



# Durham E-Theses

---

## *Educational reorganisation and collegial support: a case study*

Hubley-Little, Tamara

### How to cite:

---

Hubley-Little, Tamara (2000) *Educational reorganisation and collegial support: a case study*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/4251/>

### Use policy

---

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

**EDUCATIONAL REORGANISATION  
AND  
COLLEGIAL SUPPORT:  
A CASE STUDY**

*Tamara Hubley-Little*

**Education Doctorate**

**University of Durham  
School of Education**

**2000**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published in any form, including Electronic and the Internet, without the author's prior written consent. All information derived from this thesis must be acknowledged appropriately.

## Acknowledgements

Although writing a thesis is a solitary task, the 'doing' has relied on the participation, support and guidance of many people. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude and thanks to each of you.

Nichelle, Makayla and Kassandra – my girls – you have kept me grounded and true to myself, and I love each of you very much. My husband, Richard – you teach me everyday that if you never have a dream, you will never have a dream come true. Tracey- you have endured sisterly torment and wrath. Despite that, you always just seem to know! Mom and Dad – you have shown me how to embrace the challenges of life and that blessings come in many guises.

Dr. Geof Alred, my supervisor – you have allowed me to take what I needed – no more, no less – a balance for which I stand in awe. It was an amazing journey!

The 'Teachers of Midtown School' – you have bravely allowed me to scrutinise and share your experiences of reorganisation. I am indebted to each of you for your generosity of time and knowledge.

Sue and Mary of the Education Library – books (overdue or otherwise), articles and microfilm were never a problem and always a smile!



Lastly, I dedicate my thesis to the memory of Kimberly Munroe, whose encouragement and belief in this achievement was immeasurable. We have taken separate journeys, Kim, but you will remain in my heart and soul forever. I miss you, dear friend.

*Tammy*



## **Educational Reorganisation and Collegial Relationships: a case study**

**Tamara Hubley-Little  
Education Doctorate  
School of Education  
University of Durham  
2000**

### **ABSTRACT**

Using grounded theory methodology, the case study explores fourteen teachers' experiences of educational reorganisation. Although the study identifies three distinct groups varying in the support offered for the demerger of Midtown High School, teacher resistance to the change is minimal. A variety of reasons for this are offered, including the nature of the teaching culture. Camaraderie and jocular relationships characterise the ethos that provides a positive experience for the teachers of the site. The study recognises the value of the supportive teaching culture in its ability to reduce stress. Leadership by the principal and a cycle of student to student-teacher to teacher reinforces the supportive teaching culture and ensures its continuance despite inherent communication problems. However, teacher-leaders dissatisfied with the status quo initiated the demerger. Within the second series of semi-structured interviews, the study reveals an improvement in communications and greater teacher empowerment as a result of effective leadership offered by the new principal. However, during the change process, the effect of the reorganisation upon the teaching culture and teacher-leaders was notable. Teacher-leaders who experienced stress during educational reorganisation lost the ability to function in their leadership roles. This affected the collegial relationships of the junior site staff and individual teacher's ability to cope. Teachers with an internal locus of control experienced significant stress when expectations were not met. In arriving at these assertions the role of the teaching culture was central. The effective teaching culture not only relies on effective leadership offered by administrators and teacher-leaders but also collegial relationships that are supportive and jocular in nature. The case study reveals that such a teaching culture, despite its limitations, is a valuable asset to the educational organisation.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Chapter 1 – <i>INTRODUCTION</i></b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Chapter 2 – <i>LITERATURE REVIEW</i></b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Teacher Experiences</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Fundamentals of Change</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Coping Resources</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Change Management Strategies</b>	<b>48</b>
 <b>Chapter 3 – <i>METHODOLOGY</i></b>	 <b>61</b>
<b>Purpose of the study-academic &amp; personal</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Study design</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Evaluation Parameters</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Data Collection</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Data Analysis</b>	<b>87</b>
 <b>Chapter 4 – <i>ANALYSIS</i></b>	 <b>96</b>
<b>Open coding</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Axial Coding</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Selective Coding</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>A Prototype Grounded Theory</b>	<b>114</b>

<b>Chapter 5 –DISCUSSION</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>The Methodology</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>The Analysis</b>	<b>130</b>
<i>The teaching culture</i>	<b>130</b>
<i>Educational reorganisation</i>	<b>143</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>164</b>

## **APPENDICES**

<b>Appendix 1 - <i>Historical Perspective</i></b>	<b>167</b>
<b>Appendix 2 - <i>Code of Conduct Statement</i></b>	<b>176</b>
<b>Appendix 3 - <i>Overview of teacher participants</i></b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Appendix 4 - <i>Sample of interviews</i></b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Appendix 5 - <i>Open coding example</i></b>	<b>211</b>
<b>Appendix 6 - <i>Logic Diagrams</i></b>	<b>212</b>
• <b>Effects of demerger</b>	<b>212</b>
• <b>Merged School</b>	<b>213</b>
• <b>Change Support</b>	<b>214</b>
• <b>New Principal</b>	<b>215</b>
• <b>Maintaining the Status Quo</b>	<b>216</b>
<b>Appendix 7 - <i>Paradigm Models</i> - including         theoretical and operational notes</b>	<b>217</b>

<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>240</b>
---------------------	------------

## ***FIGURE***

<b>Figure 1 – <i>Self-esteem changes during transitions</i></b>	<b>28</b>
---	-----------

## ***TABLES***

<b>Table 1 – <i>Open Coding Chart</i></b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Table 2 – <i>Axial Coding Chart</i></b>	<b>100</b>

## **Statement of Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without her prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

# **Chapter I**

## ***INTRODUCTION***

Educational change management strategies have received considerable attention the last two decades. Academics have focused on nearly every facet from sector and type of change, to purpose, and to how, when and who would offer the best chance of success upon implementation. Change is a very complex process and the educational change literature has offered numerous arguments on the importance of teacher commitment. In response to the change movement, educational change managers have received extensive documentation on strategies for managing change. In particular the literature offers these strategies, usually based on collaboration, to manage teachers who resist educational change initiatives. The literature recognises to a certain degree the role of change resistance but at the risk of leading to narcissism, the teacher's experience has received little attention. Instead, the literature tends to focus on the benefits that collaborative teaching cultures offer.



The support that teachers provide to one another is recognised as having the potential ability to reduce stress associated with the teaching profession. However, the concept of collaboration, as discussed in the literature, does not necessarily include supportive teacher relationships. Nonetheless, teachers who are supportive of their colleagues and who create supportive teaching cultures seem to provide an environment wherein its teachers are better equipped to manage stress.

Educational reorganisation is recognised as a potentially stressful event whereby teachers may resist the change as a means to manage the threat to their personal and cultural identities. Promoting supportive teaching cultures would therefore, seem to be an important endeavour for teachers and administrators. As much of the change literature seems to overlook teacher resistance as a coping mechanism for change, as well as the benefit of a supportive teaching culture, it seemed worthwhile and pertinent to explore the role of teaching cultures. Can the teaching culture act as a means to aid coping for teachers undergoing an educational reorganisation? Considering the aforementioned, a case study that investigates teacher experiences of an educational reorganisation would be pursued.

The *methodology* chapter interprets the purposes of the study that includes the personal aspect of learning new research skills. Academically the study sought to explore teacher experiences of educational change to determine if teacher resistance is a coping strategy,

and whether collegial support and a supportive teaching culture can aid teachers' coping. As leadership seems to be regarded as paramount to the success of change implementation, the study also set out to explore the leadership role in general. The objectives of the study were supported by the study design.

As the study sought to explore teacher experiences of educational change and more specifically, how teachers support one another, it was necessary to utilise a methodology that would focus on 'why' and 'how' as opposed to questions that would generate numbers as do quantitative studies. Therefore, this qualitative case study explored collegial relationships during an educational reorganisation. The study design documents the argument for pursuing a holistic-inductive, naturalistic case study that relied on reflexivity, the fit between purpose and method, as well as data-triangulation to achieve validity.

Early in the development of the study, change resistance and identity threat were considered as foci. Although these two themes were eventually developed within the final study design, the role of the teaching culture seemed paramount. Therefore, a site undergoing a significant educational reorganisation was sought. Although there were notable difficulties in securing a research site, after addressing the suitability of the proposed site, the reorganisation of Midtown High School was pursued.

Midtown High School is housed on two parallel sites whereby the 'senior' section and

shared administration is located within the previously renovated building site. The 'junior' site of the school is located in a separate building that lacks most typical amenities. As the senior site would remain virtually intact once the reorganisation was complete, the teachers of the 'junior' site were asked to participate in the case study.

The self-chosen sample of fourteen teachers of Midtown High School's junior site, consisted of thirteen participants in the initial interview series, followed by the inclusion of the new principal in the second series of interviews. The first of two series of interviews was conducted prior to the demerger. From the semi-structured interview, numerous themes reflecting the complexity of teachers' experiences were identified after initiating the grounded theory analytical technique of open coding. These themes were further developed into hierarchies using the axial coding technique to reflect nine initial categories. Although each category was relevant to the participants' experiences, the categories could be separated into three threads - the demerger context, the teaching culture and the teachers' experiences.

The demerger context was derived from within the *Merged School* and *Demerger* categories representing why the demerger was initiated and the perceived effects of the demerger respectively. Also, *Change support* outlined three significant sub-categories for the type of support given to the demerger by each teacher. The first three categories set the framework for the study. Three additional categories related to the teaching culture thread

were *Collegial relations*, *Coping strategies* and the *Administration*. While these were regarded as significant, they required further development. The second series of interviews served this purpose, as well as providing the opportunity to note any changes in the participants' views of the demerger. The data derived from the second series of interviews in combination with the analysis of the initial interview series, provided a rich, descriptive picture of the teachers' experiences - the third thread - of this educational demerger.

From the ongoing analysis, the teaching culture, and teacher and leadership roles were developed into six subsequent paradigm models. These models explored the supportive teaching culture that was affected by communication breakdown to the point where coping was jeopardised and teacher-leaders were not able to function in their leadership roles. As a result, some teachers became reticent.

The arrival of the new principal and a new academic school year was regarded as paramount. The new principal initiated leadership that improved communication problems existing prior to the demerger and addressed those communication difficulties that presented themselves during the reorganisation process. The principal's leadership resulted in effective communication and empowerment for the teaching staff. Therefore, the principal's role impacted upon the teaching culture by reinstating the status quo, ultimately improving the teachers' experiences of the demerger.

The selective coding exercise noted that the maintenance of the status quo not only relied on the principal's support, but also that teacher-leaders played a significant role in maintaining the status quo of the teaching culture. Herein the core category was developed by relating to it all other properties and dimensions. The core category of *Effective Teaching Culture*, consisted of strong collegial relationships requiring the support of teacher-leaders and administration, and effective leadership. Effective leadership seemed to be equated to being an effective communicator, who can manage communication barriers while empowering teachers, in formal and informal arenas. The specific dimensions and properties of this central phenomenon were reiterated in the *Prototype Grounded Theory*.

The thesis culminates in a purposeful but not exhaustive *discussion* beginning with the consideration of the methodology to explore teacher experiences of educational change. Although the study was limited due to unexpected and minimal teacher resistance, the case study did provide valuable insights into supportive collegial relations. In relating the analysis to the literature review it appears that the study supported several assertions.

Teachers nearing retirement express concern for their roles and potential career shifts. Also teacher experiences of change depend on the teacher's locus of control. Teachers may be susceptible to lobbying for change if they have an external locus of control. However, a teacher with an internal locus of control may experience high levels of anxiety if their change expectations are not met.

Furthermore, the success of change not only depends upon who initiates and implements the reorganisation, but also it appears that teacher led initiatives do not have significant impact on teachers and teaching culture. It was also noted that when teacher-leaders feel anxious, this can have a deteriorating effect of the rest of the staff's ability to cope. Nonetheless, it appears that supportive teaching cultures can reduce stress among teachers and several important features of this teaching culture were noted.

The teaching culture reflects jocular relations. Laughter is recognised as a coping strategy but this is limited within the educational change management literature. Furthermore, in that supporting one another is considered the norm, teachers are able to act as mentors. Although there is no formal mentoring programme in Midtown High School at the time of the interviews, acceptable behaviour is reinforced by the continuity of the teaching culture. The teaching culture is supported by the provision of shared opportunities among staff to get together informally. Although the principal needs to value supportive, collaborative cultures, leadership is regarded as necessary for empowering teachers. However, there is some concern that empowerment may mean different things to different leaders and requires clarification.

Although the discussion concludes with a summary of discussion points as well as a summary of those issues that would benefit from further investigation, a case study never

reaches its end. There is always one more argument to be made. But within the confines of the thesis and indeed, realistic parameters of what can be gained from the case study, the following chapters provide a contextual glimpse of an organisation in the process of change.

## Chapter II

### *LITERATURE REVIEW*

Change is occurring within every sector of education (Smyth, 1993 and Neumann, 1995) and at an unprecedented rate (Barton, 1991). While educational change that serves to improve organisational, pedagogical, or curricular issues (Ball, 1993) is beneficial (Fullan, 1991), there has been much debate regarding why (Smyth, 1993), how (Hargreaves, 1994 and Smyth, 1995) and by whom (Leithwood *et al.*, 1994) the change is to be accomplished. Furthermore, the literature explores teacher receptivity to systemwide change (Waugh and Punch, 1987; and Waugh and Godfrey, 1993), whereas others report on the process of change (Stein and Wang, 1988) or examine collegiate leadership and cultural change (Neumann, 1995). As is the case with these studies and other research (Wideen and Pye, 1994; Rudduck, 1991; Newton and Tarrant, 1992; Hargreaves, 1994 and Fullan, 1991), the literature consistently reiterates that educational change is highly complex, requiring teacher commitment if the change is to be successful. While expecting professionals to



commit to change seems reasonable, teachers experience a variety of unique experiences and behaviours when engaging in educational change. Teacher resistance underpins these.

The educational change literature recognises teacher resistance as problematic, although the prevailing discourse of change management strategies is often overshadowing.

Therefore, the nature of resistance as a coping strategy for teachers engaged in educational change is not fully explored. Furthermore, the literature compartmentalises strategies into stress management, which endorses social support (Dunham, 1992; Woods, 1986; Kyriacou, 1980 and Travers and Cooper, 1996), and educational change management (Whitaker, 1993; Newton and Tarrant, 1992; Hargreaves, 1994; and Fullan, 1991), which predominately argues the benefit of collaborative teaching cultures and leadership strategies.

Hence, the following chapter identifies teacher resistance as an initial means to cope with the stress associated with educational change events, while arguing collegial support, along with effective, shared leadership and collaborative cultures, to be beneficial coping resources. Furthermore, the discussion examines how locus of control, change predictability and second-order change affects the teacher's experience of change within the context of educational reorganisation.

## TEACHER EXPERIENCES

Educational reorganisations have been documented with regard to the comprehensivization period of the 1960s (Beynon, 1985 and Riseborough, 1981), and more recently, within the context of amalgamation (Kyriacou and Harriman, 1993; and Riseborough, 1994). While these two waves of school organisational change have historically different beginnings and endings, the impact upon teachers appears to result in a threat to personal identity of the teacher and cultural identity of the school. Furthermore, teachers seem conditioned to maintain their identities and cope with the associated stress by adopting a psychological resistance to change events.

To initiate these discussions, consulting relevant change events at 'Victoria Road' (Beynon, 1985), 'Dead End School' (Riseborough, 1994) and 'Blue Stone College' (Neumann, 1995) illuminates individual teachers' experiences of educational reorganisations.

In 1985, Beynon, drawing on the experiences of teachers caught in the comprehensivization of a grammar and secondary modern school, set out to "demonstrate the importance of institutional history in the making and breaking of teachers' lives and careers." (p. 158, Editors' note). Beynon's argument is compelling to read because not only the negative effect of comprehensivization on teachers' careers becomes obvious, but also because the institutions' historical context appears to play a fundamental role in the

experience of the teachers.

Comprehensivization at 'Victoria Road' was responsible for numerous career pattern shifts (Beynon, 1985). According to Beynon, former secondary modern teachers felt that they were 'demoted' to Lower School on the two building site, whereas their former grammar school colleagues held 'positions of authority' on the main site of Victoria Road Comprehensive. As a result teachers of Lower School experienced alienation and

(i)n response, the former secondary modern staff formed an assertive, incooperative and subversive clique and pitted themselves against the new head, his appointees and their perceived 'trendiness'.  
(Beynon, 1985, p. 162)

Teachers of Lower School considered "their low status (to be) a cause of both anger and frustration, especially since they regarded themselves as superior classroom practitioners." (Beynon, 1985, p. 160) Consequently, Beynon argues, some teachers developed parallel careers "to compensate for career demotion and boredom," (p.160) or to increase incomes for those who "were debarred from vertical promotion through lack of qualifications, age or through having become too closely identified with the low-level 'childminding' reputation of Lower School." (p. 160) Furthermore as a result of their frustration, some teachers simply gave up, for example, Mr. Pickwick.

After years of being overlooked I turned elsewhere for my *raison d'être*. When I first came here I was determined to make a massive success of teaching. I couldn't wait to get here. I had all sorts of ideas. I went on courses and spent evenings and weekends developing resources. What happened? Mr Headmaster never took me seriously. I've been overlooked for the head of department post on two occasions, but I thought I was sure to get the deputy headship down here (Lower

School). But when Megaphone landed it that was the final straw.  
That's when I finally gave up. I do the bare minimum now, no more.  
(Beynon, 1985, p. 169)

The teachers of the Victoria Road Lower School felt frustrated and demeaned by the reorganisation that resulted in the entrenchment of superior/inferior teaching cultures. While some developed a parallel career, others simply resigned themselves to their fate because of a defeatist attitude. Similar cultural divisions and their consequences of comprehensivization were noted in Riseborough's (1994) research of two teachers' experiences of comprehensive school closure.

Riseborough (1994) reported that upon appointment of a new headmaster to a recently merged comprehensive school, Mr Hardman established 'The Team' in his image, which resulted in a polarised staff comprised of 'the winning team' and 'a clique' of alienated, occupational losers. Cultural identities, formed out of some previous pedagogical discipline and/or manifested as a result of differentiated leadership, became entrenched and redefined themselves.

The two teachers of Riseborough's research, Sam and John, had the distinction of belonging to 'The Team'. With this membership came progressive career patterns that formed the teachers' identities as occupational winners. They were seen to be members of the winning team and responded as such. However, when news arrived of the possibility

of school closure, although they were members of The Team the intensity of their experience was obvious.

In the end the actual closure actually affected me far more than I thought. I didn't think it would affect me because I thought I'd take things as they come. All the avenues were blocked and a great stonewall was facing us and there was no way forward, no way bloody back. (Sam)  
(Riseborough, 1994, p. 93)

Sam's first two sentences, as reported by Riseborough, indicates that he was not expecting to be affected to the degree he was experiencing. Furthermore, it seems that 'taking things as they come' might be reflective of how Sam operated and might therefore reveal that as a member of the Team, Sam was not used to this kind of negative experience. Riseborough makes clear that Sam was on a progressive career pattern and Sam's assertions of 'a great stonewall' indicate that indeed, Sam was not accustomed to dealing with adversity, especially that which was going to predominately influence his career.

However, Riseborough contends that the issue for the teachers of 'Dead End School' was not

'Where am I going to carry on being the kind of teacher I am?' It was rather 'What kind of teacher are "they" expecting me to become as "they" fit me into a contracted system which really doesn't need me?' (Riseborough, 1994, p.93).

Herein is the notion that teachers are expecting to have to give up their personal identities as they are fitted into another teaching culture that might not be conducive to their personal identity defined within a culture that afforded progressive careers. Furthermore, John

explores the difficult task facing him as a 'stigmatised' teacher who might not be accepted into the teaching culture of his new school.

I think I've got a hell of a hard job. Not so much going into the classroom. That's like riding a bike. It is all the staff relations. Most of the hassle you get in school doesn't occur in the classroom. A lot of pressures build up in staffrooms. That's where people start to worrying. I couldn't see any promotion or anything like that from now on... (John) (Riseborough, 1994, p. 97)

Within this one passage, John acknowledges the task of confronting a new teaching culture in which he would carry the stigma of Dead End High's closure. He also notes, as Sam commented, that he expects his prosperous career to come to an end. Clearly Sam and John were unaccustomed to the uncertainty of their new futures and their comments reflect a threat to the strong identity that each had formed as an individual member within the prospering and secure culture of The Team. Similarly, the threat to identity, both in an individual sense and a cultural sense, is evident in Kyriacou and Harriman's (1993) research into school mergers as a stressful event for teachers.

Kyriacou and Harriman (1993) identify six concerns of teachers based on the evidence of interviews with ten teachers, conducted at three intervals. Teachers involved in the school merger were concerned about the interview and future employment prospects if they failed to be appointed to the 'new' school. Teachers that gained appointments were concerned that they would have a role change and that "their new colleagues would have different views and values concerning practice." (p. 300) Furthermore, they were very concerned that the ethos of the school would be different, as well as being anxious about operating on

a split site. While some of these themes echo the teachers' difficulties at Victoria Road (Beynon, 1985) and Dead End High (Riseborough, 1994), Kyriacou and Harriman identify not only career pattern shifts, but also role shifts.

The two deputy heads of the newly merged school "who had normally seen themselves as 'information-givers', now found they could answer few of the questions staff had about arrangements and matters concerning the new school." (1993, p. 301) Arguably, within their former teaching cultures, the two deputies' roles and therefore, identities partly depended on relaying information to their colleagues. As the new school no longer facilitated their role, "(t)his was causing the two deputies much anxiety." (Kyriacou and Harriman, 1993, p. 301)

In addition to confirming teachers' experiences of frustration and anxiety, Kyriacou and Harriman (1993) explored the experience of school merger as an experience similar to bereavement, a parallel suggested by others (Hargreaves, 1994; Fullan, 1991; Deal, 1990 and Rudduck, 1991). Kyriacou and Harriman go as far to suggest that the experience of organisational change results in

mourning of the loss of their old school (and way of life) with apprehension regarding an uncertain future, and it could be felt just as strongly when the teacher gained an appointment at his or her reorganised previous school. (1993, p. 298)

While the bereavement analogy communicates the intensity of teachers' experiences when

faced with organisational change, a theme little explored by the previously discussed research is change resistance as a means to maintain personal and cultural identities. As will be shown, the inquiry into Blue Stone College (Neumann, 1995) reveals that cultures have the potential to condemn even the most positive organisational changes in an attempt to maintain identities.

At Blue Stone College, the new president, William Alden, came to the college with a different perspective of the college. Where college faculty saw themselves as a frugal, and perhaps stagnant college, Alden saw the college as having a firm financial grounding on which he endeavoured to expand.

The transitional years for Alden appeared to result in a strong vision shared with the faculty of Blue Stone. However, Neumann (1995) notes that “most interviewees voiced concern alongside praise.” (p. 265) What the faculty of Blue Stone saw their president accomplish was a sense of momentum and prosperity and they seemed to become accustomed to this new culture. However, it is evident that the old culture of ‘saving for a rainy day’ would not be easily conceded.

A long-time administrator was excited that ‘morale has definitely improved’ but, in the same breath, cautioned that ‘the adverse side is that you have to train people that the surplus may not always be there.’ (Neumann, 1995, p.265)

The culture of Blue Stone College before Walden was finding a way to redefine itself, despite Alden’s “leading by infecting people with vision”. (Neumann, 1995, p. 263)



Furthermore, like the comprehensive schools that formed stratified teaching cultures, Neumann (1995) perceived the expanding Blue Stone College to be at risk of this at the time of the research.

“We used to be a little closed community, and now we are more like a corporation...”

(Neumann, 1995, p.266). According to Neumann, some were not only concerned for what they were becoming, there were faculty members who felt the threat to the historical identity of the college.

“(T)he changed present stood as a threat to the college’s historic identity, which they felt slipping away. Sam Edgars, in particular, might have preferred simply to return to things as they once were.” (p.266)

Despite the principal’s positive outlook, ability to form friendships and general encouragement, Neumann (1995) identified a series of teacher responses to their new organisation.

Not everyone saw or concluded the same things, nor did they emerge with the same blend of hopefulness, despair, or indifference. Some were bound up in a sense of loss (Edgars) and confusion (Johnson) as they took in the many changes around them. Others responded to change by taking on equally the demands of the new and the old despite the toll of personal well-being (Campbell). Some acquiesced to releasing the past but sought to take back, selectively, those aspects of Blue Stone’s tradition and history that they deemed most valuable (Kent). Others gracefully and optimistically took hold of their positions in the emerging reality of Blue Stone College, although they interpreted what they saw and what they did through the family-based images of the old (Wells). (p. 269)

While the purpose of the aforementioned inquiries vary as do the respective teachers’ experiences, the thread that appears run throughout each is a form of resistance.

### **Teacher resistance to change**

The educational change literature seems to affirm teacher resistance as a frequent response to educational change (Newton and Tarrant, 1992; and Hargreaves, 1994) with discussions of rejection (Fullan, 1991), refusal (Smyth, 1995) and restraint (Whitaker, 1993). However, within these reorganisations, teacher resistance does not typically result from a negative disposition to the educational worth of the change event. As Riseborough (1994) seems to suggest, educational change resistance may be a practical means to minimise the event. However, reducing teacher responses to mere practicality seems to underestimate the experience of change.

As stated by Whitaker,

(w)hen people resist change they are not usually working in active opposition to it as such, but demonstrating that a threat to their personal and professional security has been experienced. (1993, p.63)

The personal and professional security to which Whitaker refers is, arguably, teachers' personal and cultural identities, formed within their teacher role, career pattern and teaching culture. Educational reorganisation seems to frequently result in a threat to the teaching culture (Deal, 1990), which has powerful capacities to reinvent itself even if detrimental to the reorganisation, as was the case of Neumann's Blue Stone College (1995). Furthermore, the inquiries conducted by Riseborough (1994), Kyriacou and Harriman (1993), and Beynon (1985) indicate that irrespective of the source of educational

reorganisation, the change threatens the individual teacher's identity (Ball and Goodson, 1985).

Whether educational change has been mandated by government or within the institution itself, there is a notion that mandated change has caused various degrees of difficulties for individuals involved with the implementation process (Fullan, 1991). This is not to suggest that all change creates negative experiences. Depending on the person and the situation, "change appears as fulfillment or loss to different people, and to the same person at different times" (Marris, 1974, p. 42). The reason for this seems to be, in part, that educational change requires a shift from a familiar routine to the unfamiliar (Whitaker, 1993). Moreover, change when experienced as a difficulty threatens the attachments individuals form throughout their lives. As Deal notes during his discussion of 'change as loss,' whether change is retirement, moving residence, disasters or broken relationship, "Through all of these transitions, the core proposition stands out: change produces loss, and loss creates grief." (Deal, 1990, p. 135). The notion of educational change creating bereavement type loss is reiterated by Rudduck (1991) and Fullan (1991), because change influences psychological well being.

When change is proposed, or enforced, then the role image upon which we have based our behaviour is declared null and void and we have no alternative with which to replace it. We may feel bereft of the psychological props upon which much of our personal and professional credibility is built. So we fight to remain intact by seeking to preserve the status quo, or as much of it as we possibly can. (Whitaker, 1993, p. 62).

Evidently, resistance is a common behaviour exhibited by teachers who are undergoing educational reorganisations. Although in some instances teacher resistance to an organisational change may be a reflection upon a poorly devised initiative, the research suggests that resistance is much more than this (Morrish, 1976). Teacher resistance to reorganisations in schools is arguably a behaviour adopted to maintain cultural and personal identities.

In relation to identity, vested interests develop in maintaining and reinforcing particular aspects of role and particular self confirming ways of existing in teaching. For some, therefore, innovations or reforms in teaching or school organization can represent a threat to identity or the possibility of humiliations associated with a spoilt identity (Ball and Goodson, 1985, p. 19).

However, other than identifying that resistance to educational change occurs, the literature seems to devote little attention to teacher resistance.

Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (1994) argue that 'oversimplification' of teacher resistance might be a result of uninformed views of psychological development.

Typically, staff-development efforts (whether by the principals or others) do not acknowledge the interdependence of psychological and professional development. While this may be due to ignorance or oversight, in some cases, it may also be due to the commonly held view that psychological development is completed by adulthood (p. 121).

In contrast, Fullan (1991) asserts that "(t)he difficulty of learning new skills and behaviours and unlearning old ones is vastly underestimated." (p.129) "...as though the change for the teacher consisted of no more than a superficial alteration in routine activities" (1991, p. 130) His assertion not only constitutes a fundamental insight into why change does not necessarily succeed at times even when initiated by colleagues (Fullan,

1994 and Super, 1957), but appears to sarcastically affirm the notion that what is required by teachers faced with change is not fully understood. As suggested by Rudduck (1991).

Dealing with the individual's reaction to the possibility of change is not something that has attracted much attention in the literature on educational innovation. We have to go outside education to find any substantial exploration of what change means for individuals... (p. 93)

While Fullan (1991) has argued that teachers vary in their resistance to change because each views the benefits of change differently, this discourse maintains that there is much more to change. The following section addresses several fundamental issues concerning change and specially, organisational change. In doing so not only does this seek to further understanding of the teacher's experience of change, but it also attempts to address a perceived literary void within the change management literature.

## **FUNDAMENTALS OF CHANGE**

Change is a process involving "moving from a present state to a different future one" (Whitaker, 1994, p. 49). Using the term 'transition', Adams *et al.* (1976) discuss change within a personal context. They define transition as "a discontinuity in a person's life space" (p.5), which may also be "defined by social consensus as to what constitutes a discontinuity within the culture." (p.5) Furthermore, Adams *et al.* (1976) identify macro and micro transitions, as well as predictable or unpredictable transitions.

Within the context of educational reorganisation, a macro-transition would be the

reorganisation, whereas the micro-transition would be career and relationship changes of the teachers within the school. Furthermore, a reorganisation that is teacher initiated would be considered predictable. Prior to discussing the affects of these on the teacher's experience of change, several change theories are considered.

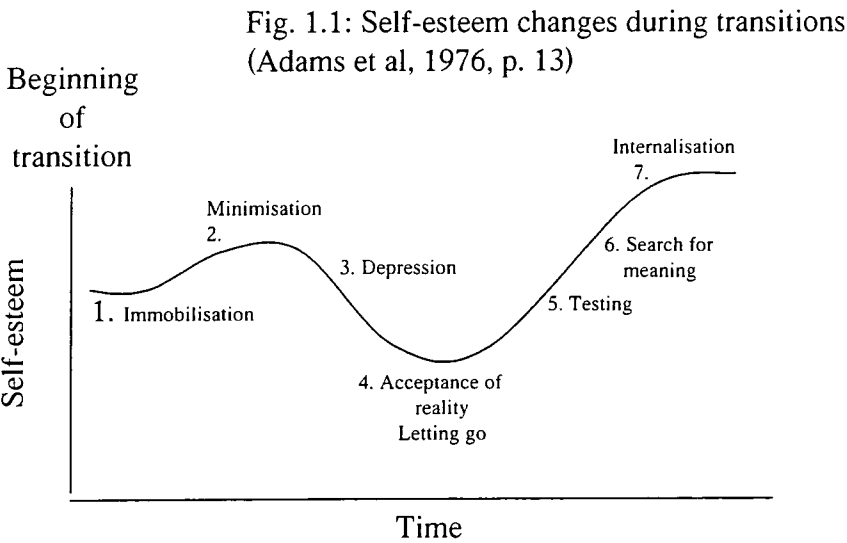
**Change Theories**

Drawing on Adams' (1969) *personal and professional model*, Adams et al (1976) note seven transitional phases that

[r]epresent a cycle of experiencing a disruption, gradually acknowledging its realities, testing oneself, understanding oneself, and incorporating changes in one's behaviour. The level of one's self-esteem varies across these phases and appears to follow a predictable path. (p.12)

Furthermore, they note that movement from one phase to another is not necessarily linear.

It is rather more likely that these representations are of the general experience and that any given individual's progressions or regressions are unique to his or her unique circumstances. (Adams *et al.*, 1976, p. 13)



Similarly, Kubler-Ross (1975) identifies stages of personal grief that begin with denial, progressing to stages of anger, bargaining, and depression, and concludes with acceptance. The relevance of Kubler-Ross' discourse within educational change is recognised by Hargreaves (1994), Fullan (1991), Deal (1990) and Rudduck (1991) who refer to change as bereavement-like loss. This suggests that reactions and feelings exhibited by persons bereaved, might also be experienced by teachers as a result of educational change.

Super (1957) suggests in his career theory that individuals go through career stages that allow for forming, testing, altering and seeking to maintain the individual's self-concept. The longer the individual remains within the role, the greater the potential for identifying with the role. Super's self-concept theory suggests that teacher resistance to change is a means to maintain the self. Furthermore, the degree of resistance appears to positively correlate with the length of time within the teacher role. The longer the teacher remains within a specific role, the greater the degree of resistance to change that threatens the role.

More recently, Sikes (1992), writing on 'imposed change and the experienced teacher' follows Super's career theory for resistance, contending that younger teachers might be more enthusiastic over change initiatives than their older colleagues. Teachers who have many years of experience are of the opinion "that they are the ones best qualified to make

professional decisions.” (Sikes, 1992, p. 49) The longer a teacher remains in the profession the more likely he or she is apt to resist change. Furthermore, in an earlier discussion in ‘The Life Cycle of the Teacher’, Sikes states that “ageing, occupational development and identity are inextricably linked” (Sikes, 1985, p. 28). This suggests that Sikes and others who discuss the life cycle of teachers (Leithwood, 1990) not only affirm the notion of identity formed within the context of occupation, but also that the length of time the teacher spends within the teacher role reflects the degree of change resistance. Therefore, a teacher who has been teaching for twenty years will resist change more than a colleague who is new to the profession. However, it is important to note that teachers do not enter the profession at the same age, which might influence late-entry teachers’ degree of resistance.

Serow and Forrest (1994), drawing on their research of late-entry teachers, contend that some late-entry teachers identify with the role of teacher long before entry into the professional domain of teaching. While conclusions cannot be drawn from this one piece of research, there is the suggestion that some late-entry teachers, because of their prior identification with the teacher role, might experience similar resistance to fundamental changes as their colleagues. Therefore, while considering teachers’ resistance within the context of career stages it is necessary to note the length of time the teacher has identified with the threatened role as this might influence the degree of resistance.



Arguably, according to age and/or length of time within the teacher role, teachers will resist changes that threaten to alter the role that has been instrumental in the definition of his or her identity. Furthermore, teachers appear to resist educational change as a means to preserve their teacher identities. When the change exists at the organisational level, the teacher is not only faced with potential role changes, but is also faced with adjusting to a new, imposed culture. As stated by Whitaker, “an understanding of the effects that organisational structures have on us is an essential prerequisite for effective management and leadership.” (1993, p. 93)

### **Teacher Cultures**

Teacher cultures are the culmination of beliefs and attitudes within the school, which then define teachers’ actions, that “help give meaning, support and identity to teachers and their work.” (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 165) Therefore, teacher cultures reflect not only the collective identity of teachers within the organisation, but they also function to define individual teacher identities.

Teacher resistance to organisational change has generally been viewed as a phenomenon of the individual teacher. However, within the few specific research documents exploring teachers’ experiences of educational change, most identify teaching cultures as playing a role in change resistance, although at times this is obscure (Beynon, 1985; Whitaker, 1993; Preedy, 1993; and Hargreaves, 1994). As noted by Hargreaves (in Woods, 1980),

the neglect of the occupational culture of teachers....in practical terms has led us to underestimate the significance of the teachers' culture as a medium through which many innovations and reforms must pass; yet in that passage they frequently become shaped, transformed or resisted in ways that were unintended and unanticipated. (p. 126)

While educational initiatives may be altered as they filter through the teaching culture, Hargreaves (1980) also argues that teaching cultures that have been altered as a result of organisational change have the capacity to redefine themselves.

Depending on the nature of the reorganisation, multiple occupational cultures within one organisation are possible as previous teaching cultures strive to be reinvented. (Hargreaves, in Woods, 1980). Hargreaves (1994) contends that "the main barrier to change may be the professional culture of teachers..." in that "they withstand many an assault and have powerful capacities to maintain and reproduce themselves despite surface changes." (p.12) Clearly teaching cultures prove to be a formidable challenge for those who wish to implement changes that alter the fundamental way in which organisations are put together. Not only do they serve to define teacher roles and ultimately teacher identities, but teacher cultures also appear to inherently resist change.

Personal identities help form the teaching cultural of a particular educational organisation, while teaching cultures in turn help to form each teacher's individual identity. When teachers respond to educational change with resistance, they are not merely stating their opposition to a particular change initiative. Teacher resistance appears to be a coping

strategy used to manage the stress of dealing with a threat to the status quo of their identities invested in their roles.

