making the curriculum relate to what children experience in their home lives and their communities. What do you think about that?*

8. *Stem:* **With regard to decision making about school issues, how would you rate yourself --on a scale of 1-10?** (CIRCLE)

Are you :

a) PREPARED (enough ***experience or training***)	1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 . 9 . 10	
	not	OK very
b) WILLING (motivated, interested)	1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 . 9 . 10	
	not	OK very
c) ABLE (time, health, mobile enough)	1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 . 9 . 10	
	not	OK very

9. *Stem:* **There is some evidence that boys in Tasmania and elsewhere get into more trouble and do less well than girls in their school work. Does this seem true in your experience?**

Probe: • *Can you shed any light on the issue?*

10. *Stem:* **Is there anything we haven't asked about that you really think *should* be said?**

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS, SECOND COLLECTIVE INTERVIEW
Sept.13, 2000

1. WHAT'S YOUR FEELING ABOUT HAVING BEEN INVOLVED IN THE ASP PROCESS OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS AT [redacted]?

2. IN 1998 YOU HAD A NOTION THAT WE WERE 'TASMANIANISING' *ASP*. HAVE WE?

3. HOW CLOSE TO REALISING THE VISION'S FIVE ASPECTS ARE WE?

4. IN THE SCHOOL'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE *ASP* PROCESS WHAT HAS EMERGED AS OUR STRENGTHS AND OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES?

5. IT SEEMS [redacted] ISN'T SUCH A HARD TO STAFF SCHOOL AFTER ALL -WHY'S THAT?

6. HAS *ASP* GIVEN ANY OF YOU A GREATER SENSE OF OWNERSHIP IN THE SCHOOL 'S AFFAIRS?

7. WHERE DOES EDUCATIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE SCHOOL COME FROM?

8. WHAT RELFECTIONS DO YOU HAVE ON THE ROLE OF THE COACH?

9. WHAT DIFFERENT THINGS DO YOU SEE THE VARIOUS MEMBER GROUPS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY GIVING AND GAINING FROM *ASP* ?

10. OVER TIME WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU HAD ON THE USE OF VIDEO AS A COMMUNICATING TOOL?

11. HOW DO YOU THINK THE CADRE SYSTEM IS WORKING? Inquiry process...action plans ...inquiry approach...parents...outcomes

12. LATE THIS TERM YOU DECIDED TO SHIFT TO A THREE WEEKLY CYCLE -WAS THAT YOUR UNANIMOUS DECISION? Was it negotiated or consensual?

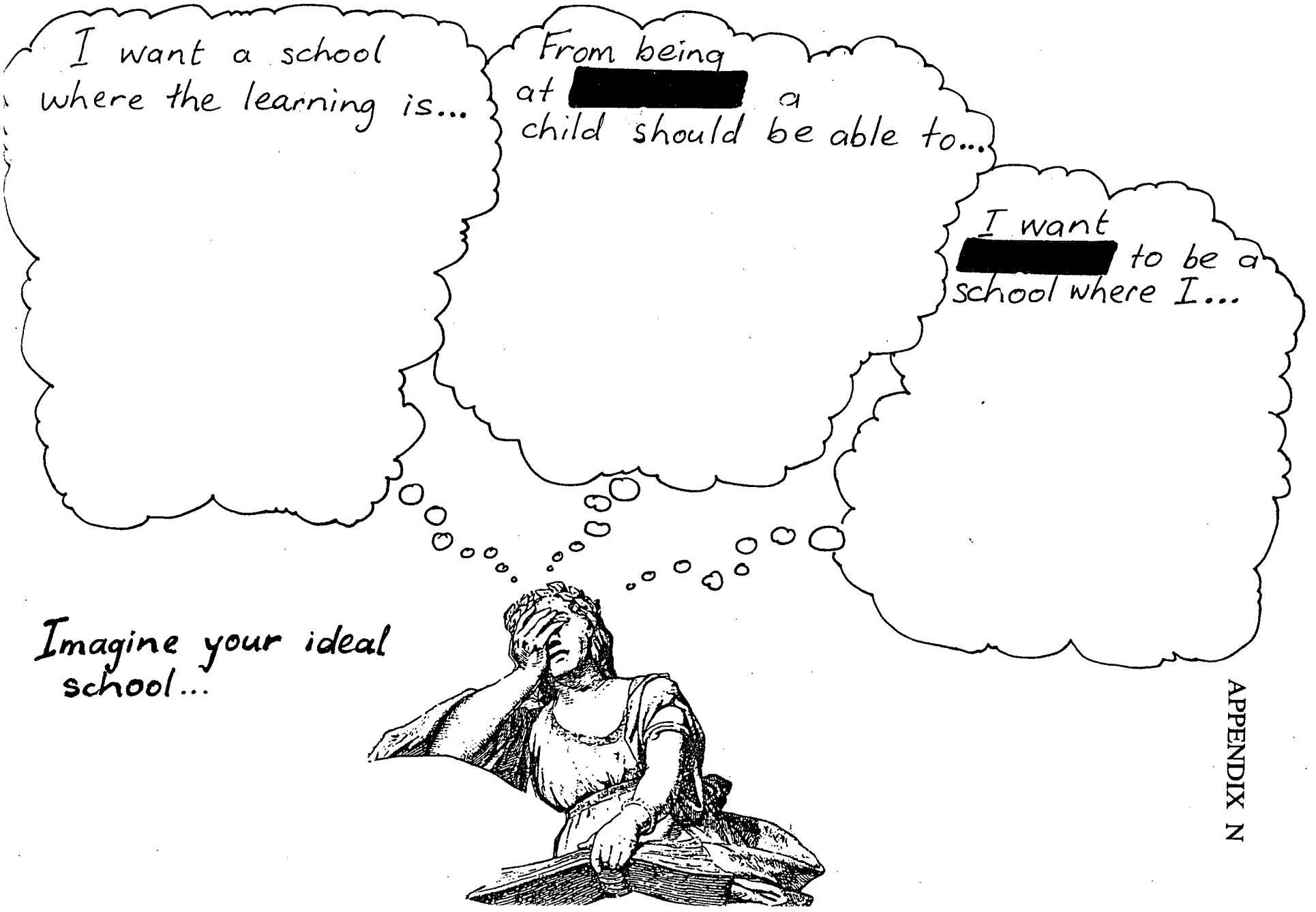
13. WHAT BENEFITS DO YOU SEE COMING FROM THE SHIFT? Will it weaken our effectiveness as an *ASP* school?

14. WERE PAUL TO MOVE FROM [redacted], HOW WOULD YOU SEE THAT AFFECTING ASP- Will it continue in strength?

15. WHAT IS POWERFUL LEARNING IN [redacted]'S TERMS? How does PASS and any other program fit in respect of appropriate practice with our students?

16. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE ANOTHER SCHOOL THAT WAS CONSIDERING EMBARKING ON *ASP*?

17. WILL YOUR READ THE TRANSCRIPT OF THIS INTERVIEW AND MAKE CORRECTIONS AND COMMENTS?


I want a school where the learning is...
From being at [redacted] a child should be able to...
I want [redacted] to be a school where I...
Imagine your ideal school...

[redacted] PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY SURVEY

PLEASE TICK HERE IF YOU WISH TO TALK WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER BEFORE FILLING OUT THIS SHEET [redacted]

Dear parent, community member,friend of the school,
Three years ago the community set a vision and goals for our school. Now with quite a lot of new families and new staff it is time to refresh our goals. Please take the time to have your say. If you want another form for your partner, just ask via your child.

Every completed form will go in a lucky draw for a BREAKFAST FOR TWO ADULTS AND TWO CHILDREN AT MacDONALDS. ***If you are interested, write your name on the back of this form.***

1. **Three things that are good about our school** (In order, 1 to 3, incl. your own)

   It's a friendly place

   The way discipline is handled

   The playground program

   The computer training given to students

   .....

   .....

   .....

2. **Three things that need the most work on them**

   Children adjusting to new grades, and to high school

   Getting more parents involved in the school program

   Helping families know more about what teachers are doing

   .....

   .....

   .....

3. **What sort of things would be good to run parent workshops on?**

   Managing kids as they become young adolescents

   Building *your* computer skills

   Helping children with reading

   .....

   .....

Thanks for having a say. Please return the form before March 27

June 23 1998,

Dear [redacted]

I'm putting together round 2 of family interviews and this time, in addition to the original 28 families, I want to interview another 30. Some questions will follow up on the last lot of issues, but we have a chance this round to ask about deeper or other issues.

IF YOU HAVE IN MIND ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE PURSUED OR CLARIFIED IN THE FAMILY INTERVIEWS PLEASE MAKE A NOTE BELOW AND RETURN IT TO ME. YOU CAN THINK FROM EITHER A PERSONAL OR A CADRE PERSPECTIVE!

Rob.

Would parents like to see our school provides more after school programmes? When? - How often?

In what way ~~could~~ can Teachers help parents with their children?