### **Change as Stress Inducing**

Teachers resist educational reorganisation as a means of maintaining personal and cultural identities. However, with the exception of Kyriacou and Harriman (1993) few studies have linked threats to personal and cultural identities, and the incidence of stress. Even then (Kyriacou and Harriman, 1993), the discussion seems to fail to recognise teacher resistance to educational reorganisation functions as a coping behaviour. The following discussion attempts to address this rift by examining change as a potential stress inducing event that requires the adoption of coping behaviours, such as resistance, while promoting supportive teaching cultures as an effective coping resource.

Identifying change sources is relatively easy, while understanding the forces that come in to play when experiencing change is a more complex matter. Events that cause change have the potential to affect a person in a variety of ways, one of which is stress.

### **Stress Theory**

The interactionist approach to stress (Travers and Cooper, 1996) is conceptualised as the result of a mismatch between the stimulus and response and is consistent with Lazarus' belief that "events do not in themselves produce stress reactions." (Gold and Roth, 1993, p.

15) Stress, therefore, results when an individual does not have sufficient coping skills to offset the threat of an external factor (a stressor).

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978), in proposing a model of teacher stress, further explain that

teacher stress is conceptualized as being directly related to the degree to which the coping mechanisms are unable to deal with the actual stressors and the degree to which the teacher appraises the threat.( in Travers and Cooper, 1996, p. 39)

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) make an important reference to teacher appraisal of the threat.

The individual's perception of his or her ability to maintain a stressor within manageable parameters seems to influence whether coping will be sufficient. Hence, self-confidence in being able to cope with a stressor plays a role in being able to maintain the stressor within manageable parameters. Therefore, the threat of a potential stressor need not be 'real'.

The teacher needs only to interpret that he or she will be capable or incapable of coping to some degree to influence the effectiveness of coping behaviours. Furthermore, the Health Services Commission (HSC) suggests that organisational change which influences the teaching culture appears capable of transcending an individual's ability to cope.

A teacher under stress is likely to induce stress in students and among other teachers. Teachers under stress can exhibit high degrees of irritability, become inflexible in their thinking, are resistant to new ideas and may go to extremes of withdrawing from personal relationships...Where large numbers of teachers are involved, an entire school environment may be negatively affected.  
(HSC, 1990, p. 6)

In addition to these factors, the Health Services Commission has argued that the experience of stress appears to be affected by the control the individual holds over the source of the change (HSC, 1990). Therefore, the predictability of the change event and the change participants' perception of control influence the change experience.

### **Change predictability**

Adams *et al.* (1976) introduced the notion of change anticipation within four domains. Transitions can be either predictable or unpredictable, and voluntary or involuntary. Predictable-voluntary transitions produce the least amount of stress, whereas unpredictable-involuntary transitions produce the greatest amount of stress. Furthermore, “[u]npredictable disruptions cause more severe stress-related diseases than predictable disruptions.” (Adams *et al.*, 1976, p. 50)

Organisational change is typically implemented at the administrative or political levels for which teachers have little control over the change event. Therefore, educational reorganisations that are mandated are unpredictable transitions, although whether teachers voluntarily engage in the transition depends upon the individual. Nonetheless, mandated educational reorganisations are more stressful than teacher initiated reorganisations.

## **Locus of Control**

*Locus of control* is a concept that distinguishes persons who feel in control of their destinies, from those who experience little control (Rotter, 1981). An internal locus identifies persons who experience control within themselves, whereas an individual who feels powerless is identified as an external (Whitaker, 1993). Furthermore,

[p]erceptions of control increase the ability to deal with frustrating situations and thereby reduce anxiety and stress, whereas little or no perceived control can increase anxiety and depression, and negatively affect psychological health. Paradoxically, when individuals with an internal locus of control perceive that they are unable to influence the outcome of a stress problem, their level of anxiety is inclined to rise higher than a person who has an external locus of control. (Woolfe and Dryden, 1996, p. 534)

Morrish (1976) in discussing teacher passivity as one of the reasons why schools change so slowly, suggests that even if a teacher believes a change to be beneficial, their perceived powerlessness might transcend their belief.

The general feeling is that, whatever teachers may think about the possibilities of development and change, they themselves are powerless to do very much about it; and in any case, if you want a quiet life which is secure and stable, you don't start stirring up trouble. (p.67-68)

Concerning schools as organisations, Whitaker states that

[t]he clear implication from research work in this area is that when people accept responsibility for themselves and their own behaviour and recognize their own power to affect and influence the way that circumstances develop, they will be likely to work more creatively and cooperatively to the benefit of both themselves and the organisation as a whole. (1993, p. 43)

Therefore, teachers who have internal locus of control have a greater ability to offset stress not only to the benefit of their own experience of change, but also to the organisations' benefit. However, 'internal' teachers who feel powerless will experience greater stress than their 'external' colleagues experiencing the same change event.

### **Second-order Change**

In addition to a teacher's locus of control, fundamental change also influences the teacher's experience of change. Fullan argues that second order changes "seek to alter the fundamental ways in which organisations are put together, including new goals, structures, and roles" (1991, p. 29), which are the challenge for the 1990s and those which are most likely to fail.

Andy Hargreaves, in an attempt to 'move productively beyond [the kinds] of collaboration,' identifies seven moral principles and structures for collaboration. Herein he not only states that "collaboration...will place interests, careers and identities in jeopardy and create conflict" (Hargreaves, 1995, p.171), but also recognises the enigma of educational reorganisation being perceived as a superficial, first-order change and not as a second-order change.

Teachers can be expected to be committed voluntarily to change, collaboration and improved education for their students. But such voluntary commitments are, in most cases, unlikely to extend to reshaping or abandoning the basic structures in which teacher's own interests and identities have been formed.  
(Hargreaves, 1995, p. 172)

The paradox is that if teachers are going to commit to such change, teachers will be *required* to 'abandon and reshape basic structures'. What Hargreaves appears to be suggesting is a first order change, when in actuality, second order change or paradigm shift (Whitaker, 1993) is what is required for fundamental change. These seem to parallel Adams *et al.* (1976) macro and micro-transitions.

As a result of previous inquiries into educational reorganisation (Beynon, 1985; Riseborough, 1981; and Kyriacou and Harriman, 1993), organisational change is understood to create new organisational structures and teaching roles, thereby threatening teacher identities. Consequently, organisational change is second-order change and not only has a great likelihood of being resisted by those who make up the organisational culture, but also seems to have great potential to become a 'source' of high stress as suggested by Travers and Cooper (1996).

### **Reorganisational Stress**

Offsetting the experience of stress brought about by reorganisational change relies on individual teacher's abilities and perceived ability to cope, although individuals with effective coping abilities may be curtailed by other teachers via the teaching culture that binds them. In addition to each individual's ability to manage stress, a review of the literature by Travers and Cooper (1996) reveals that stress in teaching may result from the intrinsic nature of teaching; the teacher's role; career development; organisational cultures;



as well as the interface between home and school. With exception perhaps of the intrinsic nature of teaching, each of these potential stress contributors seems to play a significant role in organisational change. Consequently, educational reorganisation seems destined to produce stress reactions when teachers are faced with changes that have the potential to alter or threaten identities that have been vested in their teacher roles.

The level of stress for teachers in the threatened and merged schools was sufficiently high to give cause for grave concern over their well-being and was almost certainly undermining their ability to do their jobs. (Kyriacou and Harriman 1993, p.299)

Furthermore, the predictability of change, the teacher's locus of control and the fact that educational reorganisation is a second-order change are also factors affecting the likelihood and intensity of teacher stress. Nonetheless, educational reorganisation requires teachers to utilise coping strategies to maintain stress within manageable parameters. In other words, coping strategies, such as resistance, may be used to offset the experience of stress.

The following discussion begins by examining theory that will help to ground resistance as a coping behaviour. In doing so, not only will it become apparent that resistance is an arguably futile, palliative technique, but it will also discuss social support as perhaps the most promising coping resource for teachers engaged in educational change.

## **COPING RESOURCES**

Lazarus (Kyriacou, 1981) categorises coping behaviours into two techniques: direct-action and palliative. While there is much discussion for understanding which strategy falls in either of the two techniques, direct-action techniques are actions directed toward the source of stress in order to change the perceived stressor. According to Kyriacou, Lazarus' direct-action technique will be adopted in the first instance, although it is likely to be ineffective in the instance of school reorganisations. Subsequently individuals will utilise palliative techniques (Kyriacou, 1981).

When using palliative techniques, individuals attempt to deal with stress at a cognitive (psychic) and/or bodily (somatic) levels. According to Kyriacou's understanding of palliative techniques, cognitive levels would be "refusing to admit to oneself any experience of stress" whereas somatic examples would be "drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, or playing squash." (1981, p. 55) Furthermore, palliative techniques are "aimed at dealing with the subjective experience of stress." (1981, p.55)

Therefore, change resistance appears to be a psychic-palliative technique aimed at maintaining the teacher culture in attempts to minimise the threat to personal and cultural identities. However, as educational reorganisation is a second-order change, requiring redefinition of associated teacher identities, and teachers have little control with regard to reorganisation, resistance appears to be an act of futility. However, it is proposed that

change resistance serves a useful purpose as it acts as a psychological crutch, allowing time to assimilate the effects of the experience, while developing alternative, more effective coping strategies. In order to develop these alternative strategies, teachers rely on alternative coping resources. An important resource is social support.

According to Dunham (1992), coping behaviours are developed from resources that reside within four domains: personal, community, interpersonal and organisational. *Personal resources*, based on work, are sub-divided into four types (Dunham, 1992). Work strategies allow the teacher to conduct her or himself more efficiently so that the teacher improves self-esteem. Positive attitudes and positive pressures recognise the important contribution of thinking positively and working hard with a purpose. Out-of-school activities, Dunham's fourth sub-division, recognises the need for time for one's self.

Dunham's second domain is *community resources* and could be regarded as extra-curricular activities for teachers, such as sailing, football, yoga and so on. According to Dunham, teachers will find community activities alternatives to their professional role as teachers, perhaps allowing for opportunities to develop personal identities elsewhere.

Resources gained from interactions with people are *interpersonal* and *organisational*.

Those that are interpersonal result from forming positive relationships with persons outside the teaching profession, whereas those that are labelled organisational, come from within

the profession and include colleagues. Dunham argues that if teachers can successfully develop their coping resources within each of these domains then teachers' resources provide a 'valuable bank' that teachers can resort to when necessary.

A closer look at Dunham's coping resources reveals that each of the categories has the potential for interaction with other people. While this seems to contradict the strictly defined categories of interpersonal and organisational domains, arguably individual activities like yoga can be performed within a group setting, allowing potential time for human interaction and therefore, interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, developing self-esteem, a personal resource, is dependent upon the environment that fosters or inhibits it. Because teachers make up the work environment, they too must be considered a source for building self-esteem. Although Dunham (1992) suggests that the need for the division of person resources into personal and organisational is due to the rarity of good collegial relationships, interpersonal relationships seem to transcend many of Dunham's categories. Furthermore, in an earlier discussion in Woods (1986), Dunham indicates that social support is important to teachers' coping with stress.

### **Social Support**

Kyriacou's (1980) research indicates that family and friends, as a source of social support, are of similar importance to teachers as collegial support. However, given that organisational change is apt to bring about stress and that relationships are a potential

source of stress as well as a means for effectively dealing with potential stressors, it is understandable and apparently appropriate that educational change authors focus on the importance of collegial relationships and development of collegial support. Furthermore, when social support is available in schools there exists not only the opportunity to manage the stress associated with specific change events, there is the possibility that “social support can offset the chronic effect on health of prolonged occupational stress.”

(Kyriacou, 1981, p. 56) Collegial support appears a promising coping resource for teachers within schools undergoing educational reorganisation.

### **Collegial Support**

While Travers and Cooper (1996) note that teachers can experience stress within their relationships, Brenner *et al.*, state “that good social relationships are of great value when providing support which may alleviate stress.” (in Travers and Cooper, 1996, p.51). Cole and Walker (1989), Rogers (1996) and Newton and Tarrant (1992) identify social support within educational organisations as an effective means by which to help teachers to reduce stress or act as a buffer against stress.

At school there should be an active endeavour to breakdown the communication barrier. Talking over problems with colleagues is a big step towards a reduction of work stress, and the mutual sharing of experience, even of apprehension, boosts one’s morale and gives a feeling of ‘I am not alone’. Support is an essential item in the stress reduction: problems should be discussed not only with colleagues and

friends but also with one’s spouse and friendly family members. There is a good deal of truth in the aphorism ‘a problem shared is a problem halved’. (Cole and Walker, 1989, p. 79)

While the social support literature seems to confirm the benefit of supportive relationships, there are several problems facing social support. In addition to stigmas attached to seeking support within a work environment, the environment must be conducive to supportive relationships. Furthermore, while the educational change management literature seems to disregard social support as an effective resource, social support has three apparently distinct functions.

### **Conceptualising Social Support**

Within the stress management literature, social support is perceived as a source of potential stress, mediator of stress and a potentially effective coping resource (Gold and Roth, 1993; and Cole and Walker, 1989). However, the literature does not actively acknowledge these perceived role distinctions. Consequently, to pursue a discussion reflective of social support, it is deemed necessary to define the concepts. Henceforth, *social mediation* reflects the interface between interpersonal relationships and the development of alternative coping strategies, whereas *social interference* refers to interpersonal relationships that are in themselves a source of stress. Finally, *social support* refers to those relationships that a teacher relies on as a coping resource.

### **Stigma of Social Support**

In addition to their assertions that the sharing of a problem might result in halving it, Cole and Walker (1989) also acknowledge the confidence benefit of support groups within

schools as a means to promote supportive relations.

Support teams should be set up with time to share problems and to define the limits and priorities of pastoral care. This team/group support would reduce tutors' reluctance to discuss what they perceive to be personal failures and would help them to gain confidence and flexibility. (p.124)

Similarly, Rogers' (1996) research advocates peer-support groups for which some of the benefits were increased confidence, the development of enthusiasm, interest in the classroom as well as the school, and promoting feelings of security. However, according to the HSC (1990), the stigma attached to those who suffer from mental illness results in individuals failing to disclose that they are not able to cope with stress.

While the importance for creating an environment that allows teachers to openly discuss their problems and seek support is recognised, it appears that being seen as unable to cope will be looked upon unfavourably by principals (HSC, 1990). As a result teachers might not be forthcoming in disclosing their problems of stress and inadequate coping skills.

In *Teachers under siege: A case of unmet needs*, Barton, while acknowledging the shortcomings of the profession, is adamant that the well-being of teacher resides in promoting professional reciprocity.

[T]eachers need to develop collaborative relationships with colleagues and establish good working relationships. Teachers need to talk to one another. Reflexive teaching, quality teaching is a fundamentally social activity. Individualism and isolation need to be resisted in this process. (1991, p.7)

However, expecting teachers to engage in supportive relationships seems unrealistic due to mental health stigmas (HSC, 1990), as well as time restrictions coupled with work intensification (Hargreaves, 1992), and the historical phenomenon of teaching as an

isolating and individual activity (Hargreaves, 1994). Ironically, teachers are being encouraged to be more collaborative at a time when there is less time to do so.

Having identified some potential barriers is not to suggest that supportive teaching cultures should not be pursued in earnest. Because of potential benefits for individual teachers and the organisation, supportive teaching cultures seem to be an appropriate endeavour.

If individuals can effectively help each other, feel supported and work together with appropriate and regular professional supervision, the change process will take care of itself with very little need for top down impetus. (Newton and Tarrant, 1992, p.207)

### **Social Support – literature rift**

Supportive collegial relationships within educational organisations have been promoted as valuable coping and teacher development resources especially during times of educational change, although not exclusively. However, educational change management literature fails to promote collaborative practices, including social support, with any conceptual consistency. Consequently, not only is social support at risk of being disregarded as an apparently effective, though not necessarily exclusive, means for enhancing the success of educational change events, but it also diminishes potential opportunities for educators to understand how supportive teaching relationships may be developed. However, in defense of the educational change literature, Hargreaves (1994) seems to suggest that focusing on the teacher as a person can lead to narcissism.



## **Social support - enhancing narcissism**

Putting an emphasis on the teacher as a person assists teachers in processes of self-understanding which are grounded in their life and work. It helps others to work with teachers more effectively. And it gives much-needed credibility and dignity to teachers' own personal and practical knowledge of their work in relation to the pronouncements of policy makers. But when moral frameworks are missing, or senses of context are weak, approaching teacher development predominantly or exclusively as a process of self-development has serious limitations. (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 73)

He goes on to say that

Moral frameworks and a keen awareness of (as well as a willingness to engage with) the micropolitical realities of schooling are essential if the teachers' self is to be a genuinely empowered self; not one that is narcissistic, self-indulgent or piously grandiose about its personal potential to change the world. (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 74-75)

Clearly Hargreaves is concerned for teacher development and would perhaps argue that the discourse of stress management should be left for others to consider. However, stress seems to be a consistent theme of teachers' experiences of educational change, as has been argued previously. Surely educational change authors are not fostering a comprehensive discussion for educational change management strategies when they fail to discuss supportive collegial relationships as a resource. Nonetheless, the educational change management literature appears to overlook collegial support as a coping resource. Rather, they discuss the benefit of collaborative teaching cultures.

The concluding section, *Change Management Strategies*, identifies that educational change management literature recognises collaborative practices that lead to collaborative cultures as the most effective management strategy for educational leaders. Although there is a debate within the literature as to what constitutes a collaborative practice, for which collegial support appears to be accepted as a factor, collegial support seems to be largely disregarded. Arguably it appears that this is a reflection of collaboration via empowering leadership. While the argument will support the importance of leadership as a necessity for successful collaboration and indeed, collegial support, leadership is primarily considered an administrative role. Once again promoting the importance of the teacher to provide support to colleagues, it will be argued that teacher-leaders, in addition to administrative leaders, have a vital leadership role to play in the development of collaborative cultures, which by definition includes collegial support.

## **CHANGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

### **Social Support vs. Collaboration**

In essence, collaboration is defined by working relationships that help teachers in some capacity. However, often the focus of benefit with regard to collaborative cultures concerns pedagogical activities. This distinction is evident from Newton and Tarrant's (1992) exploration of supervision and support for the benefit of imposed educational change, who state that "Unfortunately the staff of schools in many countries are notorious for finding it difficult to collaborate effectively or to help each other." (p.207) While arguing the

importance of supportive relationships within their 'practical handbook' for managing change, they seem to be affirming that the development of collaboration is an option distinct to helping colleagues. To enhance the argument, Whitaker (1993) states that

Collaboration structures create more conducive conditions for skills and expertise to be shared and allocated appropriately and make it easier for individuals to be encouraged and supported. (p. 88)

While the distinction appears obscure, collaboration seems to be offered as a mode of practice, which when in place allows for collegial support. However, I would maintain that collegial support is a collaborative practice. Hargreaves recognises that just what constitutes collaborative practices is a matter of dispute.

In terms of specific initiatives alone, collaboration and collegiality can take the form of teaching, collaborative planning, peer coaching, mentor relationships, professional dialogue and collaborative action research, to name but a few. (1994, p. 188)

Apparently collaboration is an ambiguous concept, as it is regarded as both a helping relationship (Newton and Tarrant, 1992) and a vehicle to aid the development of supportive relationships (Whitaker, 1993), as well as a teacher development strategy (Hargreaves, 1994). Therefore, although the stress management literature, and in some instances change management literature (Newton and Tarrant, 1992), recognise the benefit of supportive relationships, social support is not to be confused with collaborative practices intended to develop collaborative teaching cultures. However, where collaborative practices exist, social support appears to be a feature also. Drawing on Judith Warren Little's paper

entitled *Schools' contributions to Teaching as a Profession* (1985), Lieberman states the benefits of closer collegial relations which form the basis of collaborative teaching practices.

Schools benefit first by simply orchestrating the daily work of teaching across classrooms. Teachers, students and parents all gain confidence in their knowledge of what is taught throughout the program and why. Teachers are better prepared to support one another's strengths and to accommodate weaknesses. Second, schools that promote teacher-to-teacher work tend to be organised to examine and test new ideas, methods and materials. They are adaptable and self-reliant in the face of new demands; they have the necessary organisation to attempt school or classroom innovations that would exhaust the energy, skill or resources of an individual teacher. Finally, schools that foster collegiality are plausibly organised to ease the strain of staff turnover, both by providing systematic assistance to beginning teachers and by explicitly socialising all newcomers to staff values, traditions and resources. (1990, p. 176)

The case for collaborative practices in schools has been well documented (Lieberman, 1990; and Little, 1990) and, according to Hargreaves (1994), collaborative cultures are now widely proposed as an organisational solution to the problems of contemporary schooling, just as it is proposed as a flexible solution to rapid change... Collaborative decision-making and problem solving is a cornerstone of postmodern organisations. (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 17)

### **Collaborative Cultures**

Although Hargreaves (1994) has identified collaborative cultures as "working relationships between teachers and their colleagues (that) tend to be spontaneous, voluntary, development-oriented, pervasive across time and space and unpredictable." (p.192), these are not easily developed, nor sustained.

Hargreaves (1994) argues any collaboration that is contrived is inflexible and inefficient, thereby delaying, distracting and demeaning teachers. While Lieberman (1990) explains that not all teachers experience collaboration with enthusiasm, which might be a consequence of the tradition of teaching in isolation, and herein it becomes fundamental to acknowledge that collaborative practices can be either contrived or spontaneous, whereas collaborative teaching cultures, as argued by Hargreaves (1994), are spontaneous and unfortunately infrequent. While collaborative cultures appear to be favourable, Hargreaves notes that these are at risk of balkanisation.

Balkanization is characterised by strong and enduring boundaries between different parts of the organisation, by personal identification with the domains these boundaries define, and by differences of power between one domain and another. (Hargreaves, 1994, p.235)

Hargreaves (1994) argues that collaborative cultures are at risk of balkanisation, which restricts the ability of the teaching culture to adopt a whole-school approach to education, usually within subject departments.

To be a member of a 'whole-school' is to aspire to belong to a community, to share the same educational beliefs and aims, to work together as a team, to acknowledge and activate the complementary expertise of colleagues, to relate well to other members of the group, to be aware of and involved in classes beyond one's own, and to value the leadership of the school principal. (Hargreaves, 1991, p. 235)

Consequently whole-school identities are possible, although unlikely especially in secondary schools where the curriculum is taught by subject matter and teachers work within departments.

Although collaborative cultures seem to be an idealistic undertaking if they are to resist balkanisation, and not be contrived, while attaining whole-school status, the educational change literature maintains that these are a worthy endeavour for contemporary schools. Furthermore, although the change management literature appears to distinguish between collaborative practices and social support, evidently social support functions within collaborative cultures. This issue notwithstanding, Hargreaves (1994) notes that the development of collaborative cultures requires dedicated teachers, a system supportive of experimental practices and exceptional leadership. Furthermore, although whole-school identities as described in Nias, Southwarth and Campbell's (1992) research of primary schools are difficult to establish, the importance of leadership is also recognised.

Where the school is small, where it is predominately middle class and not very multicultural in its intake, and where the leadership is in some ways neo-feudal in character, with a strong, visionary principal caring in a benevolently matriarchal or patriarchal but nonetheless inclusive way for a family of collaborating teachers (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 235-6).

## **Leadership**

Leithwood, et al. (1994), drawing on the work of George Terry, suggest that leadership is the act of influence upon a group for the sake of identifying shared goals, an apparently accurate, yet simplistic definition of leadership. Hargreaves (1994) contends that expert leadership is important to having a collaborative culture, while Leithwood, et al. (1994) recognise expert leadership as necessary for future schools. Leadership seems to be identified as the most probable means to achieve successful schools. Indeed, most

discussions of educational change suggests strategies that are largely dependent upon leadership skill. Furthermore in the development of supportive teaching cultures, Newton and Tarrant (1992) argue that the “process does not have to be hierarchical although it does have to be valued by the school leaders.” (p. 227) Like the rift that exists between collaborative relations and supportive relations, leadership appears faced with a similar disparity.

Consensually, collaborative cultures seem to require the skilful, expert leadership of the principal, which is democratic in style and empowers teachers by means of collaborative decision-making activities and shared governance for the school (Blase and Anderson, 1995; Hargreaves, 1994; and Leithwood, Begley and Cousins, 1994). Leadership of this kind includes the substantial participation of teachers at the school level. Leadership appears to be essential to developing collaborative practices. As well, effective leadership is fundamental to supportive teaching cultures.

### **Leadership - social support**

Apparently the principal of a school holds the position to promote and facilitate the creation of an environment conducive to social support. Therefore, the principal might be regarded as the keeper of social support. If the principal does not advocate an appropriately safe environment, where teachers feel able to seek collegial support, then it is unlikely that teachers will place themselves in a situation that is bound to be perceived as

an unfavourable inability to cope (HSC, 1990). The role of the principal as advocate for social support is a crucial one, creating the time and an environment that allows teachers, without recourse to discuss openly their concerns and problems encountered.

While leadership seems justifiably a fundamental resource within both the change management and social support literature, the contradiction between democratic, empowering leadership and collaboration seems obvious. Is it possible to achieve true collaboration, where all teachers and administrators work together, with each having a voice, where leadership is empowering, but not product oriented, and does not lead to collusion and/or balkanised cultures? Collaborative cultures appear an impossibility, which is identified by Hargreaves' (1994) critique of collegiality.

Because there are so many faces of collaboration and collegiality, their professed attractions as a whole should be treated with caution. There is no such thing as "real" or "true" collaboration or collegiality. There are only different forms of collaboration and collegiality that have different consequences and serve different purposes. (p.189)

Collaboration when spoken within the context of education management seems a pretentious, rhetorical concept. Even so, removing the boundaries that seem to define true collaboration, instances of collaboration have been identified (Hargreaves, 1994; Lieberman, 1986; and Blase and Anderson, 1995). When speaking of collaboration therefore, leadership should intervene to empower teachers' participation in leadership roles. Consequently, teachers should become leaders within their educational



organisations. However, the literature currently recognises leadership as an administrative role which acts upon and not within the teaching profession.

Although leadership is at risk of being restricted to administrative positions as is the case with Holmes' (1993) *Essential School Leadership*, arguably teachers too have a role to play especially concerning the development of collegial support and collaborative cultures.

While arguments might strongly reflect leadership as an administrative role, contemporary educational management literature frequently recognises the contribution of teachers as leaders.

### **Teacher-leaders**

While Hargreaves (1991) recognises that *teacher-leaders* "can become one of the most powerful forces of change," (p.139) their exclusion from discussions pertaining to leadership roles seems reflective of historical boundaries. Drawing on the work of Little, (1987) and Smylie and Denny (1989), Hargreaves (1991) notes that "(t)he teacher-leader's task will not be easy because teachers have not been used to viewing and helping each other's work." (p.139) However, mentoring programs that are formally initiated and compulsory for the purpose of teacher training and/or development, offer similar leadership activities.

Tomlinson (1995), Wilkin (1992), and Smith and West-Burnham (1992), discuss mentoring as a structured task, which reflects a formal relationship between the experienced and less experienced teacher, where the inexperienced benefits from the knowledge and skill of the other. Although there has been a great deal of focus on mentoring as a means for student-teacher education and mentoring roles seem to be largely based on leadership of the experiences, as a means to promote supportive collegial relations, they are divorced from leadership discussions within the educational literature. Arguably this is a reflection of mentors operating within a formal, educational capacity. Indeed, Hargreaves (1994) refers to peer-coaching as a means to improve practice. Although this too seems to be defined by formal criteria, it seems reasonable to suggest that teacher-mentors fulfil a leadership role and are in a position to facilitate collaborative practices that include supportive teacher relationships.

Returning to Terry's concept of leadership adopted by Leithwood, *et al.* (1994) and others, the suggestion is that the leader is the principal of the school. While this restricts the inclusion of teachers, clearly teachers may act as leaders thereby influencing the group for the purpose of identifying shared goals. While much of the educational change and teacher development literature recognises the benefit of securing teacher commitment for innovation and change, few identify teachers not holding administrative positions as leaders or potential leaders within educational organisations. In addition to this apparent shortcoming of the literature, where there is potential for shared leadership among

administrators and teachers leading to collaborative cultures, there is a risk of failure due to inherent difficulties.

### **Paradox of Shared Leadership**

Blase and Anderson (1995) suggest that shared governance may not result in truly collaborative practices because of consensus among like professionals or compliance from teachers due to professional socialisation. Empowering teachers to participate must clearly go beyond the inclusion of similar minded professionals so that consensus is achieved as a result of true participation. While this may lead to collaboration, leaders must also find ways to get teachers to participate in discussions where they have previously been mute. Furthermore, not only does true democratic leadership appear an impossibility, where participatory cultures exist, power relationships are left intact (Blase and Anderson, 1995). Nonetheless, principals are in a position to establish an environment conducive to supportive collegiality. However, Travers and Cooper's research of stress and teaching concluded that, "(h)eadteachers are less likely to be sought as producers of support in the event of stress" (1996, p. 114). This again confirms the importance of teacher-leaders.

### **Summary**

The literature review, although not exhaustive, has revealed and supported the view that teacher experiences of educational reorganisation frequently reflects teacher resistance to

change. Although the change management literature appears to frequently reduce teacher resistance to an identifiable issue best managed within the context of collaborative practices, some change authors recognise this as a function of being uninformed about the fundamental requisites of change. Attempting to address this perceived shortcoming, a review of how teachers' identities are formed within their teacher roles and occupational cultures, provided an explanation of why change, specifically educational reorganisation, threatens identities and teacher cultures. Furthermore, stress was also identified as a frequent feature of educational change, and has been argued to be even more likely during changes affecting organisational structures. As a result of the stress associated with educational change and the threat to invested identities, teachers exhibit coping behaviours of which resistance has been argued to be a strategy. While the effectiveness of resistance as a coping strategy was questioned, the discussion explored alternative coping resources, giving specific attention to the role of social support.

The educational stress management literature consulted recognises the benefit of developing supportive relations particularly those that are collegial. While there are potential difficulties in pursuing cultures where collegial support is the norm, the benefits appear to transcend even the apparent literature rift within the educational change management sector.

[Teachers] are happiest in a social environment characterised by mutual dependence in which "sharing" is the norm and individuals do not feel ashamed to admit to failure or a sense of inadequacy...relationships between staff who can and do help each other, provide one another with oases of calm in a long and frenetic

day, set one another high but attainable standards for professional performance and provide a mutually supportive social environment, are characterised by: personal accessibility; plenty of opportunity for discussion; laughter; praise and recognition. (Nias, 1989 in Fullan, 1991, p. 135)

Nonetheless, collaborative practices, which may or may not include collegial support, are regarded as the most promising endeavour for contemporary educational organisations.

While collaboration is not without its own conceptual paradoxes and implementation barriers, empowering leadership, which promotes teacher participation, is seen to be fundamental for their development and sustenance.

While it appears indisputable that leadership is fundamental for successful change management, primarily leadership discourse reflects administrative personnel skill. Furthermore, the principal is most often regarded as the fundamental proponent of change management strategies. Nonetheless, teacher-leaders have a vital role to play in promoting and sustaining such strategies.

The literature appears to acknowledge and support, although with varying degrees of certainty, the benefit of supportive collegial relations and the role of teacher-leaders, irrespective of several conceptual paradoxes and voids within the change and stress management literature. Furthermore, the role of the teacher appears to be fundamental to ensuring effective management strategies that not only serve to relieve stress associated

with change events, but also the everyday stress associated with the teacher profession.

Supportive teacher cultures appear to foster the development of coping abilities and in themselves have been argued to be a coping resource. Arguably, it is the teachers who are in the position to influence such cultures, perhaps as informal mentors. Therefore, teachers who support colleagues not only promote supportive cultures, but they also fulfil a fundamental leadership role. While it is not the purpose of this literature review to discredit the effectiveness of collaborative teaching cultures and the role of the principal as leader, it would appear that cultures reflective of supportive teacher relations, where they exist, are capable of enhancing the success of change events and improving teachers' experience of educational change.

Therefore, the forthcoming inquiry examines teacher experiences of educational change. In conducting a case study of an educational organisation undergoing change, the study investigates whether teacher change resistance functions as a coping behaviour for teachers who attempt to maintain the threat to their personal and cultural identity. Furthermore, the case study will investigate whether supportive collegial relations do aid coping and also explore the role of teacher-leaders in developing the supportive teaching culture.

## **Chapter III**

### ***METHODOLOGY***

In this chapter the design, data collection and analytical processes based on the purpose of the study are discussed. To explore teachers' experiences of the secondary school demerger, two sets of depth-interviews, comprised of open-ended questions, were conducted with the study participants at Midtown High (junior site). However, several ethical problems were identified due to relationships with participants, as well as the study's focus on certain sensitive issues. A research conduct statement (Appendix 2) was devised to address each issue, ultimately resulting in informed consent. The discussion concludes with consideration of the classic qualitative methods of analysis, which led to the use of grounded theory.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY-academic and personal**

In the literature review, I argued that supportive collegial relations aided by teacher-leaders, administrative leadership, and collaborative teaching cultures appear to be fundamental for teachers to effectively cope during times of educational change.

Furthermore, it was argued that the teaching culture, wherein lies teacher support, has the ability to redefine itself irrespective of effective leadership strategies that might be adopted to deal with teacher resistance to change. Although this suggests that leadership strategies are destined to fail where teacher cultures are not supportive of the change, I argued that teaching cultures that exhibit supportive collegial relations, are collaborative and have empowering administrative leadership, will promote teachers' coping with organisational change. Therefore, teaching cultures have the capability to influence the success of educational reorganisation, but if they are supportive, teaching cultures may also be utilised as a coping resource. However, the educational change management literature seems to exclusively recognise leadership strategies and collaborative teaching cultures as effective means for achieving teacher compliance to educational change.

There exists an argument for the need to listen to the teachers' voices, "to the person it expresses and to the purposes it articulates" (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 249). Furthermore, change management strategies including leadership, collaborative cultures and supportive collegial relationships are recognised (Hargreaves, 1994). However, the discourse



segregates teachers' experiences of change, the fundamentals of change and coping resources. Hence, the literature repeatedly fails to offer any new insights as to how and why teachers cope (or fail to cope) in the way that they do. Apparently, this is a result of the focus of the research, a fear of creating narcissism or mere misunderstanding for the experience of change. Nonetheless, the time to focus on teachers' personal experiences of reorganisation so that it is possible to explore the role of supportive collegial relationships has arrived. Therefore, this inquiry aims to explore the role of supportive teaching cultures as a coping resource during educational reorganisation by exploring teachers' experiences of an educational reorganisation.

Previously, I succeeded in implementing, analysing and reporting on a quantitative inquiry.

Since that time, I have spent a great deal of time reflecting on how people experience change. Arguably, this was a reflection of my own personal experiences of imposed change. Therefore, my current interest of change experiences and the perceived shortcomings of the educational change literature ultimately resulted in the pursuit of a qualitative inquiry.

## **STUDY DESIGN**

Methodological approaches can be broadly defined into one of two categories, that may overlap depending on the evaluation being undertaken (Morrison, 1993). Quantitative

approaches are those that require detailed preliminary consideration thereby resulting in more simplified analytical process. Furthermore, quantitative methodologies are appropriate to studies where description, correlation, and statistics, among other things, (Morrison, 1993) are of primary interest to the study being undertaken. As this study was intended to reflect the unique, subjective experiences of teachers undergoing educational reorganisation, quantitative approaches were largely inappropriate. Teacher numbers in schools are relatively small if wanting to establish statistical evidence. More importantly the inquiry did not seek descriptive data, based upon a prescribed set of categories (Morrison, 1993 and Patton, 1987).

According to Michael Patton (1980 and 1987), qualitative methods can be naturalistic, inductive and/or holistic. If the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the participants or the study site and the phenomenon is studied in its naturally occurring state, the inquiry is said to be naturalistic. Furthermore, if existing theoretical assumptions are not imposed on the study and “researchers using the qualitative methods strive to understand phenomena and situations as a whole, ” (Patton, 1987, p. 40) then the study is holistic-inductive.

There are numerous methods of evaluation as discussed by Patton (1987) and Morrison (1993). However, several methods are expendable within this study as these primarily produce data in which “variables and outcomes are specified in advance, measured in

operational quantities, and where possible, subjected to experimental manipulation.”

(Patton, 1987, p. 50) Traditionally these methods are representative of quantitative methods, although not exclusively so (Patton, 1987).