Would parents ~~like~~ come to sessions about procedures of maths, or other subjects or parenting sessions or would they like to suggest anything that could be done at school e.g. night sessions on craftwork where parents could get to know one another

TO CADRE MEMBERS: APPENDIX Q

Here are some questions which we agreed will help inform the Combined Cadres and the SAW for its end-of-year meeting in December: (these came out of the Combined Cadres session last Wednesday 25th Oct.) Please drop your responses into Rob's pigeon hole ASAP. I'll need a bit of time to feed back to you, preferably by next Cadre meeting, rather than just prior to the SAW meeting.

1. **What do you think about the suggestion to move to a three weekly cycle like the following:**

Week 1	1hr Cadre	*Week 2*	1hr Cadre	*Week 3*	2hrs PD
	1hr PD		1hr Cadre		

.....

.....

.....

2. **In your view, are two cadres sufficient to address the school's agreed priorities?**

.....

.....

3. **Should we rename the ASP jargon and , if so, what needs changing?**

.....

.....

.....

4. **Has the Accelerated Schools process outlived its useful life?**

.....

.....

.....

5. **How can we include ancillary staff and student voice more in the cadre's work?**

.....

.....

.....

6. **Are we in need of new priorities?**

.....

7. **Do we require a new or reviewed *Vision?***

.....

8. **Do you support a refocussing of Vision, Priorities and processes at start of 2001?**

.....

If you wish to make further comments on any of the questions, please use the other side of the sheet and code the response with the question number. More general comments are also welcome.

Tea & cheers,
Rob.

QUESTIONNAIRE TO CADRE MEMBERS: Notions raised at Combined Cadre 25 Oct 2000

What do you think about the suggestion to move to a three weekly cycle (with weeks one and two having the first hour for cadre work and the second hour for PD, with week three devoted to PD alone)?

A Two week cadre.
B No, 1 meeting every 2 weeks worked well before, or if not, 1 in every 3.
C I can try and make it if it suits the teachers. Note in Mayday about dates of meetings would help.
D not answered
E It would be easier to keep some type of continuity. Have to ensure cadre week one does not encroach on professional development time.
F agree it would be advantageous to both areas
G I think it would be good to split it up a bit. But we have gained and how cadres and lost and how PD as above. I disagree with this.
H I like this idea because we sometimes forget what we were working on in cadres after three weeks. It would be more of the flow on. *(This was in response to the incorrect week 2 model.*
J Could allow greater continuity.
K Good idea!
L This is OK (ie the corrected Week 2 1hr cadre/1hr PD version).
M As suggested last term -every third Wednesday. 4:00 is a long finish - doesn't leave time to mark day's work and tidy up. I end up leaving school at 5 or after. Could we finish between 3:15 and 3:30?
N More may be achieved by having the meetings like so. There is more valuable work done in the first hour.

In your view, are two cadres sufficient to address the school's agreed priorities?

A yes
B Yes
C No, but have we enough people to make make another group?
D I believe more discussion required by all people concerned.
E maybe not but with only a small staff it is perhaps the best option.
F I believe we should add a third producing small groups and possibly more productivity.
G Possibly but the problem as I see it is that they are under even -- one small, one large. If you can't even them up maybe there should be three. And a percentage of each need to change cadres each year. May be 1 teaching and learning, 2 communication 3 special events. But I haven't got a lot of thought.
H I prefer 3 but I don't think we have enough staff – if we could include ancillary staff that would make more bodies available but this is nearly impossible.
J I think that 3 cadres would be better – seems a lot that Teaching & Learning group have to achieve.
K I think that two is suffice.
L Yes
M Not answered
N More cadres would be better – but you would need more people which has proved to be difficult.

Should we rename the ASP jargon and , if so, what needs changing?

A No
B Yes, more down to earth words that can be understood, that won't put parents off from coming to meetings (or should I say, come back a 2nd time).
C Cadres -e.g. working group-- ASP-school management by all.
D Cadre!!
E If it is changed we will probably only replace it with jargon.
F not answered
G There is a lot of jargon and that I feel alienated the parents. Maybe it is too late to change and we should put more effort into getting more parents/outside involvement.

H The name to start with. Cadres -- many don't know what this means (parents, that is).
J The jargon needs to be teacher, parent and student friendly.
K The word *cadre* could be changed to working group.
L Leave as is. No need to complicate matters.
M Definitely! Cadre; inquiry process; facilitators etc.
N After working with ASP jargon – I have no problems, you just get used to it. I don't feel there is a need for change.

Has the Accelerated Schools process outlived its useful life?

A No
B Seem to be gong over the same things time and again.
C need to find a way to inject some life back into the whole process.
D No
E Not sure.
F Never- I simply believe we need more efficient process at 1) obtaining the data 2) developing 3) implementing. Implementing tests have focus.
G I think it has been great but if we are not going to leave by its it has outlived its useful life. Maybe we should change the vision but then that's it is a precedent maybe it's because some of the staff can't change. This is too hard but it to won't go away.
H Not yet. We need to go through the process several more times and new staff/parents will give different ideas etc.
J Not if it is in line with <u>our</u> priorities or Vision.
K I'm not sure sometimes it seems we are looking for issues just because we have this allotted time.
L ?Still seems effective.
M What is the alternative? Comments for Qun 1 are appropriate here - 3rd Wed, finish by 3:30.
N If ASP stopped I can see the school not striving forward like it has in the last few years. We need a Vision and priorities to work towards.

How can we include ancillary staff and student voice more in the cadre's work?

A not answered
B not answered
C To they want to be involved? If so they may form their own cadre, maybe.
D With great difficulty.
E Make sure they get copy of minutes and then give them term or half term response sheet
F Through this SRC re-students -- have them participate in cadres first 30 minutes each Wednesday (ancillary staff).
G Make it more inviting and less demanding. May be everything shouldn't go through the inquiry process. This is a bit tedious.
H I'm not sure, unless we add extra time (paid -- ancillary staff) perhaps once a fortnight. Can we advertise a bit more? In the Mayday in simple language.
J The SRC should/could be a way to include students. Perhaps on 1hr session could include ancillaries –this would be a reporting/reviewing session.
K No idea- maybe send them the minutes.
L Dedicated session times worked into first half hour/hour on Wednesdays.
M Staff and students would not enjoy working toll 4:00 - far too boring for students - SRC is a more suitable voice.
N You can only invite them to come- I see no sure way to get them involved.

Are we in need of new priorities?

A not answered
B not answered
C As a group we need to decide what about direction for the future will be. What do we hope to which the as a group? (This response is directed at question six and question 7).
D No

E Maybe slightly as new staff and new children bring new priorities.
F Yes
G I don't believe so. I do believe we need to evaluate more thoroughly.
H We need to re-focus.
J not answered
K Yes
L No
M No
N Yes

Do we require a new or reviewed Vision?

A not answered
B not answered
C See above (ie Ditto to previous question's response).
D Would do no harm to discuss all aspects.
E (Ditto to previous question's response).
F No
G I don't believe so but I think we need to look at whether we are delivering what is in our vision or not and therein lies the problem.
H We need to review of the vision. Reviewing priorities and reviewing vision go together.
J I think that the vision should be reviewed yearly.
K Yes
L No
M No
N Yes

Do you support a refocussing of Vision, Priorities and processes at start of 2001?

A Yes
B Yes
C Yes
D Yes
E Yes
F No, just the process it takes.
G I'm very democratic so whatever the majority wants.
H Yes
J Yes
K Yes
L Discuss with staff next year.
M Probably.
N Yes, the world/school-people are changing constantly.

Follow-up: What are your impressions from what you see here? There is a variety of responses, and there is a 'weight of opinion' for each notion or question. I think all of the questions had meaning for those who responded, with quite a few reasoned positions given in the open-ended space given. I hope we can find time to consider the points raised to establish a cautious but happy consensus on what are some vital points. I can see from a little bit of a distance that the active school community is now fairly familiar and experienced with the ins and outs of the ASP process- experienced enough to want to re-author parts and even some parcels to generate a more appropriate fit to Mayfield School's circumstances.

I'll be led by your expressed needs concerning the outcomes of these 'data'. At the least, we will need to raise them at the SAW in a few weeks time (Nov. 29). There are a few responses still to come, so this shouldn't be seen as any final word - just as a general picture. I am more than happy to circulate my own interpretation or reading of the collective picture (responding both to the range *and* weighting *of responses), before the Nov 29th SAW, if so desired.*

Accelerated Schools Project Questionnaire

School: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for your assistance in completing this questionnaire. Your responses to the questions posed below will help in developing a better understanding of how the Accelerated Schools Project is experienced in your school and will also assist in identifying areas of the project and process that could be improved. Please complete all questions candidly; your responses will be remain completely confidential. (*Note: This survey draws from a variety of sources including the 1/94 North Middle School Survey developed in Colorado and the Center for Teacher Context at Stanford University).

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION The information requested in this section allows us to understand your responses in terms of your grade levels, subjects, and roles. Please answer Section I questions directly on the questionnaire.

A. What is your current role in the school community? (Please Circle.)

1. Teacher
2. Administrator
3. Aide
4. Parent
5. Other (please specify: _____)

Teachers and teachers aides, please complete questions B, C, D and E. All others, please proceed to question F.

B. What grades do you teach?

C. What subjects do you teach?

D. What is the total number of years that you have been teaching?

E. During the current school year, have you attended professional development activities (e.g., workshops, seminars, conferences, college courses, etc.) outside of school? YES NO

F. What is the total number of years that you have been working in this school?

G. How many years have you personally been involved with the Accelerated Schools Project?

If you don't work with a cadre, please answer **questions I and J only.**
If you work with a cadre, please answer all of the questions below.

H. In a typical month, how many times does your cadre meet?

I. In a typical month, how many times does your SAW meet?

J. In a typical month, how many times does your Steering Committee meet?

K. What is the name of the cadre with whom you work ?

L. Do you have an official role on your cadre (e.g., recorder, facilitator)? (Yes /No)

M. If yes, please tell us what it is.

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Please record your answers using the following scale:

A = STRONGLY DISAGREE
B = SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
C = NO OPINION
D = SOMEWHAT AGREE
E = STRONGLY AGREE

Accelerated Schools Project Questionnaire (Scantron Portion)

II. **THE ACCELERATED SCHOOLS PROCESS** Think about how far your school has come, to date, in implementing the *Accelerated Schools Project* . ***Overall***, how would your rate the school on the items below?

PHILOSOPHY

1. We've created the kind of school for all students that each of us would want for our own children.
2. As a staff, we use a commonly defined set of high academic expectations for our students.
3. At our school, students have high academic expectations for themselves.
4. We've focused decision-making on the students' needs.

UNITY OF PURPOSE

5. The consensus decision-making process is an essential part of our school's culture.
6. There is a "we" spirit at this school.
7. It seems very clear that everyone at this school is striving towards the same goals.

EMPOWERMENT COUPLED WITH RESPONSIBILITY

8. All members of our staff take responsibility for implementing consensus decisions: we don't pass the buck!
9. At this school, I am recognized for my accomplishments.
10. At this school, staff doesn't just talk about program improvement, we make sure it happens.
11. When I have concerns, I always share them because I trust that my opinions count when decisions are being made about the school.

BUILDING ON STRENGTHS

12. In our school, we are continuously identifying and expanding upon our areas of strengths.
13. At this school, students are not placed into classes according to their ability levels.
14. School activities and programs actively build on the strengths of all school community members.
15. The School as a Whole has not allowed concerns about resources to hinder efforts to build programs that it wants. Additional resources have been secured through grants, redeployment of existing resources, volunteer efforts, etc.
16. Since becoming part of an Accelerated School, I personally have been able to use a talent or skill I had, but never used at the school before.
17. As a school community, we recognize each others' strengths and actively draw on them on many occasions.

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Please record your answers using the following scale:

A = STRONGLY DISAGREE
B = SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
C = NO OPINION
D = SOMEWHAT AGREE
E = STRONGLY AGREE

VALUES

18. Our school has a supportive atmosphere for staff (teachers, support staff, administrators, etc.)
19. The school community acknowledges the good work I do in my classroom.
20. Teachers here spend time together examining and evaluating student work.
21. At this school, cooperation and productive exchange among staff members is the norm.
22. Personal interactions among school community members are respectful and trusting.
23. Our school regularly reflects on our progress and the remaining challenges to overcome.
24. Experimentation and risk-taking are encouraged and supported.
25. I feel informed about issues facing our school.
26. I feel informed about our school's accomplishments.
27. The staff at this school go above and beyond the call of duty in their efforts to work with the students at this school.
28. As a staff, we have confidence in using our own expertise to address the school's challenges.

TAKING STOCK

29. The Taking Stock process helped me to get to know my colleagues better.
30. The Taking Stock process helped us to identify our strengths.
31. Taking Stock helped us to build consensus around the school's major priority areas.
32. In my cadre, we often refer back to our taking stock data when we need information about the school.

VISION

33. I feel proud of our vision statement.
34. I think our vision is an accurate reflection of the hopes and dreams we all have for the children at this school.
35. On the whole, I think that the staff uses the vision in many active ways: to guide cadre work, to focus curriculum development, as an informal assessment tool, etc.

POWERFUL LEARNING

36. In my classroom, most students are motivated to do more than the minimum requirements. They take responsibility for their own learning.
37. I try to foster students' initiative, independence, and interest by giving them ample choices and frequent opportunities to discuss their ideas in supportive groups.
38. I consistently provide students with opportunities to set their own goals and plan and monitor their own work.

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Please record your answers using the following scale:

A = STRONGLY DISAGREE
B = SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
C = NO OPINION
D = SOMEWHAT AGREE
E = STRONGLY AGREE

39. I think that this school offers students powerful learning activities not just in their classrooms but in a variety of school-wide events, programs, and activities.

40. It is important to me to make the classroom curriculum relevant to students through connections with their strengths, experiences, cultural background, and identities.

41. I often work with other staff to develop curriculum that builds on engaging, interdisciplinary themes.

42. All academic and extracurricular programs are the product of careful review of "best practices."

43. I expect 90-100% of my students to complete their work successfully.

44. I use assessment methods that allow me to accurately and creatively capture each of my student's strengths and achievements.

45. Working in cooperative groups is an important part of the learning process for my students.

46. It is important to give students the opportunity to edit and rework their assignments.

47. I have been able to use ideas and skills learned through professional development activities in my classroom.

48. When I plan my classroom activities, I do not distinguish between "accelerated", "gifted", "remedial".

49. In general, I have the materials and other resources I need to take risks and use innovative curriculum and teaching strategies.

50. The staff at this school are active learners themselves -- they read current research, attend conferences, and are involved in professional networks.

INQUIRY

51. The members of my cadre, including myself, feel comfortable using the inquiry process.

52. In my cadre, we carefully analyze challenges and discuss possible root causes before taking any action.

53. My cadre consults resources internal to our school such as members of other cadres, parents and students, about our challenge areas.

54. My cadre actively consults outside resources like district staff, teachers at other schools, and community experts about our challenge areas.

55. My cadre tries to keep abreast of possible solutions to our challenges by reading and discussing research, articles, books, and other materials.

56. When necessary, my cadre collects additional data necessary for our work with the Inquiry Process.

57. Before we propose a program for school-wide adoption, my cadre typically uses a pilot test to see how effective our action plan really is.

58. Even after an action plan from my cadre has been adopted by the SAW, we continue to monitor its effectiveness with systematic evaluations.

59. Our evaluations show that the action plans that my cadre has developed have benefited students at the school.

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Please record your answers using the following scale:

A = STRONGLY DISAGREE
B = SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
C = NO OPINION
D = SOMEWHAT AGREE
E = STRONGLY AGREE

60. My cadre is productive in addressing its challenge areas and in moving the school closer to its vision.

61. An inquiring and reflective approach characterizes decision-making through this school, not just in cadres.

GOVERNANCE

62. Our school's governance structure promotes active sharing of ideas across the school community.

63. Each cadre has a clear and comprehensive understanding of its primary challenge areas.

64. Our SAW meetings give equal voice to each cadre; no one's concerns are trivialized.

65. Staff and administrators try to deal with conflict constructively; differences of opinion are discussed openly.

66. The steering committee representative from my cadre always shares information about what other cadres are working on.

67. In general, I think we make important and concrete progress in our meetings.

68. In general, our school works hard to make sure that there is adequate follow through on cadre recommendations.

69. Our current governance structure promotes democratic decision-making.

70. Our principal is not an authoritarian leader; s/he follows the governance process consistently.

****

(The following questions are for teachers only. They involve a quick survey of your students.)

71. Teacher to classroom: "Have you received help from a parent with your homework this school year? Raise your hand."

72. Teacher to classroom: "Have either of your parents attended a parent/teacher conference this school year?"

73. Teacher to classroom: "Has one of your parents volunteered to help the school this school year (PTA, classroom volunteer, fieldtrip chaperone, etc.)

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Accelerated Schools

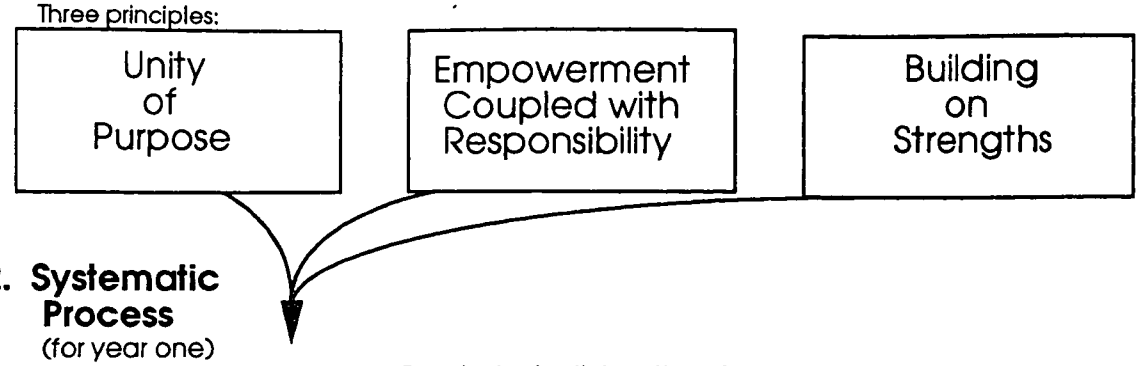
1. Philosophy

The schools we want for children in at-risk situations should be the same schools we want for our own children.