Patton recognises the transaction model, like the goal-free and decision-making models, as one of the “evaluation models compatible with qualitative methods” (1987, p.53), of which illuminative evaluation is a variation. Since this inquiry represents a single case study

that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. (Yin, 1984, p.23),

the illuminative model is appropriate. As is stated by Morrison (1993),

[t]he illuminative model is a very powerful approach to generating case studies which celebrate the particulars of a situation. The attraction of this approach lies in its ability to generate an evaluation which is rich in authenticity and honesty, being very close to the objects of the evaluation, rich in multiple perspectives, having high explanatory potential, and being capable of identifying key features of a programme as experienced by the participants. (p. 51)

However, the illuminative model generates large quantities of data from a small sample group, which are open to interpretation by the researcher. (Morrison, 1993)

## **Reflexivity**

Woolfe and Dryden (1996) note that reflexivity is a core value of qualitative studies, whereby research is a subjective account of a phenomenon. As researchers, “[t]he ways in which we theorize a problem will affect the way we examine it, and the ways we explore a

problem will affect the explanation we give.” (Bannister, 1994, p.13) Furthermore, as the researcher’s understanding of a phenomenon increases, the way in which he or she looks at a problem shifts as well.

Qualitative research does not assume objectivity like the positivist tradition. It is framed by the researcher’s disposition, which is further shaped by information generated by the study. This in turn “will restructure the way it will be understood by others” (Banister et al., 1994, p. 14). Since reflexivity is

[w]ork (research or theoretical text) which includes self-criticism and alerts the reader to the human subjective processes involved in production of the text; it warns the reader that knowledge is relative to the writer’s perspective. (Coolican, 1994, p. 184),

factors affecting this study (including potential biases) are discussed throughout this chapter and are also defined by the theory discussed in the literature review.

Although positivist strategies have traditionally been valued for their ability to generalise findings,

Qualitative methods can be used both to *discover* what is happening and then to *verify* what has been discovered. What is discovered must be verified by going back to the empirical world under study and examining the extent to which the emergent analysis fits the phenomenon and works to explain what has been observed. (Patton, 1987, p. 47)

The value of the holistic-inductive, naturalistic study is inherent in what it seeks to accomplish as a method of inquiry. The study sought detail and depth (Patton, 1980) of

teachers' experiences to promote understanding for the role of supportive collegial relationships during educational reorganisation. Although the validity of analysis is determined by the fit as described by Patton (1987), qualitative data is in itself valid because of its relativism (Coolican, 1994).

Each research participant holds a unique perception of what is real or true, because of co-constructed social realities (Woolfe and Dryden, 1996). Therefore, the validity of qualitative data, unlike quantitative data, is based on the premise that the phenomenon being studied is representative of the participant's experience within a discernible context. Therefore, the validity of the data ultimately relies on the fit between the study's purpose and the methodology. Furthermore, the validity of the data is improved by data triangulation.

[i]nvolves collecting accounts from different participants involved in the chosen setting, from different stages in the activity of the setting and if appropriate from different sites of the setting. Insights that rely on only one source of data are clearly limited. Accounts from people differently positioned within the context are unlikely to fit neatly together. They do, however, highlight how experiencing and thus understanding are context bound. Triangulation allows for considerable extension and depth of description. (Banister et al., 1994, p. 146)

Whereas quantitative studies seek 'truths' that can be generalised, qualitative studies attempt to create meaning within a specific context. This study seeks to explore teachers' experiences of educational reorganisation, while considering the role of collegial support as a coping resource. Hence, the requisite 'fit' between the purpose of the study and the methodology will result in valid data.

## **EVALUATION PARAMETERS**

In this section, the context of educational change is discussed for the identification of the study site. Furthermore, several potential biases are examined prior to establishing the sample group of this case study. Noting the parameters of the case study establishes the foundation on which the data collection techniques were based.

### **Contextualising Educational Change**

In order to address the role of the teaching culture during educational change, the participation of an educational organisation undergoing change was fundamental to the inquiry. More specifically, it was necessary to study an organisation in which the change was at the organisational level and encompassed the whole organisation. The sample group would then be considerably larger than, for example, a departmental reorganisation. This would possibly lead to greater insight into the differences of teachers' experiences.

However, within the educational change and change management literature, there is little distinction between the sources of the educational change; organisational, pedagogical or curricular, and whether these are mandated and/or adopted at the political or educational level (Fullan, 1991; Newton and Tarrant, 1992; and Whitaker, 1993). Although Fullan (1991) recognises that teacher responses to change are influenced by the source, the lack of

specificity leads to the assumption that teacher responses to educational change will be categorical. While it is not the intention of this inquiry to argue this point, it appears necessary to recognise it. In doing so, not only am I recognising that this as an area for further consideration, but I am also acknowledging the possible influence of the change source on the nature and degree of teacher response. Therefore, prior to contacting prospective participants, it seemed necessary to define which type of educational reorganisation would be pursued.

Firstly, I chose to approach schools within the primary and secondary sectors of education who were undergoing a school merger in line with previously conducted research of educational reorganisation. (Beynon, 1985; Riseborough, 1981; Kyriacou and Harriman, 1993; and McHugh and Kyle, 1993). Secondly, it was assumed that organisations within the further and higher education sectors would have larger staff bases and therefore, make it difficult within the scope of this study to ensure adequate representation of various educators' experiences within the entire organisation. Simply put, they were thought to be too large to be thorough. Finally, the primary sources of educational change literature consulted for this study were based within the primary and secondary sectors. For these reasons, a letter to my local county's educational authority requested the identification of primary or secondary schools that would be undergoing a recent or upcoming school merger.

Identifying recently merged or merging schools would allow for the exploration of teachers' perceptions of a change over a period of time at the onset of the change and then again, at a later time. Since the experience of change shifts in intensity with time, as change is a process, seeking participants at the onset of their experience would help to establish differences in the intensity of their experiences. I was seeking data that was an accurate representation of the teacher's experience of educational reorganisation as it was happening. Ideally, the school reorganisation would occur at the time that I was ready to conduct the empirical component of the research. Doing so would promote the accuracy of the teacher's experience, although it is recognised that other factors influence the data and attempts to address these will be made later. As a result of these considerations and the forwarded letter, one primary and two secondary schools were identified as recently merged or merging.

### **Seeking Participant Organisations**

Letters were addressed to the head teacher of each school, outlining my intent.

Subsequently, I placed a telephone call to each head teacher. The head teacher of the primary school expressed interest, whereas the others felt that with the extra burden of the merger, they could not participate. Three meetings and numerous telephone conversations were held over a period of four months with the head teacher of the primary school.

During these meetings the head teacher and I discussed teacher participation, confidentiality, and representation of the teachers' views in the research report. Although



the head teacher seemed genuinely interested in participating, the teachers at the school did not share her opinion. As a final effort to engage the teachers' participation, I organised a meeting to address their concerns. No one came to the meeting and I concluded that this was not a possible research site. Furthermore, I was aware that the seven-month investment in this site was in vain and that precious time had been wasted.

However, given time to reflect on the experience, I learned several valuable lessons. Firstly, asking teachers to talk about their personal experiences of change is not only difficult for the teacher due to professional relationships, but teachers are also of the opinion that their experiences may not be accurately depicted in the research. Secondly, teachers undergoing reorganisation have greater demands placed on their time and participating in research would be a further demand. Finally, while considering each of these concerns, I determined that it would be useful to identify how I would deal with the teachers' concerns. Consequently, I devised a consent statement and forwarded this to prospective participants (Appendix 2).

### **The Research Site**

In conversation with my parents following the site setback, I was informed that the school in which I had been a student and which had undergone a merger nearly twenty years previously would be demerging at the time I would be ready to begin the empirical work component of the study. While it was the intent to pursue a merging school, the demerger

of Midtown High School would also provide teachers' experiences of reorganisation.

(Appendix1 - Historical Perspective) However, several difficulties were identified.

As a former student of the demerging school, I had developed relationships with several teachers. It became obvious, however, that the majority of these teachers had since retired or became employed elsewhere. More importantly, my father was the principal of the merged school, although would not continue as the principal of the 'junior' school once the demerger occurred. As a result of my relationships at the junior high school, it was necessary to address several potential biases.

### **Addressing Biases**

Although there was a perceived urgency in the task of securing participation, much time was spent considering the possibility of utilising this particular site. All efforts to base an informed decision upon reading discussions of ethical matters in research texts initially seemed unsuccessful, as there is little discussion about 'familiar' relationships between researcher and research participants (Lee, 1993; Burgess, 1989; and Bond, 1993).

However, after careful consideration, I concluded that relationships held prior to the inquiry should not be the basis for restricting research. Indeed there are arguments for the establishment of rapport and friendship within ethnographic research.

Corrine Glesne (1989), for example, has written about the importance of rapport in ethnographic research. Based on her own research, she notes that while friendships are “more problematic” (p, 53) and can bias the data and its collection, friendships “also may contribute an even more potent voice than that gained through rapport.” (p, 53). Glesne (1989) argues that ethnographic researchers need to pay greater attention to rapport and friendship. In providing the opportunity for greater depth of interview, which these previous relations between myself and the research participants would offer, the problem of disclosure also needed to be addressed.

Lee (1993) states that “there is no guarantee that informants will realize before an interview begins what they might reveal, in what ways, or at what risk.” (p. 103) Because the inquiry sought teachers’ experiences, it was recognised that the topic of inquiry might raise professional concerns for the participants. The teachers might be concerned that their interview data would have repercussions for themselves or other teachers. For this reason, the ownership of research data became an important issue. Therefore, it was decided that the teachers would be the owners of their data with the opportunity to edit as they saw fit. Furthermore, if the teachers knew they would have the opportunity to edit their own interviews prior to analysis, it was thought that they would freely discuss their experiences. However, providing this opportunity also meant the possibility of teachers deciding not to include their interview for analysis. I was of the opinion that the onus was on me to demonstrate professional regard for each participant and his or her concerns, thereby,

reducing the likelihood of participants editing or withdrawing their data.

Additionally, it was important that the teachers did not feel coerced to participate, as this might influence the authenticity of their accounts. Therefore, the confidentiality of those opting to participate was paramount. In maintaining confidentiality, not only would the participants be unknown to the principal, but also those teachers who decided not to participate would remain anonymous.

Finally, as a result of the relationships at this research site, there was potential for the data to be biased. Teachers might try to anticipate the issues of the study and respond in a way perceived to be favourable to the researcher. Too, the researcher may over-identify with the teachers, biasing the data by selectivity. Although there is no way to ensure that participants don't 'go native' (Glense, 1989 and Lee, 1993), being aware of the issue is important. Furthermore, although maintaining objectivity contradicts the nature of qualitative investigations (Hammersley, 1993), promoting objectivity throughout the research process with regard to ethical issues should maintain the accuracy of the data.

Disclosure of sensitive data, coercion to participate and the potential for 'going native' were research issues compounded by the existing relationships at the junior high school. Since qualitative research is neither a neutral nor impartial activity (Henwood and Pidgeon, in Hammersley, 1993), there were additional factors that may influence the validity and

reliability of the study requiring consideration.

According to Yin (1984), the researcher must be able to ask good questions, while being a good listener, be adaptive and flexible, have a firm grasp of the issues being studied and be unbiased by preconceived notions. The skill of the researcher is paramount to the success of the case study investigation. Furthermore, acknowledging the use of these skills also implies that the researcher's presence plays a role in the collection of the data.

Riddell, in her discussion of the ethics of feminist researcher in education (in Burgess, 1989), suggests that gathering data from women is not only informative, but that the relationship between researcher and participant is also exploitative. Citing the work of Oakley, Riddell (in Burgess, 1989), notes that the gender of the researcher and participant operates as a form of power relation. While it is not my intent to engage in a debate on power relationships and exploitation, feminist researchers seem to appropriately acknowledge the role of the researcher's presence. Of course by referring to feminist research I am not suggesting that exploitation or the influence of the researcher is only a phenomenon of female researchers and participants. Arguably male participants are also subjected to exploitation and power relationships.

The presence and skills of the researcher act as both a physical and psychological filter through which the inquiry occurs. Status, dress, gender and articulation all have the

potential to influence the participant and therefore, the data. Furthermore, in recognising that the researcher relies on his or her self to conduct the inquiry, it is accepted that qualitative inquiries are not objective in the way that quantitative studies try to be. However, instead of regarding the lack of objectivity as prejudicing the data, seeking means to manage the objectivity of the inquiry is central to the research. This was achieved through consistency of approach. I would be the only researcher, conducting the same inquiry, within the same time frame and under similar conditions. While there is little to do about my gender, as I am the only researcher, my gender remains consistent. I also chose to dress similarly for each participant encounter.

These methodological and ethical issues were encompassed in the important matter of gaining informed consent. Informed consent requires that not only do the research participants agree to participate in an inquiry, it also acknowledges that participants be aware of the purpose of the inquiry. In general, this might prove problematic as at times the nature of research is not evident until it is underway or perhaps even completed. Furthermore, the participants must be informed of the procedures for collecting the data, what their rights are with regard to the data and how the researcher expects to deal with issues. Providing all of this information and being forthcoming results in the participation of informed individuals (Burgess, 1989).

Considering the various ethical issues of pursuing this research site led me to conclude that

informed consent (Lee, 1993; Bond, 1993; Banister, 1994 and Burgess, 1989) is one, if not the fundamental ethical issue when conducting research. Therefore, the *conduct statement* was revised to address each of the issues identified. However, if the researcher is to achieve informed consent and not merely play lip service to it by writing a statement, then the researcher must have the integrity to abide by its content.

### **Sampling**

Initially, the teachers participating in this study were self-chosen for two reasons. Firstly, when I contacted the teachers upon my arrival, there was an overwhelming response for participation. Furthermore, I had allotted time to conduct as many interviews as there were teachers in the school. Consequently, as a result of this indiscriminate sampling (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) it was not necessary to seek participants based on any categorical quota. Secondly, in my bid to act upon my stated objective of having informed consent for participants, I did not think it appropriate to have anyone participate that felt compromised in any way. As thirteen of a possible eighteen teachers were willing to participate, which is important for internal validity when conducting a case study (Yin, 1994), I ultimately relied on an opportunistic sample (Morrison, 1993) within this inquiry.

During the second stage of the inquiry, some teachers were unavailable due to a change in their employment. Furthermore, as this was an opportunity to focus and build upon the previous data, as well address inconsistencies or difficulties within the preliminary

analysis, discriminate sampling (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) was used to identify six of the original participants who defined themselves as either for or against the demerger. The latter group also included the newly appointed principal for a total of seven participants.

## **DATA COLLECTION**

Having arrived at the illuminative model of evaluation, it was necessary to explore methods of gathering qualitative data that would give insight into teachers' experiences of educational reorganisations. The method had to accommodate the gathering of data reflective of the previously noted theoretical issues, such as the potential role of the teaching culture. Furthermore, the data had to be capable of reflecting teachers' experiences of reorganisation. Therefore, it was determined that the data be derived from two semi-structured interviews, containing a series of open-ended questions as a result of the following considerations.

Qualitative data can be derived from two sources, observation and/or interviews. While either of these would have been appropriate to use in this inquiry, several factors were noted which prompted the use of the interview technique. Firstly, the issue of time was of concern as site was in another country. Depth-interviews require significant development of the questions to be asked and the interview with each participant may take several hours.



However, the duration of observation may be as long as a year (Patton, 1987). Therefore, to meet the time constraints of the study, depth-interviewing was chosen. This is not to suggest that concessions were made to the detriment of the study.

While observation establishes context, identifies nuances and sensitive information, and enhances the inductive approach and reflexivity, depth-interviewing “probes beneath the surface, soliciting detail and providing a holistic understanding of the interviewee’s point of view.” (Patton, 1987, p. 108) Interviews offer the opportunity to reflect the essence of the inquiry, within the time frame allotted and perhaps most importantly, allow the participant to respond in confidence about sensitive issues.

The interview style was primarily determined by the purpose of the inquiry to address a perceived, neglected area of research. The inquiry was attempting to illuminate issues within educational reorganisation relating to individual experience and behaviour, and in particular teacher resistance. A focus on these specific issues within interview questions was not to preclude the identification and discussion of other issues. Therefore, the interview would be informal in that the content would be determined by the teacher’s experience of the reorganisation, within the boundaries of certain broad issues.

Bell (1987) notes that semi-structured interviews, “eliminate some of the problems of entirely unstructured interviews,” (p.73) such as expertise of control and a lengthy

analytical process. They also allow the respondent the freedom “to talk about what is of central significance to him or her...” (p.73). Hence, the semi-structured interview was adopted and open-ended questions were developed to prompt teachers’ experiences of educational reorganisation.

Susan E. Chase’s ‘Taking Narrative Seriously’ (1995) offers a compelling and insightful discussion on how to ask questions that do not get caught up in rhetoric, but rather provide an effective approach to promoting the telling of one’s story. Chase argues that narratives have the potential to offer much information if given the right opportunity. Chase in this sense is not specifically considering creating a ‘safe’ interview environment. According to Chase, “[a] successful interviewer manages to shift the weight of responsibility to the other in such a way that he or she willingly embraces it.” (p. 3). Apparently, having the participant take responsibility for the focus of the interview is accomplished by asking the ‘right’ question. In order to ask the right question, Chase (1995) suggests that “we are most likely to succeed when we orient our questions directly and simply to life experiences that the other seeks to make sense of and to communicate.” (p.12) and that “knowing the broad parameters of the other’s story prepares us to ask good questions.” (p.13) However, she notes that even the most thoughtful questions will not be enough if the interviewee produces ‘narrative difficulties’ or inconsistencies in the story, that the interviewer is not prepared to deal with.

Having a background in counselling I felt somewhat comfortable in my ability to identify and address inconsistencies in a story, while actively listening to what the respondents were saying and being aware of body language. Furthermore, it was possible to identify a list of teachers' experiences of educational change based on previous research (Riseborough, 1994; Kyriacou and Harriman, 1993; and Beynon, 1985). Hence, a number of questions that had the potential to allow the teacher to express his or her experience were devised.

Based on Chase's criteria and exploring multiple responses, the questions were adapted until the questions were simply worded, and so that there was little explicit expectation of a specific response. Each question was constructed to offer the opportunity for story telling, while representing the opportunity to explore broad themes of personal experience, the effects of reorganisation, coping resources, and teacher expectations as a result of the reorganisation. Furthermore, participants were given the opportunity to discuss any issue that they felt was not addressed during the interview. Not only did this function as a mechanism to gauge teachers' expectations of the interview, it also allowed for the further identification of issues relevant to the participant. The opportunity also provided for the teacher to reflect upon his or her discussion and make comments.

## **Interview questions**

The initial interview questions were as follows:

1. In what capacity and for how long have you been associated with the school?
2. What has it been like to be involved in the school?
3. What have been the effects on you as a teacher?
4. What has helped you to cope?
5. What expectations do you have for the demerger?
6. Is there anything that you would like to add?

The questions for the second functioned as an opportunity for greater focus as well as definition and clarity of the previous interview data. As a result the second set of interview questions, were basically uniform, but allowed for the recognition and expansion of each teacher's personal experience.

They dealt with the following issues: expectations previously noted; the teacher's experience of the change during the four month period; the teachers concerns; the nature of their collegial relationships; the teacher's hopes for the future; the need for change facilitation; and finally, the opportunity to add anything deemed of importance. The questions were as follows, and included differences that reflected each participant's data and the preliminary analysis.

1. When we last met, you commented on several issues you thought would happen as a result of the separation of the school. These were primarily related to issues of (this depended on the teacher's response). Can you discuss with me the extent to which your expectations have been realised? What would help/has helped you to realise these?

2. During the interview you commented that (this related to the teacher's previous comments of the effect of the demerger). What have the past four months been like for you?
3. What concerns, if any, do you have at this time for the demerger? What would/ has helped you to address your concerns?
4. When I interviewed you and your colleagues last summer, a number of different views about the demerger were expressed. I got the impression that the teachers recognised this and accepted that there are different viewpoints, and also regard this as a natural state of affairs. Do you think I gained an accurate impression? I would like to explore this with you, and would like to understand more fully your feelings about teachers holding different views.
5. We have discussed your previous hopes for this year and your own personal experiences over the past four months. What would you like to see happen from here on in for yourself, the school and your colleagues?
6. During the previous interview there was some discussion regarding the need for this change to be facilitated for the teachers. What would be the benefit of facilitation?
7. Is there anything you would like to add or discuss?

According to Yin (1984), piloting allows for identification of methodological difficulties and improves the researcher's understanding of the issues. Furthermore, the questions can be appropriately altered to deal with any noted difficulties. Therefore, each set of interview questions was piloted with the first three participants of the initial sample and two participants of the second sample.

The first interviews were conducted within a three-week period prior to the reorganisation. In addition to this being convenient for the participants and myself as it was prior to the

actual date when the reorganisation was to occur, it was an opportunity to gauge teachers' expectations of the reorganisation, while exploring their experience of the events that led up to the reorganisation. The second set of interviews was held four months succeeding the reorganisation, over a ten-day period. During these interviews, teachers' previously noted expectations were discussed together with issues arising from the first interviews.

### **Conducting the Interviews**

Upon my arrival, I telephoned each of the junior school's twenty teachers and administrative staff, arranging interviews dates and times with thirteen willing participants. I was not successful in speaking with each teacher, although the attempt was made. A further two teachers declined to participate due to prior commitments.

The initial set of interviews was primarily held in the meeting office within the senior school's administrative area. While there was concern for the impact of this on the participants, it was readily available and for the most part the interviews would be conducted under the same conditions. Two interviews were conducted within the participants' homes as this was convenient for them. Eleven interviews were conducted in the senior school's meeting room.

The second set of interviews was conducted in various settings of teacher convenience for time and place. Six interviews were conducted in an appropriate area of the two schools,

and one at a participant's home. The other interview was conducted over the telephone due to the weather conditions. While this eliminated the interpersonal dynamics of a face to face interview, Lee (1993) drawing on the work of Sykes and Collins (1988) notes that telephone interviews have a tendency for greater disclosure. While the interview conditions were different from the others, several issues were considered for the inclusion of this interview for analysis. Firstly if the interview could not be conducted over the phone, the interview would not have taken place. Secondly, the teacher suggested this means of interview in the event that the school would be closed due to poor travel conditions. Thirdly, this particular teacher was one of two key informants, the other being my father, the principal. These two individuals supplied the background information with relation to the demerger and the issues for the teachers. Having spoken at length with this teacher, a strong rapport was developed. As a result I did not think that a telephone interview would bias the data in a way that would render it admissible. Furthermore, without jeopardising confidentiality, this teacher's role in and experience of the demerger was such that inclusion of this subsequent interview seemed necessary to the analysis and subsequent understanding of teacher experiences.

Where the interviews were held outside the participant's home, I endeavoured to arrive at the site fifteen minutes early. This provided the opportunity to organise the area and focus on the interview task. When the participant arrived, he or she was directed to a chair opposite of where I had placed my interview schedule, note pad, pens, and bag containing

the cassette recorder and extra batteries. While this might have influenced the dynamics of the interview, it seemed necessary if I was to be organised upon the participant's arrival. Prior to commencing each interview, the research conduct statement was read aloud. Each participant was asked to provide a pseudonym, although three declined to do so. In the latter three cases, pseudonyms supplied by the researcher were then brought to the attention of the participant in a subsequent letter. Thereafter, the participant was asked if the conditions were acceptable and if he or she was willing to proceed, as this appeared paramount to address the issue of coercion. No teacher declined to participate at this stage.

Having established willingness and having discussed how I would address the issues for conducting the interviews, I asked for permission to record the interview using a small cassette recorder. Each participant agreed to the tape recording of his or her interview, with the knowledge that interviews were the property of the participant. Furthermore, it was explained that I would transcribe the tapes and that each participant could have a copy of the transcription. Where omissions could not be avoided due to poor sound quality, the teachers were also told they would be contacted to fill in the missing interview data. While each interview would be transcribed in its entirety, a note would be made where a participant requested the data not be included for discussion. Finally, the security of the interview data was discussed with each participant.



Each participant asked that I erase the tapes upon my completion of the research.

Furthermore, it was explained that throughout the research, the tapes would be carried in a locked case when not in use and that I would transcribe the tapes. The transcripts of the interview data would be held on a secure file on my personal computer and on a back up disc.

Prior to commencing the interview, it was also explained that I would be taking general notes in the event that the recording device failed. This also allowed the jotting down of key issues that would be returned to for later discussion in the interview. Having attempted to thoroughly explain my purpose and conduct, the interviews were conducted. Of the first set, the interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and three hours. The second set of interviews lasted between one and two hours.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

As noted, the interview questions were generated in light of the needs of the inquiry, while attempting to have the respondent take control of the interview focus. Also, considerable attention was given to how the empirical component of the inquiry would be conducted in an attempt to not only consider the ethical issues of this inquiry, but also to enhance the study's reliability. Irrespective of these attempts, it was necessary to consider the process that would be used to analyse the vast amounts of data. Furthermore, the means of analysis

needed to address the issues of internal and external validity, while minimising potential analytical biases which effect reliability (Yin, 1984).

In Hopkins *et al.* (1989), two classic frameworks for analysing qualitative data are recognised. The analytical frameworks of Becker (1958) and Glaser and Strauss (1967) applying similar techniques under different names, requires; immersion, validation, interpretation and action. Whereas Becker's method relies upon the initial identification and definition of concepts, Glaser and Strauss' analysis begins by "comparing incidents applicable to each category." (Hopkins et al., 1989, p. 64) Furthermore, both analytical approaches recognise that analysis begins during the generation of the data.

Arguably, the teacher's response to the predetermined questions, irrespective of the participant taking ownership for the focus of the discussion, relies upon the interviewer recognising potential categories and their sub-categories or concepts, such as those of Becker, and generating subsequent questions based upon this recognition. While this may appear to be in contrast with earlier discussions, teachers' must first take control of the focus of the data, which in turn provides the data by which categories are recognised by the researcher during analysis.

While data analysis begins during data collection, the procedures for data analysis must be such that the findings of the inquiry are based on appropriate analytical techniques. The

method must be capable of producing reliable and valid analysis.

The application of grounded theories promises to contribute to improvements in the degree to which findings (1) reflect conditions actually present in particular change efforts (internal validity); (2) typify conditions actually present in other change efforts (external validity); (3) contribute to the generation of new concepts by constantly comparing information obtained by different methods (reflexivity); and (4) promote understanding among groups with conflicting frames of reference. (Hopkins *et al.*, 1989, p. 67),

Hopkins *et al.* (1989) suggest that it is possible to improve upon criticisms of qualitative analysis, it remains that the researcher must adopt the 'tools' to meet the challenges and pitfalls of qualitative data and its analysis.

Considering the possibility to enhance the inquiry's validity and reliability, and the generation of theory for further study, the grounded theory method of analysis was adopted for this inquiry. The systematic approach to analysis available in Strauss and Corbin (1990) was followed.

### **Grounded Theory**

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of the data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 23)

Grounded theory begins with a research question, which in this inquiry is "What role does support play as a coping mechanism for teachers within a secondary school which is

undergoing reorganisation?” After arriving at the question, it is used to maintain focus during the research process. The research question is then refined during analysis. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Also, grounded theory relies to a certain degree upon technical and/or non-technical literature.

Technical literature, or previously conducted studies, is used to compare analytical findings. However, unlike quantitative inquiries which rely on previous studies to suggest theoretical and conceptual frameworks, grounded theory maintains that the researcher disregard previous studies as these lead to conceptualising and therefore, categorising data according to a set of rigid variables. The fundamental purpose of grounded theory is to be open to and generate new theory, and Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that if a study is to be truly grounded, then researchers must not be restricted by the concepts of earlier studies.

This appeared a difficult task as I had been reading about teachers’ experience of educational change, or lack thereof, for the past two years. However, having spent nearly a year focusing on securing a research site and writing about the methodology of the study, it was a welcomed realisation that much of my conceptual background for pursuing this issue had diminished. Therefore, I was relatively comfortable that any theory generated would indeed be grounded in the data. This issue aside, the process of active analysis was undertaken upon the complete transcription of the first 14 interviews.

Generating a grounded theory requires the analysis of the data by a series of coding techniques. While the three techniques appear to have particular criteria, and consequences, they are nevertheless, reciprocal practices in actuality.

Whereas Strauss and Corbin (1990) recognise coding as the “process of analyzing data” (p.61), open coding refers to the process of breaking down the data into categories. To do this the data is conceptualised word-by-word, or sentence-by-sentence and given a name that represents it. Within the coding practices used herein, conceptualisation was conducted word-by-word, although it became apparent that not only was this labour intensive, but also the themes were often vague. However, once the open coding was complete, a set of identifiable categories and sub-categories emerged, as well as their properties and dimensions (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

To understand the dimensions and properties of a specific category, I adopted Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) graphical representation to handle the numerous categories that were identified during this stage. Not only was this effective to visualise the data in a structured manner, it provided time to reflect upon the categories, resulting in thoughtful coding notes.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) recognise that coding may result in theoretical assumptions or missed phenomenon. In order to enhance the analysis process, the authors suggest several

techniques for enhancing 'theoretical sensitivity'. In addition to questioning the data, theoretical sensitivity allows the researcher to examine the concept more deeply.

Furthermore, by engaging in this process, analysis becomes a comparative process thereby assigning concepts not only to a set of hierarchical categories, but giving them properties and dimensions as well. Techniques for enhancing theoretical sensitivity once adopted for analysis were utilised throughout each of the coding practices.

Having developed the skill of theoretical sensitivity and open coding the data, the second stage was to put the data back together, "*by making connections between a category and its sub-categories.*" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.97) By ascribing the sub-categories according to its relationships several categories resulted, whereby it is possible to construct a paradigm model. Within the model the causal conditions result in a phenomenon with identifiable properties. Thereafter, the phenomenon was given specific dimensions according to the data, resulting in a management context for the phenomenon, complete with strategies for phenomenon management, as well as intervening conditions.

Intervening conditions are those that effect the strategies for managing a phenomenon.

Such conditions during educational reorganisation were the professional standing of respondents, at the extremes namely the principal and newly appointed teachers.

Identifying these conditions further enhanced the analysis of the data by promoting new, deeper ways of thinking about the data. Following this procedure, which results in several

categories and sub-categories, and their dimension, properties and conditions, selective coding promoted the identification of the core category.

The core category is the “central phenomenon around which all the categories are integrated.” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 116). While selective coding is a daunting process which seemed to creep upon the researcher, it was a satisfying experience once the story line has been identified. Arguably selective coding requires not only the validation of previous coded data, but also noting where holes exist in the theory. The researcher must endeavour to fill these.

Having been satisfied that the analysis had reached a point of saturation, whereby the categories and their properties and dimensions were validated within the data and no new specifications were noted, there was a realisation that the theory did not fit exactly. In order to advance the story line to the point where integration was possible, it was necessary to gather additional data borne out of the previous coding practices. While the transcription of this new data and its coding were conducted in the manner discussed above, during selective coding the data from the two interview sets were integrated. This resulted in a rich, dense theory grounded in the data. This is not to suggest that the resulting theory was complete.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that cases do not seem to fit the theory generated from the data because these “represent a state of transition” (p.139). Arguably in studying change it would be impossible to get an exact fit because change is a process of transition and any data obtained might become obsolete when the researcher attempts verification. However, in recognising the time frame under which a phenomenon is studied, it is possible to validate the theory by describing the process according to a change of conditions. Within this inquiry the change of conditions has been noted as the time leading up to the separation of the school and is followed by a period four months after the separation. Therefore, not only did the second interview allow for focusing on the categories and density of the categories, it also served to reflect the process of change.

Having arrived at a grounded theory that reflects the phenomenon under study, it is up to the researcher to decide if and when the theory that has been developed has achieved adequate density and integration. However, having followed the procedures outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and being confident that the analysis indeed reflects the phenomenon, the remaining task is to create a conditional matrix that describes the historical conditions under which the phenomenon occurred. The conditional matrix in this instance is equally important for promoting understanding of the events that led up to the schools’ demerging, thereby giving meaning to the analysis. However, as it is a lengthy description, the historical context has been provided in Appendix. 1.



The resulting grounded theory is a series of memos and diagrams that reflect the phenomenon of educational reorganisation. Prior to discussing the analysis of the data, it is necessary to acknowledge that the preceding discussion of the study's methodology has been an attempt to disclose the procedures used in this inquiry. In doing so, the reliability of the research is enhanced. Furthermore, disclosing the agendas, method and design of the research, reveals the potential biases of the inquiry. Arguably each study exists within a set of unique biases when conducting research and it is the responsibility of the researcher to manage these within the data collection procedures, analysis and research design (Yin, 1984) as has been attempted herein. By attending to bias inherent in this case study and qualitative studies in general through the generation of open-ended questions within the interview setting, adherence to the analytical practices of grounded theory, and the personal integrity of the researcher, the resulting analysis and subsequent discussions are offered as reliable and valid as possible.

Truth is a product of relationships among words as well as among those who use them. It derives from auras of power and arts or persuasion as much as from rules of evidence and rigours of proof. (St. Maurice *et al.*, in Smyth, 1995, p. 83)

## **Chapter IV**

### ***ANALYSIS***

The following analysis of the interview data from educators involved in the demerger of Midtown High School is a derivative sample of the extensive analytical notes, memos and models generated from the process of conducting this grounded theory analysis. The analysis began with an open coding exercise followed by axial coding and selective coding. While the analysis concluded with selective coding, in fact axial and selective coding procedures were conducted in response to the analytical needs, whereby it was often necessary to operate between the two.

To manage the breadth and depth of the analysis much of the 'paper work' has been omitted in favour of producing the most sequential, yet uncompromised analysis and grounded theory. However, within the text, operational notes have been used to elaborate on specific analytical notions. Also relevant to the development of the core category are the logic diagrams that give a visual representation of categories and their sub-categories, and the

paradigm models that establish relationships among the various categories and helps manage the complexity of these relationships (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). In order to maintain the flow of the analysis these analytical guides have been included in Appendix 6 and Appendix 7 respectively.

The analysis consists of three threads that begin as broad themes. As the analysis progresses the threads are sequentially developed to the point of integration. The first thread contextualises the analysis in detailing categories pertaining to the original merger, the perceived effects of the demerger and the participants' stance on the demerger, which also outlines those teachers who resist the reorganisation. The second thread seeks to establish the properties and dimensions of the teaching culture at the Midtown junior site. As the teaching culture was explored, the role of teacher-leaders and effective administrative leadership in maintaining the status quo was developed more fully. Throughout the process, the analysis reflected upon the teachers' experiences of belonging to the Midtown (junior site) teaching culture. The experiences of the teachers prior to and after the demerger completes the underlying third thread of the analysis. Upon integration of the relative themes developed during the analysis, a prototype grounded theory based on effective teaching cultures consisting of both effective leadership and a strong teaching culture, with each having a role to play in the maintenance of communications was revealed. The analysis began with word-by-word open coding.

## OPEN CODING

Reading each participant's interview transcription, whereby words, concepts and themes were identified and documented as potential categories, formed the initial coding exercise. Examples of this process are located in Appendix 5, whereby the transcription of the interviews (verbatim) parallels those themes identified during the open coding exercise. Once each interview was manually reviewed in this manner the open coding task, whereby themes, issues and concepts were identified, revealed 43 distinct items.

The themes were listed in chart form along with a column for each participant, following which the items, known as categories, were cross-referenced with each participant's data. By charting the items each received designation as to which teachers referred to the category and thereafter, whether the participant revealed that they perceived a problem in relation to that category. A blank meant that the participant had not made any reference to the category.

Examination of the Open Coding Chart (Table 1) not only establishes the frequency of themes, but also affords the opportunity to begin to establish potential relationships between the categories. Furthermore, the chart also provided a quick reference to determine the 'fit' of theoretical propositions.