Powerful learning experiences are provided for all children through the integration of curriculum, instruction, and organization.

Accelerated school communities share a set of values, beliefs, and attitudes.

Three principles:



2. Systematic Process

(for year one)

Take Stock

- Begin to build unity of purpose by bringing everyone togethe
- Empower participants to find strengths and challenges.
- Build on the strengths and ideas of people at school.
- Develop a sense of the "here"–baseline data.

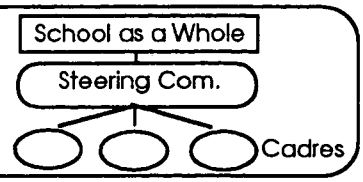
Develop Vision

- Get everyone–staff, students, parents–involved in developing the vision–the "there."
- Imagine what kind of school you would want for your own ch
- Celebrate your shared vision!

Set Priorities

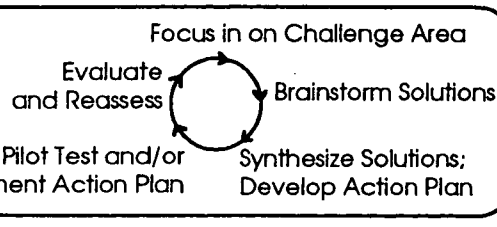
- Start to get from "here" to "there."
- Realize that you can't work on everything at once.
- Prioritize differences between taking stock and vision.
- Set out 3 to 5 areas that will be the focus of your cadres.

Create Governance Structures



- Include members of entire school community on all cadres through a self-selection process.
- Build a steering committee of cadre representatives, administrators, parents, students, and community.
- Empower School as a Whole to act as the decision-making body.

The Inquiry Process

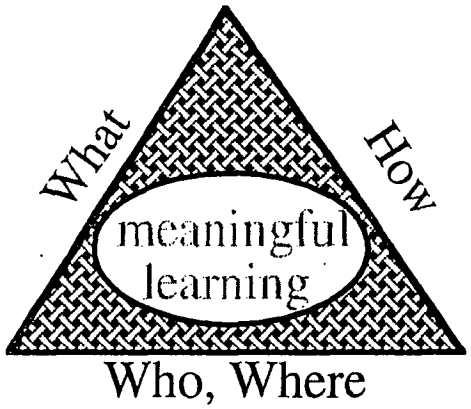


- Focus in on challenge area.
- Brainstorm solutions.
- Synthesize solutions and develop an action plan.
- Pilot test/implement the plan.
- Evaluate and reassess.

p.58 Accelerated Schools Resource Guide (Hopfenberg et. al, 1993)

GETTING IT TOGETHER

An *Accelerated Schools Project* brings together what is learnt, how it is learnt (instruction), and *all* people doing the teaching and learning. When these parts all work together, there is purposeful, powerful learning going on.



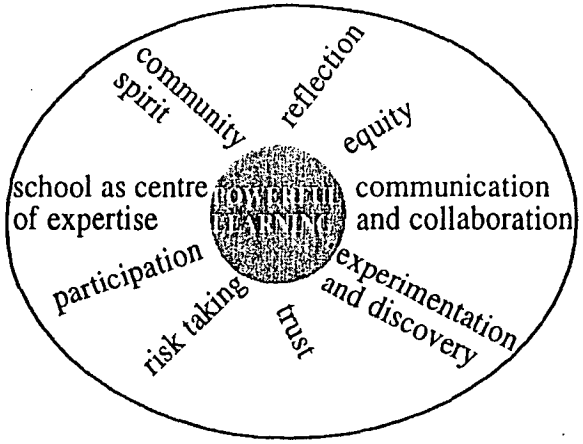
Schools tend to work just on one of these or to treat them as if they are separate, so schools haven't changed the real prospects of their students.

Why *Accelerated?*

The term *'accelerated'* was first used in California in 1986, to describe school communities who wanted to change their belief in themselves, their children and their schools, to break the self-defeating label of working class, urban or remote schools as 'disadvantaged'.

An *'accelerated school'* means a school community on the go with *energy*, not seeing ourselves as stuck with a poor deal.

The key values within the project schools are :



"A proper school makes the world a child's home."
Brandwein

Accelerated Schools Project

? Asking... ?

How do our students learn best ?

How can the whole school community take ownership in learning?

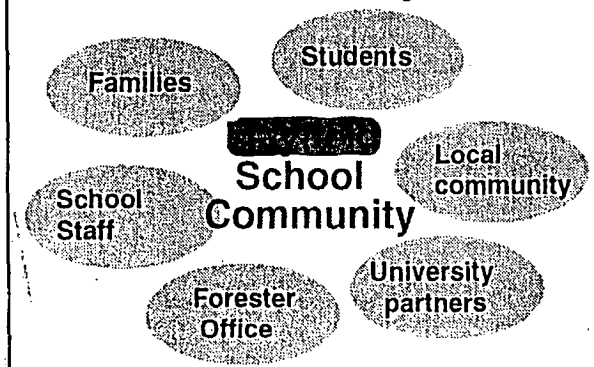
How much can we all share in a vision for the best school we can make ?

Tasmania and Stanford

- the University of Tasmania,
- Forester District Office and
- Stanford University (USA)

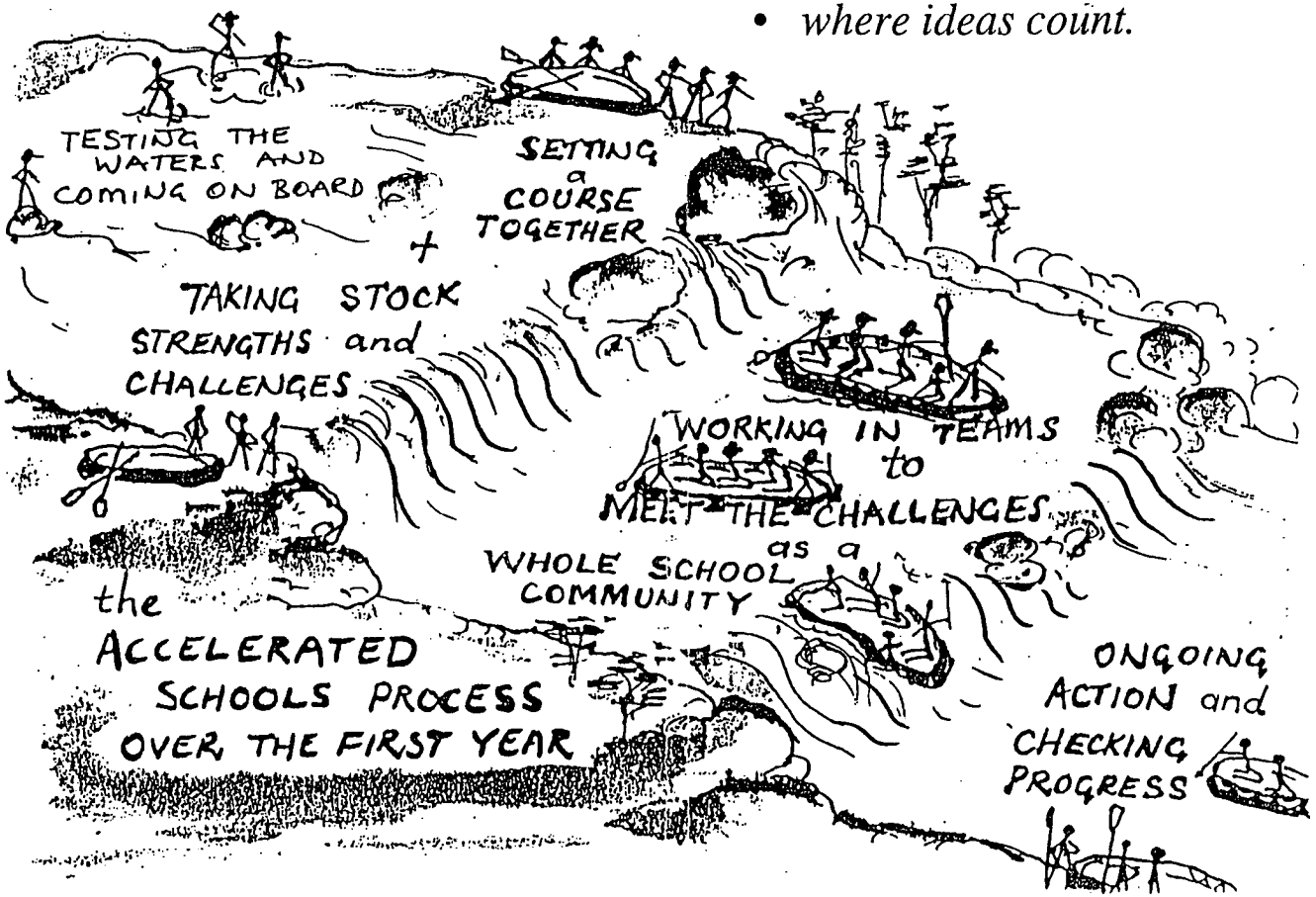
are thinking about working through the Accelerated Schools process. Without the enthusiasm of the school community, there's no point in something like this going ahead — it is a community-based project, for the community and its students.

So, who **is** the 'school community'?



Becoming an 'Accelerated School'

- *in which all children achieve at high levels, regardless of their backgrounds;*
- *that treats all children as having gifts, building on their talents through enrichment strategies and inquiry-based, creative, responsible learning;*
- *in which all members of the school community work together to achieve their vision of the ideal school, making major decisions and contributing to curriculum, teaching and learning, and school organisation;*
- *where ideas count.*



Appendix T(2)

Accelerated Schools Project

A [redacted] school community partnership with Forester District and Uni of Tasmania

November 14, 1997

Dear community member,

What are the differences between <u>where we are</u> and <u>where we want to be</u>? Our new VISION has been put together from families', students' and staff's ideals. It represents <u>where we want to be</u>:

[redacted] VISION

- **[redacted] students will be confident, capable achievers in society.**
- **Our number one priority is 'teaching and learning', in particular for literacy, numeracy and social skills.**
- **[redacted] is a safe, caring and happy environment for everybody.**
- **The school community embodies families, staff and community. We are a positive, collaborative team in decision making.**
- **[redacted] acknowledges everyone's individual gifts and develops them to their fullest potential.**

The next few pages are summaries of our 'Taking Stock' surveys. They give us a good picture of <u>where we are at.</u> Please take the time to read the results of a lot of hard work and honest talk from* whole school and community group meetings, in-depth interviews and the recent video feedback. Ask yourself, *from the information at hand, what stands between <u>where we are</u> and achieving our VISION? Decide for yourself what are the obstacles, not the solutions or 'answers'. These will be starting points for our 'cadres' or teams next year as we go into action in pursuit of our priorities.

MONDAY 17th 3:00 to 5:00 is the culmination of a year's preparation for major change at [redacted] Try to be with us and help decide the <u>key target areas</u> or priorities that we <u>will</u> pitch into (time* and *funds) next year as a school community.

REMEMBER, SUPERVISED <u>CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES</u> ARE ORGANISED TO HELP YOU ATTEND

See you this Monday Nov 17th!

Appendix V(2)

ALL OF THE IDEAS RAISED IN DIFFERENT GROUPS' TAKING STOCK MEETINGS (ie parents, staff and students) WERE PUT INTO THREE-WORD PHRASES AT A WHOLE SCHOOL WORKSHOP. THESE ARE REPRESENTED HERE AS RED BRICKS (*STRENGTHS*) AND WHITE BRICKS (*CHALLENGES*). Only elements related to student learning have been used. 'Bricks' noted in interviews, video feedback or vision-forging meetings have been given *asterisks.

RED BRICKS (STRENGTHS)

*Comprehensive, Challenging Programming	*Opportunities for all	Good range of school programs	Child centred curriculum	
	Extra-curricular activities	**Social Skills and Relationships	*Student ownership of school rules	*Improving behaviour standards
*Supportive School Environment	*Working together	**Pleasant, Positive, Co-operative	*Parent/teacher partnerships in problem-solving	
	*Friendly school relations	Understanding, consistent staff	*Safer and friendly environment	*Early Intervention
Special programs eg Macquarie Reading	*Peer support programs for playground	Clean, tidy school environment	Community loyalty	

WHITE BRICKS (CHALLENGES):

Communication in school community	*Community participation in learning program	*Using school community's skills	Inclusion of multicultural perspectives	
	*Common learning language	**Higher, more powerful educational outcomes	**Focus on literacy (spelling noted)	**Focus on numeracy (tables noted)
Exploration of other learning programs or processes	*Bullying	Having a go (risking error)	*Recognising/ developing individual strengths	
	Positive school image and reputation	Homework effectiveness	Maintaining staff stability	School marketing
Curriculum resources and equipment	School access to broad community	Social skills and behaviour planning ongoing	Enriched curriculum, including LOTE	

Appendix U(3)

[redacted] Primary School
Interviews - Collective Analysis
(28 Interviews)

Compilation from commentaries on data by expanded steering committee comprising six staff and six parents

7-11-97

Q1. What's the most important thing you want to say about [redacted] School and your children?

There was a consistent positive response to this question. Parents seem to be happy with the atmosphere and camaraderie in and around school, as well as methods and teamwork used and expressed by staff and kids alike.

Q2. Why is it that your children are at [redacted] .....?

Even though it's the local school, it is a good school. Children are taught well, they learn with an emphasis on discipline, manners, and social skills. Families are sending their children to [redacted] Primary School not only because they live in the area but because of the school's reputation getting better, and because the learning programs are improving.

Q3. What direct involvement do you have with the school? How do you find the Mayday?

There is quite a limited involvement of parents in the school and most had no idea how to improve this. Most parents had no involvement with the workshops but some thought they would be good. Parents generally felt they would be willing to work with teachers. It would likely be a favoured action if this were encouraged in the future. All interviewed read and appreciated the Mayday. Parents seem generally pleased with what is happening at school. Parents appear to want to be more involved but find it difficult due to work commitments, child care and confidence. More communication between parents and teachers is desired.

Q4. How would you feel about having more say in decisions about [redacted] Primary School?

There is a minority of parents who have no desire to be involved at [redacted] in any capacity. There are lots of parents who are interested in what goes on and would like to be more involved. Some parents are unsure about being involved in decision making and a belief was expressed that the PTA is the only way to be involved. Lack of confidence and a belief that teachers are the experts "on a different level" results in big communication gaps. Many parents find it difficult to talk to teachers.

Appendix U(4)

Q5. What do you think about male parents and male community involvement in the school?

The overall impression that the parent community agree that the role that men play in the school life of their children needs to be enhanced. Work is seen as the predominant factor that inhibits male involvement. We need to identify activities for men to be involved in within the school that they will not feel threatened by.

Q6. (a) I want a school where learning is ....
(b) From being at [redacted] a child should be able to ...
(c) I want [redacted] to be a school where I ...

The overall impression was that the parents are happy with the school. They want their children to learn social skills and work to their full potential, while at the same time have fun, be happy and feel safe. They want to feel welcome in the school and be able to come in when they feel like it. Some parents lacked confidence and didn't feel comfortable coming into the school and they didn't want their children to feel the same way. They want their children to feel happy, enjoy school, feel safe, be well adjusted to cope with life and be able to cope with high school and life.

Q7. I'm going to ask you about a few words used by teachers to describe some of the things kids do at school. Tell me what these mean to for kids in school:

a) ***responsible learners*** d)***invented spelling*** b) ***co-operative learning*** e) ***behaviour management*** c) ***risk-taking in reading*** f)***integrated curriculum*** g)***supportive school environment***

While some parents were confused by the terms, about half had what a teacher would consider accurate interpretations. The strongest understanding came with those terms that have had plenty of 'airplay' in Mayday, parent workshops, and in children's programs, such as *Supportive School Environment*, *Behaviour management, Risk-taking* and *Invented Spelling*. There was generally a poor understanding of *Responsible learners* (Children taking conscious and sometimes leading roles in their own learning) and almost no comprehension of the terms *Integrated Curriculum* (blending subject areas such as maths and language, or science and the arts).

Several younger female parents were uninformed with regard to school processes and the terms attached to them, one saying she was anxious for her child to get into Prep so that she (the parent) could get a handle on educational terms and ideas.

Q8. Are you happy with your understanding of how schools deal with teaching and learning these days?

There is a definite need to establish better liaisons between home and school in order to provide parents with a clearer understanding of the teaching and learning process. Whilst

some parents are happy with their understanding there is an equally large number who need to be further informed. The improvement of parental understanding had direct implications on the help and support that parents can give their children throughout their years of schooling.

9. What do you know about the Accelerated Schools Project at [redacted]?

People didn't understand much about the Accelerated Schools Project. Although they said they would like to come to the meetings, what they read in the Mayday impressed them however. Half of the people don't seem to take an interest and leave it up to others to make the decisions. There appear to be not enough people involved.
A lot of people find it hard to come because of work commitments or child care problems.

Q10. How *Prepared, Willing* and *Able* are you to contribute to school decision making? Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10.