Table 1: Open Coding Chart – first interview schedule

Key

P= problem  
NP= no problem  
T= referred to

Participants	Pro-demerger					Indifferent, but supportive					Anti-demerger		
	1 Slim	2 Froggie	3 Megan	4 Mary Ann	5 Mary	6 Blue	7 Sam	8 Charles	9 Rita	10 Huds	11 Steve	12 Norm	13 X
Conditions													
Finances		P	T			P			NP	P		P	P
Experience	T		T		T				T	T	T	T	
Tradition			T		T	T				T	T	T	
Parent Involvement			P						P	P	P		P
Teacher Involvement	T		T	T	T	T		T	T	T	T	T	T
Facility/Share			P	P	P	T	T	P	NP	NP	NP	NP	T
Teach/Share				P				P	P	P	P	P	
Programs	NP	T			T	P				P	P	NP	
Students	P	T	P	P	P	P		T	P	T		NP	T
x-curricular	T		P		P	P		T	P				P
Discipline		T							NP		P		T
Community		P	P	P	P	T	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Philosophy	NP	P					NP			P	P		P
Careers			T			T		T		T	T	T	T
Location			T				T				T	T	
Change	NP			T	NP	NP	NP		NP	T	P	P	NP
Roles		NP	NP	NP	NP			NP		P	P	P	P
Facilities		T	P		P	T	P	T	P	T	T	T	T
Leadership	P	P	P	T	P					NP			
Scheduling		NP			P	P	P	P	NP	P	P	P	T
Equality			T			P			P	T			
Feeder sch	P	P				NP				P	P		P
Identity	NP		P			T		P	P				
Mentoring			T	T	T	T		T	T				T
Meetings	T		T					P	P		P	P	
Socialise			NP	T	NP			P	T		P	NP	NP
Flexibility					T			T		T	T		
Equipment										P		P	P
Isolation							T	P			P		
Mail		P	P		P								
Travelling		P	P	T	P	P		T			P		
Photo/copy	T	P		P						P			
Course load		T									P		P
Free time											P		P
Intervention	T			T	T		T			T			
Territories			P					P	P	P	P	P	
Rivalry			P					P		P	P	P	
Support	NP	P	NP	NP	NP	NP		NP	NP	NP	T		NP
Frustration	T	P			P				P	NP	P	P	NP
Professional		T		P	P		P	P			P	P	
Personalities		T		T	P	T		P		T		P	
Apprehension	T	P		P	P		NP		NP			T	P
School board	P		P								T	P	T

AXIAL CODING

By proceeding to axial coding, whereby "data are put back together in new ways after open coding by making connections between categories," (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.96) nine broad categories were identified thereby incorporating the balance of the previously identified categories in a hierarchical manner. The nine categories indicated in Table 2 are considered in greater depth with the theoretical notes.

Table 2. *Axial Coding - Initial Categories*

1. Merged school	2. Demerger	3. Change support	4. Collegial Relations
5. Coping strategies	6. Administration	7. Provincial policy	8. Parents and community
9. Us versus them			

The first three categories form the first of three threads that link the early analysis to the integrated categories in later stages of analysis. This thread contextualises the demerger, giving valuable information as to why the demerger was initiated by the teachers (Logic diagram 1- Appendix 6), the perceived effects of the demerger and the kind of support given to the demerger by each participant.

The participants discussed both teachers and students as being effected by the demerger. (Logic diagram 2 - Appendix 6) Teachers expected the demerger to affect their personal

and professional lives, communications between the teachers and the administration, and school finances. Furthermore, it was thought that teachers' preparation time might be reduced as a result of financial restraints brought about by a smaller budget. The participants also noted that there were various levels of personal frustration and apprehension.

As for the students, the participants noted that there were concerns for the equality of education and the students' school identity. More specifically, the majority of the teachers were of the opinion that there would be improvements to the junior site's facilities, programmes (in that they would benefit from in house facilities) and demographically appropriate extra-curricular activities. However, not all participants agreed with these favourable effects of the demerger, citing that ultimately each of these would suffer from lack of financial support at the governmental level. It appears to be the foreseen effects of the demerger that cause notable distinctions among the study participants. This constitutes the third category identified as *change support* (Logic Diagram 3)

During the original open coding practice, it was noted that the participants could be categorised by their stance on the demerger, in other words how they supported the change. This is represented in the *Open Coding Chart* (Table 1), which not only resulted in identifying that the participants assigned themselves to one of three categories, but also identified common themes for each of the three distinct groups.



Five teachers supported the separation (demerger) outright, whereas four teachers were opposed to the demerger. The remaining four teachers expressed indifference yet supported the demerger as a result of effective lobbying by those supporting the demerger. Therefore, when the opportunity presented itself, apparently nine teachers voted in favour of the demerger, which resulted in maintaining shared facilities for the moment, but providing the junior school with its own administration and school identity.

Those teachers who comprise the group supporting the demerger were found to be accustomed to decision-making involvement. Furthermore these teachers advocated the need for improved facilities as a reflection of educational equality. On the contrary, the group of teachers opposed to the demerger was of the opinion that the demerger would result in increased problems relating to issues of program viability and provision of material goods. The teachers of this group had been associated with the school prior to the merger of the late 1970's, commenting that their earlier experiences of separate administrations warranted their current stance on the demerger.

Those of us who were around long enough knew...we had been through this before and it didn't work the first time. In fact it was decided in the end that it wasn't very productive to have people sharing facilities and not one person in charge of it all. I think this is a great step backward again. (Steve, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Furthermore, the teachers of what could be termed "the pro-demerger" and "anti-demerger"



groups held opposing views of change.

Those in favour of the demerger felt change was important for growth, whereas teachers opposing the separation were of the opinion that change was problematic. The opposing group also felt that their teaching roles might change as a result of the separation, while those supporting the separation felt that their professional roles would expand once the change took place. Finally, the opposing group believed that no new facility would be gained by separating the administrations, whereby the proponents of the demerger were apparently seeking the demerger for that very reason and expected to obtain new facilities as a result.

The third group of teachers represented those who were indifferent, but inevitably supported the demerger. These teachers typically held the opinion of having little or no control over events, which might be a reflection of their years of service within the teaching profession. The teachers of this group were either relatively new to the school, (i.e. within three years), or were recently licensed teachers. Furthermore, this group claimed to be typical fence sitters when it came to stating opinions, but were swayed into supporting the separation.

Well, I was kind of swayed into it at the beginning...like it was sort of a means to an end. Like if you have your own administration, you might get better facilities. I was kind of led down the path with a lot of other teachers I think. (Sam, 1<sup>st</sup>)

With exception to those indifferent teachers, the two other groups held very distinct

notions about what would and would not happen as a result of the demerger. However, the teachers of these two groups did agree that there would be communication difficulties as a result of separate administrations. Those opposing the separation were of the opinion that the difficulties would be insurmountable, whereas those supporting the demerger claimed that increased communication difficulties which would affect programs and scheduling, were important to ultimately obtaining separate facilities.

You see it's a terrible thing to say, but I really hope that during the next two years that there's going to be all kinds of problems... Like before the high school had no choice, they had to give to the junior high the time slots because they were one school, but now they don't have too. (Megan, 1<sup>st</sup>)

The analysis thus far reveals that there is resistance to the demerger by senior staff members. Although not all senior staff members are opposed to the change, there was evidence to suggest that these teachers' were experiencing identity threat. However, the teachers opposing the demerger didn't actively oppose the demerger. This lack of conviction does not support the level of resistance experienced by those teachers outlined in the literature review. Although it needs to be noted that the level of resistance might be a reflection of the teaching culture, the current study was not able to address this issue. Nonetheless, other significant aspects of the teachers' experiences were noted.

Although six additional categories were identified, only three of the categories derived from the axial coding exercise were developed because analysis did not warrant their inclusion henceforth. Based on the relevant paradigm model (Appendix 7), each of these

categories was assigned its relative dimensions and properties.

*Collegial relationships, coping strategies* and *administration*, formed the second thread within the analysis but also drew heavily on the teachers' experiences of belonging to the junior site teaching culture. Collegial relationships were identified as consisting of sub-categories that were closely related to the notion of collegial support. Therefore, in this instance staff collegial relations were defined as supportive. Nonetheless, *collegial relationships* consisted of seven sub-categories notably teachers, principal, vice-principal, parents, auxiliary staff, physical education (PE) staff and industrial arts (IA) staff.

The sub-category *teachers* recognised that at the junior site, teachers defined their collegial relationships as collaborative, family-like, sharing common interests and consisting of roles. These were mentor and leadership roles and often there was an overlap between the teachers viewed as holding these roles. Some teachers noted that many of the teachers had pursued the majority of their careers within this one school. Others noted that living in the school's community afforded a closeness not only among the teachers that resulted in close social ties, but also allowed teachers to get to know the students outside of the school.

The principal's supportive relationship with the teachers appears to be more argumentative as a result of communication issues, although the participants defend the principal's ability to lend support as a result of strong collegial relationships at the site. Many research

participants argued that the principal had a fundamental role to play in the creation and maintenance of the supportive teaching culture at the junior site.

The support expressed by those regarded as shared teaching staff (industrial arts and physical education) is characterised by respect, problem input, flexibility and partnerships that were reported as aiding coping when collegial relations become strained due to 'misunderstandings'.

The category of *Coping Strategies* consists of personal, collegial and external resources. Personal resources were identified as job satisfaction, experience, identifying what is important, attitude, separating emotions and game playing. The majority of participants had unique personal resources to aid coping. However, the majority of participants cited collegial relationships within the school's staff as a coping resource. A few participants noted that assuming leadership roles was an effective coping strategy. Shared teaching staff unanimously agreed that their colleagues were an invaluable coping resource although there were distinctions in how the support was translated in reality. For example sharing similar philosophies for two of the participants results in letter writing as a process of identifying issues and gauging their importance before determining what course of action should be taken. The external resources noted by the participants consisted of the teacher's individual interests that were grouped into physical activities, hobbies and committee work. Although the participants described unique coping strategies, all of the teachers were

able to recognise several strategies adopted to aid the coping process.

The final category, *Administrators*, consisted of the current principal and the incoming principal. The current principal was characterised as having the ability to deter potential territories being created between the two sites and ensuring that decisions were fair. He was seen as being in a position to provide financial support to programmes and personal support to junior site staff. While the principal received extensive praise for the support given to teachers at the junior site, his dual administrative role was regarded by those who supported the demerger as an impediment to their cause. On the contrary the incoming principal's role was seen primarily to secure new facilities for the junior site. Additionally the new principal was hoped to enhance teacher involvement in decision-making tasks. However, some shared teaching staff expressed concern that there would be rivalry among the two administrations to get the most out of their teachers. In doing so the shared staff were regarded as being at a grave disadvantage. Furthermore, there was concern that the shared teaching staff would work in isolation from their colleagues. If each school assumed sole responsibility for specific specialist teachers in the senior site, participants feared that IA and PE teachers would lose valuable support systems and coping resources.

Each administrator appeared to have a vested role to fulfil when the school officially demerged. Although the experiences of the staff that would remain in the 'senior' site were valuable, they reflected a minority of the participants. During the process of analysis and

integration of the second series of interviews, the new principal was identified as potentially belonging to the central phenomenon of the case study. Utilising the paradigm model it was possible to ascertain the properties and dimensions of the 'new principal' phenomenon while establishing its relationship to other significant categories, such as collegial support.

Leadership, decision-making, improved communications and valuing of opinion were consequences of having the new principal. Upon further analysis, leadership provided by the new principal resulted in improved staff relations, compromises, improved communications and pending improvements to the facilities. The common thread of these categories was the improved communications.

The leadership qualities of the new principal (Logic Diagram 4 - Appendix 6) included effective communication skills based on being proactive, decisive, and communicative with an ability to delegate. Communications were improved by creating opportunities to speak with teachers. Although personal agendas did get in the way occasionally, such leadership empowered the majority of teachers. When the teachers were empowered through communication they coped better, and were able to voice their opinions, make decisions, and maintain the status quo of the teaching culture. Consequently traditionally reticent teachers were enabled to participate fully in staff matters.

While the second series of interviews was useful in expanding upon the role of the new principal, it was equally useful to expand the context of the junior site teaching culture. The teaching culture upon initial analysis seemed to function as a coping strategy in that teachers relating to one another were supportive, acted as mentors, experienced camaraderie, laughed and recognised special occasions. Although this relied on teacher-leaders to facilitate on a day-to-day basis, the culture appeared to be sufficiently entrenched as to stay off confrontation at the risk of altering the cultural status quo (Logic Diagram 5 - Appendix 6). However, the second series of interviews revealed that the supportive culture had failed to be maintained. Teacher-leaders were unable to fulfil their leadership roles and the informal mentoring systems were replaced with individuals fending for themselves.

The early analysis revealed factors associated with the original merger. This was closely associated with the perceived affect of the demerger. Teachers participating in the case study were identified as belonging to a category based on their support for the demerger. Each of these categories helped to create a contextual picture of the teachers' experiences. Although vital to the overall case study, the analysis was gaining focus by not only retreating from the contextual thread, but by also integrating this thread along with the remaining sub-categories to a higher category. Therefore, upon considering the relationships between the paradigm models (Appendix 7) the categorical analysis of leadership, teaching culture and communications required further integration with the aim of arriving at a core category. This was achieved within the selective coding tasks whereby

the categories were not only integrated but also redefined in line with the operational notes.

## **SELECTIVE CODING**

Selective coding is the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships and filling in categories that need further refinement and development. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.116)

A story line that is an opportunity to write about the core category, thus beginning to establish sub-categories to higher order categories which is an appropriate point to begin the selective coding process.

### ***Story line***

The teaching culture at Midtown Junior High School is defined by a professional ethos that encompasses two distinct roles; the principal and teacher leaders. The principal's role is to provide leadership in the form of setting an example for acceptable behaviour, while being supportive. Being supportive means that time (personal and daily) is allocated for the maintenance of the teaching culture. Teacher leaders are also responsible for maintaining the teaching culture. They do so by being mentors for other staff members, setting an example for others to follow similar to that of the principal.

The teaching culture relies upon teachers being able to communicate with one another. The ability for teachers to communicate relies not only upon the principal maintaining support, but also ensuring that the leadership given is comparable to the status quo. Therefore,



communication is the very foundation on which the teaching culture is built, but is subjected to the leadership offered by the principal. This is depicted in Logic Diagram 5 (Appendix 6).

As a result of seeking the demerger, separate administrations were necessary, requiring the appointment of a new principal to the junior school site. The selection procedure was such that the relationships among certain teacher-leaders were strained. Two things happened concurrently. The teacher-leaders were incapable or unable to fulfil their leadership roles. Also, the level of leadership provided by the principal was exceeded by what was required. Consequently the status quo was affected and the teacher-leaders' coping strategies were ineffectual. Basically there was a complete breakdown of communications and teachers looked to themselves to cope with the residual effects of the demerger. However, the status quo was reinstated with the leadership efforts of the new principal. While the staff had a history of effective mentoring-type communications, there were strong communicative barriers within formal discussions, namely staff meetings.

The leadership provided by the new principal enhanced communications among staff members by increasing opportunities for informal discussions and valuing all opinions by discussing these within formal meetings. Furthermore, this leadership provided realistic parameters for communicating opinion that were consistently maintained. The leadership resulted in empowerment for those teachers who were reticent under the previous

administration. Lastly, loyalties for the previous administration were recognised without making attempts to shift these.

#### **OPERATIONAL NOTE:**

Having written the preliminary story line it is obvious that in addition to the higher order categories of *teaching culture* and *leadership, strong collegial relationships* must also be integrated into the story line. At this point it is appropriate to order the categories into properties and dimensions. This will establish the central phenomenon or core category.

#### **Outline of PROPERTIES AND DIMENSIONS of the CORE CATEGORY-**

##### ***"EFFECTIVE TEACHING CULTURE"***

- I. STRONG COLLEGIAL RELATIONSHIPS
  - A. Teacher Leaders
    - 1. Supportive
      - a) professional
      - b) personal
    - 2. Job Satisfaction
    - 3. Approachable
    - 4. Effective coping strategies
    - 5. Establish acceptable behaviour (informal communications)
      - a) check each other out
      - b) tell jokes
      - c) collaborate
      - d) Family-like atmosphere
        - i) Respectful
        - ii) Flexible
        - iii) Socialise together

6. Initiate informal communications
  - a) sharing experiences
  - b) sharing materials
  - c) provide support
    - i) personal
    - ii) professional
- B. Administration's support
  1. Provide time for teachers to get together informally
    - a) Lunch times
    - b) Common breaks
    - c) Social events
  2. Value informal communications.

## II. EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

- A. Effective communications
  1. Informal communication
    - a) Support by providing time for
      - i) Lunch times
      - ii) Common breaks
      - iii) Social events
    - b) Value informal communications
  2. Formal communication
    - a) Opinions are voiced
    - b) Decisions are made
    - c) Acceptable behaviour is established
    - d) Realistic parameters are maintained
    - e) Approach is consistent
    - f) Potentially volatile discussions are contained
  3. Communication barriers
    - a) Identify
      - i) Reticence
      - ii) Loyalties to former administration
    - b) Develop strategies
  4. Empowered teachers
    - a) Collegial relationships
    - b) Voicing opinions
    - c) Status quo maintained

## **OPERATIONAL NOTE:**

Effective teaching cultures requires both strong collegial relations and effective leadership. In order to manage the paradigm model (Appendix 7), it is necessary to consider the two separately. However, this does not suggest that one, without the other, will result in an effective teaching culture.

The grounded theory analysis culminates with the designation of the central phenomenon and relationships between the hierarchy of sub-categories. Having arrived at this point as outlined previously, the analysis concluded with the prototype grounded theory based on the case study of Midtown High School's demerger.

## **A PROTOTYPE GROUNDED THEORY**

*Effective Teaching Cultures* rely on *strong collegial relationships* and *effective leadership*. Strong collegial relationships require participation from both teacher-leaders and administrators, whereas effective leadership relies on effective communications, formal communications, identifying and developing strategies for communication barriers, and empowering teachers.

## **STRONG COLLEGIAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Strong collegial relationships rely on teacher-leaders that lend both personal and professional support. Teacher-leaders experience high job satisfaction, are approachable, have effective coping strategies and help to establish and maintain acceptable behaviour. As teacher-leaders act as role models, they check each other out, tell jokes, collaborate and create a family-like atmosphere that is respectful and flexible, and where teachers socialise together. Teacher-leaders also take responsibility for initiating informal communications by sharing experiences and materials, as well as providing personal and professional support to their colleagues.

Also administrators need to be supportive of the teaching culture by providing time for teachers to get together informally during lunch times, common breaks and social events. Administrators need to value informal communications among teaching staff.

## **EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

Effective leadership is characterised by effective communications. Principals need to value and support informal communications by providing common lunch times and breaks, as well as social events.

As part of effective communications, formal opportunities should be created so that teachers can voice their opinions. It is also important that teachers' opinions inform

decisions made during staff meetings. During staff meetings, it is essential that acceptable behaviours are established, realistic parameters are maintained and the principal's approach is consistent. Furthermore, the principal must be able to contain potentially volatile discussions.

Effective communications also requires that the principal identify any barriers to communications such as reticence and loyalties to the former administration. It is useful that the principal have strategies to manage these in formal discussions. However, it is not necessary to shift loyalties.

Effective communications result in empowering teachers. Empowered teachers are able to voice opinions. They also help maintain strong collegial relationships and the status quo of the teaching culture.

However, teaching cultures with leadership that provides for informal communications but fails to attend to formal communications may result in strained collegial relationships when teacher-leaders communication breaks down due to inappropriate appointment procedures causing personality clashes. Allowed to carry on without intervention from the principal, the teaching culture is affected to the point of severe breakdown in formal and informal communications among staff. Consequently, teacher-leaders become reticent and are unable to function in their leadership roles. Generally, coping strategies in the form of

collegial support ceases at the organisational level and reverts to teacher-leaders coping on a personal level.

In light of the analysis, teaching cultures can be a valuable coping resource for teachers.

Where teachers are confronted with educational change these resources can be useful but are susceptible if the status quo of the teaching culture fails to be maintained. Furthermore, leadership is a vital component as indicated in the literature review, although it is important to recognise the valuable contributions of teacher-leaders.

The following section, in consideration of the preceding analysis, addresses the final three tasks of the case study. The first task is to review the suitability of the methodology and make appropriate suggestions for improvement. The second task is to relate the literature review to the current case study findings. Although one of the primary questions of the study (teacher resistance) could not be sufficiently developed, the discussion provides an opportunity to contextualise and relate the findings of the current case to other studies conducted. The discussion also provides an appropriate opportunity to identify and elaborate on any unexpected findings, such as the value of laughter. Upon providing the basis for exploring the original questions, the final task is to identify and discuss appropriate research questions for future studies.

## Chapter V

### *DISCUSSION*

The culmination of this case study resides in the following discussion whereby initial attention focuses on the suitability of the methodology to explore teacher experiences of educational change. Since hind sight is of benefit to such endeavours suggestions are offered that would improve the study if it were to be developed further. Thereafter the literature review becomes the focus by drawing comparisons to the analysis and discussing these within the limits of the thesis. Finally, the discussion will explore the implications for a study that explores a teacher-initiated case, considering its implications and the focus for future studies. The discussion chapter begins by ascertaining if the grounded theory methodology was as useful as originally argued. Furthermore, insights as to the process of this qualitative method are offered with the hope of benefiting those new to the grounded theory methodology.



## THE METHODOLOGY

Within the literature review the argument maintained that not only are supportive teaching cultures able to promote effective coping during educational organisation with the help of effective leadership, but it was also noted that the literature seemed to recognise the two as entities unto themselves. The grounded theory methodology was adopted for the purpose of not only providing a voice to teachers undergoing an educational reorganisation, but it was also adopted so that it could be determined (to some extent) if leadership along with collaborative teaching cultures that maintain a supportive ethos contribute to the organisation's ability to cope during change. The following discusses the extent to which the methodology achieved its intent.

A great deal of effort was put into getting the inquiry 'right'. That is there was much to consider as was discussed in the methodology chapter. The method was selected foremost for its appropriateness of generating data reflective of teachers' experiences. Also it is acknowledged that feeling capable of conducting qualitative research, a method suitable to qualitative research was sought. The grounded theory method met the two requirements.

More specifically, perhaps the greatest struggle of this inquiry was dealt within the understanding that the biases of the researcher had potential to affect the study. While efforts were made to examine, identify and manage these, it became obvious that it is not

easy to dismiss biases just because they have been noted and disclosed, and efforts were made to maintain their influence. Ultimately there came a time when it was necessary to make conscious decisions over the inclusion of certain themes and data. The issue became one of integrity as a person versus the integrity as a social scientist.

## **Reflexivity**

While reflexivity recognises the role of the researcher and allows the researcher to deal with his or her affect on the study, pursuing a subjective-objective study does not result in a neatly packaged set of quantitative data. For whatever drawbacks qualitative methods bring with the intrinsic role of the researcher, that same role in my opinion enabled data rich in detail, honesty, and feeling that wouldn't be possible within the positivist tradition. This stance is supported by Morrison (1984) who as noted earlier states that "the attraction...lies in the ability to generate an evaluation which is rich in authenticity and honesty..." (p. 51) While it appears possible to come up with a set of data that is 'rich in authenticity and honesty' simply by committing oneself to a genuine discussion, much more was required to achieve the rigour of an academic study. Hence, the case study needed to achieve data triangulation and validity.

## **Triangulation**

Having adopted Banister *et al.* (1994) requirements this case study achieved triangulation by interviewing a number of teachers from both sites on two separate occasions. As

suggested by Banister *et al.* (1994) the accounts did not fit together neatly. They did, however, “highlight how experiencing and thus understanding are context bound.” (P. 146) In having achieved triangulation within the case study methodology the validity of the data was enhanced. However, it is in concluding that the fit between the purpose of the study and the methodology was as suitable as possible that results in the data being valid. This validity is supported by the efforts taken to minimise the affects of bias, which began with identifying the case study site.

### **Existing relationships**

Securing participants within one organisation undergoing change was a great hurdle of this study. Teachers are generally busy. Add to that pending change and they are even more so. To ask to speak to these teachers at length about what they are experiencing was too much to ask on several occasions. Therefore, when an organisation presented itself that showed such willingness, it was difficult to overlook. There were several reservations though due to existing relationships. In hindsight these relationships have benefited the study, as it was possible to discuss details of people, places and things of which an unfamiliar researcher would not have knowledge. Too on many occasions it was not necessary to be told about something. There was a valuable interaction between myself and the research participants during the interviews that was made possible by my relationships with some of the participants. My previous knowledge and experiences at the junior site did affect the gathering of data, but not to the detriment of the data as I had thought. With the risk of

sounding egotistical, personally conducting the interviews enhanced the breadth and depth of the data. Arguably a researcher without previous relationships would not have achieved similar data in the same amount of time. This is not because another researcher would not have the skill to develop the necessary rapport, but that it would simply take more time than perhaps the participants would be willing to commit as they are already working within time constraints (Barton, 1991). The most important acknowledgement is to recognise that while my previous relationships might have enhanced the data, it also appears that the data has not been jeopardised in any tangible way. Furthermore, while it is not possible to determine at present, the existing relationships might have also benefited my access to these teachers and their willingness to discuss their experiences.

### **Informed consent**

Although I had devised several safeguards such as the conduct statement agreed with each participant and the participants' right to be excluded if they wished to do so after agreeing to participate, I had to ask myself if I was exploiting my relationships with these educators. To a certain extent I suppose each researcher exploits his or her research participants because the researcher may benefit more than the study participants. As long as researcher and study participants agree with and abide by their roles as had been done within this study, (I would benefit from the use of the data to inform my thesis and 'the school' would have a completed copy of the thesis) then conducting research with participants especially those known to the researcher is acceptable.

## **Sample**

The self-chosen sample was acceptable for two reasons. Firstly, the number of teachers wanting to participate was manageable as well as providing a sample consisting of a variety of teachers. Secondly, by giving the teachers the decision to participate meant that the issue of coercion was dealt with. Also teachers willing to participate were more likely to be committed to the study. One participant did not carry on for the second interview session although it has not been determined why this was the choice of the participant. Nonetheless it would have been valuable to have the opportunity to interview this participant again. In future studies I would make a greater effort to understand the decision and work to negotiate his or her participation in the later stage.

## **Interview questions**

The usefulness of the interview questions is directly related to the prototype grounded theory. After all, the question asked initiated the discussion although it was not the intention to direct the participants. However, the interviews were semi-structured with the intent to allow teachers to engage in a discussion with limited focus that would allow him or her to speak about what was of central significance to him or her. For the most part, this worked very well. On occasion though, especially during the first interview and first question, some participants were hesitant of taking the lead so to speak, requiring gentle probing. Being able to provide examples offered by other participants in these situations

was most useful because I was not making assumptions about what teachers might say and they were true examples of what their colleagues had offered. While this may have a potential to bias, teachers were quick to agree or disagree with their colleagues on issues. So initially it might have weighted the data, but as the first question was a 'detail' gathering question, there was not an opportunity to bias the data. Thereafter, the interview questions fulfilled the role for which they were intended. The one notable issue deals with the fifth question "What expectations do you have for the demerger?"

### **Hopes versus expectations - a matter of wording**

The majority of teachers cited that they had 'hopes' rather than expectations. The use of the different word implies that while the teachers would like to see certain things come as a result of the demerger, they were not committing themselves to that outcome. This stance might function as a means to fend off the disappointment, thus acting as a coping mechanism. Also it is possible that the teachers were either being vague because it is a professional characteristic or that the participants were wary of the implications of the data. Nonetheless the teachers participating in the study were equally noncommittal to having expectations.

Although the teachers sought to use an alternative word it was useful to identify that the teachers say they were not expecting certain results for their efforts. A question came to mind: Why would teachers pursue such a procedure if they were not going to get

something out of it? Perhaps the choice of words had another purpose. From the interview data it certainly seems that the pro-demerger group were 'fighting' for new facilities and a new administration. The latter seems a probable reason for stating that they had hopes and not expectations as will be discussed later.

### **After the interview**

Although this was the only noteworthy issue of the interview questions in both the first and second series, there were some teachers who, after the interviews had been completed and the tape machine turned off, commented that he or she thought that our conversation would be about something other than that what was discussed. In these situations I wonder if I had missed the important bit for that teacher. In fact these teachers' concerns were voiced in the interviews in subtle ways which alleviated my anxiety. However, this goes to show that the demerger was about different issues for different people.

### **Guidelines for interviews**

With regard to improving the gathering of data, therefore, I would begin with a brief outline of the discussion, stating that the first few questions would be about the number of years in teaching, if they had taught in other schools and so on. I would have a list of such questions and go through them as it seems the teachers expected this and were thrown by the lack of limits within the questions offered.

Attempts to be thorough during this case study, particularly with regard to the participants, seem to have resulted in the establishment of strong rapport, mutual respect for professional roles and rich interview data. While it was not always clear how to proceed and at times the issues were clouded, without a doubt conducting this piece of research was an extremely rewarding experience both personally and professionally. As I have discovered it is a very satisfying experience to deal with many complex research issues, resolving them to meet the needs of both researcher and participants.

### **Exclusion versus inclusion of data**

Since the participants' agreement was based on maintaining confidentiality, then data that might cause professional difficulties as well as forfeit their identities was excluded. The answer to the dilemma seems so obvious having now pondered it. While the decision to exclude the data was the right one, it raises questions such as "If the data had been included, would there have been other lessons to benefit from?" I believe the answer to be 'yes'.

The issue arises then, that if the inclusion of this data would result in greater depth within the analysis, then is the validity of this case study not forfeited? By restating that Banister *et al.*'s (1994) criteria for triangulation has been achieved and that the fit between the study's purpose and the methodology appropriate, then the validity is not forfeited.

However, the argument must progress because the exclusion of data must have



implications, but what and to what extent?

While, it is difficult to engage in a supporting argument because it is not appropriate to present details of the very data that has been excluded, by omitting the data the analytical depth has been reduced, but arguably the breadth was maintained. Furthermore, it was the personal details of the interview data that were omitted from the analysis and not the theme. The theme was represented in the analysis and developed to a point whereby identities were not jeopardised and professionalism was maintained.

The study was conducted in the manner to which each participant had agreed and in keeping those terms I feel that the research experience (for both researcher and case study participant) has been completed with integrity. For future studies though, the negotiation of full use of data would prove more beneficial to the study. Of course there is a strong possibility that no teacher would agree to full disclosure in similar circumstances. That full disclosure was not pursued for this inquiry resulted in not knowing if the participants would have agreed as well as not allowing a valuable research opportunity to prevail.

Having discussed the efforts taken to produce interview data that was valid in its own right, it is also necessary to explore the analysis, ensuring not only that the methodology was carried out with sufficient intent, but also providing a forum in which to discuss the process, techniques and context development so important to achieving a grounded theory.

The data analysis was conducted by closely following Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory procedures. While their procedures seemed to leave much room for interpretation, simply getting on with it and immersing oneself in the procedure allowed for grasping the logic of grounded theory analysis. However, I do not believe that the procedure was fully understood until the prototype grounded theory evolved from the data.

### **Analytical techniques**

The techniques offered by Strauss and Corbin (1990) for arriving at the theory were very useful, although it is important not to get caught up in their anecdotes as I did trying vainly to understand how their examples paralleled my case study. The answer of course is that there are no comparisons and it is up to each researcher to recognise how each technique is to be used and adapted to suit his or her analysis.

For example, using the open coding technique at the beginning of the analysis was straight forward as was writing memos and producing logic diagrams. The procedures were comfortable if not somehow familiar. The successful completion of these seemed to have left a false sense that the analysis was going to be simple and/or straightforward. The axial coding and selective coding techniques were more difficult to understand and therefore, adopt. I was most comfortable producing the extensive diagrams that successfully kept track of the categories and their sub-categories and the subsequent relationships. In

retrospect this comfort was a result of not understanding what would be achieved by the techniques. It was compounded by the need to oscillate between the two techniques in an attempt to reach integration.

### **Persistence**

If it were not for sheer determination the hundred of pages of analysis would have sat in a pile. Nonetheless, nowhere is it possible to teach the valuable lesson of when to be persistent and when to be patient. Being a relatively organised person I had underestimated the importance of maintaining organisation throughout the study because I could not see the point at the time. Also I have learned that documenting 'everything' relevant to the data will not only save valuable time, but it will also enrich the analysis. In maintaining order by committing my thoughts and thematic diagrams to paper, the analysis held true to the data because of the issues attended prior to and during the gathering and analysis of this case study. Therefore, even when it was impossible to see where the analysis was going because of the volume of data, the notes, diagrams and charts generated by following the little understood techniques of Strauss and Corbin (1990), not only provided the resulting grounded theory, but also left a provocative trail for future research.

Now that I have completed my first qualitative study I have an appreciation for the analytical journey the mind takes as well. It seems that along with creating sufficient opportunities and trial and error the point is to allow for the time to assimilate and

assemble the data into some greatly reduced, justifiable theory. Therefore, grounded theory supports, expands or challenges existing discourse, as is explored in the subsequent discussion.

## THE ANALYSIS

As it appears with most theses, the real meat of the discussion lies in relating the analysis to the literature review as it is an attempt to reflect upon and where possible, synthesize what has gone before. It is at this point to which this discussion has arrived; where it is necessary to recognise the similarities between the existing discourse and argue the differences where any have arisen. Herein the discussion explores how mandated change differs from teacher led initiatives, and the subsequent influence this demerger had on the teachers of the junior site of Midtown High School. Prior to this it is necessary to establish the parameters that define this site's teaching culture. By identifying the facets of the teaching culture, it will be possible to not only consider the coping difficulties encountered due to this educational reorganisation, but also examine the principles that appeared to have maintained the supportive and collaborative teaching culture of Midtown High School's junior site.

### *The Teaching Culture*

The teaching culture of Midtown's junior site is highly regarded by all the teachers who participated in this study and seems to be relatively unchanged since the school's

conception nearly twenty years ago. It withstood the previous merger and takes pride of place among the data from those who participated in this case study. More specifically the teaching culture is characterised by jocular yet collaborative, supportive relations, an informal and inherent mentoring system, and a non-confrontational ethos. Each of those characteristics has had a role to play and was influenced by the demerger.

### **Jocular relations**

From the data it has become apparent that the staff's nature to make jokes, especially of sensitive issues, provides an outlet for frustrations, resentments and feelings of upset, while getting the point across and identifying what is and is not acceptable as professionals within the junior site.

You know little things like recognising somebody's birthday. "At lunch on that particular day, I had my birthday cake and we're doing something special."...making the (staff) room a happy place to be, to tell jokes, to kid around, to make light of a lot of things. I think that is important and as a staff that has happened. (X, 1<sup>st</sup>)

In the "Meaning of Staffroom Humour" (1984), Woods argues that laughter is "a major means by which teachers come to terms with their job and reconcile their selves with the demands of the teacher role." (p.190) He also recognises the importance of conflict-initiated humour that seeks to re-establish or neutralise unacceptable behaviour that has been clearly demonstrated in the data.

If an announcement is made and someone does not do it, and you know, maybe the administration might say something, but the rest of us will pick up and it will become a humorous thing. We're not making fun of the person, but we might

make a quiet comment of something. But we do not condemn, criticise. (X, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Woods (1984) also notes that laughter creates solidarity among staff and where the retelling of humorous incidents exists, “even if they have rehearsed it a hundred times. The humour in the material is constant. The laughter is sparked off, and then spread, contagiously, and then frequently compounded by other tales.” (P.193) This certainly seems to reflect the staffroom of Midtown High’s junior site and speaks to the importance of humour. Although there is little or no recognition of the fact, it also suggests that laughter is a powerful tool for promoting and maintaining collaborative, supportive teaching cultures.

### **Collaborative, supportive culture**

As noted earlier, the prevailing literature on the topic of collaborative cultures suggests that while collaboration means different things to different people, such cultures are neither easy to develop nor maintain. Furthermore, Lieberman’s (1986) premise that not all teachers experience collaboration with enthusiasm suggests that unless all teachers are committed, it will not be sustainable. On the contrary, not all of the teachers of Midtown High’s junior site share in the collaborative, supportive culture, although it does seem to withstand the test of time.

Many of the participants recognised and accepted that collegiality was not for everyone, all of the time. The key herein, it seems, is that the vast majority of teachers actively participated in the supportive culture of the school with few exceptions. Most importantly it is not necessary for all teachers to be committed to this culture for it to be sustainable, although accepting this might be important as is the case with the teachers of the Midtown High's junior site. Furthermore, at the junior site the provision of support is not regarded as a result of poor coping skills of the teachers.

The ethos has been created to favour a supportive culture, as is recommended by the HSC (1990). Hence the teachers' attitude toward support is seen as favourable and supporting one another is regarded as quite normal. While there could be an argument that suggests such a culture would deteriorate with the turnover of significant or key staff members, the inherent mentoring programme as well as the perpetuation of the ethos through continuity seems to favour the maintenance of the collaborative, supportive culture.

### **Mentoring**

They were really very supportive to get me started. They back me up with a lot of things...I noticed last year we had a very young teacher comes in and it just seemed like you slip right in to helping out. I did everything I could to help him because that was the courtesy shown to me. (Blue, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Corrie, in researching how collaboration is constructed within six primary schools, seems to reiterate the importance of staff adopting informal mentoring practices.

A newly appointed teacher has to identify standard practices and the abstract

notions of culture, climate and ethos of that particular school. Knowledge of these matters means the teacher is able to become an accepted member of the staff group and so reinforce staff cohesion. It is through the process of discursive practice that the staff become linked, as they contest, reconstruct and incorporate knowledge that becomes normalised and universalised within that context. (1995, p. 91)

Within the junior site of Midtown High School the staff have achieved this cohesion through a culture that does not seem to enforce informal mentoring practices. The mentoring just seems to happen and this may be significant. Wallace (1998), writing on the benefits of the S4G mentoring program, recognises the importance of spontaneous and informal mentoring.