From the 31 parents interviewed (including three fathers), the following overall ratings resulted:

	Prepared	*Willing*	*Able*
Average	***6.47***	***7.50*** *(mode =10)*	***6.37***

Among those who were more commonly in the school for meetings and classroom help, there was a natural inclination to give higher ratings on all three dimensions. The averaged figures show that parents are generally more *willing* than they are *prepared* or *able.* There is a fair reluctance on a number of parents' parts to believe there is much point in putting in a lot of effort when their perception is that "nothing gets implemented'. this might indicate that consultation in the past has had the effect only of appeasing either Central Office or 'keeping the peace'.

Q11. Is there anything we haven't asked about that you really think should be said?

Most parents are happy with the school and had nothing to add. More emphasis on basics - maths/tables and spelling. More communication. Once again to help with learning problems and behavioural problems. Generally parents seemed happy with the school. They did feel more emphasis needed to be placed on the basics, eg. maths, spelling - more communication was needed between parents and teachers regarding problems arising in learning.

Appendix U(6)

"A LOOK INSIDE [redacted] PRIMARY SCHOOL"

OVERVIEW OF THE RESPONSES FROM PARENTS TO THE VIDEOS OF CLASSROOMS

There have been over a hundred and fifty feedback sheets returned by parents since the videos were distributed. This far exceeds the response rates of any other survey method used.

Parents are generally very happy with children's social competency in the classroom. The videos were welcomed, with the great majority of responses being supportive of what was viewed, with many open statements of appreciation for the opportunity to 'see what happens' in a classroom. The major positive appeared to be in the students' co-operation and in their respect of each other, with many parents stating their preference for such a friendly, relaxed and open way of teaching. A frequent point of praise was the way teachers 'get involved' with the children. There were fewer criticisms raised and these mainly related to what they saw as a lack of attention and time given to 'basic' knowledge and skills. It is clear that the responses reflect a belief that the behaviour of the children has improved markedly but that a concern for learning standards has now come to the fore.

Given that the videos were shot at several intervals across the school week, some classes' snippets didn't show 'formal' work, this criticism is understandable. Most teachers had talked to their class about what activities, if videoed, would expand their parents' understanding of the school learning program. The result reflected both the interests of students *and* the chance visiting of the cameramen. Teachers were aware that a real 'spread' of activities wasn't shot. However, there *is* an undercurrent of concern among the parent body that the basics require better development, perhaps from a blending of the best of the old with the best of the new methods.

Q.1 ***How does anything you've seen differ from the way your class was when you were a young person at school?***

The question drew two fairly distinct and even sets of responses. Half the parents said there was little difference. The other half noted the physical dominance of the blackboard in their own schooling, working from the board, with rows of desks (their own desks)resulting in less room to move about in. In many parents' day, there were with fewer opportunities for classroom communication with the teacher and other children as most of the learning was whole class rather than small group learning. There was less equipment, in particular computers and calculators, both of which were queried by several parents for their value and purpose in students' learning. Several also questioned the validity of students learning from students in co-operative styles.

Q.2 ***What would you like to ask about any of the learning being done?***

The vast majority of people were happy with what was going on or simply didn't respond to the question regarding anything they would like to ask about any learning that was being done. Those who did would generally like to know:

• *What time does learning tables start?* • *How does Flying Start work?* • *How useful were calculators in the classroom?* • *How can children monitor each others' accuracy ?* • *How much time is or should be spent on reading writing and maths?* • *Is rote learning being phased out?* and • *What's wrong with 'the way we used to learn'?*

Q.3. ***How do you feel about what you've seen?***

The overwhelming majority thoroughly enjoyed watching the video. Comments were very positive and particularly encouraging towards the efforts of teachers.

(The fourth question on each of the sheets was devised by each teacher to relate directly to the sessions captured by the video in their class. Responses to those were for the teacher's benefit, rather than for the Taking Stock process.)

REFLECTION:

Given the high return numbers of the feedback forms from the community, and the richness of responses written, it would seem that using video is a valuable way of going about school and family communication. It will be interesting to see what the teachers themselves have drawn from the experience, and how we as a community wish to use the method next year

Appendix U(7)

Results of Whole School Community brainstorms in Term 1, 1997

What is good about [redacted] Primary School?

(Ideas have been roughly clustered into areas of similarity, and only those aspects which directly impact on student learning have been listed; for instance, 'tidy school' has not been charted as a 'strength' in respect of student learning outcomes)

- **PTA (open and responsive)**
- **School working hard to develop links with parents**
- **Improvement effort coming from school**
- **Early Intervention Program**
- **Parent /teacher partnership on children's problems**
- **Approachable teachers**

    - **School rules are good in that children help build them and own them**
    - **Behaviour standards have improved in recent years**
    - **Bullying is diminishing**
    - **Discipline process clearer and more consistent**
    - **Friendly children, generally good mannered**
    - **Peer Support in phys. Ed/playground**

- **Tidy School**

What needs improving at our school?

- **Pace of student learning growth**
- **Reading, spelling and maths core skills**
- **Tables knowledge**
- **Homework's impact on learning**
- **Language/s other than English**

    - **Parent involvement in reading and spelling programs**
    - **Communication within the local area**
    - **Aboriginal and multi-cultural perspectives to decisions**
    - **Tapping of unidentified skills in school community,**
    - **Understanding of educational jargon/ use of plain language**

- **The school's reputation/image**

    - **Bullying**
    - **Children's involvement in decisions**

Distributed by AST_2 1997

Powerful Learning

What are the essential elements of your philosophy of teaching.

- Empowering the students to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour.
- to encourage "having a go", risk taking and "chosing to be good."
- to establish a wide program of goal setting.
- to establish a democratic classroom.

How do you understand/believe that students/children learn best.

- by positive reinforcement.
- by hands on experience.
- by good examples.
- by being respected
- by encouragement
- by participation.
- by being included.

What do you understand to be the key aspects that underpin the concept ofPowerful Learning?

When you use the childrens' interests or select "topics" that the children will be interested in to devise a wide curriculum accommodating the individual needs of the children and their different learning styles.

TEACHER_____

GRADE_____

DATE_____

"POWERFUL LEARNING" RUBRIC

TRADITIONAL LEARNING					POWERFUL LEARNING
Curriculum is presented part to whole with emphasis on basic skills.	1	2	3	4	Curriculum is presented whole to part with emphasis on big concepts.
Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued.	1	2	3	4	Pursuit of student questions is highly valued
Curricular activities rely heavily on textbooks and workbooks.	1	2	3	4	Curricular activities rely rely heavily on primary sources of data and manipulative materials.
Students are viewed 1 as "blank states" onto which information is etched by the teacher.	1	2	3	4	Students are viewed as thinkers with emerging theories about the world.
Teachers generally didactic manner, disseminating information to students.	1	2	3	4	Teachers generally behave in an interactive manner, mediating the environment for students.
Teachers seek the correct answer to validate student learning.	1	2	3	4	Teachers seek the students' points of view in order to understand students' present conceptions.
Assessment of student learning is viewed as separate from teaching and occurs almost entirely through testing.	1	2	3	4	Assessment of student learning is interwoven with teaching and occurs through teacher observations of students at work and through student exhibitions and portfolios.
Students primarily work alone.	1	2	3	4	Students primarily work in groups.

from Accelerated Schools Coach Training Notes. (not dated/not paginated)

Wednesday, November 19, 1997.

[redacted] PRIMARY SCHOOL PRIORITIES

Dear Priorities Meeting Participant,

The only unfinished task of last Monday afternoon's successful meeting was to rank the challenges listed under the four major priority areas. This will help give four 'cadres' (working parties) next year a clear idea of where to start and in what order to tackle the challenges. We should remember that a big part of our work this year has involved identifying our *strengths.* These will be an important part of the resources considered by the cadres.

You will need to *CIRCLE* a 1,2,3,4 or 5 next to EACH of the listed challenges.

A '1' is HIGHEST PRIORITY, and '5' represents LEAST PRIORITY. All of the challenges will be addressed in 1998; this will simply help decide which are to be 'first cabs off the rank'.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- enriched curriculum with input from all . *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*
- students moving through without basics *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*
- academic excellence not achieved . . . . . *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*
- limited horizons of students . . . . . *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*
  (not aware of broader community and not having high enough aspirations ;accepting second best);
- time . . . . . .*(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*
  (for partnerships in teaching and planning, curriculum, development programs);
- curriculum demands from system . . . . . *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*
- recognising and fostering gifts of all . . . *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*
- staff stability . . . . . *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*
- focussed teaching. . . . . *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*
- utilising individual learning styles . . . . . *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*
- resource adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness *(equipment, specialisations, class arrangements, workplace organisation)* . . . . . *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*
- technology for library resource management . . . . . *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*

SCHOOL IMAGE

- School's esteem in the wide community *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*
- positive portrayal of the school . . . . . *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*
- fund raising (recognised by the meeting as also having a direct relationship to the T&L cadre-- esp. re maths equipment and excursion costs). . . . *(higher priority)* 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 *(lesser priority)*

Appendix X(2)

COMMUNICATION (within the Mayfield School Community)

- understanding of teaching and learning (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)
- whole community participation . . . . . (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)
- reporting 'the whole story' to parents . . . (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)
- parental expectations. . . . . (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)
  (raised, realistic , supportive and supported, open)
- family/teacher partnerships for children with learning difficulties . . . . . (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)
- family involvement in learning, school and home; . . . . . (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)
- parent/teacher/student communication (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)
- accommodating cultural differences . . . (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)

SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT (SSE) (Relationships and understandings in the school/ community to make us safe, caring & happy)

- maintaining and improving our SSE. . . . (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)
- transitions from class to class and to high school. . . (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)
- bullying and peer pressure.... . . . . (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)
- vandalism. . . . . (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)
- students respect for others' property and school equipment . . . . . (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)
- outdoor equipment and quality of the school environment . . . . . (*higher priority*) 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 (*lesser priority*)

Thank you for taking the time to contribute to your school's future and to improving the education of your children.