This research indicates that although collegiality holds some promise, externally imposed programs of peer supervision may be difficult to implement because of entrenched practices in schools and classrooms. (p. 96)

While there is recognition of the limitations caused by the teaching culture (Hargreaves, 1980), there is widespread consensus for the benefits of collegiality and collaboration as was exemplified by the junior site staff's demeanour.

Our needs seem to be met internally, among one another. Like you can walk in to the staff room and if one of the teachers seems to be down, there's always three or four who would say, "Oh gosh, you're having a rough day." or 'What's happening?' and I just think that's so beautiful to have that...So even though we're not actually really friends, we do not meet each other socially, we still feel that we are close enough to confide in one another on the problems that we are having outside and it is different. I've never experienced that with a colleague before. (Megan, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Also the teachers who identify themselves as mentors or leaders were quick to note that they were fulfilling a role they felt comfortable and able to do.



I remember not last year, but two years ago, when I was in hospital for a week or something, and Johnson was acting vice-principal and I was out for three weeks. When I came back he said, "Thank God, the staff have not been the same." I guess probably I go out of my way to try and joke around and get that upbeat (mood), yeah. (X, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Similarly, their colleagues filled other, equally important roles.

Like every staff, we have key people who kind of run the ship. Everybody does their job, obviously. But there (at the junior site), people have certain roles and some people are uplifters. (Mary, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

The supportive relationships among the teachers are the norm at the school. Although the level and kind of support each teacher engages in varies, it seems that every teacher provides some support. This culture has been maintained over two decades despite turnovers of significant numbers of staff and key staff members. Arguably this is the result of not only having the time to 'be together' but also a high degree of continuity.

### **Maintaining a supportive culture**

The majority of teachers at the junior site live within the catchment area of the school. Many teachers moved to the town to teach and remain after decades of working within the school. Furthermore, there are a few teachers who were students within the Midtown school system and some of whom completed their teacher training at the junior site. This continuity seems to reflect on the relationship of students and teachers.

When you're like Isabelle (a highly respected and experienced teacher) and have lived in the community and you know everybody and everybody's relatives and everybody's problems and good points and bad points, like there is something to be

said for that. Because these are the people you deal with. They're not just some number on a student form. (Steve, 1<sup>st</sup>)

It also seems to ensure the ethos perpetuates itself during significant staff turnovers.

Many of the teachers there (at the junior school) grew up in the area and many of the younger people were student-teachers in the school. So you have a continuity of exposure and familiarity that a lot of people do not get the benefit of.... And it is very comforting because you know the teacher's style and it may be the style that you are modelling yourself on. (Slim, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

While it was not the purpose of this study to gauge the effectiveness of having teachers living and working in the same community, in recognising it, Slim seems to be affirming an expectation of the ethos continuing. Although the benefit of 'exposure and familiarity' is acknowledged, there is concern for change resistance as the relationships between students and teachers not only become cyclical, but also lead to cultural entrenchment. The cultural entrenchment may be compounded by a non-confrontational ethos.

### **Non-confrontational ethos**

While several teachers recognised that conflict is a healthy, positive experience, and necessary for group consensus, the avoidance of confrontation seemed a characteristic of the teaching culture.

They (the teachers of the junior school) do not want to be involved in what would appear to be a volatile argument in a public setting....That's probably to do with some of the dynamics that have occurred between some of the people (teachers). (John, principal demerged, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

While the participants of the study recognised that differences of opinion exist among the staff, some teachers seemed to be unwilling to engage in any discussion that may become

confrontational due to a history of public put-down's during staff meetings that left some teachers feeling demoralised. To others, it seemed a matter of maintaining a comfortable status quo due to personal idiosyncrasies or coping behaviours.

Like for me, it is very important to me that people are comfortable and I would never have been good at saying "this is the decision". I want to be sure people are okay with it as well. I want them to be okay with it. To come around. And it is a personal quirk. I want people to be happy...I always want things to be copesetic. (Mary, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Arguably, this has been entrenched as a result of a strong sense of camaraderie that has been so highly regarded by the teachers.

I think we make it pretty clear to each other that it is unacceptable and maybe it is not spoken, but it is there. I mean we do not criticise each other. There's a teacher I'm close to and we may discuss something, but at the same time we would not do that in the staff room with another teacher for fear that that may become some kind of a put down session. (Mary, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Also there appears to be a sense of wariness about creating situations of confrontation because of some inherent cultural barrier that acts as a safe guard for certain teachers and a barrier for others. This reflects the statement that supportive cultures can be a source or mediator of stress that seems to depend on the teacher's perception of events (Cole and Walker, 1989 and Gold and Roth, 1993).

It appears that the principal, in discussing confrontation, recognises the importance of avoiding confrontation.

...as soon as you have confrontation, that seeps into every crack and crevice of a

facility, into the teachers, the students. The teachers aren't happy, the students do not get the programme proper. (Principal, merged school, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

While it is only speculation, it may be that the principal has made efforts to contain confrontation. It is an important assertion to acknowledge and pursue in future inquiries as the non-confrontational ethos seemed to be well established and served a purpose, acting as a safeguard, as is suggested by Mary Ann.

Relationships and working together are more important...in some senses they can talk about their differences of opinion, but then there seems to be a cut off and people will only go so far. I think it is not wanting to break the bonding that they have. (Mary Ann, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

In contrast, Slim recognises that by being non-confrontational, there are strengths as well as weaknesses.

Because I think the pressures are on teachers, in the staff room it tends to be fairly...let's relax... and there's some good natured talk about students. But we rarely seem to get beyond that as a group of people. In a way that's unfortunate particularly now there is so many things changing in education and this is the time that we really need to be looking at issues. And I do not feel as a staff we do unless we are pushed. (Slim, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Furthermore, the new principal seems to have recognised two modes of the non-confrontational ethos. The negative side at the junior site was that inequalities during discussions had arisen (teachers being reticent and not offering opinions during meetings). At the time of the second interview set, John was actively addressing this mode. The other that he appears to wish to maintain reflects a notion that while it is favourable to have everybody on board with regards to initiatives, it is not realistic. The implication is for a

mature and professional acceptance that teachers are going to have different points of views.

I would like people to move along in terms of their technology. Like Mark is retiring this year and he's excellent in determining where people are at, but in terms of technology he's not interested. I highly respect that. Those types of things used to bother me. You know if everyone was not coming along. They do not (bother me) anymore. So when you try to look at people collectively and say I want everyone to be here, everyone is not going to be there. (John, new principal, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

The teachers also recognise the benefits of the non-confrontational ethos.

In some senses they can talk about their differences of opinion but then there seems to be a cut off and people will only go so far. (Mary Ann, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Some even acknowledge that this manner of relating to one another is a matter of respect.

I think maturity goes beyond accepting different opinions...if you do not recognise differences, you can not compromise and it is then when you hold onto it. If I'm right and you're wrong then we might as well end it here because the lines of communication aren't open at all and you're just not going to go anywhere with it...Respect has very much a role to play in maturity. (Mary, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Despite the perceived drawback of the teaching culture of the junior site staff, several teachers noted that given the opportunity to teach elsewhere, they would remain at the junior site due to the staff relations.

...there is a very strong camaraderie among the teachers and a lot of mutual support, which is why I wanted to stay here. (Slim, 1<sup>st</sup>)

I have considered looking into a transfer closer to home, but every time I think about it I really want a staff like this to work with. (Blue, 1<sup>st</sup>)

I think it is important to move and change. I think if I had the chance to do it again I probably would. Although, the bottom line is when there was a possibility for a transfer I always thought, I really do not want to leave this staff. (X, 1<sup>st</sup>)

While there are apparent problems or drawbacks with the teaching culture insofar as it has fostered a non-confrontational ethos that does not work to everyone's benefit, the general consensus seems to be that issues work themselves out. This stance appears to work not only because the teachers have 'a good laugh' and support one another as leaders and mentors, but also because the teachers share regular break times and the majority of the teachers accept and support this manner of relating to one another. Nonetheless, the literature suggests that maintaining a supportive culture is not only very difficult but can also lead to balkanisation.

### **Balkanisation**

Hargreaves (1992, 1994) and the HSC (1990) suggest that creating collaborative teaching cultures that are supportive may be too much to ask, and perhaps lead to balkanisation.

Within this case study there was no evidence of balkanisation despite the supportive culture. Because balkanisation is most likely to exist in secondary schools that have a large staff and are departmentalised (Hargreaves, 1994), Midtown Junior High School seems to be exempt despite being disjointed from the day-to-day life of the High School.

The 'shared' teachers made conscious efforts to ensure their participation in staff events (even though it meant doubling their administrative responsibilities). Furthermore, the effort made by all teachers ensured not only their participation in activities concerning

themselves, their colleagues and students, but also that they maintained the continuity of supporting one another. As suggested by Hargreaves (1994), the maintenance of a collaborative and supportive teaching culture rests upon the dedication of teachers who act as mentors and teacher-leaders, as well as administrators who offer supportive, effective leadership.

## **Leadership**

Effective leadership as was argued in the literature review consists of skilful expertise of the principal. It is democratic in style and empowering for teachers in that they share governance and decision-making activities. (Blase and Anderson, 1995; Hargreaves, 1994; and Leithwood, Begley and Cousins, 1994) Although the study participants recognised the communication limitations of having the principal's office at the main site, they were largely in agreement that the administration offered strong leadership. However, the teachers advocating the demerger noted that previous teaching positions had afforded greater participation in decision-making activities and that they expected their involvement in such activities to increase with the appointment of the new principal.

Because the budget was coming down from the high school we have no say and I did not think that was right. So uh, now having our own administration, having our own principal under one roof, I think these are decisions that we are going to become involved with. (Megan, 1<sup>st</sup>)

While teachers discussed issues there was no finality in their efforts as these had to go to a higher authority for ramification. This issue became apparent as Slim discusses the benefits

of having 'integral' leadership.

So I think the that the decision making process is crisp and I think it is a function of our being an integral being within the school. We have no higher court of appeal as far as staff opinion goes.... Attainment of consensus is what we are talking about!  
(Slim, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

While there is much evidence within the literature to support hierarchial leadership, Newton and Tarrant (1992) recognise that input from principals can be limited and still achieve a supportive, collaborative culture. Clearly Midtown High School's junior site staff achieved this. However, while the role that the principal had in building the culture is unclear, he did support it in theory and of course the logistical framework for teachers to be together was maintained. Key teachers fulfilled the leadership role and all teachers seemed to take on mentor roles of varying degrees once established within the school. Therefore, it appears that the principal does not need to actively participate in the maintenance of a collaborative, supportive teaching culture, but that it is necessary for the ethos of such a culture be valued and supported.

Having established the parameters of the teaching culture, the importance of its jocular and supportive relations, as well as the role of its mentors and teacher-leaders and the nature of its non-confrontational ethos, is recognised. Furthermore, it is evident that the combination of these factors has created a teaching culture that functions as a means to aid teachers' coping. While the data from those teachers of Midtown High School's junior site who participated in the case study certainly supports this assertion, it is now appropriate to



explore the impact of the educational reorganisation; to examine how these cultural facets have influenced teacher experiences.

### ***Educational Reorganisation***

The following section establishes that teachers close to retirement experience concern for their roles and careers, and that their limited resistance was a reflection of this. The discussion continues by exploring the relationship of locus of control with teachers who express indifference to the change, as well as those teachers who supported the change but faced difficulty with its implementation. The latter teachers' experience of high levels of anxiety led to teacher-leaders not being able to fulfil their mentor roles and finding it necessary to revert to utilising personal coping behaviours until the intervention of the new principal. While the principal's skilled leadership qualities enabled the empowerment of reticent teachers, there is some speculation as to whether the presence of the administration or the teachers' determination was responsible for the success of the change. To initiate this discussion it is necessary to establish that the demerger was a teacher led initiative and discuss how this kind of change has different coping implications from mandated changes.

### **Teacher led initiatives versus mandated change**

Many teachers of Midtown High's junior site recognised three issues that reflected the need for change as is evident in the following passages.

What really precipitated the move to having a new school with separate administration was the facilities report. He (the author of the report) did not speak

with anyone down at the junior high. I guess he spoke with the principal. He indicated that all of the things that the junior high school students needed were in place and almost sounded like everything was rosy and honk-dory. The Home and School (association)... wanted to know what could be done to improve the situation, because this report ...set them back by saying that the students had all of these things when in fact it is terrible. The feeling was that if we were going to get new facilities then the first step to doing that was with a separate administration. So the Home and School latched onto that. (Megan, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Most teachers had a similar logic for promoting the demerger of the school.

It is like a cracker box with plumbing! (Slim, 1<sup>st</sup>)

We can not expose our students to the other options (specialist subjects) until they get into grade ten or eleven (at the senior site). (Blue, 1<sup>st</sup>)

...we never thought the library was ours. I must say I never once took my students up (to the senior site) this year to do research. By the time you got them dressed we had 25 minutes and nine times out of ten there were high school students working and we wouldn't have the room. (Megan, 1<sup>st</sup>)

The effect of sharing facilities between the two sites can be broken down into two distinct domains. Firstly, the teachers working at the junior site, as well as the administration, note that the lack of administrative presence in the facility effects communications among the staff and between administrators and staff, as well as effecting the provision of leadership.

There are times for example that you were supposed to be at a workshop or a letter went out from the Department where the workshop was available if you wanted to attend and often you only got the letter after the workshop was finished. (Megan, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Those educators teaching students of both schools, but who are primarily located in the senior site (shared staff), not only identify communication barriers, but also scheduling difficulties which further strains communications.

I was one of a handful of people who had always had to stand with one foot firmly on each side of the fence. And there's a lot of extra frustrations. Frustrations with like for example a double lot; parent teacher interviews and examinations. (Steve, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Also the principal of the school recognised that the communication issue was widespread among the staff, noting that his presence was inadequate.

If I was to say something failed, then it would be that, my presence (at the junior site). If I would have started my day at the junior high, then the senior high would have felt the same thing...the lack of presence. I mean you can not be in two places at the same time and uh, I made a choice to be at the senior high. (Principal, merged school, 1st)

Having established that the facilities of the junior site were an issue along with the problem of the lack of leadership and poor communications, several teachers seized an opportunity to promote a demerger that would give the site its own administration. While it was a reoccurring effort for nearly as many years as the school has been merged, a group of teachers successfully lobbied for the demerger. Although there are logistical differences between mergers/amalgamations and demergers, it is the teacher led reorganisation that distinguishes this educational reorganisation from the others documented in the literature review.

The literature states that mandated change is, basically, difficult to establish because teachers resist it. They do so not only because change is at times poorly thought out or inadequate in some other way, but also that it threatens teachers' identities, both personal

and professional (Hargreaves, 1994 and Whitaker, 1993). This implies that teacher led initiatives would not threaten the identities of those teachers who initiated the demerger. Also, if teachers opposing the demerger experienced coping difficulties as is suggested, would those teachers who supported the demerger not have difficulty coping? These issues are considered below beginning with the threat to the identity of those teachers who opposed the demerger.

The literature suggests that teachers resist change because their identities are under threat- a coping strategy aimed at maintaining the psyche's status quo so to speak. Four teachers resisted the demerger. But the question remains, did they do so because their identities were threatened or simply because they had had the experience of the demerged school previously and thought it not the best solution to the school's problems?

Take for example the Industrial Arts people. They're 75% junior school and 25% senior school. Industrial arts is one of those programmes where you have two teachers for 30 kids. It means that if you have a staff ratio of 19.6 teachers, which the junior high has, then take two (teachers) right off the top to deal with 30 students. You have 17.6 teachers to deal with 330 students instead of 18 teachers. So there is going to be changes there. There is no question about it. And if they want to add other programmes they are going to have to do something else. (Huds, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Now each of us is going to have to teach more because one position has been eliminated. When you bring in a principal and you did not have one before, that principal does not teach....So you've eliminated a teaching position. So I think to make up for that each of us will probably lose some free time, some planning time, or whatever. (X, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Also, each of the teachers who opposed the demerger agreed that they would have

supported the demerger if they thought the school would get the new facility that the demerger advocates sought. They were, however, of the opinion that these conditions would not be met. This could be regarded as a safety net, thereby allowing this group of teachers to justify their opinion. Such change resistance, arguably, is a psychic-palliative technique meant to maintain personal and cultural identities. (Kyriacou, 1981)

However, there is no clear indication that any of the teachers who opposed the change did so out of a need to maintain their selves. However, it is theoretically possible that to some extent these teachers were experiencing a threat to their identities. While X seems to be expressing the personal drawbacks of the demerger,

You know it was a very good working relationship. And um, that I think it going to be lost...I would have loved to have finished with the principal. We're not too far away but it is just not going to be the same. (X, 1<sup>st</sup>)

and another who opposed the demerger was rather frank,

It is not a traumatic experience. In my opinion they should not demerge. I think it is a bunch of foolishness; bullshit. It is going to mean more money spent on administration and there will be more bickering between the schools because they are sharing facilities. (Norm, 1<sup>st</sup>)

there is no indication that these teachers opposed the demerger due to threats to their identities even though the literature review and my own knowledge of change suggests otherwise. A similar difficulty presents itself with regard to Adams *et al.* (1976) model of transition which explores the relationship between change and self-esteem. Once again it is difficult to detect identifiable shifts in the teachers' self-esteem.

However, Kyriacou and Harriman (1993) identified six concerns with regard to educational change. Of the six, role shifts (particularly for teacher-leaders) and potential for career shifts (for those teachers reaching retirement age) were identified within the data from those teachers opposing the demerger.

Because I'm so close to retirement, it really hasn't bothered me a lot. I'm going to put in one year...(X, 1<sup>st</sup>)

If I was going to be here for x number of years then I might be a little more against what has happened. (Huds, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

X also talks about relinquishing some of his extra-curricular duties as a result of the demerger.

I finally made that decision. I'm not going to do it next year...someone else will have to look after it. I'll be involved in fundraising, but that is it... I probably made that decision because of this change. If that had not happened, I probably would have done it this year as well. (X, 1<sup>st</sup>)

While the teachers resisting the reorganisation certainly noted potential role changes for themselves and therefore, identity shifts, that these teachers also discussed the school viability leads to the notion that the resistance offered by this group may have reflected something greater than individual identity loss. This group seems to have been concerned for the loss of the organisation and therefore perhaps the culture as a whole.

There may be an argument for a new school based on the fact that we do not have enough space. So now the board looks at it and says, 'Oh, but this school ...is only half full. We can solve this problem by keeping the grade nines here, here and here. And all of a sudden the problem can be eliminated. We can put grades 7 and 8

somewhere else, maybe the elementary school, and create a 1-8 or a 1-9 and then you eliminated the junior high concept all together.' Which I would hate to see happen. (X, 1<sup>st</sup>)

While teachers may not want to engage in change because it disorganises what is comfortable, it seems that these teachers may have resigned themselves to this fate because they do not see themselves as having a long term stake in the outcome of the reorganisation. On the contrary, Sikes (1992) argues that there is a correlation between the length of time a teacher remains in a career and the level of resistance. This would suggest that these teachers would offer greater resistance to this demerger.

We had been through this before and it did not work the first time. In fact it was decided in the end that it was not very productive to have people sharing facilities and not one person in charge of it all. (Steve, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Although they see themselves as being the ones most suitable to informing the demerger decision, which supports part of Sikes' (1992) theory, it is also important to recognise that the opposing teachers' resistance to the demerger was limited.

Once the demerger became mandated the teachers opposing the reorganisation made no further efforts to resist the reorganisation. Their actions might be explained by the influence of their pending retirements. However, their lack of ongoing resistance and early acceptance of the school's administrative destiny (which may be highly developed coping strategies) seems to offer insights into why they did not experience the obvious coping difficulties as anticipated. To address this shortcoming of the research, it would be

necessary to establish a point of reference with change participants prior to their engaging in reorganisation. Such efforts would allow for the gauging of difficulties experienced as a result of reorganisation.

Furthermore, it could also be said that teacher initiated reorganisations would have limited affect on educators because of the involvement of teacher-leaders in the demerger as suggested by Hargreaves (1991). This not only supports my earlier assertion that mandated change has different implications than teacher initiated change, but also that the involvement of teachers in an initiative reduces the effect on those resisting the change. Irrespective of these issues, perceived role shifts and career shifts seem to be prevalent issues irrespective of whether change is imposed (mandated) or teacher initiated. Identifying which teachers perceive or may be at risk of imposed role or career shifts could provide insight of those who may experience greater difficulties with reorganisations and therefore resist change efforts. Predictability of change events is one facet of coping (Adams *et al.*, 1976) as is having an internal locus of control.

### **Locus of Control**

There was a marked distinction between those teachers who perceived themselves as having an internal versus an external locus of control. Those teachers, who classified themselves as fence-sitters with regard to the demerger, seemed to be expressing that their willingness to let others make the decisions was a coping strategy. Several of these



teachers indicated that their experience of offering an opinion usually led them to a position that was not accurate or failed to reflect the consensus. Furthermore, their experiences did not necessarily reflect professional matters.

Anything I usually speculate on, I'm usually wrong. We used to go to the boat (car ferry). If there's two lanes of traffic I will pick the wrong one and be there much longer. The same with the supermarket. So over time you just stop. So basically now I just accept whatever comes along.... (Blue, 1<sup>st</sup>)

This group of teachers seemed to have an external locus of control, whereas the teachers comprising both those resisting and supporting the demerger perceived themselves to be responsible for their experiences or have an internal locus of control. While it was clear that the teachers had opposing views of the demerger, it is important to note that having an internal locus and therefore, a perceived ability to cope using one's resources, can also lead to greater states of anxiety if the teacher does not cope well with stressor. (Woolfe and Dryden, 1996) This phenomenon was evident in three of those teachers advocating the demerger.

The teachers who supported the demerger all seemed to share the fact that the change was not regarded as a threat to their identities. Rather it was regarded as an opportunity to affirm their notion of education and teacher roles.

So I said to him (report writer), "do not you think the that the best way to go about getting a new facility for all of these changes is if we became and independent facility?"...so we carried that through from that meeting to the staff meeting. So then as a staff we spent many, many meetings on this and we decided that probably what we really wanted and if we were to get what we really wanted, is if we fought for it as an independent school. As a staff we decided the best route to take would be to ask to become an independent school. (Megan, 1<sup>st</sup>)

However, three teachers belonging to this group experienced high levels of anxiety which did not evolve until subsequent and unanticipated issues were created as a result of circumstances brought about during the process of demerging.

I'm just trying to sort out my own feelings about that, because there were a lot of them...Uh, I have not sorted that out. I just know that I was very anxious...I felt that I was second guessing myself with the situation. I felt the staff were basically looking for a change. And once again, as much as that hurt,... um, but that's life you know. (Froggie, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Arguably each of the teachers who have an internal locus of control seemed to develop the greatest levels of anxiety because of their inability to "influence the outcome of a stress problem" as described by Woolfe and Dryden (p. 534, 1996). This seemed to reflect the vice-principal's experience of applying for the newly formed principalship and seeing the control of that situation exist outside of his control. His early interview data suggests an internal locus of control. The fact that he was incapable of controlling this outcome suggests at the time of the appointment, he would have been experiencing high levels of anxiety.

The second teacher experiencing personal difficulty differs from the other in that this teacher's perceived anxiety came as a result of not achieving the goal of obtaining a new facility. As noted in the literature review, an individual with an internal locus of control is likely to have a rise in anxiety if they do not achieve their goal (Woolfe and Dryden, 1996) as was the case with Megan.

Two years of work have gone down the drain...I feel let down in that the staff isn't as together as I thought they would be. (Megan, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

The personal investment of this teacher seems to play a role in her experience. Although she had several colleagues who also supported the demerger, what is unclear is the level of their participation in achieving the demerger. Supporting and actively pursuing the demerger are two levels of involvement within the same role. Speculating that this teacher was somewhat more involved suggests that the level of personal involvement will play a role in the teacher's experience of the change.

Another teacher experiencing high levels of anxiety during and following the interviews for the principalship was somewhat perplexed by her lack of professionalism during that period. Her comments suggest that she was aware that she was not coping as customary.

I've always been proud of my professionalism. Always worked to maintain it. Keep things professional. And I found it very hard. I would catch myself. "Oh, God, what did I just say?", because the reason for that is my support system had broken down. Well that's part of the reason. You know I would say something or feel something or I would allow myself to be subdued by something. That was my fault. But (pause) the system outside of myself was breaking down too (pause) because there was nobody there, (pause) not to talk to. Everyone was the same. There was nobody there. (Mary, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Furthermore, she recognises that not only were her internal coping mechanisms not managing, but also that her external support network had broken down. Not only did this add to her anxiety as she sought to cope with the situation, the break down of the collaborative and supportive teaching culture allowed tensions to arise among the staff.

There was a lot of awkwardness. Awkwardness because of our vice-principal who has been doing a good job, applied for the uh...., principalship position and did not get it. (Mary Ann, 1<sup>st</sup>)

According to some teachers who supported the demerger, collegial relationships came under strain due to the inability of a few teachers to discuss their feelings openly. Teachers who considered themselves staff leaders found the time following the announcement of the appointment of the new principal extremely difficult to manage. This was despite the fact that the teachers felt they were getting the principal that they wanted to lead the staff and school through the demerger and subsequent issues.

The difficulties cited did not reflect upon a problem of teachers holding different opinions. The difficulty centred on the breakdown of communications between teachers which put a strain on the collegial relationships. Those teachers who usually fulfilled leadership roles, were no longer able to act as mentors to their colleagues. The strain seemed to be compounded as a result of many teachers not knowing how to handle the situation of a new administrator being appointed but not yet acting in that role.

It just did not seem that anyone had a clear direction and that included the vice-principal as well. I think he was not sure. He did not want to step on people's toes. He did not want to over do it. No one seemed to know where we should go and there was not anything written in stone. You know, this is how you deal with someone new coming in. (Mary Ann, 1<sup>st</sup>)

Some suggested that had the current principal been located at the junior school, the situation would not have been so awkward. However, it appeared that a general lack of guidance and leadership was problematic, ultimately allowing the disintegration of the formerly supportive teaching culture of Midtown's junior site staff.

When the teaching culture failed to be maintained as was accustomed, some teachers found themselves unable to function at the organisational level, specifically within their own leaderships roles. This restricted their professional roles as mentors, reduced collaboration

among the staff, and increased frustrations and apprehension for the pending separation. As a result of these experiences, several teachers talked about closing off and relying on their internal resources to cope with the practical issues of teaching and their emotional well-being as well.

I do not know how we came through some of the things we came though and manage to keep our staff relations together. (Mary, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Dunham's (1992) distinction between personal and organisational coping resources is valuable in respect to the current issue. The data suggests that when both are prevalent and there is sufficient difficulty to produce anxiety, organisational resources will be forfeited and personal resources will be adopted as the main coping behaviour.

### **Intervention**

Although some teachers recognised the benefits of change facilitation, external intervention was not perceived as being necessary or appropriate for this reorganisational effort by any of the research participants.

I think the teachers would have been very anxious had a formal facilitation been made available. (Mary, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Nonetheless, the intervention of the newly appointed principal seemed to be responsible for the reinstatement of the supportive, collaborative teaching culture at the junior high school. All but one teacher attributed this to the leadership abilities of the new principal, John.

Apparently formal facilitation is perceived as threatening, whereas the intervention 'offered' as a characteristic of the principal's leadership style was less daunting for the

teachers. Certainly the majority of teachers interviewed identified the skill of the new principal as playing a major role in the perceived success of the demerger.

### **Leadership qualities**

Hargreaves (1994) suggests that skilful leadership is democratic and empowering as well as being necessary for the creation of supportive teaching cultures. According to Mary Ann, the new principal has empowered teachers by giving each of them a voice.

John would come in and ask for opinions. He's recognised the dynamics of the group. He'll have staff meetings but will also meet with individuals and take turns talking to them - sometimes before the staff meetings, if there is an issue or after the issue has been brought up - just to see what the feeling is...A lot of people will not speak up in the meetings about an issue. So he's trying to ensure everyone has the opportunity to speak. I think it empowers them more. (Mary Ann, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

John, according to the majority of the interviewees of the second series, is proactive and able to assess the dynamics of the group and individual personalities. His assessment abilities have been successfully coupled with his ability to manipulate the group to improve staff communications.

Right from the very first day when John came in he just took right over and he made his own decisions. So it gave everybody the feeling that someone was in control here and I think it relieved a lot. The past four months have been good. It felt like there was a lot of support. John would come and ask for opinions. He's recognised the dynamics of the group. He'll have staff meetings but will also meet with individuals and take turns talking to them. I think it empowers them. (Mary, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

In reality, the new principal's ability to assess has positively translated into a 'safer' environment where more teachers felt able to voice an opinion publicly. The safer environment was not instantaneous, requiring much conscious attentiveness on the part of the new principal.

I worked my butt off trying to learn everyone's name and call them by their name, because that's pretty important. That was very intentional.... I have come into a

school and an administrator where the administration is essentially intact and I did not want to be perceived as undermining the former administration....There are some very vocal people within this school and over the years people have been shot down. They (those shot down) speak out during staff meetings... So, I've created an opportunity for one-to-one. (John, new principal, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Although the majority of teachers recognise John's ability to provide leadership and the improvements to staff communications are evident, many teachers expected success. In retrospect some teachers expressed their perceptions of John's capabilities prior to his incumbent term as principal of the junior high site.

I think a good administrator can re-establish that (ethos) among a group of people. I've seen people do that you know. And if an administrator is successful at doing THAT then I think dealing with specific issues is more matter of routine. It is not a hurdle that has to be jumped over. And I think John's leadership in that regard will be quite capable. (Slim, 1<sup>st</sup>)

The expectation seems to reflect a self-fulfilling prophecy.

### **Self-fulfilling prophecy**

Although the appointment of John was perceived positively by the teachers because he met their criteria (in reality there was more to it than the teachers creating a list and matching personal qualities though), the teachers recognised the qualities they were after in a principal and strongly felt that John had those qualities. Consequently, there seemed to be a built in expectation for success in that the teachers had identified what they wanted, appointed a person they felt would be successful in meeting their needs, and they would let him get on with what he was hired to do. The staff certainly felt he was capable and it could be that in addition to his leadership qualities, the staff's genuine *belief* that they had chosen the right administrator attributed to the success of the demerger. In addition to the self-fulfilling prophecy issue, it appears that certain improvements were inevitable.

## **Administrative guidance**

All of the participants agree with the improvements at the school in terms of staff meetings, staff relations in general, the dissemination of information and the decision-making process.

I think that the decision making process is crisp and I think it is a function of our being an integral being within the school. We have no higher court of appeal as far as staff opinion that goes beyond the school. So that's encouraging. (Slim, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

In discussing the improvements to some staff members' characteristic reticence, he goes on to make assertions that cloud the issue of to whom or what the success can be attributed.

I think in the past people may have been more reticent to speak because they knew the decision did not end at the meeting. It still had to come up to another authority for ratification. I think right now that we know the school is integral. It is our chance to say something and I think that has brought people out a little bit more. Attainment of consensus is what we are talking about. (Slim, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Slim suggests that the result of staff members speaking out in a forum they had not previously done so is a consequence of having a permanent administrator at the junior high school. Furthermore, in light of his statements, it seems that having any administrator would have accomplished this.

Similarly, the dissemination of information would apparently improve by having the administration located at the junior high school site. Therefore, it is arguable that improvements to many of the issues could have been met by the appointment of any principal. Furthermore, having an administrator within the school arguably alleviated the anxiety leftover from the spring term of the previous school year.



## SUMMARY

While it appears that any administrator could have met the logistical improvements sought by the demerger, John's leadership does seem to be responsible for addressing the aspects of the culture's non-confrontational ethos that seems to keep some teachers from achieving professional input.

He seems to know how far to go with things. When to cut it off. And as a result I think he is the key. He conducts meetings in an efficient manner... I find he's very efficient that way and very personable. There are some people who do not speak at the staff meetings and he puts people at ease. (X, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

...right from day one it was very positive. And I think that not just for myself. We were able to gain that sense of okay, I feel I have a lot of strength here. I perceived it in more people. People who were not necessarily like that before. They are on equal footing there now. It does not surprise me. John has offered them the freedom. The freedom to be professional. (Mary, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Having John who has the background that he has and a document that outlines the recommendations have been important in our direction. Had we a principal who did not want to take the bull by the horns and not rock the boat and let things go as they have been, it would have been a real mess. Not being afraid of conflict either. To work it through. That's been important. (Slim, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

The factors responsible for the improvements at the junior site seem to reside in two areas. Firstly, the presence of an administrator who has the ability to finalise decision-making efforts has been important. Also, improvements to general communications have occurred by default. The second improvement reflects adjustments to the non-confrontational ethos, which was regarded as a reflection of leadership skill.

John's leadership style is such that he believes in everyone having a voice without the threat of reprisal or public ridicule. By managing this part of the teaching culture that seems to occur within the formal meetings, those teachers who have been reticent to speak

out before are given a professional voice. In addition to these benefits, the status quo of the teaching culture was re-established.

Teacher-leaders who seemed to be preoccupied with the breakdown of their supportive role within the teaching culture, were able to fulfil their perceived roles. Not only did this alleviate these teachers' anxiety, which is "likely to induce stress in students and among other teachers,... and may go to extremes of withdrawing from personal relationships" (HSC, 1990, p.6) but it also permitted the supportive, collaborative culture to return to its status as being a consistent means to alleviate stress (Brenner *et al.*, in Travers and Cooper., 1996).

Consequently, earlier assertions that collaborative, supportive teaching cultures have the ability to alleviate stress seem accurate. This seemed to happen for several reasons. Firstly, teachers were given common opportunities to get together during breaks from teaching. Secondly, the supportive, collaborative culture was valued by the principal. Therefore, the leadership provided by the principal is paramount to maintaining an environment conducive to a supportive, collaborative culture. The assertion that the principal is the keeper of social support within the literature review certainly seems to be supported by the case study data. Also the teachers showed pride in their teaching culture; how they supported one another and how they laughed with each other.

Support is offered throughout the staff but is particularly evident from key staff who seem to fulfil the role of teacher-leaders and informal mentors. The most surprising phenomenon is their jocular relations. Clearly, this created a favourable atmosphere, but it

also provided an opportunity for issues to be addressed in subtle ways. Perhaps it is this manner of humour that caused the non-confrontational ethos to function so effectively in less formal settings.

Unfortunately, the literature consulted does not discuss laughter as a means for promoting and maintaining collaborative cultures although “Laughter is the coping mechanism *par excellence*.” (Woods, 1984, p. 202). In fact, it came as a surprise, although pleasant, that the issue of laughter would prove to be so important to the teaching culture of Midtown High’s junior site.

Woods (1984) identifies three laughter inhibitors, which require bearing in mind. These are the *psychological and physiological state of the teacher, injustice, and the undermining of status, or threats to professional equilibrium or personal insult*. The importance of identifying these inhibitors is quite marked within this case study as there was a time when the laughter stopped and the teachers ceased to function effectively.

Had we continued with people not talking then I think it would have really dismantled the whole staff. (Mary Ann, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Identifying that laughter appears to function purposefully and consistently as a facet of a supportive, collaborative teaching culture is one of the fundamental outcomes of this case study. This is not to suggest that one can incite laughter or that by its presence, a supportive, collaborative culture can be maintained. What is argued is that in this instance, laughter was a valued part of this school’s successful teaching culture and that further exploration is required to understand it more fully.

Clearly the cultural component of this thesis is significant. It not only seems to have shaped the demerger issues and how teachers were affected by the demerger, but it seems that at the end of the process, it remained relatively unchanged and continues to be a source of pride and benefit for the teachers of the new Midtown Intermediate School.

There is an identification with what I can only call an ethos in the school. I think the reputation of the school comes before it. Like people know that it is the least well equipped school in the Maritimes, possibly, and yet there is a line-up to get in. I think that says something to me that...over the years there's grown up a staff ethos that recognises it is the people who make the school. That's it. And you'd sooner be a member of a harmonious group of people in a poor physical situation than be a part of a back biting, irreverent group of trouble makers in the most modern school... (Slim, 2<sup>nd</sup>)

#### ***SUMMARY OF POINTS - discussion***

- There is indication of concern for role and career shifts for those teachers nearing retirement.
- Individuals with external loci of control seem to be open to lobbying.
- Those with greater perceived coping abilities will have greater anxieties if expectations are not met.
- When key staff members (teacher-leaders) feel anxious this has a deteriorating effect on the teaching culture. This has potential to induce stress among others.
- Intervention is appropriate. The level and person to carry out the intervention requires consideration.
- Effective leadership empowers teachers. Empowerment in this instance is giving reticent teachers a professional voice.
- To maintain collaborative supportive teaching cultures, the administration has to value it and provide opportunities for teachers to get together in informal ways.
- The management of staff meetings is an important leadership role of the principal.