Please sign this form and return it to Leonie at the school office (via a teacher if that's easiest). By all means, share the answering of the items other directly interested family members if your wish. We want a 100% return *by next Monday Nov. 24*, so that we can:

- **publish the overall results in Mayday;**
- **provide stakeholders with a picture of our plan for reaching our vision; and**
- **begin to set up the cadres for next year's kick start!** (Remember to do some hard thinking about which cadre most attracts your energies...)

Signed .....(Meeting participant, 17/11/97)

ACCELERATED SCHOOLS BENCHMARKS

Results of questionnaire answered 'as a group' by each of [redacted] three cadres. Oct.,1998

The following statements have been supported by the greater majority of [redacted] cadre members. Some 'options' chosen from are shown in brackets *[ ] Italics are used to highlight the result, and were not in the original questionnaire.*

I. *Powerful Learning* is about switching our children on to learning, by using interesting, meaningful strategies. It respects and uses resources in the students' own community.

Interactive (working together)
There are *often* opportunities for students to participate and collaborate with others in the learning process; to work together toward a common purpose, and to share their expertise and knowledge with one another. *[always, often, sometimes, seldom]*
Learner Centred (building *their* curiosity)
***Some students are actively engaged in individual exploration and continual discovery in order to enhance their learning experiences in a way that promotes critical thinking and problem solving.*[all; some; most; few]*
Sometimes the learners' experiences and interests help shape the direction and content of the instructional process.*[always, often, sometimes; seldom]*
Inclusive (recognising students' different needs & approaches)
Most learning experiences are designed to allow students with varying learning styles to be successful. *[all; most;some, few]*
All(SSE cadre); *Most* (T&L); *Some* (SI&C) children (e.g., those with Learning Disabilities, Low English Proficiency, Attention Deficit Disorders, Gifted and Talented, etc.) have equal access to powerful learning experiences. *[few]*
Continuous (links to other learning; not boxed into 'subjects')
Teachers *often* build on students' prior knowledge in the instructional process *[always, often; sometimes, seldom]*
Teachers are *often* conscious to integrate at least two or more subject areas in their lessons and activities.*[always, often; sometimes, seldom]*

II. Accelerated Schools enjoy a unity of purpose among staff, parents, students, and community members focused on making progress towards our *shared vision.*

Depth of SAW's unity of purpose
In the majority of cases, it is clear that the vision functions such that everyone strives toward common goals.
Use of consensus decision-making (around 90% agreement)
The consensus decision-making process *is becoming* an integral part of our school's culture. *[is; is becoming; is not yet, is not]*
Outcomes of consensual decision-making
On *even the most difficult issues,* we are able to come to consensus as a school community and move towards our vision.

III. Accelerated Schools <u>empower</u> all in the school community to make important educational decisions and share the responsibility for the outcomes.

Broad participation in important educational decisions.
Most school community members agree they have adequate participation in important educational decisions*[all;most;some;few]*
Shared responsibility for implementing important educational decisions.
******Some* members of the school community share responsibility for <u>implementing</u> important educational decisions.***(Note,SSE cadre rated this at <u>all-to-most</u>)*
Shared responsibility for the outcomes of important educational decisions.
*****Some* members of the school community share responsibility for <u>outcomes</u> of important educational decisions.***[all;most;some; few]*

IV. Accelerated Schools build on the strengths of students, staff, parents, and all available resources.

Taking Stock (in 1997 we took time to find out where we were at)
Taking stock succeeded in <u>*two*</u> of the following three areas: • Actively involving the whole school community to identify strengths and challenges. • Producing a report that provides an adequate comparison point for setting priorities and baseline data for cadres. • Building a sense of ownership and responsibility.*[all;three;two;one;none]*

Building on strengths of School-as-a-Whole (SAW) members
School activities and programs build *unevenly* on the strengths of school community members*[systematically; unevenly;sporadically; don't]*
Utilization of strengths
The school community's human and material resources are *frequently* utilized on problems blocking reaching the school's vision. *[systematically; frequently; sporadically; severely under-utilised]*

V. Accelerated Schools recognize the school as the center of expertise and promote equity, participation, communication, community, reflection, experimentation, risk-taking, and trust.

Promoting 'accelerated' values (those underlined above)
Members of the school community *are implementing* an environment where all opinions are solicited and freely and respectfully voiced, where discussion is focused and productive, where feedback is constructive and offers alternatives, where new ideas are honored and encouraged, and where every situation (e.g., new ideas, new programs, etc.) is viewed as an opportunity for learning and improvement. *[have created; are implementing are planning; have not begun]*
Recognizing the school as the center of expertise
******Only some members of the school community recognize that they possess the vision and talent they need to make their dreams a reality.[all; many; some; most don't]***

VI. Accelerated school communities work toward the vision of the school in a systematic manner by *Inquiry*:identifying our own challenges, searching out solutions, developing action plans, pilot testing them, refining them, implementing them and continually evaluating them.

Integrating Inquiry into all aspects of school life
Inquiry-driven decision-making is used *periodically* throughout the school community. There is still a tendency to jump to solutions and not to consider relevant inside and outside data and experiences when developing solutions.*
Using inquiry to make progress
The use of the inquiry process *often* allows us to identify the root causes of challenges and generate action. *[always; often; sometimes; never seems to]*
Effectiveness of inquiry
Inquiry often leads to action that truly addresses the challenge. *[always; often; sometimes; rarely if ever]*

VII. **Accelerated Schools decisions involve the school community, focus on student learning and are communicated efficiently.**

Cadres: (our 3 volunteer working teams of teachers, students & parents)

Broad participation in school decisions and management
Most school community members (including parents and students) have participated in setting the priorities of the school and *(some)* are a part of the accelerated schools governance structure (i.e., cadres, steering committee, and SAW).
Active participation on cadres
***Many* parents and students, and *most* teachers, administrators, and staff participate sporadically on a cadre.*??many parents; some students; all teachers; few if any others??*
Cadre focus on primary priorities (from our SAW decisions)
Each cadre has a clear focus and is developing a comprehensive understanding of its primary challenge area.*[has; is developing; is aware of; is struggling with]*
Cadres' use of Inquiry
Each cadre has been trained in inquiry and is applying it, *with varied success,* to address its challenge areas.*[comfortably; with varying success; with difficulty; off-track]*

Steering Committee (cadre reps and parents to help keep on track)

Definition of Steering Committee role
Members of the steering committee are *beginning* to define and speak through their role.*[have; developing; beginning; need to]*
Steering Committee communication with School-as-a-Whole (SAW) and cadres
The steering committee *is working to* establish effective ways (e.g., frequency of meetings, location of meetings, posting of minutes, meeting protocol, etc.) to communicate with cadres.

School-as-a-Whole (ALL interested school community members)

Consensus decision-making (90% agreement before go-ahead)
The SAW has defined procedures for consensus decision-making and a timeline for implementation. Most members of the school community feel an active part of a governance (decision-making) structure that is focused on the realization of the school's vision.
Communication
The SAW *has successfully developed* and implemented procedures for keeping all members informed of developments and outcomes of cadre, steering and SAW meetings.*[note SSE cadre said "are being developed]*

RESULTS OF SURVEY PRIORITY-SETTING 1997.