- Positive expectations may be important to the success of a change initiative.
- Leadership and administration seem to be two separate roles. Administrative guidance is necessary and leadership is preferable.
- Supportive teaching cultures can alleviate stress or anxiety in teachers.
- Jocular relations are very promising although very little is written with respect to their role in school staff rooms or the maintenance of supportive, collaborative teaching cultures.
- The collaborative, supportive culture of this school is sustainable, although not without problems, such as entrenchment.
- Being supportive is considered normal. Teachers readily adopt informal mentoring roles.
- Continuity is supported within the culture. Students become student teachers, who become teachers, who live in the area and who have children who are students, who become teachers and so on.
- Administrators need to value supportive cultures and ensure opportunities for teachers to get together informally.
- The affect of change depends on who initiates and implements the reorganisation.
- Teacher led initiatives have less impact on the teachers and teaching culture, but may result in greater anxiety for those implementing.

### ***SUMMARY OF POINTS - future studies***

- Any study conducted in the future would benefit from the skills obtained during this case study. This is not to suggest that this study has suffered to invalidate the data or analysis.
- There will always be an unanswered question, but it is recommended that one further interview series should have been conducted, allowing for inductive/deductive thinking to proceed.
- T-1 needs to be established as the norm. It is necessary to initiate the study before change is initiated to establish whether resistance is a means to maintain the self.

- With regards to the self-fulfilling prophecy what is the likelihood of teachers expecting success and achieving success of a change initiative?
- There is a need to clarify and define what is expected from engaging in a collaborative culture in order to establish degrees of achievement.
- Is there a need to distinguish between resistance as ongoing and opposition to a change which is temporary?
- If you reduce cultural entrenchment would this make the teaching culture unsustainable? Also how important is continuity to maintaining supportive, collaborative cultures?
- Are levels of anxiety also influenced by the extent of personal investment in initiating and implementing a change?
- Empowerment is enabling all teachers to voice opinions during staff meetings.
- Empowerment is considered an aspect of expert leadership. Does empowerment reflect the needs of the organisation insofar as it would mean different things to different organisations?
- Is the adoption of informal mentoring practices an inherent part of a supportive culture? What role does respecting colleagues have to play in these practices?

## CONCLUSION

Frankly, the case study was an incredible learning experience from conception to submission. The process of carrying out such a study alone was significantly challenging. Nonetheless, it is necessary to step back and question whether the initial goals were achieved. One of my goals was to fulfil the academic requirements of the education doctorate by examining educational change - a topic in which I was and continue to be very interested. The majority of my time has been spent focusing on that goal and culminates within these pages.

Primarily the study had three main areas of educational change to consider. Firstly the argument for exploring change resistance was established and the study designed to address the role of teacher resistance as a means to maintain the self. Secondly, the many functions of the teaching culture were to be considered. Finally, social support being regarded as an effective coping resource, was to be examined for its ability to alleviate stress while examining the role that teacher-leaders and administrators play in its maintenance. In essence the study was designed to address these areas. However, the level of teacher resistance within this case study was minimal and therefore, it was not possible to ascertain whether change resistance functions to maintain the self as argued in the literature review. This was a result of the peculiarities of this case study and not the study design. Nonetheless, difficulties resulting in high levels of anxiety were evident, requiring skilful leadership to reinstate the status quo. Too although there are many questions to pursue in future studies, the data provided rich evidence to affirm that social support is a valuable coping resource.

The data also illuminated the complex nature of the teaching culture and the importance of teacher-leaders and principals to maintain their functioning. In addition, the data revealed that although supportive, collaborative teaching cultures benefit teachers, teaching cultures with very good examples of collegial support can have problems where entrenchment and a non-confrontational ethos exist. Nonetheless, there seem to be two fundamental factors that have attributed to the success of the teaching culture and that is the professional respect each teacher has for the next and the laughter they share. An inherent mentoring program maintains these aspects of Midtown Intermediate's teaching culture.

Secondly, I set out to challenge myself and learn a 'new' method of inquiry by utilising the qualitative case study. At times it seemed a daunting task as I attempted to not only comprehend reflexivity, but also transcend linear thought processes. While I am confident that my qualitative skills are sufficient to fulfil the academic requirements of this inquiry, I recognise that these skills are in their infancy and will benefit from being developed, challenged and honed by other research opportunities. Having nearly come full circle I am fulfilled with an overwhelming sense of personal accomplishment in having produced this thesis to achieve my goals.



## APPENDIX 1

### *Historical Perspective*

Midtown High School is located in an Eastern Canadian town, which has a population of approximately 2000. The school has a long history of transition. For as long as the school's name has existed, it appears that it has been followed by a series of change attempts, many of them failed. Nonetheless, Midtown High is a name synonymous with reorganisation. Since the conception of the junior high within the town, several attempts have been made to improve facilities at the junior high site. It is this very fact that has made the site such an appropriate organisation for conducting an inquiry into the phenomenon of teacher support during times of reorganisation. In addition to the series of reorganisational attempts, this particular reorganisation is rather unique, as it has been initiated by a group of teachers within the school. In order to fully appreciate the complex nature of the school and the impact on the teachers of the school, it is important to detail its history and explain the nature of the reorganisation. Furthermore, discussing the context of the reorganisation allows for the contextualisation of the inquiry. The following details were gathered by speaking with individuals who have a long history in the community and at the school. Every effort has been made to make the details as precise as possible. However, those supplying the information noted that some of the dates might be incorrect. Therefore, time frames have been given.

## **THE BUILDING**

In the 1960's, Midtown High School was established as a feeder school, taking in students from the immediate and rural communities. The site of Midtown High School is mid-town and occupies the building adjacent to the former elementary school building. Later came the construction of an elementary school facility in the town that would accommodate children in grades one through six. With the previous elementary school building vacated, the site became home to a newly formed junior high school. As a result, the town of Midtown had two secondary schools serving students of two distinct age ranges on adjacent sites. The association of the two schools was close, primarily due to proximity, as only a street separates the two buildings. In the late 1970's the two schools merged to become Midtown Junior/Senior High School. The senior site (formerly known as Midtown High School) was refurbished with new facilities that would serve students of both sites. In 1983, Midtown Junior/Senior High School's new facilities were officially opened. Several years later the merged school officially became known as Midtown High School.

## **THE FACILITIES**

Due to apparent economic factors, the merged school's new facilities were positioned on the site of the senior secondary school. These facilities included Industrial Arts (IA), Shop (mechanics and carpentry), Home Economics, Science labs, Physical Education (PE), Music and the cafeteria. Prior to the refurbishment, the schools' music facilities were located in a mobile between the two sites and the IA facilities were located in the former gymnasium and a connecting mobile of the 'junior' high school site. Students of the

school, regardless of their site shared these facilities located at the 'senior' high school site. Therefore, students of the 'junior' site were required to walk to the senior site to use the facilities noted. The senior site has always been self-contained, with the exception of the mobile music facilities.

## **THE DEMERGER**

Nearly twenty years after the merger of Midtown's secondary schools, they have separated. While this was not the first attempt to separate the school since its merger, previous attempts failed. Some speculate that lack of parental involvement played a large role. Why has the school separated now? The analysis of the interviews will reveal that a small group of teachers, with an agenda to improve the 'junior' high school's facilities and have the school moved to the outskirts of the town, successfully initiated the demerger. Furthermore it has become apparent, through the analysis of the interviews conducted with the junior school's teachers, that the teachers of Midtown's 'junior' high school are divided over the separation, and the meaning and reasons for its occurrence. Nonetheless, in September, 1997 Midtown High School became Midtown Intermediate and Midtown High School. Adding to the complexity of the history of the school, after the merger of the two sites, the schools and the community continued to refer to the two schools by their previous, respective names, perhaps a reflection of the school's destiny to separate nearly twenty years after the fact.

The logistics of separating the school are complex. The high school building has the majority of the facilities. In fact, the only facilities that the intermediate school has are its classrooms, administration offices, washrooms and a staffroom. In addition to these

basics, the high school consists of the library, double gymnasium, cafeteria with stage facilities, industrial arts, science labs, shop, home economics, and track and field facilities. The two schools are to share these facilities.

In 1991, a committee of intermediate school teachers met to discuss the needs of the junior school. These included major improvements to basic facilities and it was the opinion of this committee that the best way to ensure that their needs be met, was by seeking a new facility on the outskirts of the town. In more recent years the teacher committee has gained momentum and recognised that to initiate their goal of a new site, they would seek the separation of the junior school from the senior school. It was the intention of the teachers to impress upon the community and government that a modern day school could not operate, provide equality of education, if the school did not have resource, gym, and shop facilities, to name a few. The timing of the proposal was also important, as the provincial government had funded a study to report on the needs of various 'school families' within the province. The junior school was regarded as having adequate facilities in light of the senior school's facilities. By association the meager facilities at the junior school were regarded as adequate. This was unacceptable to some of the teachers of the junior school and the committee sought the approval for a demerger from the school board.

## **THE TEACHERS**

Since the merger of the two schools nearly twenty years earlier, there is a feeling that the merger was never meant to succeed. In the interviews, the junior school was regularly referred to as the Junior High, even though this terminology was obsolete for nearly two decades. Too, the community at large refers to the site as the Junior High. The reference

to the site as a separate entity is compounded by the fact that ever since the merger, when the two staffs were collectively addressed during staff and orientation meetings, the two staffs have increasingly been given their separate identities due to little or no association. As one teacher put it, I don't know the teachers at the senior school. An odd notion I thought for a school that had been merged. But the philosophy behind the separate staff operations appears well founded. Indeed the staffs deal with separate philosophies, due to the vision and missions of the schools. The teachers admit there is no benefit to a shared relationship between the two staff teams.

The staff at the junior site are self-contained, although they do not have their own administration in a perceived way at the high school site. The principal's office is located in the senior site, whereas each site has its own vice-principal and department heads. While the principal is the common bond, this appears the extent of the two site's relationship with one another.

Another shared relationship is the teachers who work with students of both school sites, including the physical education teachers, Industrial Arts and music teachers. These teachers appear to have an unenviable existence among staff of both sites. The shared teachers work at the senior school facility, although their time is spent to some extent with junior school students. These teachers note the difficulties of being in two places at one time, especially for staff meetings and some have adopted strategies for sharing the attendance at such meetings. Furthermore, shared teachers experience double administrative tasks, such as staff meetings, parent-teacher interviews, and evaluation procedures, such as examinations. The most problematic part for these teachers has been

suggested as the inability to develop working relationships outside their own departments. This has happened for two reasons. Firstly, the nature of their programs means that they have the responsibility for facilities that are sought by students during typical teacher break times. Secondly, these teachers have a commitment to the students in that they encourage the use of their facilities during non-class time. Thirdly, the location of some of these facilities makes it an inconvenience to get to staff rooms due to distance. As a result shared teachers tend to develop strong relationships with teachers within the same or nearby departments.

While there have been several concerns voiced that has led to the demerger of the two sites to its former state, many of the teachers within the junior school site did not favour the separation. Also, there were great problems associated with communications. These reflected issues of shared teachers being available to attend staff meetings, undirected mail from the central office at the senior site, and administrative availability to address concerns at the junior site. The latter issue appeared to have the most comprehensive effect upon communications and the teachers acknowledged that this was unacceptable.

The junior site had an in-house vice principal, whom the principal concedes basically acted as principal of the site. While the vice principal was in the position to address arising concerns, it was the principal who had the final decision making powers. This seemed to result in the feeling that any discussions and decisions held at the junior site out of the presence of the principal had no finality. Furthermore, while many teachers felt supported by the principal, many were of the opinion that because the principal wasn't located in the building, his unavailability caused teachers to seek out each other to address their

concerns. While this appears to have suited the culture of the junior staff, it remained a concern.

The teachers interviewed during the initial interviews identified these issues. Ultimately it was a combination of these that lead to the support for the demerger. Where teachers didn't support the demerger, they felt that having their own administration wouldn't serve to improve their conditions. Most notably, the anti-separation teachers didn't think that a new facility would come from the separation and that issues of finance and viability would become even greater issues as a result. However, the committee for promoting the demerger was successful in achieving its goal.

Prior to the formal separation of the two sites, a hiring committee was established to interview candidates for the principalship. As a member of the committee, one teacher was elected as the junior school's representative. During professional development meetings, the teachers discussed the criteria for the new principal. Above all, they were seeking a leader, which in my opinion reflected the current state of the staff. At the time of the selection, it was a difficult period for many teachers at the junior site. Many attribute this to the vice-principals of both sites applying for the position, neither of whom were successful candidates for the position. Several teachers discussed issues of perceived, failed loyalty to the vice-principals, where as others noted that they were simply looking for a change. Whatever the reasoning, the teachers agreed that the period of time following the interviews was extremely difficult. As one teacher noted, "We were walking on egg shells and no one knew what to say or do." From those interviewed it was clear that this was a low in the junior school's history of having tremendous relationships among the

staff. From several accounts the teachers felt emotionally exhausted toward the end of the school year. By the time I interviewed the teachers, many had resolved themselves to looking at the positive, but even then, some teachers were saying, this can't last, we won't survive if this keeps up. These teachers were putting the fate of their staff in the hands of the principal who was hired to be 'the leader.'

This is a leap of faith of sorts, because the relationships of teachers at the junior site have a history of being incredible. Teachers are proud of their staff and are quick to defend it if called into question, citing praises offered by supply and student teachers. True to their word, the staff at the junior school, indeed appears to have something very special going on, a phenomenon of sorts. When asked specifically as to the reason behind the close knit nature of the group, the teachers are quick to point to a senior member of staff whose very presence has the ability to lift low spirits and who is quick to make a apparently appropriate jokes. Bringing this to his attention, he passes the responsibility to the principal, who he says showed him how to be benevolent. Neither of the two is quick to take ownership of the staff's success with its relationships. Pressing the matter the principal concedes that perhaps they feed off of one another. Regardless, X is seen as the individual who instills the sense by which the staff prides itself. Furthermore, X is of retirement age and there is great concern among the staff that things will never be quite the same once he has left. While this is not meant as a testament to a teacher who is revered by his colleagues, it is important in that it establishes the nature of the staff. Kindness, generosity, and respect are typical of the adjective used to describe this staff. Not everyone bows to the nature of the benevolent staff and it would be misleading to suggest otherwise, but it is for the majority of the teachers, who they are. It was quite an experience to listen



to these teachers talk about their colleagues, their staff, with such admiration. Any school, it would seem, would be so lucky to have this kind of ethos. Indeed, the teachers are quick to note that part of their success is in the informal mentoring offered to new teachers.

The majority of the staff members give new teachers to the staff of the junior school sensitive guidance and reassurance. While recently there has been a formal mentoring program implemented, previously the teachers felt it their job to show 'new' teachers the ropes, including how they get along as a staff. With such devotedness to the ethos of the staff, it comes a little surprise that the teachers had difficult times during the end of the last school year. Clearly they are unaccustomed to staff divisions which the demerger promoted via the selection process of a new principal.

After many years of failed attempts to improve the facilities of the junior site and to secure separate identities, the school board agreed that the school could demerge. As I left the town of Midtown this past summer, the uncertainty felt by many of the research participants was clear on the side of the school. There on the wall of the intermediate school was the name, Midtown High School. But all things come to an end and when I returned four months later to conduct the second series of interviews, the name on the building was simply Midtown School.

## APPENDIX 2

### *Code of Conduct*

#### Research Conduct Statement

Tamara Hubley- Little  
Ed.D. Programme  
Durham University, U.K.

-Participants will have the opportunity to discuss their personal experience of reorganisation. Each will be identified by an appropriate pseudonym.

-Participants can expect the researcher to maintain a strict code of confidentiality. Details of conversations used to express a point will be identifiable only by the participant's pseudonym. The participant will have final say in the inclusion of their interview, in whole or in part, for analysis.

-Researcher and participant will agree to an appropriate means of conversation recording and 'ownership' of recorded material.

-Where details of conversations are ambiguous, every effort will be made to collaborate with participants to ensure that information and its contextual analysis is acceptable to the participant. Participants' experiences will be appropriately represented within the analysis and subsequent discussions.

-At times it will be necessary to confirm information. In this instance, prior authorisation will be sought from the parties concerned.

-The researcher is a guest of the participant and every effort will be made to conduct herself efficiently and with professional regard.

-Any issues arising as a result of the research, not dealt within herein, will be explored as deemed necessary. Participants are encouraged to bring any such issues to the attention of the researcher as soon as possible.

-The school and/or participants will have access to the analysis and discussions of the research if desired.

-Participants should expect to commit two hours for the initial interview and one-half hour for the second. Therefore, interviews will be scheduled for convenience. Furthermore, participants may withdraw, although the researcher requests that reasonable notice be given. Names of teachers withdrawing will be confidential.

-Each participant will have the opportunity to examine and refine these notes of research conduct.

Note: The conduct statement is not intended to be a legal document. It has been proposed as a means to overtly address some of the obscure issues of research. However, as the researcher, I will comply with any agreement made with each participant.

*Tammy*

## APPENDIX 3

### *Overview of Teacher Participants*

Teacher	Gender	Years service	Interviews		Stance on demerger
			First	Second	
Sam	Male	14	✓		Indifferent
Rita	Female	8	✓		Indifferent
X	Male	25	✓	✓	Against
Slim	Male	10	✓	✓	For
Froggie	Male	26	✓		For
Megan	Female	7	✓	✓	For
Mary	Female	4	✓	✓	For
Huds	Male	31	✓	✓	Against
Steve	Male	23	✓		Against
Mary Ann	Female	7	✓	✓	For
Charlie	Male	6	✓		Indifferent
Blue	Male	4	✓		Indifferent
Norm	Male	21	✓		Against
John	Male	N/A		✓	N/A

## APPENDIX 4

### *Sample of Interviews*

#### **Sam - first interview**

**Interview date - July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1997**

**Boardroom - 9:00 a.m.**

Int-- In what capacity and for how long have you been associated with MRHS?

Sam- 14 years as a teacher, we're coming up to the 14th year.

Int- So you were here after the merger and you're at the jr high?

Sam- Jr high . I was at the high school, jr high, high school and back at the jr high.

Int-Full-time?

Sam- Yeah except when we come up to use the facilities, like the library or cafeteria.

Int- So what are you teaching?

Sam- Mostly science and math.

Int So you've been back and forth between the two schools for coming up to 14 years, do you do any volunteer work as a parent or coaching?

Sam- At the school level I was involved extra curricularly with basket ball when I first got here for maybe 3 or 4 years and after that I got involved with the science fair, school regional ,so I've organised the school's science fair.

Int- Are you on the home and school?

Sam- Well as a teacher I'll go to the odd meeting. Last year I think I made two meetings.

Int- And how often do those meetings go on?

Sam-- I think they're once a month, but last year was kind of a weird year too with the transition, not knowing where we were heading for and stuff, but uh, that's about it at the school.

Int- The second question is, What has it been like to be a teacher in a merged school? I know you came after the merger, but had you taught before that?

Sam- Yeah I taught for three years in the NWT and they were two self contained schools that I taught in before. One was primary and the other was up to grade twelve, but this was the first one where I had two different buildings.

Int- Do you notice any difference between being in that kind of school and being in this school?

Sam- Well I felt that it's really two separate schools. It has been for me anyway because there is very little contact other than going to the library or going to the gym. There is very little contact with this staff. At the very beginning we used to have whole school meetings, but in the last few years it's been basically the lower school holds their meetings so there wasn't a lot, I didn't feel that there was a lot of contact.

Int- A lot of your colleagues have brought that up and have mentioned that the two sites, or have kind of secured the notion of two separate schools. And the point that I made to them and I'll make it to you is that the school is actually one school. It is Midtown Regional High School. But yes for almost 20 years since to merger, they've maintained separate identities.

Sam- Since I've been here it's always been called the jr high school. It's never been referred to as. The only thing that you notice is that it's got the sign on it. It says Midtown Regional High School, which always seemed out of place. Even the kids would ask, why is that there. You know because they associated the name high school with this building rather than the whole of the buildings. I did, I do. I think a lot of the kids did.

Int- Do you think that there is anything in that?

Sam- Well I think on paper it's one school and that's all. On paper, but admin-wise on paper it's one school. But in reality I think it's been really two schools. At least from my, like I've always felt that there's the admin down there, even though I know he was the VP, he seemed like the principal of the school. Like you wouldn't really have to come here unless he was sick or something (he laughs). Then you'd come here. Other than that it was basically two, I felt it was.

Int- How many years has it been since the whole staff meetings..

Sam- Well I went away to school myself about 4 or 5 years ago and it was before that, because since I've come back we've had no, we've had no meetings. The only time we come together is at the end of the year when we get our checks (he laughs).

Int- All of your colleagues have mentioned that and I find that amazing.

Sam- Like it's funny. Like I'll see teachers here at the end of the year that I haven't seen all year. Even though you're technically on the same staff, like you just don't see them because you have no reason to go into that wing of the school and they're just not in that area of the building when you're in the library. It's kind of a strange situation. But before that we had meetings. Like when I first got here, I believe we had several meetings a year where we would actually, I remember even a couple of times when the sr high teachers went down to the jr high. But that was, must have been 10, 11 years ago.

Int- Was that infrequent?

Sam- I remember when I first got here it used to be uh, the cafeteria. Everybody at the beginning of the year would gather in the cafeteria for orientation and you'd get the general low down on what was going on, but other than that that was that was, basically the only time we got together was at that time of year and the end. And the last four or five years it's only been at the end of the year. So we've been going less and less.

Int- What consequences does that have on the teachers?

Sam- For me, well I can't speak for the others, but for me again there's really not a great deal of connectedness.

Int- So let me put it this way, if there was a great deal of connectedness what would be the benefit of that?

Sam- Gosh I don't know, I never really thought of it. I can't really. I never thought of having more involvement with the high school. Because again it always seems it's not necessary. Like we do what we do at the jr high or when I was up here at the high school we did what we did at the high school. You were in the other building so they were just another school.

Int- So there's no benefit for having the two teaching bodies come together.

Sam- I couldn't see any personally. Other than the dissemination of information at one meeting, rather than having the admin double their time.

Int- So you think the information would basically be the same?

Sam- Not especially since they became semestered. They became semestered up here so that sort of separated it a bit more, because they they started to have issues and situations that pertained to a semester system that really didn't affect us. Other than the admin trying to put their timetables together to maximise teachers.

Int- Okay let me put this to you, it could take a minute to sort out in my own head. In the fact that so many people and the community even supports it as two separate schools. I do that myself. And that for years now the teachers for years now have been treated as separate staff and then you've got things like the semestering system that kept them even further apart. I guess the point I'm trying to make is that it seems that there has been a paving the way for a demerger and that had there been more collaboration between the two sites a demerger would be more difficult.

Sam- I don't know. The jr high wasn't really that involved with semestering. When semestering was being discussed I was at the high school and like there were quite a few meetings when they brought people in from other schools and experts I guess to talk about their experiences. And it was always, from what I remember, always the high school people who were primarily involved with those meetings. Like it really didn't affect the jr high. I assumed the jr high people weren't there because they weren't involved with the semestering within their school. Maybe that's why they weren't there even though it did have an impact on them eventually. It does now, but I don't think they were trying to omit anybody.

Int- I seems though that there was a series of events that have kind of paved the way. I mean I've been involved distantly with this school all my life and as a child I came in here and ran around, but um, I'm getting a very different perspective of it now. And it just seemed to me that the path has been paved.

Sam- What year did you graduate?

Int- 1984.

Sam- So you would have been in the jr high when it was a separate school?

Int- Yep and I was just leaving the jr high when it merged. Um I remember the big deal. Things that are important to kids. Um but yeah I was here through it, but I wasn't aware of any of the teacher issues. Okay so let's go back to the question. What has it been like to be a teacher in a merged school?

Sam- Again... Like when you're at the high school, it doesn't seem like a merged school, because everything you need is here. But when you are at the jr high it's a different situation. I like to use the library quite a bit when I teach and I find myself looking at this like is it going to rain today, is it available. Those types of things. But for a person in the other building I felt it was an issue, where as here it, you just didn't think of the jr high because you never had to go there.

Int- So are you saying that it's a practical thing?

Sam- Yeah, more than anything. You realise that you're a merged school, or that you don't have a lot of facilities in that particular facilities in that building when you're in that building.

Int- The third question Sam, is, what have been the effects on you as a teacher as a result of the demerger?

Sam- Well they were discussed I guess. I don't know when exactly they started discussing it, but since I got back again. I was in the high school for a while and then I went away to school and I came back and I was in the jr high, but since I've come back which has been 4 years no going on 5, uh, people have been talking about it, either formally or informally. Like personally I can't remember it being an issue when I was at the jr

high before.. I was down there once before and I can't remember hearing people talk about it. I'm getting old. I can't remember, but I can't remember (he laughs) it being an issue. But since I've come back it has been. People, some people have been more for it than others and some have seen the benefits of it and some see more the problems of it. But uh, in the last, yeah since I've come back, three or four years, yeah.

Int- So what is your stand, if I can ask you that?

Sam- yeah, well I was kind of swayed into it at the beginning as thinking that if you had, like it was sort of a means to an end. Like if you have your own admin you might get better facilities. I was kind of led in the path of a lot of other teachers I think. But I think .. from what I've heard through different people and so on that that won't be a big issue. Like I don't think we'll get something out of having a new admin. Like a new building or an addition, at least in the near future. I think one big motivator has been is not there. Like although we're going to have a new admin, we're not going to have a new facility or a new add on or updated facilities within the building. I was, it really didn't matter, because in effect for me it was really two separate schools, for me anyway but I think that for the foreseeable future it will still be the same thing. Like having to come to this school to use everything that we've been using.

Int- Okay, so when you said it had been an issue since you came back, did you mean an issue with the teacher?

Sam- yeah, more so I think there was a group uh, within the school who tended to be more pro independence. It sounds like a political (he laughs) but anyway that's just like most situations. You have the silent majority, sort of going with the flow thinking that nothing will come out of this. but anyway I think that's essentially what happened. We had a few who were quite interested in seeing that it become an independent school?

Int- So there were pro's and cons, did that cause any divisions within the school?

Sam- I haven't seen any. There have been people who voice their opinions and so on and so forth but nobody who's ever, you know taken a negative or a antagonistic stance towards someone who's brought and idea, uh there's been discussions but I can never remember anything being negative or bad about it.

Int- So there's different opinions, and there hasn't been any confrontations. So you think that's it's been stressful for anybody?

Sam- I don't know. Again I can't speak for other teachers, but the uh, when they finally decided, when the board said that they would make the two schools separate, there was sort of at least in my understanding, there was sort of a time line of plan to admit the change, the separating of the, the separating, and uh, that wasn't followed very well. So that for me has been kind of stress my head, I thought we were suppose to be doing this or why hasn't this been discussed. Like it's been done here, like not stressful or anything, but it hasn't been. Like I thought it would be more of an event than it has been., It's been very low key and nothing much has been. Like we've had really only one meeting that has dealt with, as a staff, the separation of the two schools. I don't know of anything other than that one meeting and it wasn't a long meeting or a deep meeting (he laughs along).

Int-The fact that there hasn't been much that has led up to um, the separation, getting together, not following the plan, now what was my question? I hate when that happens.

Sam- The older you get the more frequent it becomes.

Int- Maybe if I talk about it. Do you think that that's a reflection, that's it's not a big deal?

Sam- Like it didn't seem like a big deal to most people.

Int- Yourself included?

Sam- Well I think what I had, I had expectations based on what was told to us. That could have been my, like I might have misinterpreted that. I thought what they had suggested was a plan, but it could have been simply

the hopes of someone with regards to a transition. For example trying to have meetings and get together, uh, with the staff and the community and bringing in the new admin early to start the wheels of change and towards the end of the last school year, you'd have the final transition. Well see none of that happened and uh, or at least I wasn't involved in any of it. So I assume that none of it happened, that most people didn't see it as a big change, or a big deal.

Int- It seems like you were looking forward to having the new admin involved and kind of getting a head start on next year.

Sam- Yeah, well not so much our admin here, I was thinking that if you were going to get a new admin that it was a good idea to get the new person on board fairly early to start looking at things that might have an impact on that new school. Because there are lots of things out there. Everything ranging from middle school philosophy to uh, philosophy of schools that go from one to nine or whatever. And all of these reports that have been coming out from the depart. of Ed the last few years, that people would want to start looking at these specifically for the school. Like I think this is the only one in the eastern part of the province that is from seven to nine and nothing like that at least if it happened I wasn't at these meetings, but things that I would have liked to have heard. Like you know since I'm going to be working there it would be nice to know what's coming up or maybe it's just the status quo. I assume it is because not very much has been discussed about any change. Like it looks as if everything is going to continue as is. So I assume it was just myself, mainly me thinking there were things that would change that maybe aren't going to change.

Int- For the last few minutes you've been talking about your lack of participation um or welcomed involvement in the transition and that the plan of action wasn't fulfilled. Um, do you feel any personal frustration as you had seen it, you know because your lack of involvement, whether you were meant to be involved or not, that a plan that you had assumed would be followed hadn't been followed.

Sam- Not really frustrated, just kind of wondering at times. Like the further we came from Jan. For me the big time this year was suppose to be Feb. because that was in my mind that somewhere along the line somebody told me that it was in Feb that we were to start to get this new admin to start getting the ball rolling and nothing seemed to be happening and nobody was bringing anything up about this so I just kept wondering if things had changed. Nobody had mentioned that a plan had been changed or, I wasn't frustrated, but I was just kind of curious what had transpired. There wasn't a lot of information coming, maybe there was in the school or to some teachers, but myself I never got anything.

Int- Do you think that that information would pass you by? Don't you think you would have known?

Sam- Well if it missed me I'm assuming that it missed most people because I'm just an average Joe on the staff there. So I assume that everybody else is in the same boat as myself, but again nobody was really too worried about it so I didn't get myself in a fluff either.

Int- So are you following everyone else's lead?

Sam- Yeah.

Int- So I paraphrased that you seem to be following everyone's lead, but um, why is it that you think you don't worry about this stuff?

Sam- I assume in the back of mind, that essentially everything's going to be the same, so I'm not too worried about a big change. I can't see any big change happening where I'd be in a situation where I'd feel uncomfortable. I think everything is going to be essentially the same. So I'm not too worried about it.

Int- So it's basically what you and your colleagues have said in different ways, is that we're getting a new admin and that's it. We're going to go on with the same stuff day in and day out that has always been and other than the fact there's going to be somebody occupying an office

Sam- I think so. I haven't come across in 20 years of teaching where you have an admin change or an addition, where it impacted upon me greatly. Like I haven't had somebody come in or somebody change and all of a sudden everything is turned upside down. So I don't anticipate this happening now.



Int- So your experience is that there isn't much of an impact, do you think that's why you are this way now?

Sam- Yeah perhaps, because I've never seen it. Since I've been here for example there's been three super's and when the other two came really nothing changed. Even though you might get different admin's I think they all work about the same. SO there's no big worry there. But other than like you said the only big difference will be two admins in the building instead of one. Again it's the same. Where I was up north I was in a situation where we had a principal change and a super change the next year. And again there was literally, I found no big deviation from what was going on. I think in most situations, in a lot of situations, I think, admin can change, but sometimes they overrate the power of the change. Like they'll say we're going to have a new admin and there's going to do something. There might be, but I've never experienced a big deviation. Like there's never been a real turn over of philosophy or make everybody itchy. I'm not too worried about that.

Int- The last question is, what expectations do you have as a teacher following the demerger?

Sam- I don't know. Next year, this coming year is probably going to be the most important because everything that I expected last year might happen this year. Like thing like the school name, the school mission. Like I worked on the school's mission statement two different times, just for that school, for that site so it, this coming school year it will be interesting to see because, again everything that I thought would have been in transition and been taken care of, because you have plenty of time leading up to, to me it would have been a good year to utilize that time and energy that was available. Where as here we are coming in to a brand new school, technically a brand new school, and like we haven't discussed any of that. You know with regard to mission statement, still you know, is it applicable to us now that we're a separate entity. Simple things like what are our school colours going to be; are we going to keep the same name. Things like that, you know simple little things that weren't discussed, at least I never heard it discussed. The kids never ever brought it up, but I suppose, that they still feel that it's going to be the same anyway. Like things like that you kind of scratch your head about. Hopefully in Sept when we get back, like we're not even sure of the name (he's laughing all alone this topic), I think it's Midtown intermediate, but see even the name wasn't hasn't been discussed. I'm assuming it's Midtown Intermed. because a couple of years ago a policy statement came out from the Dept of Ed to get away from the use of the term jr high school, so that's an assumption on my part, I'm not sure if that's the name or not. So these are the questions people will ask in Sept, I would assume.

Int- So for this coming year, do you think all of the things that were suppose to go on will take place.

Sam- I think some things will naturally have to be answered like simple things like, what's our name or, again maybe people were just assuming that we would know what the new name would be. Just things like that, Even a parent asked me that and I had to be honest, I said I really don't know, but I think it's going to be intermediate school. something as low level as that and you can imagine what other things will be coming aboard. At any rate I think some things, again I don't think most people are worried about it because they don't anticipate a big change between the two schools or a big change in the philosophy of the running of that school down there.

Int- The last thing I need to do is give you the opportunity to talk about something that you thought we might cover or something that you think is important that I've missed.

Sam- I can't think of anything. No

Interview is formally ended and Sam has agreed to participate in interviews in Jan.

When asked to talk about the teaching culture at the jr high, Sam talks about the isolation that he feels, which is a sharp contrast to what other teachers have experienced. (counter # 200)

**MEGAN -first interview**  
**5<sup>th</sup> August, 1997**

Int- In what capacity and for how long have you been associated with MRHS?

Megan- I just completed seven years and the reason why I moved on to the jr high because I had been teaching at the elementary school, I had done everything there and I really needed a change so I went to the principal and I asked him if he would have an opening and he said yes, when are you coming and what would you like to teach. And then another thing, uh, I was teaching French emersion and at the time I heard that one of the teachers who was the key emersion teacher, and he was moving to the high school and being that I had worked so long and so hard in emersion through the years I sort of panicked when I found out that there is no one at the jr high do really do the emersion. And so, then I went over and then uh, that's when your did said yes, sure come on over. So I moved right into the jr high. I just finished seven years.

Int- You've been at the jr high for seven years and before that how long had you been in teaching?

Megan- Oh I just completed 30 years. I had taught ten years in Quebec and then I taught uh, elementary here on the island for thirteen years and then I moved into the jr high. 1990 I moved up. Then at the time I took over the grade 7 and 8 emersion programs and I taught grade nine math. So that's how long I've been there.

Int- Have you had any involvement as a parent?

Megan- No, no except the fact that both of our children had gone through the jr high and uh, when I moved into the jr high, I had never been in the jr high until I had moved into teach. So you know when you have your kids going through and everything is fine, because they did have all of the facilities, they had their home ec. they had their phys ed, so you never questioned or at the time, sometimes the kids would say, well I had to go up to the high school today and it was pouring rain. So to me at the time that didn't mean anything to me really, until I got into the school and I would see some of the kids in my home room who had to go up in the morning for example, they went up for industrial arts and then they had to come back down and then I was also. My home room was mostly the music classes so then they had to turn around and go back up again. So only then did it really start to hit me. Why should these kids have to do this, when they are the only school in the province where they have to share facilities as far as a jr high school was? And I think if I'm not mistaken, I think on the whole island, the Midtown jr high was the only school that was under the umbrella of the high school. Because I think every other jr high is an independent. So and then, like none of it, when you're in a position and you're doing your work and you really don't have time to start thinking about all of these things because you're so busy on a day to day basis. But it only, the first year that I was over there, we formed a committee and I was the teacher on the committee and superintendent was on the committee and Neil, who was VP at the time, and there were two parents and a student and we formed a committee to study, what is it that this jr high really needed? And that was seven years ago. So as a staff we got together and said okay what we really need and want is our own gym. We need our own library, our own science labs, and the list just went on and on. So then we presented that to the board and I have the minutes of the first meeting when we would meet and the business manager was also on the committee, the principal of the high school, myself as a teacher, the VP of the jr high the superintendent, the president of the student council at the jr high and the business manager of the school board. So what we did and that was seven years ago. We went and we met three times, maybe and then what ever happened the meetings just fell through and whenever we would arrange a meeting one or two people couldn't attend so come the end of the school year that had sort of dissolved on its own. So nothing was done about it. Another thing that had happened too, is we had gone in, the committee, we had taken a day off from school, the whole committee had gone in and we had visited the two jr highs in the Royalty Area where they had just put millions of dollars into renovating and then it really hit us. Why should these students have all of these opportunities where our students did not have their own science labs. They did not have their own phys ed. (Phone rings) Oh our first committee,

Int- You went into the schools and that's when it hit you

Megan- Yes, that's when we realised that uh, like they had just poured millions of dollars and the thing is when we had formed this committee and we were told by the school board that the Midtown jr high was priority on the list for renovations. And then the year following that, what happened is that the

amalgamation. Unit four was dissolved. The whole change of the structure of the school board on the Island, so therefore what happened to the Midtown jr high as far as priorities went?

Int- How many years ago did the two broads merged?

Megan- Three years for sure, maybe four. So with all the changes and all the restructuring, we were sort of lost in the shuffle. So nothing happened. So then things really started to stir up again when the uh, the Coles/ Andrews Report surfaced.

Int- One things on my mind and I want to clear it up before I forget. when you were going and looking at these facilities and the jr high was on the list for renovations. Was that strictly renovations or as a committee looking for separate schools?

Megan- No at the time, what we were looking for were immediate needs. It was strictly facilities. So like a new school wasn't a priority then. WE thought that the millions they poured in to the three schools, like millions and money, they just didn't have the money. Probably subconsciously it was there, but we were looking at uh, you know, the changes that we needed. So then after that, Neil, went back up to the high school and Jack came down as VP. Then we had Jack for two or three years I think and then Bob Roberts and now Neil came back down and this is his second year know. So then once we heard also about the Andrews report coming out and one thing that we did as a staff, two years ago, we formed the first home and school assoc. There had never been on that existed before at the high school, so therefore, we formed one and we wanted as a staff to form an independent home and school association, separate form the high school . Two years ago we started and on e of the primary goals when we go the home and school going was to look at the facilities. And even the parents who were on the committee had never, ever given a tour of the school and they were just appalled by the facility. We're talking about the washrooms. And it's something that as an individual teacher and I'm sure most of the teachers will say that, in the run of the day you really do not have time to stop and think, oh my gosh, these kids are going on up to the high school for industrial arts, phys ed, for music for lunch for library. So the tracking back and forth was just unreal. So they would leave my class and they would go up. I would think nothing of it because I had another group coming in. So when you say, like one of the questions was like how did it affect you as a teachers?, it really didn't affect us until we got together and formed a professional development group at the school and then we started to think about this. You know when you've got a group of four or five teachers all voicing the same opinion, then it hits you, this is not fair to our students. We really felt that our students deserved what the other students on the Island are getting. That's when we really started to think something has to be done here. So then when Jimmy Andrews came to the jr high last year and he presented the results form the Andrews report. The home and school had asked him to come and please give us just a summary of exactly what his report was all about. He during the run of the year he visited every school on the Island. He had seen our facility. He met some of the teachers. He met with the principal and VP. He had the tour of the school and that went into his report. He didn't speak directly with me. He spoke with us as a group. But not, he didn't meet with any teacher on an individual basis. It was a general meeting. So the home and school invited him to come and to explain what was taking part in this study that he was doing. So then we really wanted him to focus on what was his report saying, regarding our facility. Because that's the only thing that we were really interested in. So then in, when he was giving his presentation and he was saying yes, he certainly agreed that we did need, if not a new facility, definitely changes. So then I brought up and I said to him, I said don't you think that the best way to go about getting a new facility for all of these changes is if we became an independent facility. So then that was talked about at that meeting. So then we carried through form that meeting to the staff meeting. So then as the staff we spent many many meetings on this and we decided that probably what we really wanted and if we were to get what we really wanted, is if we fought for it as an independent school. As a staff we decided the best route to take would be to ask to become an independent school. Then went to the home and school and of course it was teachers who were really active in the home and school, are the teachers that you are going to interview, like myself, Charlotte, Linda, like we attended most of the home and school meetings over the past two years. And then the parents thought that yes, if we want something then maybe if we were an independent school, with our own principal, our own VP, then lets fight and let's go for getting our own facilities. We thought maybe that maybe that would be the best route to take. I t had nothing to do with the admin of the high school. I t just thought, if we were a small group with our own principal then we firmly believed that we stood a better chance to getting form the board what we wanted.

Int- No one specifically has said that's it's an admin thing, but having spoken with the teachers and looking at there responses collectively, it's very obvious to me that there are certain things admin, that will benefit from having a separate admin. Like a physical presence that's their day in and day out. Not someone who's there and the students don't know he that is. Just the notion that it's one school, but it's two separate schools. so the whole notion of separate school identities was fostered and it got bigger and bigger. And like facilities appears to be the number one thing but from what people have said there is also the notion of that you're going to benefit admin from having separate school sites.

Megan- And what I found and I've been there for seven years and I never at any time in seven years felt a connection to the high school. Never. And I'm sure, like you said we met for the first maybe for the first three years, we would have the Christmas staff party together and then the hr high teachers ort of felt we really don't want to go but we'll go anyway. So as of the last three years the jr high staff have done their thing. Socially we've done our own thing. Because we really did not feel any connection to the high school.

Int- And that's where the irony comes in. Because one of your colleagues talked about getting together to get your paychecks. For me to come in to hear that I was appalled because I thought that the role of the admin was to foster a collective identity where people benefit from the collaboration with other colleagues and then another of your colleagues said well what do you expect teachers to do for each other because we don't have the time.

Megan- That's so true and we never felt that it was the adman's responsibility for us to get together with the other teachers. We did our own thing and believe it or not as crowded as we are in that building. like with 360 kids and the staff and the corridors are so narrow and as crowded as we are we never felt the need or we never felt a connection and the students at the jr high, sometimes we felt they're in limb. They're going under the name of Midtown Reg, High School and we often thought, where do these kids belong? Do they know where they belong? So when you ask them to whom do you belong? Well we're the jr high of course. I always refer to it as the jr high.

Int- That blew my mind and I don't know why. Even now when I speak with my father or other teachers, I always ask how things are going at the jr high. And I thought that was because I had gone through the jr high school, but in the nineteen years that the school has been merged, that's never gone. Children that weren't even borne when the school merged still call it the jr high. Perhaps it's not a big deal, but in my thinking if the school was ever going to be a merged school, those are the kinds of things that you have to address.

Megan- Yes. I know. Like every year we have to fill out these forms for the gov't and it says to which school are you assoc.. We have to write Midtown Regional High, but in brackets I would always put jr high. For six years that I've been there I've been with the student council and all of my correspondence, letter head, I remove Midtown Reg. I put Midtown jr. So that everything comes into me under Midtown jr high, because I never really felt connected. Maybe had I been there years and years ago. Then maybe I would have felt connected. But I never did feel connected. I would go up to the high school. I never knew half of the teachers and we're suppose to be one staff. And a lot of the new teachers that have gone in there, like since I have been there, I'm sure they feel the very same way. They don't feel any connection whatever. And what is really interesting is when I arrived there I was asking about the budgets and the overheads and the capital budgets and there was no (can't make it out). And the teachers who had been there, because there are teachers who started teaching at the jr high and they're still there have never been to any other school. So therefore never really knew how things functioned in other school areas and I had always been in a school where you were really really involved in the management of the school as far as the budgets and there was never any talk about budgets as far as and I was not used to that at all. So like you know, there was no spending done unless the teachers approved of it. So this was really new, so I thought maybe we're just a smaller portion of the big picture, so therefore, it's not brought to our attention, because the budget is coming down from the high school, so therefore, we have no say and I didn't think that was right. So uh, now I think that having our own admin, having our own principal under that one roof, I think these are decisions that we are going to become involved with. And I know how haw difficult it would be what there's a staff of 58, 60 teacher, so how do you sit down with 60 teachers and discuss, okay we've got 3000 dollars how do you want to spend it. It's just too big. I think we're really going to feel. I've always felt that we were just one school.

Int- When you weren't given the opportunity to have a say in the budget and indeed your colleagues have talked about transportation, accessing facilities, uh, all that stuff. One of your colleagues has said that you're the poor relation down here and we get what's left over. What do you think about that comment?

Megan- Well this really is how we felt so therefore you know we felt okay the money is going to go for the sports and the transporting of kids across the Island, so we felt that we were never really involved in that and it is true. So I know that a lot of the travel miles were being used for our students, because we do have sports teams at the jr high. They were involved. We weren't involved directly we had no say how this was going and granted yes, we did feel that whatever was left over they'll give to us.

Int- So it seems that you don't think you got your fair share of the pie.

Megan- No we don't and then we never questioned it.

Int- So when you think back and realise that you never questioned that, what is that like?

Megan- Well what really surprised me at the first meeting I was there, simple things like overheads, like and tape recorders and I was the French emersion coming in and I was used to having my own overhead, my own tape recorder and we really need it every day, so what I did I went straight to the French coordinator and they dug up the money to get a tape recorder and I went up to the high school one day, because they said that's where the overheads are. So I went up to the high school one-day and they couldn't find one that was working. So I said this is crazy. Then we started talking about, we need this and this and this and this. So we did get overheads and we did, but when I first talked about budgets and honestly the people who had been there, like forever, (she laughs) looked at me and said, what are you talking about? Having a budget for your own classroom. When I hit the jr high like you know and teachers were saying what are you talking about, I couldn't believe that they had never had an input into how the money was being used. So you know you sort of go with the flow, do you know what I mean?

Int- Yes, you become assimilated into you know whatever goes on. So how do you feel about not going with it then?

Megan- I was just amazed that teachers didn't have a say into where these funds were going, but I thought okay, I'm new coming in, but then the year after when two new teachers came in, and then the same thing. Like where are the funds coming from. Like those that were there never thought about where the funds were coming from, They are going to handle it. This is new for me because I was always involved in every decision that was made. And then you talk to yourself and you say it's such a big complex, so therefore, maybe the admin's didn't want the teachers to have to bother with this. Where as before in the schools that I had been in before, even in Quebec, they were smaller schools, so every decisions were made with the teachers. So me walking into a huge complex, I thought okay maybe this is not the teacher's business, so I just let it go and I'm new coming in so who am I.

Int- So for 23 years it was your business and then all of a sudden

Megan- No one knows what I'm talking about so I'll just go one and do my thing. (she laughs)

Int-I want to go back to another thing. You talked about getting the home and school assoc formed and I was wondering what role you had played in the organisation of that.

Megan- What had come up was that it was straight from the gov't or from the school board to all school. Every school on the Island had to have a home and school, so it was more or less forced on us. Now I forget what document that was, but it was a document that did come down and this was another thing, because I was always involved with home and school. And it was great. I thought oh terrific. We thought that was a great way to work in the needs of the jr high was through the home and school.

Int-You saw it as an opportunity.

Megan- Definitely, but the first few meetings were terrific, like we would have seven teachers there. Sometimes we would have 15 parents, which was great. It was a new thing, but during the patter part of this year I find that it really sort of teetered out. (phone rings and she's excited)

Int- So I'll carry on with the second question.

Megan- Okay, but what was the first one?

Int- That was how long have you been associated with MRHS?

Megan-and now you know it would be really good to find out the correct information to find out about the forming of the home and school. Find out if it was gov't or school board. I don't know.

Int- I'll try to get that documentation. Okay the second one is, what has it been like to be a teacher in a merged school?

Megan-Uh, okay personally it really hasn't affected me directly simply due to the fact that I always considered myself as a part of the Midtown Jr high. So therefore, it never really affected me from that point of view, because I never did feel that I belonged or was part of the Midtown Reg. High. And I never really did question that. The only thing that I did feel at the beginning I really found it strange not to see your school principal there with you. Like I found that, not difficult, but different. You see? And at the beginning years when I was there it was great, like the principal did attend our meetings but then I think they were having meetings on the same night as we were having meetings. WE knew that it would be impossible for the school principal to be at both places.

Int- Don't you find that unusual that something wouldn't have been done so that the admin could have been at both?

Megan- No I really didn't. It was really nice when the principal did come down and if there was something that

Int- You say 'nice' as if it was like uh, he was honoring you with his presence.

Megan- We didn't expect to see him unless there was something on the agenda that had to deal directly with the school principal and if there was something really urgent he would always be there. Oh one thing that really really really bothered me throughout the years and that we did request as a staff, that our VP attend the principal's meetings. We did request that, because we wanted to know what happened at principal's meetings, so that the information would come back. That's something that as a teacher I really really missed. Really really missed. WE requested then and that was denied. No the VP could not attend the Principal's meetings.

Int- Did someone question why there was a need for that. Like why wasn't that addressed? (Thought: if there was no need for the principal to attend staff meetings then why is she saying that they needed the VP to attend the Principal's meetings?)

Megan- Like we really felt strongly and we did request that our VP go to attend the meetings, but then we were told that it was the principal's meetings, the principal did attend. If the principal could not attend then the VP would take the VP's place. But when that happened, the VP who would attend the meeting would be the VP of the high school. And that really bothered me. So we were suppose to get a copy of the minutes from those meetings. Now we definitely did not get those on a regular basis. Never got them on a regular basis. Sometime we would find out like this was taking place in town, like the Eastern School Grammar Festival or something like that, and I know that would be discussed at length at principal's meetings and we would find out about it when it was too late. Like to get our kids involved in any of the things that were going on. So personally I felt that we were not left in the know. What was great is that we had a teacher whose husband taught at another school. She would come in and say did you know this was going on and that was going on.

Int- But that shouldn't be necessary.

Megan- I know that at principals' meetings, budgets were discussed. Like when Principal's meetings were held we always had our staff meetings on Thurs. night. So once a month our staff meeting dealt with everything that came out of the principals' meeting. So we were, we had first hand info and that did not happen and yes I really did feel that was a lax, that we did not know what was going on. When we did request the meetings and we found out that he couldn't lie at least we did ask would you please make sure that we get a copy of the minutes and I don't know if it was never followed through. WE did get copies of the meetings, but definitely not on a regular basis. And when they were pinned up on the board we would grab them and read them and that's another thing, we did not know what was happening at board meetings. We weren't informed.

Int- If you speculated on why you weren't given these things, what has been your conclusion why you haven't been informed.

Megan- Okay was it a time factor. Was the high school informed of what happened at the principal's meetings, I don't know. Was our VP not insistent enough. Did the principal not think it's important or did not have the time. Or was it lack of communication between the both schools? But the result was that we did not find out what was happening. I really don't know if our VP found out what was happening at principal's meetings or did he think it was his responsibility to find out? I think it was lack of communication, but that was something that I was accustomed to knowing what was going on to what went on at principal's meetings and what went on at board meetings.

Int- In your opinion, were your colleagues expecting to get feed back?

Megan- I think that the teachers who came from other schools I think really expected that this would have been an important part.

Int- And when you say that are you suggesting that the teachers who have been there for years really didn't expect that?

Megan- I really think so. I think it was foreign to them, or maybe it was none of their concern, but I certainly felt that what happened at principal's meetings certainly would affect what was happening in the school. And then on the other hand the jr high, you wouldn't believe, the jr high functions extremely well. Regardless of all that. I had never been in a school before where I really thought that the teachers worked together and you will hear a lot of people say, they have a terrific staff at the jr high and things function so well at the jr high.

Int- Why do you think that is?

Megan- Personally I think that, I don't know if it's the nature of the people that are there or sometimes what I expect, we are so close as far as space is defined we are just so close, I've never been in a school where there's been such a terrific relationship between teacher and pupil as there is at that jr high.

Int - What about teacher to teacher?

Megan- yes I think teacher to teacher we do have a great rapport. I don't think that there's a staff room, certainly not in the schools that I've been in, where there was such terrific spirit feeling of friendship or, like you could walk into that staff room at noon and there was always someone laughing or it was a place you came to unwind and I think we were really concerned for one another and I've never seen a group that had such a concern for every student in that building, whether you taught that student or not. And I've never seen that anywhere else. And really we've often said it's just that we are so close and confined that you are constantly rubbing elbows with the kids, because you have no choice. And every kid seems to know every teacher. And really you see it at assembly, because they know the teacher indirectly and I notice where the teachers all seem to know the kids by name whether they've worked with them or not and I think that's important for the students. And it really think it's because we're so confined.

Int- yeah I've just had a vision of teachers working in almost like a one room school house scenario, where the teachers because the admin really is not there, to be blunt, where teachers are doing their own thing. They're handling their own things and on a day to day basis you run your own ship and there seems to be a great sense of satisfaction that comes out of relationships with teachers and other students. My other thought is it will be interesting to see when John comes in and to see if there will be any shift in the camaraderie.

Megan- Another thing at that school is that we solve each others problems rather than going to the admin. We often do that. Like I will go to another teacher and say okay I'm having this problem, how should I deal with it and that is when you really get to feel close to the person that you're working with and whether she knows the student I'm referring to, and vice versa, someone would come to me. So usually I would go to the admin and I'd say I'm having this problem how do I do it. But we go to one another.

Int- Why do you think that is?

Megan- Probably because the admin is not there or and it all depends on the personality of the VP that we are working with. So I think it's just something that comes naturally at the jr high and I'm sure my colleagues would probably say the same thing.

#### **MARY - first interview**

**27<sup>th</sup> July, 1997**

**School guidance office - 10:00 a.m.**

Int- Explanation of research and discussed conduct statement. Terms of interview detailed on note sheet.

Int- In what capacity and for how long have you been associated with MRHS?

Mary- Let me see now. I'm just starting my fourth year teaching at the intermediate school. I'm also involved as a parent. I have a child who is going into grade nine at the intermediate school. Other than that my involvement really probably has been nil, although I lived in the community I taught in school, you know that was fairly distant and of course I had no children who were involved in this particular setting. So it's been up until three years ago I would say I had no involvement at all and now it's, I'm fairly well involved in just about every facet of it, both as a professional and certainly as a parent as well.

Int- Are you involved with any specific organisations such as the home and school?

Mary- Everything.

Int- You're into everything, okay, right. Is this because your child is there or would you do that anyway?

Mary- Um, yeah, I would do that anyway. I like to keep moving and I like to be involved in quite a number of professional organisations. Yes, I am on the home and school association. That being said it means that I attend all of the meetings. I have in the past been the staff representative. Ah, I'm involved in the teacher federation as well as most professional development. I'm involved in that fairly strongly and as well as most piddly committees around, a good number of them. I guess I what keeps my involvement in home and school is the fact that I do have somebody in school and I also have somebody else coming through this system. And probably that has given me a little more impetus to stay with it and it's been an interesting position, because I am a teacher at the school and I am also a parent. I think sometimes, uh, as teachers we tend to not really get our backs up but be very suspicious of parents' motivations for involvement and it helps me see that, you know, certainly you should always be skeptical about things, but in a healthy way. So it's been interesting to be able to sit down with parents and listen to them and then relay that back to teachers or to sit down with teachers. Sometimes you really just have to keep your mouth shut. You know you don't want to... I don't know, say something that maybe could be misconstrued, but it's an interesting position to



see both sides and I wouldn't change it. I still really like being involved and I think in your own way you think that maybe you can help make a better system.

Int- So it's been three years, coming up to four and what is your subject specialty or do you teacher a range of subjects?

Mary- I'm a special ed. teacher. So I teach (grade) nine math, English and social studies and I teach grade eight English. The kind of system that we have going at the intermediate school, our special ed. programs are curriculum based and I am very much curriculum based in the work that I do, meaning that we start with the curriculum and we start with the child. It's very task analytic, when we reach a problem or the child reaches a problem it is at that point that I begin to take the task apart and go into the various components and try to fit in, you know or pick up where I have to. And so that's pretty well what I do with those three subjects, for those two grades. In the lower grade, in grade seven, at different times my role has been interventionist, if a student... you know. A couple of years ago I did have a student who was severely language disabled, so there was a lot of one on one language therapy and uh, I shouldn't say therapy, I should say intervention. And uh, you know, probably over the course of years we'll get probably no more than one. Right now we do have a student who is severely dyslexic and when he was in grade seven, I did a lot of one on one with him...because of the program I had to do with him. And then as he moved into grade eight I worked with him more in the classroom and then of course for the student we were able to fit in some teacher assistant time with him. So my work with him faded from one on one to just a classroom approach with him. That's pretty well what I do.

Int- The second questions then, is What has it been like to be a teacher in a merged school? I know you've only come three years ago, but do you see any difference from other schools, being involved in a merged school?

Mary- Oh sure there have been differences. There are differences in any school that you teach. I have taught in a number of schools. And uh, I found this school to be very good.

Int- Very good? How?

Mary- Very good in the sense, well things that are important to me before I even look at programs. Probably the emotional state of the teachers that I am working with and within the system. I always found that there is a lot of comradity, um, among the staff down there (the intermediate school). Now, that would also be true of the administration in this building (the high school). As far as the teachers are concerned in this building (the high school) I still don't know half of them. I don't know who they are.

Int- That's been made quite clear that that is the common (interrupted)

Mary- If I do know them I remember them from when I was a student. I didn't attend here, but I had reason to be around here, because I would be in a nearby high school. You know, I remember who they are. But as for the intermediate facility, for the most part I have found it to be fairly cohesive staff with ups and down's and as I said with the administration here being a part of that as much as they could. So is it different from other schools that have been merged? I don't know. I once taught in a building called the annex which was way, way down the street in a community and there were five of us there. So that was more to me a case of really being tacked on to a school. So I guess I see it differently than other people maybe who have taught here all of the time. Certainly there are draw backs, you know...

Int- Can you elaborate on the drawbacks?

Mary- Sure. I think the drawbacks are in being able to-and I speak more in terms of facilities-in terms of being able to uh program optimally. You know I think we have good programs, but I believe that you can always have better programs and obviously you should work toward that. Little things like scheduling classes. I'm on the periphery of that, thank god. It must be a real nightmare to make sure that groups don't get too much of something and in the course lose something else and I think probably that happens. Just all in the name of scheduling. Um other things that as I speak I guess do have.... not a problem with but something that I've kind of thought about in the past is that since I've come here I've never really been

involved with things like drama and what not. One of the reasons is because of being able to find a place where you can consistently have your practices and then a place where you can have a performance. Not that this school (high school) wouldn't have been available, but you kind of know that it is being used for a lot of other things. Whereas if we had something on site or at least if we had a bunch of people who would all work towards that it might seem a little bit easier. One part of me says that and then the other other part says that if you really wanted to do it you would find a place (very quietly spoken).

Int- So where do those two sides of you meet?

Mary- (laughs) Maybe with commitment and how hard you want to work to get something done. I think it's harder. I think it's harder to think like that. Being physically removed from the main structure and not having the room down there to carry these things out. Now I have experience with something simple like the book fair. When I came.... a few years ago they never had a book fair and I couldn't believe it. And so I brought it up. People said well we don't have a book fair, we have no where to have a book fair. Yeah we have places to have a book fair, you know we can have it where ever. So we did have one but it was a hassle, because it means that the room that we used we had to stop classes in there. It was the computer room because we don't really have a foyer, those kinds of physical things where we could do that. But then doing parent teacher interviews we would have to get a bunch of people together and we'd have to move the books, pack them all up, and take them up to the cafeteria (high school site) and set it up there. Then when interviews were over, we took them back. Little things like that prevent people from going ahead and I guess that's where commitment comes in. I think it's important for kids to see new books. You know, you know, it's just like that, so we do it, but I can see why a lot of people wouldn't want to do it either. It is a hassle. It is a pain. And that would be the same with a lot of programs. Particularly extracurricular programs that we try to run, you know. Gathering all of the troops, getting them here, giving them the incentive to come.

Int- Do you think that's a difficulty to get the kids to come?

Mary- I think it is. It comes through in our intermurals that is another thing that has been tried. I know they've run the programme in different ways. Um, when you have to leave the facility, the building to go to another building to do something like play a game of basketball on your own time to boot, the kids just don't make it to the other building. They have to be real diehards to do this week after week. It's very different being in a school where everything is there and you don't have to put on any outside gear. You know you just have your lunch you talk to your friends and you go down to the gym. In my experience with schools like that the kids show up and a lot of other kids show up to watch and that doesn't happen here despite the different means of trying to organise.

Int- How important do you think the extras are as a teacher?

Mary- As a teacher I think they're important because they build class cohesion which is very important because you spend most of the day with your class. I think those kinds of extra curricular things are as important as the curriculum in building a student, in building a person. You learn cooperation. You learn self-esteem. You learn that maybe you're not so good at something, but that okay too. So, as a teacher I think those types of things are important. As I watch the kids, listen to them, it's really important to them.. I think it's the most important part of their day for most of them. And I don't know if that's the teacher in me looking or the person...a lot of our learning comes from social interaction and it's extremely important. And I say sport, but I mean that could be anything. Anything where kids gather, that's where the learning happens. an I do think that we have trouble with that and uh, and as I said earlier one of the draw backs is scheduling... and things like that. And the effort. You can do that for so long, but then after awhile, after you get bogged down in your other work you kind of think well is this really worth it? Particularly if you can't keep the kids momentum up.

Int- Do you find that a big effort on your own part, whenever you try to do these things that benefit the students, that it's always a big effort, because of the lack of facilities?

Mary- Um, I think you could safely say that. and a big effort on...of course we have a core group of kids that are really just gung-ho to do anything. It becomes a real effort for them.

Int- What keeps you going, plugging along, trying new things?

Mary- You mean personally?

Int- Um hm.

Mary- Well I just really like it. I hate to be stagnant and I'm very much if something doesn't work... try it another way. You know that's just the way I am. I suppose that's why I can teach, why I enjoy teaching, because I don't... I'm very positive and when I get knocked down I come back and I think without that quality as a person, I would find teaching very very difficult. Face it we do get knocked down all the time. But those things don't tend to bother me.

Int- You pick yourself up.

Mary- Generally, most of the time. And um, it goes back to I said earlier about the cohesiveness of the staff. That figures in there very prominently. Because there have been times where it's not quite so easy to get back on the horse because there have been times when the staff moral has been low. It's difficult to do something by yourself. Even if it's to lift your own spirits. But when moral is high it's always so easy.

Int- So if you were to characterise the ethos or the culture of the staff what would you, how would you characterise that?

Mary- Um, I find it very much as a family, away from my family. You know there are people on staff who fulfil different roles and you come to depend on them to do that and uh, most people seem to complement one another and they're very good at helping out. People are very good at noticing if things, uh, just aren't right. And people always seem to be on the same wavelength. You know as for the staff room, for most people, you know we have exceptions, realise that the staff room is a place to go to laugh, just to be with people, and to let it out. We, we do have a lot of people on staff who I think are that way. WE like to laugh. And it's very therapeutic. You know? But there have been times when it has been difficult, you know?

Int- Any of these times that have been difficult, have they been associated with this demerger or the poor facilities? You know all of the issues around why you, why the school needs to separate?

Mary- Um,.... here's where we get into the tricky stuff.

Int- I know, yes, yes.

Mary- I don't think it's been around the demerger, although I know a couple of staff members are really dead set against it and I can certainly understand why. Um,.... but uh, that wouldn't be the main thing. It's been at times when we've changed leadership... Some of those times have been really tough... Because, just because of personalities that don't merge. That became for me a time when I really leaned on people at this school (the high school site).

Int- At this school?

Mary- Yes, whether the principal or, more than I normally would. You know, that was difficult that was very difficult for everybody at the school.

Int- Yes. I am aware of this. It's been discussed by another teacher and like yourself, felt it was very difficult to discuss, because ethically you don't discuss other people.

Mary- Well exactly.

Int- I appreciate that and every effort will be made to represent the situation right so that anybody is not offended by a particular incident.

May- Right.

Int- When you talked about staff supportive culture this particular teacher said it was almost an understanding. The teachers could see the needs of other teachers. You have said that yourself, but with different words. And during my other discussion, we wondered, trying to be insightful I guess. We wondered if, um,... the administration was not, did not frequent the Junior high school, intermediate school as frequently because there was such comradery. And when um, that fell the staff was in such a way that they could do it (handle) it on their own. What do you think about that, about that discussion?

Mary- I think, if I understand what you're saying, Tammy, is that that is probably true, if I think back over most of the year when we had that problem and we all did. When we find, I know for me personally, I've always been proud of my professionalism. Always worked to maintain it. Keep things professional and I found it very hard. I would catch myself. "oh, God what did I just say" or something, because the reason for that is my support system had broken down. Well that's part of the reason. You know I would say something or feel something or I would allow myself to be subdued by something. That was my fault. But...the system outside myself was breaking down...Because there was nobody there....not to talk to....Everyone was the same. There was nobody there. It was like a marriage, you know? It's lovely, just the other day I was really upset with my daughter and I just really gave it to her and my husband was able to be there for her after, you know? I had just gone all the way around the block with her. And I said to him after she left the room, "I'm really glad you could do that." Because what you really need when someone has really, really given it to you, you need someone to be there. It was so important that both of us were not down on her. Right or wrong she needed someone. And I think that's the same in any kind of an organisation. So I found that when I kind of broke down, the staff was breaking down around me. I looked around and by golly I saw that in the faces around me. So we became a very mournful lot. And at that time what would help us was the administration from this school would come through, because they knew. I know they were in a position that they didn't know what to do. Here was this organisation that they have looked at and saw was very strong and cohesive and really could shoulder it on their own. You know/ So it was very difficult for everybody. So little times like that you'd get a little bit of strength. And then people that were involved in that maybe, uh, maybe just did a little bit of self analysis and uh, trying to work on that things improved. I forget what your question was.

Int- No, uh, I was feeding back to you that this had come through in another interview. I was wondering what role the administration played or failed to play when things had broken down, but yet the staff had been able to maintain this marvelous culture amongst themselves and then there was an incident when things had broken down. Um, and just kind of how does the administration attribute to that or fail to attribute to that? And you've discussed that. They intervened or...

Mary- Just being even by being there...that helped. But of course that would go when they would leave.

Int- Right. And that of course leads me to the questions, if this incident hadn't occurred, would the administration have been a presence in the school?

Mary- No! No I don't think. Because I think what happened and the more I talk about it the more I, you know. We have key people on the staff. **Like every staff we have key people who kind of run the ship. Everybody does their job, obviously, but there, people have certain roles and some people are the uplifters. Um, and when those people can't do that things start to break down and I think that's what happened.** I think there are some people who are not uplifters. They are very key components in the staff, but that's not just who they are. You know? And so uh, yeah, I think that happens. There are a few people who are capable of keeping things rallying. Keep people going. Keep people laughing.

Int- So where do you see yourself, if I can ask you that? Are you in the parade, leading the parade or are you watching the parade, to use that analogy? You know when you talk about people who are real uplifters and those who have other roles. How do you characterise yourself amongst the staff?

Mary- I see myself as a leader on staff. Um,...not always a place where you want to be.

Int- Especially when there are difficulties and people are looking toward you for...

Mary- Exactly.

Int- Looking for something that you're not capable of giving.

Mary- Exactly, because then I think you have a lot of guilt yourself. Thinking I should not be doing this. This is not a good example. There are a couple of other people I see myself with as one of those (leader). It gets tiring after awhile, you know?

Int- So when this incident happened and it was being sorted out um, how did the staff manage to bounce back then?

Mary- Well in all fairness, where the difficulty was coming from, initially, what kind of instigated this... I think there was some work done there. The individual worked very hard...As I said earlier it was a little bit self analytic and maybe realised that certain skills needed sharpening. That's come along.

Int- So I don't mean to beat the dead horse, but when you come out of something like that, when you've felt guilty, and the staff, feels demoralised. I don't know that you said that, maybe someone from another interview. But when you're coming out of that, working in that and then all of a sudden things are starting to shift, how do you shift that?

Mary- Well for me it's easy. It's easy for me. I can say that's the way it was, this is the way it is now. I don't dwell on the past.

Int- That's what I'm wondering, yes.

Mary- I don't do it and I have found that some people keep going back to that and you have to say look, this is the way it was, this is the way it is now, things are really improving. If we spend all of our time looking over our shoulders we don't make the most of what we have here right now. So, how do we bounce back? Once again you come back to people saying okay we're going to give this another whirl, another shot.

Int- So is that the leaders, the people who are leading that are saying that, we need to pick ourselves up and get on with it.

Mary- I think so. Maybe not in those words, but in actions and things that you do and attempt to do, I think that's the message. But I have found the need to have to say to people to discuss it point blank, say look there's been some improvement.

Int- Are teachers receptive to that then?

Mary- If you talk to them, I think they are. I think that I perhaps bounce back faster than other people do.

Int- That's interesting that you characterise yourself as a leader and that you also bounce back quickly, because for all intense purposes you wouldn't be a very good leader if you always dwelled on the past. You know, do you see my point?

Mary- Yeah.

Int- Do you think all of the people that you characterise as leaders are equipped to bounce back and get on with things?

Mary- Yeah, yeah, I think so some more than others, but then again that's where these people get together. Um, that's where people kind of rub off on each other. It brings out their best. So I think as a group...But I do feel very very badly for staff members that we have, that I respect enormously, that I think are going to have trouble with his merger, sorry demerger. Who are already having trouble with it. I feel so bad for them, you know that, that they would shroud themselves in that way of thinking because it is going to happen. It's not the end of the world and I think there are some positive things about it, but I guess for them they've been at it for awhile, they've been there for a long time and it's changed. Change is scary.

Int- That's interesting because of the the people that I've interviewed, that just hasn't come out and I really expected that to come out especially with the older teachers who are quite used to getting on with it in a way that it has gone. And I don't know if they're not being honest with themselves, but I can't speculate on why people aren't coming forth and have no opinion on it. I find that bizarre. It's unfortunate because I don't get the whole picture. Had you not said that there are some people who have or you expect to have a difficult time then I would go back and say everybody is fine.

Mary- I think I should qualify that. I think that there is a continuum where you can place people on a continuum of negative and positive. When I say that I think of one person in particular. As I said what makes me feel so bad is that I just really respect this person and it's saddens me that I know that they're negative about it, even though they're trying not to be and that's good. But in discussions we've had, um, this individual says no good will come of this. yeah and that especially from someone that you do like a lot. I think ah, why do they do that. Why can't they just....

Int- But has that caused any friction? Or do you carry on?

Mary- Oh, for sure, and we can openly say look, look at this. They know I'm really positive for this change. Like I'm, I really want it. It's good and they know that and that's business. It's been a really interesting experience, that's not over yet. But I'm really optimistic about it. I think anything that stirs people up it good, you know. Because we tend to become really dormant...

Int- Well when you've done the same thing over, year after year, and you might just get stuck. My own experience of going abroad, I really thought it would be a great experience. It has been, but it was still tough, you know? I can see the same type of thing here. It seems really exciting, but that doesn't mean it's not going to have its rough times.

Mary- It's how comfortable it is. It's not always comfortable.

Int- But like I said there are people who have led me to believe that it's just, just fine. No bumps in the road at all. Like I said it wouldn't be accurate for me to go back through the tapes and say, well this has been just..they have a tremendous staff and it must be a reflection of the staff because they certainly have no problems. And that wouldn't really be accurate.

Mary- Could it be though Tammy, that the amount that people personalise things as well. Um, there are certain different levels of that that operate in all of us... I tend to be analytical and theoretical a lot of the time, I'm also very emotional and that part of me always creeps through. I think a lot of people are like that. They are very good at separating.

Int- Are you saying that you are a reflective type of person? You look at something and you say this is what has happened. Are you that type of person?

Mary- Yeah... But I think that people just accept it, without having any kind of strong reservations either way. And there are others who are very strong. But it has been interesting really. Very, very interesting. And it's also interesting that we have spent a lot of time talking about a facility, a building, a physical structure. And is that emerges, um.. I think now that we will be a separate entity.. I think that is going to be good for us. Before we ever have the facility that we need. Terms of personal growth all of that time. I think that's going to be good.

Int-So what kind of expectations then do you mean when you say personal growth?

Mary-Well I think people will have to be, if they want to change things, move forward. Then they'll just really have to be innovative. So I think that's good.

Int- There are going to be some teachers retiring in the next few years. Do you see that as having any bearing on the progress of the school? The teachers that have been there year in and year out, which gives the opportunity for new teachers to come in. Do you have a (interrupted)

Mary- Well you know the teachers that we have, a lot of them are heading for retirement, they are a very big part of what is down there. They will be really missed...They're movers and shakers and that's what I find so attractive about there (the intermediate site). I've taught in three levels before I moved into special ed., before I did training in that area. I started out as a senior high English teacher and that was certainly interesting, working in a senior high school, because it was so different. and I found really there people who had been there awhile were not movers and shakers. They were very territorial... and what not. and then I went to elementary, to grade three and that was once again a different bunch. We had teachers that were involved, once again not territorial like I always found senior high teachers to be. That's just the way I find them and it drove me crazy, but at elementary the teachers work extremely hard uh,... are so focused on the kids in their class and maybe less on each other and maybe less on the whole system, the whole school. Not that things ever fell into disrepair, but the majority of the focus was on their kids, which is where I suppose it should be. In junior high, what makes it so exciting to work in junior high, number one you have kids who are always changing, every day is different. The teachers are like that too and they're flexible... They're just a different breed of people. Now going back to the people that will be retiring, they're very flexible, they're very much a part of that...I think that we're really going to miss them um... and they'll undoubtedly be replaced by new teachers, with a different level of energy.

Int- Do you think it's a characteristic of junior high school teachers or intermediate level teachers to be movers and shakers?