	TEACHERS					Raw	Rank	COMMUNITY					Raw	Rank	OVERALL					Raw	
Rating:	1	2	3	4	5			1	2	3	4	5			1	2	3	4	5		
TEACHING AND LEARNING																					
• enriched curriculum with input from all	7	2	4		1	28	3	12	3	3	1		31	2	19	5	7	1	1	59	
• students moving through without basics	7	2	3	2		28	4	11	1	1	4	2	42		18	3	4	6	2	70	
• academic excellence not achieved	5	3	2	3	1	34	7	6	5	6	2		42		11	8	8	5	1	76	
• limited horizons of students	7	4	1	2		26	1	6	6	6		1	41		13	10	7	2	1	67	
• time	5	6	3			26	2	8	9		2		34	3	13	15	3	2	0	60	
• curriculum demands from system		2	7	3	2	47		6	4	7	2		43		6	6	14	5	2	90	
• recognising and fostering gifts for all	3	3	5	2	1	37		6	8	3	2		38	5	9	11	8	4	1	75	
• staff stability	3	3	7		1	35		15	2	1		1	27	1	18	5	8	0	2	62	
• focussed teaching	4	2	5	3		35		7	8	2	2		37	4	11	10	7	5	0	72	
• utilising individual learning styles	3	5	5	1		32	6	6	4	8	1		42		9	9	13	2	0	74	
• resource adequacy, effic. and effect	7	3	2		2	29	5	7	4	6	2		41		14	7	8	2	2	70	5
• technology for library resource manag't	1	1	4	3	5	52		4	10	4		1	41		5	11	8	3	6	93	
SCHOOL IMAGE																					
• school's esteem in the wide community	10	4				18	2	10	7		1	1	33	2	20	11	0	1	1	51	
• positive portrayal of the school	12	2				16	1	10	7	1	1		31	1	22	9	1	1	0	47	
• fund raising	6	2	4	2		30	3	6	6	5	1	1	42	3	12	8	9	3	1	72	
COMMUNICATION																					
• understanding of teaching and learning	5	2	4	1	2	35		12	5	1	1		29	2	17	7	5	2	2	64	
• whole community participation	8	2	2	1	1	27	3	3	8	4	4		44		11	10	6	5	1	71	
• reporting 'the whole story' to parents	4	5	1	2	2	35		13	2	3	1		30	3	17	7	4	3	2	65	4
• parental expectations	6	4	3	1		27	4	6	8	5			37		12	12	8	1	0	64	4
• family/tchr partners for learn'g difficulty	9	2	2		1	24	1	15	4				23	1	24	6	2	0	1	47	
• fam invol't in learning, school and home	8	2	2	2		26	2	10	5	4			32	4	18	7	6	2	0	58	
• parent/teacher/student communication	5	5	3	1		28	5	10	5	3	1		33	5	15	10	6	2	0	61	
• accommodating cultural differences	1	5	3	3	2	42		4	6	5	4		47		5	11	8	7	2	89	
SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT																					
• maintaining and improving our SSE	10	2	2			20	1	6	10	3			19	4	16	12	5	0	0	39	
• transitions class to class & to high school	1	4	4	3	2	43		10	8		1		22	5	11	12	4	4	2	65	
• bullying and peer pressure	7	2	4		1	28	3	13	4	2			19	2	20	6	6	0	1	47	
• vandalism	4	3	4	3		34	5	10	5	4			19	3	14	8	8	3	0	53	
• stud. respect property and school equip	3	7	3	1		30	4	13	5	1			19	1	16	12	4	1	0	49	
• outdoor equip and qual of sch. environment	5	8	1			24	2	8	6	4	1		22		13	14	5	1	0	46	

Appendix Y(5)

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ASP Questionnaire items' means, ranges, modes and medians for 1998. 1999, 2001.

Matterslea School results.

1998 ASP Questionnaire

item number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
mean rating	4.2	3.7	3.1	4.7	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.6	4.1	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.9	4.6	3.9	3.8
range	2...5	1...5	2...4	4...5	1...5	1...5	1...5	1...5	2...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	1...5	4...5	1...5	2...5	2...5	4...5	3...5	2...5
mode	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	5	3	4
median	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	4

21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
4.5	4.3	4.6	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.4	3.7	4.3	4.4	3.9	4.7	4.8	4.3	4.0	4.7	4.6	4.1	4.9	4.1	4.2	4.6	4.5	4.7
4...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	3...5	3...5	3...5	3...5	3...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	3...5	3...5	3...5	4...5	4...5	3...5	4...5	3...5	3...5	3...5
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	5
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	5

46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
4.6	4.7	3.2	3.7	4.5	3.7	4.3	4.4	3.3	3.9	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.7	4.1	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.6	3.9	4.6	4.6	4.3	4.6
3...5	3...5	1...5	2...5	4...5	2...5	4...5	4...5	1...5	2...5	2...5	2..5	2..5	2..5	4...5	2...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	2...5	4...5	4...5	2...5	3...5
5	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
5	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

1999 ASP Questionnaire

item number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
mean	4.0	4.0	2.5	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.2	4.3	3.9	4.3	4.5	4.5	3.3	3.9	4.1	3.1	4.2	4.5	3.8	3.9
range	2...5	1...5	2...4	4...5	1...5	1...5	1...5	1...5	2...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	1...5	4...5	1...5	2...5	2...5	4...5	3...5	2...5
mode	4	4	2	5	5	5	4	4	3	4	5	4	2	4	4	3	4	5	4	4
median	4	4	2	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	4

21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
4.4	4.3	4.3	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.1	4.1	4.4	4.1	4.5	4.7	4.1	4.0	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.8	4.3	4.5	3.9	4.1	4.8
4...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	3...5	3...5	3...5	3...5	3...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	3...5	3...5	3...5	4...5	4...5	3...5	4...5	3...5	3...5	3...5
4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	5
4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4.5	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4.5	4	4	5

46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
4.5	4.5	2.7	3.7	4.3	3.1	4.1	4.4	3.4	3.3	3.7	3.8	3.4	4.1	4.5	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.5	3.7	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.7
3...5	3...5	1...5	2...5	4...5	2...5	4...5	4...5	1...5	2...5	2...5	2..5	2..5	2..5	4...5	2...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	4...5	2...5	4...5	4...5	2...5	
5	4	1	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5
5	4.5	2.5	4	4	3.5	4	5	3.5	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5

2001 ASP Questionaire

item number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
mean	4.2	4.1	3.3	4.5	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.0	3.4	4.1	4.2	3.7	3.5
range	2...5	2...5	1...5	4...5	2...5	2...5	2...5	2...5	2...5	2...5	1...5	4...5	3...5	4...5	3...5	2...5	3...5	2...5	2...5	2...5
mode	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4
median	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4

21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
4.1	4.0	4.0	3.6	4.1	4.2	4.5	4.3	N/a 2001				4.3	4.6	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.0	4.0	4.4	4.1	4.2
3...5	2...5	2...5	1...5	2...5	2...5	2...5	3...5	.	.	.	.	2...5	4...5	2...5	3...5	3...5	3...5	4...5	3...5	2...5	3...5	3...5	3...5	3...5
4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4					4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4					4	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4

46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
4.4	4.4	3.1	4.0	4.3	3.5	4.0	4.1	3.8	3.5	4.3	3.1	3.4	3.6	4.1	3.5	3.3	4.3	4.4	2.9	3.8	4.0	4.1	3.2	2.9
3...5	3...5	2...5	2...5	3...5	2...5	2...5	2...5	2...4	2...5	4...5	2...4	2...4	3...5	3...5	2...5	2...5	3...5	4...5	1...4	2...5	3...5	3...5	1...5	1...5
4	4	2	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4
4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3

Items highlighted [ ] show disparity between mean and mode.
Items highlighted [ ] have rated consistently low relative to other items

10. Do you have **daughters?** Are there any differences in the learning relationship you have with a daughter (compared to the learning relationship you might have with a son)?

11. How much of what is taught seems out of your '**comfort zone**'?
(ie, are there things you just haven't been able to keep up with or relate to?

Probes: What is your opinion of computers?
What sort of impact are they having?
On your relationships with your children?
On your confidence to help with schoolwork?

12. We found that in the past, our **Grade 5's average scores** on statewide tests hadn't been much to crow about.
Probe: Can you think of any reasons why that might have been so?

13. There is some evidence that **boys** in Tasmania and elsewhere get into more trouble and do less well than girls in their school work. Does this seem true in your experience?
Probe: • Can you shed any light on the issue?

14. How do you you and your partner share the responsibility and involvement in your the children's education?

15. **Is there anything we haven't asked about that you really think *should* be said?**

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR [redacted] MEN.
July, 1998

1. Before we begin, is there anything you really want to say about you and **your involvement in your children's learning?**

2. What sort of **experiences** did you have at school?

3. How much **time** do you get to spend with your children?

   Probes: How does your usual weekday after-school and evening look?
   How does your usual weekend tend to pan out?
   What sorts of opportunities do you have to teach or encourage your children in learning anything?
   Are you content with that?

4. Are you **genuinely interested** in your children's education?
   Probe: How has this come about?

5. How much learning do your children do outside school?
   Probe: How much of that is something you engage in?

5. How would you rate your **knowledge about** [redacted] **school affairs?**
   Probe: How do you keep touch with what's going on? (*Mayday*?)

6. What things tend to **get in the way** of being involved in school matters?
   Probes: Do you have any opportunities to help out in the classroom
   or on excursions?
   Does your confidence or self-esteem have any influence?

7. What things might **make it *easier*** for you to be involved in decision-making for the school?

8. What sorts of school activities would be **most appealing** for men to become involved in?
   Probe: Any particular things *you* would enjoy doing at school with children? (explain this isn't a recrutiment exercise!!!)

9. What sorts of things should be in the curriculum if you are thinking about the **best interests of boys**?