Mary- Movers and shakers and very accepting. You know very accepting and very willing to not just give kids, but certainly foremost to give kids, a second chance. Change the guise a little bit. You're really still giving all of these chances. I think they're more flexible that way. I think that reflects in how they operate they're school. So... I don't know if that answers the question.

Int- Well I was asking um, I was asking what your expectations were and .... what it would be like when these people(interrupted)

Mary- Oh, what it would be like when these, the number retiring.

Int- Yeah, but even before that it was the expectations of of being involved in a demerged school. Personal growth, that type of thing.

Mary- Yeah I think it's an opportunity for personal growth, because they would have to be more innovative. And that's where a good strong, oh excuse me, strong leader comes in.... In any change the leader is the person at the top.

Int- So do you have that expectation for the incoming leader?

Mary- I sure do.

Int- Yeah?

Mary- Yeah!

Int- Is that you hoping or you knowing, because I know you've met the incoming principal?

Mary- Um.....

Int- I'll tell you the reason I am asking. Specifically, I am hoping to come back to you in several months and ask you whether the expectations you have now measure up to what is really happening. I'll say okay Mary, these were your expectations in July, how accurate were they? It helps me to place everything in a motion of change, I guess. Is this all still valid?

Mary- I do expect, well I know there will be leadership. Um, I hope that there's no resistance, because I think that there will be very different from what we've been doing down there. you know?

Int- I s that an expectation that you have? That there will be some resistance to (interrupted)

Mary- Um,...(laughs) I don't know. Maybe. I think maybe. I think maybe there will be some resistance, but I am hoping that that will be mild. And that's where I see the role of the rest of us coming in. Say well look, you know once again, um, to kind of smooth things over for people. Talk about change, uh, just make individuals see that change is all right. I'm not being very articulate, because I have it spinning around in my head.

Int- I know it's difficult.

Mary- Yeah, difficult to articulate. Um...yeah.... I think we'll have to have people on staff, who will be there to say, okay let's give this a chance and convince other people. Yeah,

Int-Do you see that as your role then?

Mary- I see myself as part of that role, not, not just me, not just me.

Int- So one of a group that will (interrupted)

Mary- Yep, yeah. If it's going to work I think so. Because this guy is strong, you know. And I expect it would be easy for people to shut down, so and I don't think that would be wise. You know? Because I think we'll have to learn to operate as a, as a group.

Int- Now you've talked about personal growth and going through the change and accepting that, um the majority of your colleagues have discussed the more physical presence of the new facility, what that will do for the school and of course there is no right or wrong, I'm just interested in what people have to say. I do find it very interesting that you've pinpointed personal growth, because (we both laugh) that is part of what I am looking at specifically. But going back to your colleagues and what role do you think this facility will have um,... they think it is so important. How important do you think it is compared to your colleague's professional growth?

Mary- It's very important. But that's where a change, I go from looking at teaching staff to the students...There are just so many more things we could do. I think a facility is key. So don't get me wrong on that, but I don't think we're going to get it for awhile. And what I don't want to see happen is us to stagnate and wait. Like I do think it will come, but I don't think it will be for awhile. and uh, part of the job for the next few years, is going to be getting staff rallied, doing things despite our facility, or continuing to do things despite our lack of room. But yes I do think it is very very important.

Int- Let me put this to you then. Similarly a colleague has said that in this individual's opinion, the sheer physical space of the building attributed to the teachers' cohesiveness. Um, you had no real choice, but to be together and laugh together. And I said, well if you get a new building, just hypothetically, do you think that will have a bearing on the culture of the school and teachers?

Mary- No, I think that's a mistake to think that people were close because of the physical proximity. I have taught in schools that were much larger and people would seek each other. So that doesn't change. So I don't think that is going to be the case. I think it's the dynamics of the group, um... that's more important than the physical structure in terms of group cohesiveness. So yeah, I don't see it a problem, no. I think if anything you might see people working together more on um, more extracurricular things. I don't think it would cause any kind of a break down. You know, I don't see it as a problem at all.

Int- Okay then. Um.

Mary- The only thing that I have gotten really used to at that school is when you go to the washroom, having all of the kids hear you pee!( Int laughs aloud). I nearly died when I first went there, (laughing loudly) and that's why. Honest to god. You could almost identify people, ha, ha, ha, but it's amazing because it just kind of roles off people, you know. You don't have to include that...



Int- No I don't, I'll simply say, oh the stories she could tell. Okay, Mary, another question is what has it been like, no we've already discussed that. What have been the effects on you as a teacher? We have already talked around the questions, but I would like to ask what the effects have been since the demerger, the separation.

Mary- Um,...Once again I suppose it's given me the opportunity for growth to each of us in different ways. You may or may not know that our professional development committee got very involved in both aspects of this, um. First of all in putting together a presentation regarding our needs of the physical facility as well as putting people's heads together and getting some ideas out of them and what it was they wanted in an administrator. And the day that we did that, last February, a professional development day that we had,

Int- I recall that you were nominated

Mary- I was. I wasn't nominated, I was elected (laughs). There's no such thing as a nomination. That was a really good day, because we've learned, the people on the pd committee, we have a lot of people on our staff. **A few people I guess, but we have people who are reticent to speak out, but are extreJohnny verbal when we work together in small groups and so we've taken that as an approach to anything that we really want to get done. And um, we manipulate the group, so that in such a way that everybody has a chance to speak out.** You know, if you and I are in a group and I'm at all intimidated by you, I may not say anything. So we worked that way and it was a really profitable experience in many ways. It was good for people to get a chance to say what they want. And I think it was nice for them to be able to see their thoughts reflected in what we came up with overall. So.. that was a really good session. And then yes, I was the person who was uh, elected to go on the search committee. And that was very tough, extreJohnny tough....Yeah, but it taught me some things (tape stops)

{During this time, I asked Mary to discuss how she coped. She spoke of treating things as a game, although she didn't think the term was appropriate.}

Int- I've completely missed that last part, if we could just pick up where we left off and if we could continue, because I've got myself all flustered. Can you remember? You talked about, I had asked you if your training was responsible for, how you get on with this game of. I know you don't like to use the idea of a game, but how you, when you come up against a wall, and you manage to get yourself around that. Um, and then you thought that the research that you had done

Mary- Okay, I think you had asked me, what my training had to do with it and uh, yeah, okay. Um, I guess to, I'm just picking up on the work game that's how I think of it. You can call it a strategy I mean what are my coping strategies. I think probably I was always like that. I was always a strategic person. I needed to have something that I could follow, some kind of a framework that I could relate to. I think that uh, what happened with my training in special ed. gave me the opportunity to uh, converse with a lot of people in different fields, uh, to do a lot of research on my own and just to do a lot of learning I guess of what people are like. And I think that the training allowed me in some way to articulate that. You know to put a handle on it, to be able to actually talk about it. I think I always had those qualities, you know, to actually talk about it. Probably in some way to be able to articulate that. To be able to actually talk about it. I think I always had those qualities. As I think back to what led me into special ed. was you know, in those classes that I'd be teaching whether it was ten eleven or twelve English, I was always fascinated with the kids who couldn't get it. Not with the kids who could. Because they didn't really need me, because they were going to get it. I was very fascinated with the kids who couldn't get it, right. And ah, became very challenged at finding ways of helping them to get it. Then when I went down to the elementary level once again still finding that same thing. If I didn't have kids who couldn't get it I think I would have become very bored. So that's the same quality.

Int- Let's go back even further if you can and this might be difficult all the way around, but what makes an individual look to children who don't get it. Why do you, Mary, say that these children fascinate me? Why that? You know something perhaps when you were a kid, did you find something difficult or perhaps a relative who had a difficulty? Do you have an idea why that particular type of child fascinates you?

Mary- I've often thought about that, um.. I probably do my best in the face of adversity, really. After it sunk in, you know. yeah, I guess it was who I was um... as far back as when I was a year old I. My father was walking down the street with me and my legs just gave out. And I ended up, I was in the sanatorium in Royalty Area for a year and a half, because what happened was my spine had disintegrated at that age. (Deep breath) So I think I started there, you know and my parents being told that I would never walk and all of those kinds of things and trying to find out what was wrong with me. So I was there and maybe I had a lot of time to think at that age. You know, I was lying on my back for a year and a half. It's a long time.

Int- Especially at that age.

Mary- Yeah, at that age. And uh, being in a body cast for a couple of more years. Then when I came home...I was probably close to four, yeah, four when I came home and being I in a body brace. I remember having to learn to walk again. I remember the rails. I remember all of that. It's interesting I can remember the smell of the leather in the orthopaedics shop, where they made the shoes. Because the man used to take me down. I would sit on the floor there and they'd be making shoes. I remember those things and I remember learning to walk. And I guess maybe that's where it comes in. Like having that kind of a challenge.

Int- I think you're not being very generous with yourself calling it a challenge. I think it was a real struggle

Mary-I think that's where that comes from. Um and then watching other kids, not you know when I went to school. I had two older brothers who were very close to me and I always had to wear this rig that came right up to here (neck) and then down over the top of my hips... Them making me try to put it on and me trying to get away without it, but I was never allowed to do anything in school, anything until I guess I was in grade two when the doctor said the brace can go and you can skate. That's all I wanted to do, was to skate. And I remember the teacher brought me in a pair and maybe that's why I am a teacher, I don't know (laughs). My teacher brought me in a pair of skates, some old things from her daughter and I went in the races that year and I remember coming in last, but just making it (voice quivers), you know I think that's very much a part of who I am. But I also remember the next year I got first. You know, because I practiced all year. That's all I wanted to do.

Int- So, your spirit was just, just to keep going. That's incredible.

Mary- Yeah and that's apart of me and then I used to um, just different things I've done the kinds of work that I've done, the summer jobs. I remember being a leader in brownies. I remember one little girl who had a lot of problems. She had surgery every year. I don't know what was wrong with her, but she was a little bit slow and one of the requirements was she had to knit a pot holder or something and this little girl couldn't learn to knit. She was left-handed as well which made it very difficult. So I remember my mother laughing, because I went home and I could knit, I learned to knit with my left hand so I could show her how to do it and I just remember my mom laughing about that saying yeah, you would do that. I went back and taught her how to knit.

Int- There are very few people who would do that.

Mary-Yeah, I mean it was very natural for me to do that. It was very natural for me to do that.

Int- So you're the type of person who sorts it out somehow.

Mary- Well you have to.

Int- But not everybody

Mary- But maybe not everybody has had those experiences. I had another when I was fifteen, fourteen. I guess I was in grade nine, yeah grade nine. I was diagnosed with Grave's disease. which is fairly rare in adolescents, but it kind of really through you life into turmoil.

Int- What is Grave's disease?

Mary- It's a disease of the thyroid and uh, accompanied by goiter and protruding eyes...tremors, you know a whole bunch of different things and I was diagnosed with that. and it changed me, it changed me physically. And you don't need to be changed physically, negatively, when you're an adolescent. And so I had that for. it probably took a year for that to come under control. I was in the hospital a lot, everything trembled, um,...so I missed my grade ten and then finally when it was under control after a long long time, I went back to school. And well, what seemed natural was, well I missed a year of school and I wanted to go to university when my friends go. And so I just worked really hard and so I went to university from grade eleven. Like it made, it just made sense to do that.

Int- To you it made a lot of sense to do that. A lot of kids would just say blow it.

Mary- Yeah, but to me that's what I wanted to do. But once again that's you are I guess you're defined by your experiences.

Int- I truly believe that, but I mean wow.

Mary- I think that's why I am the way I am. And I think in special ed. when I look at kids and I say look you can do this and they look back and say how do you know? I know in my heart. Yeah believe me you can do it. I really believe that. And that that has made me effective there... So

Int- It's an incredible story and I don't mean to say that with disrespect. It's an incredible story.

Mary- It is, it's like a story. A lot of people don't know that, why would you bother. But that's why I am who I am.

Int- I mean I've asked teachers the same question over and over, why is it you go on the way you do and a lot of people don't have an idea and I don't wrong them for that. They might not have spent anytime thinking about it, where you know, I myself spent a lot of time thinking about most things. And I've got a pretty good idea why I do things in different situations. Your story is so, it goes back so far and of course I can see why you do the things you do. You've faced such adversity. It's incredible.

Mary- Yeah, it gives you, you don't think about it consciously, but I think that's what makes me say well I've hit this wrong and so if I want to go on I have to get over it or I have to do something. I think that's why that time at work. You know I get really into my work obviously, It's, **we hit that low and it was really hard for me. Like I said everybody was low, but not only was everybody low, I was low too and that's, that doesn't happen very often.**

Int- And I guess you'd be used to not, or being able to get yourself over the wall, sorting out solutions to things and you've been accustomed to being able to deal with things. It could be a real

Mary- But something else, just talking about it shows you how important the group is too. All my life I've had people around, strong, you know. And then when we were in that situation at the school and everybody like I said, everybody was low, so like those resources gone. And it's very much a give and take.

Int- And when you were growing up you had people around you who were strong? Do you think that fed into you and then that fed into them?

Mary- Definitely.

Int- Is it the same situation at the school and when that wasn't there everything bottomed out.

Mary- Yeah sure, for all of us. I mean maybe that's a lot of coincidence, I'm no, my work isn't all of my life that's for sure. Yeah, I think just everybody was down and it was difficult. But people picked up fairly quickly and I can't really remember when the change came.

Int- It's interesting that you say that, because everybody, Like I have some notes on when things happened officially and everyone has a different time frame for when things happened. I find that very interesting in itself.

Mary- I could never really pin point it. Yeah

Int- Anybody that has tried to pinpoint it has pinpointed it differently.

Mary- Oh, for sure. When the change came for them, eh?

Int- It's all relevant to your own experience, of course we must realise that. Anyway, I've gone through the questions that I wanted to ask, but there is something that had come up in each of the interviews and you've touched on it, although you might not be aware. The notion of the name of the school. Now originally I picked up the teacher's saying Midtown Junior High School when I asked where do you work. So they considered themselves, they gave me the whole deal about it being a separate school. Just because it's a piece of paper and as the government it's down as one school. Um, the demerger has finalised what has always what has been, You know a separate school with exception of the principal who is up here. That is really the only tie we had. The only time we get together is at the end of the year when we get our pay checks. That type of thing and um, so far you're the only one who has said intermediate school and I would just would like you to tell me why you refer to it as intermediate. Walk me through that term.

Mary- Um, it's not too deep at all. I've constantly reminded myself that we're Midtown intermediate now. It's becoming a bit of a habit. yeah, because last year maybe in some of the work that had to do with professional development I would be more aware or using the term when we were writing up or for things that had to be presented. There's no real significance to why I would use that term other than reminding myself. Times I would say Midtown junior, oh, I mean intermediate school.

Int- I mean the whole idea that the school has been merged for nineteen years and by all intense purposes this is not Midtown Junior high school. It's Midtown Regional high school and I didn't realise how ingrained that was in the community, not just the teachers and the students, but the whole community. The business community.. Everything just talking to people, because I'm fascinated by the identity. And the teachers, the community, everybody thinks they have their own identity finally you're going to be recognised as such. Before you started calling it intermediate, did you identify it as junior?

Mary- Definitely, definitely. Right down to the point where things would come out from board offices and we would have to sign them and send them back. Of course they would always have Midtown Regional High School. Everyone of us at that school would put a little arrow in, Midtown Junior high school. Now that could have been because most of us weren't getting our mail. That's a big thing.

Int- We'll get our own mail!

Mary- Because there are a lot of things that we would miss out on. WE just didn't get things or we wouldn't get things until the day of, you know. Either a slip up in the board office or the, not sending separate things to us or if it came up here it would get put under things. That was a real big issue. I hadn't really addressed that. But that's something that didn't need to be.

Int- Yes, like when I spoke with the other teacher who was very frustrated about the mail situation, because there was something specific that had happened with her, that just because it had sat in the office for so long she had missed out on the whole thing that was quite important to her and uh, she was very frustrated about that, but like I said everybody's got something, some issue that is most important to them. It's all relevant to your own experiences.

Mary- For sure. Yeah, the mail was a problem.

Int- It's such a practical thing to handle. Very, very simple and that's when I would have been up in arms. Why didn't someone handle this?

Mary- Another thing that I'm sure will fall in here somewhere is getting back to the supposedly being one school. Another thing that I've found other than the mail, there was quite a bit of information that we didn't get at the junior high and you know this because I have a spouse who teaches at another school. So I would get a lot of information from him, who would have gotten it first hand from the principal.

Int- The principal's meeting that you are referring to? (Nods yes.) That has been brought up.

Mary- Things from principals' meetings, just little things that you might talk about in the staff room. Like the principal might say oh yeah right, because the person is right there. But in our case everything pretty well had to be gathered to present at, you know whenever we sat down. It's not the same as having someone on site, who you can talk to informally and a lot of information is spread informally.

Int- Absolutely. So that's obviously an expectation you have for the new administration.

Mary- Yeah.

Int- Communications, knowledge, things like that?

Mary- Yeah, for sure. Because you don't have that set time frame to present this at this staff meeting, this day. Logistically that's a problem.

Int- Chance meetings are sometimes the most productive meetings.

Mary- Yeah, yeah. So there were some things that we would miss out on. I just like to be informed.

Int- Well, that's not too much to ask.

Mary- Certainly not. So I think that will be something that I would identify as a difficulty...

Int- Well the only thing I have left to say is if there is anything that you would like to add. Any expectations that you had for this, this discussion that you would like to see happen. Is there anything that you want to address?

Mary- No I think probably I addressed all that I could have. You know. 'm not really gung ho on any really big problems. Like once again I'm sure there are problems, but everything can be worked with, but I'm very positive about the demerger. I think it's going to be a real benefit for everybody.

Int- Whether they want it or not? And I don't mean that to be facetiously, I mean that genuinely. Like even people who don't want change, I think they benefit from it.

Mary- Yeah I think so. Pinch me. WE all need that.

Int- Well I'm going to offer you the same opportunity. If anything comes up you thought might be important or you think oh, she wouldn't be interested in that, chances are I would be interested. I know once you think about this interview, especially as a reflective person, you might go back and say gosh..

Mary- Oh there will be all kinds of things. I should have said that.

Int- I will be calling you, but if you want to tell me something in the meantime go ahead.

formal interview ends and session is concluded by reviewing the agreements made with the participant.

The day following the interview, Mary called me to say that another reason for the difficulty she had during the early stage of the demerger, her unusual inability to cope, was in part due to the death of her mother. She didn't know why she had omitted this, but felt it important to tell me nonetheless.

**SLIM - first interview**  
**9<sup>th</sup> August, 1997**  
**Board room - 9:00 a.m.**

Int- The first question, Slim, is for how long and in what capacity have you been associated with Midtown Regional School?

Slim- Since the fall of 1987, with a hiatus with five years, when I worked out of the school board office, and a further hiatus of two years, when I worked with the department of education, but during the time I worked with the school board office I did teach a partial time table for one year just to keep my hand in.

Int- So is that 5 years and were you always located at what has been called the intermediate school?

Slim- Yes always at the intermediate school.

Int- Do you have any other associations, such as the home and school? Do you have children going through the system?

Slim- No.

Int- Okay, then the second question is, what has it been like to be a teacher in a merged school?

Slim - A merged school being defined as?

Int- As Midtown Regional High School, operating on two sites. It was merged in the late 70's. Did you have any experience prior to your arrival here that only had one administration within the facility?

Slim- You mean a similar merged school.

Int- Yes.

Slim- No. This is the first time I have taught in such a school. I think the thing I noticed when I came here. I came here from the elementary school in Midtown and uh, **I notice that the Junior High School... had a sort of shadowy existence. You could read the yearbook and not realise that there was a junior high, because it focused entirely on the senior high.** The secretary was half time mornings. The care taker was half time mornings and uh, I think that first thing I noticed was uh, that it was pretty well on its own and the teachers with the vice principal, I seem to recall about 80% , who taught, uh, was pretty well on its own. It surprised me because there was obviously a need for full time administrative, full time secretarial and custodial services and thoughts were slowly achieved over several years, but it did mean that the that that the work, you were looking over your shoulder you know in anticipation knowing that the resources with which to deal with them were customarily there to deal with them, weren't there. So there was a lot of make it up as you go and I think that's detrimental to the success of an institution of any kind. Is that the objective of your

Int- Sure, the idea is for you to put the focus on the question.

Slim- Yes, I've answered your question, though.

Int- If I could just get you to elaborate on that. For your personal self, um, what does it mean to not have the administrative help, the secretarial help, the custodial help? How did that influence you?

Slim- Well, I've been in this business for so long, it probably didn't affect me as much as teachers with less experience. The people coming into the system. But I think the success of any school depends on a harmonious uh, collaboration among all of the functions we've mentioned. Those have to be in sync. And for them to be in sync they have to be present all of the time. And if you take some of those pieces off of the

board, so to speak, you simply interrupt the smoothness of the operation that people build their confidence on.

Int- Okay, you use the word success, so is it your opinion that there was room for improvement and that in fact it wasn't a success?

Slim- I think in so far that it was a success, it uh, it was a success because of the people in the building, the teachers and the students. Pulling together and uh, a success in a situation like that doesn't come without a price and I think that the price was of the teachers. The nagging feeling that you could be doing a better job. Or you should be doing the same job with less stress. Um, and I'm looking forward to the future with a little more confidence. The other factor in the school that I think conditioned the school's ability to succeed, is the tenure of the students. Because the grade nines, many of the grade nines are only there for one year. So you don't build a continuum of knowledge and experience and familiarity at that critical level. So each year the school is forced to reconstruct itself around an unknown group of youngsters, who may constitute half of the school population. So you put that into the mix and I think it's another consideration that has to be taken into account.

Int- You talked about the staff and the students and that they have attributed to the success. Um, your colleagues have talked about the wonderful ethos down there. Can you comment on that?

Slim- It's quite remarkable, because of the situation of the school, I think there is a realisation among the staff that it is really up to them to make it succeed and I think success uh, success is evoked in a variety of factors. First of all you have to be, the courses have to be carefully planned so that teachers can cope with the non-curricular problems, without the curriculum suffering. I think the teachers at the junior high school have done that extremely well. The programs are very well managed and well thought. So I think the school is on quite a sound academic basis. And uh, that means that teachers are able to deal with unexpected problems more effectively, than in a case where teachers are scrambling to deliver the academic program. Also I think there is a strong, genuine interest in children as individuals and identifying and assisting in the problems. There is an attempt to stay in touch with homes, although that is not always successful in this day and age. Those would be the outstanding, **plus the fact that there is a very strong comradery among the teachers and a lot of mutual support, which is why I wanted to stay there.**

Int- So has it been difficult to the point that you thought about leaving and then thought, well this is such a great staff and we work well together, I'm not going to entertain that idea?

Slim- Well I did leave for several years, but uh, but I knew when it came time to go back into the system that's where I would go. In fact I did, I asked to teach a partial time table down there and I taught a 35% timetable in early morning classes and that was good. And then when I decided to leave the department, I requested to go back where I was.

Int- And you requested to go back because?

Slim- Well because of what I mentioned before, it's a school worth being in.

Int- Um, the.. demerger the separation, have you been an advocate of that?

Slim - Oh sure, I always thought it was essential to uh, to. I don't think that there is a track record on PEI, or any other province that I know of and I've taught in a few now, uh, where merged schools have a successful track record. So you're sort of going against the grain by operating one. Uh, and I think the type of unique nature of the junior high here as I described a few minutes ago, it needs an administration that is concerned only with the problems of that institution. It can't be solved with mirrors. It has to be on the spot. I think the ultimate decision making power has to be right on the spot. And uh, so yes I've been an advocate right from day one really.

Int- So when you say day one, is that, have you recognized the need for a change down there since you began teaching down there?

Slim- Oh, yeah. I've taught in many, many different schools, public and private, from grade 4 to the university and I think the similar issues that you notice is like when you go into a school, it gives you a feeling of confidence that everything is under control, you know. And in a situation where you're lacking some of the essential serves in the school, it's hard to feel that. It's hard to feel that. You sort of feel that you're walking along a the crest of the hill and sooner or later something is going to happen. Something is going to happen as a result of this situation that is going to hurt you. For example, one of the things, I'm an early arriver at the school. I'm usually one of the first one's at the school and uh, the uh, half time care taker would open the school, let students in and then disappear, because he had duties up here. So sometimes I would arrive to find kids unsupervised in the school. You can't have that. And when you confiscate a couple of skateboards, you know you have the makings of a serious situation. What's to stop someone from going down the skateboard on one? So I think things like that, very early on suggested that there needed to be you know, all of the presences had to be there. The administrative, the custodial, the secretarial. I think the relations with the senior high have always been harmonious, but in fact that is a practical problem. You know?

Int- yes, the practical problems have been a constant focus in my interviews.

Slim- Excuse me, the other thing I meant to say, you're also, in terms of PEI, tends to go toward the trend which is to have independent junior high schools. Unit four became an early exception. The other high schools were 9-12 and this one of course was 7-12. SO I think it's uh, now now that the school board has been enlarged in its area of responsibility it makes additional sense to me to have a junior high school situation here which the school board is familiar with. Because school boards tend to make decisions based on norms and if the norm for the old unit 3 was 7,8 and 9, then I think we have a better chance of having our problems understood. If we are of the same normal configuration.

Int- So where does the issue of the facility come into play with you?

Slim- I think um, that there are certain issues surrounding the physical plan. Uh, that that are the most obvious. You can only watch kids walking through heavy rain to get to the library or the shops or the gym so often, before you realise that these kids are going through something that they shouldn't necessarily have to go through. Um, **but perhaps even more important in my mind is the ability to to create an identity for the school. Which uh, unites all of the component factors, the academic programs, the student services, in in a package that is not (unclear, 079) of something else, but is of itself. That is important, because kids of that age, they have to identify with something and I think the present situation, I think confuses them with what they should identify with.** And it's quite evident when you're teaching grade 9 that the that they have a hard time understanding that grade 9 is more that just an entry ticket into grade 10. That grade 9 has an importance in itself and leaving the junior high is an important step in their education. SO that issue tends to get a little confused, I think. But then again that is part of the unique situation where grade 9 only come in for one year. And that's aggravated in that you can't interest parents too much in participating in a school where their kids are only going to be for one year. So... but uh.

Int- You talked about the students' identity and the need for that. What about the teachers? DO you think there's a need for the teachers to identify with an administrative, an administration and a school of their own?

Slim- I think so, I think so. That sort of thing doesn't bother me too much, **but I think it maybe true that people have to feel that when they're sitting in a meeting trying to reach a decision, that their decision has finality and it doesn't need ratification from outside.** And I think that could be important to many people although it doesn't bother me. Really.

Int- The third question then Slim, is what have been the effects on you as a result of the separation?

Slim- As a result of the separation? Hard to say because it hasn't really taken place yet as you know. Um,... I don't think it's had much of an effect on me, uh, I was relieved that a decision had been reached. **Uh, I think it's exciting, It creates a special kind of excitement, because now people are forced to sort of recreate themselves in a new environment, a new administrative environment.** How that's going to effect different people, I can't say. **Personally I tend to uh, to enjoy change. In fact I've gone out of my way to create change in my life.** Because it's hard to sit still for too long. So I'm finding this very interesting and



exciting and uh,...I'm a little concerned that we develop a mechanism to study the change effect, that's why this sort of thesis is useful. Uh, because studying change is something that we're not that good at. We're very good at changing things, but when you actually study and track a change, there's that strong temptation to legitimise uh, in a sort of rosy notion that everything is okay, when really it isn't and I think the January interviews are going, I think to be more significant than the ones you're getting now, for that reason. When I was on the Teachers' Federation Executive, we participated in a project Called CBAM, the concerns based adoption module. It was an instrument developed at the University of Texas for the studying the change process and it's a seven stage identification of where people are in the change process. I don't know if you're familiar with it?

Int- I'm familiar with, not that it is that one, but

Slim- Similar ones?

Int- Yeah, it was very effective. It's a very interesting instrument. And uh, I think it would be interesting a year from now to put our staff through a CBAM type interview and see where they are.

Int- To locate them.

Slim- Yeah, it's really. Uh and as you know with anyone of these it's starts with don't know anything about the change and number seven is, of course, I want to redirect the change. So um, I think the effect it's had on me is..I'm kind of excited about it. I'm optimistic. Not that the change isn't going to have its problems, but I think it's, if people are reassured at the beginning of the year that it's going to work, then I don't see any problems.

Int- Can I take you back then? Are you saying that before the end of June um, you were looking forward to having the new administration and that would come. Did you have any problems or did you notice any problems in the school?

Slim\_ I think some teachers were a little apprehensive. Um,

Int- But you yourself weren't apprehensive?

Slim- No I've been through change before and uh, looking at the people involved I think they can handle the change very well. Uh, I think change is good in that it forces everyone to reexamine what they are doing. You know in a new context. You know that's good, because we don't do that often enough.

Int- It's very difficult, I'm sure you'll agree that it will be for some individuals to take on that challenge, to contextualise what they are doing.

Slim- Like I said before, there was some apprehension. You know about the change, but I didn't hear any reason for the apprehension that uh, that I thought were extremely, they might have been serious to the mind of the individual, but I didn't see them as germane to the long-term success of the change.

Int- Can you give me an example?

Slim- Just logistical things. Like are we going to have enough paper, you know that sort of thing. Because the uh, high school administration had just uh, uh things like material needs. If you needed it it was there and now of course the new school, administration is going to have to deal with quotas. We're going to be given certain assigned quotas of materials and we're going to have to live with that. So come January if we're out of ZEROX paper, you know where's it going to come from? I think there were those kinds of concerns, but I think that, I've been in schools before where we've had to count the sheets of paper and it didn't seem to grind to a halt uh, you just have to be a little more circumspect in how you use it. It was that sort of thing that was coming out.

Int- Okay, the fourth question then, is what has helped you to cope um and that's not necessarily suggesting that things have been difficult. In your situation you've been looking forward to this, but perhaps this is how

you face these types of changes, by welcoming them. (puzzled look from participant) Let me give you some more information. Your own experience is to welcome the change and your looking forward to it. Um, and obviously you're not having a difficulty with it and I'm wondering if that's how you are, um, in your everyday life. You welcome change and therefore, it's not stressful for you. Is that your strategy. Some people use exercise, some discuss with a spouse. But you haven't found it stressful and I guess I'm just wondering why. What is it about Slim that he doesn't find it stressful?

Slim- I think it's part of the function of background. One of the interesting things for me in moving to PEI, 15 years ago was to live in a community that has such deep roots. You know. Of course I've sort, I'm a will of the wisp and I've enjoyed each one of them for its own merits. So and I think in my case it goes back to the fact that I was part of an intenerate family group. Moving is second nature. This is the longest length we've ever stayed anywhere. But I can see the people whose roots are very deep here would look at things in a different way. The thing that mitigates that for me is uh, you have to be very careful in particularly junior high. The message that the educational system is sending to the public is that if you, if you read or haven't read the PEI philosophy of education that came out the end of '89. It might be worth having a look at. But it's in my mind right now, it's paying lip service, but it's a lip service that could be turned into action with the right leadership. The notion that we have to prepare children for a world of change. And yet teachers who are afraid of change themselves can't be pretending to be preparing children for a world of change. Because I think no matter how we pretend I think our inherent deep rooted beliefs come through to the kids as clear as radio signals. So I think one of the things that would interest me very, very much ever since that PEITF CBAM experience was how the change process works in any organism and where kids are concerned there is no place to hide. They know when we're paying lip service to something. So I think if we're going to be saying that the educational system has to prepare people for change then the whole of the education system has to demonstrate that they're comfortable with it and can move with it. And that is going to be harder for some people than for others. So I think that's the thing that fascinates me about the whole process.

Int- So you seem to be enjoying this whole process. Would that be fair? You seem quite excited about the whole thing.

Slim- Sure, oh yes, it's quite interesting. I mean I don't jump up and down, but I sort of look forward to you know

Int- Is it like a mental challenge for you?

Slim- I think so, I think so. And I think as people get on board with it they'll find things to enjoy as well. Uh, unless I'm missing something very significant, I don't see anything to worry about. Certainly the kids won't worry about it. I mean they're what it's all about anyway, you know. (laughter) If it was something that was going to affect them, you know. If it were something that was going to be apparent to them, but they're going to go through thier routine, They're going to be coming up here for the gym and cafeteria and the library. It will be business as usual. They are going to be taught down there and they are going to have a principal down there. That is the one change that they will notice. You know the presence of a principal down there at all times. And I can't see it affecting them and I would be concerned about things that were going to affect the student body. Cause then you have new problems to cope with. And those can be very unpredictable, but I think their situation will be better. And I think as staff realise that the kids are perhaps in a better position, uh, then they will realise that it has been beneficial. I'm hoping that anyway. I could be wrong.

Int- You've just kind of answered my fifth question. But I will state it, what expectations do you have following the demerger?

Slim- Expectations..... It's going to depend on so many things because the cut backs right now it's going to be a function of the human resources available to the school. I think they're stable right now, but any **junior high school, particularly so poorly, physically endowed, it's just a cracker box with plumbing** (laughter) You know what I mean?

Int- I do. I do but I've not heard it put quite like that.

Slim- It's, you need, because the building is not endowed with the things that schools often have, readily available to kids, you have to have a compliment of staff members to look out for that and if people at board level are going to treat that school just like any other school, they're liable to make wrong decisions at times, decisions that would hurt our school more than they would hurt another school. So that's sort of the joker in the deck. And uh, I don't know.....There are too many variables over which we don't exert much control, you know sort of condition the answer to my question really.

Int- I'm sure you will be aware that some people have stated some very specific expectations, some very specific expectations, specifically with regard to new facilities. And of course I've had conversations about paper and uh, I've talked to individuals about the hat issue and these types of things and uh, it all seems that the teachers seem to have very specific expectations one way or the other, realising that there are too many variable that they can't possibly predict, like yourself. Uh, another way to look at it is to ask you if you have any personal expectations. You talked about looking forward to the experience, so is that kind of a personal expectation. I'm just reaching.

Slim- I think the, it's hard to develop expectations around. To the the hat issue is a relatively unimportant issue. Uh because I think if you talk about things like that I think you're missing the extent to which the sort of administrative rebirth can simply illuminate problems like that. The right kind of leadership in the school can make those problems insignificant. And uh, I wouldn't want to see us get hung up on things like that. I think we have to give the direction the new directorate time to establish of what the school is and I think we go through the process of relating to that and think that will require some adjustment, probably will and then in the middle I think it's a question of waiting to see if this new conception of what the school is, has sort of rendered some of these time honoured problems insignificant. You know. Because I think it's going to be a case of looking at the positive things that are being created. To me if the positive things are created and fostered in the school I think a lot of the problems that used to exist are diminished. And uh, that's no guarantee that they're going to go away, but I think uh, I think the message that I'm getting about what you're saying about things like the hat issue, I think teachers are frustrated with, with having to deal with non academic trivialities like hats and gum and I think they would collectively like to see those problems go away. But I think the one thing that hasn't been tried, uh is, by way of a solution is giving people a new definition of what being a junior high student is all about. And that things that seem important before, like wearing hats and chewing gum, are relatively unimportant. And I think if we can get the kids that message, that these things are not part of your future, that's not what we're here for, I'd sooner see us approach it that way then be coming down with strict rules, thou shalt not, thou shalt not. Because uh, we have to try the other approach which is to give a better definition of what being a student is all about and to a certain extent I identify and sympathise with some of the, some of the elements of the student ethos that places great importance on these things. This is an eternal problem that is not going to go away. And I don't think out junior high school is going to solve it, but I think we can prevent it from becoming a preoccupation, which it might be doing now. So we'll see.

Int- So you're not going to lay any expectations on the line, because you want to wait and see what is going to happen and then you'll go with it.

Slim- I don't have a score card by which by December I'm going to make up my mind whether the new principal is going to be a success or not. I know the man and uh, to some extent I think I can see where he's going to take us. Once the directions are set then I think it's up to everybody else to help, help make it work. If I had an expectation it would have to be that I think the staff will do their best to make the new philosophy work.

Int- Is that your belief in the staff as a group?

Slim- Oh sure.

Int- I was going to ask you for personal hopes instead of looking at expectations. Do you have any hopes?

Slim- I just hope the junior high will be able to do it's job, I mean the uh, being successful in an academic program is a very difficult business as you know, given all the distracting factors and if our school can deliver the academic program that is set for junior high school well, if we can deal effectively with the uniquely student problems that arise at the student level and have the resources to be effective, that's good.

But these are unpredictable. It's hard to know what is going to get in the way. So my expectation is that we are capable of those things, we have the human resources to do a good job. Uh, **also I find that the student body at the junior high school is typical group of adolescent kids, so I have hopes more than expectations. Expectations for me quickly become a score card and I think they sort of work against the flexibility,** because I might have expectations sitting here right now

## APPENDIX 5

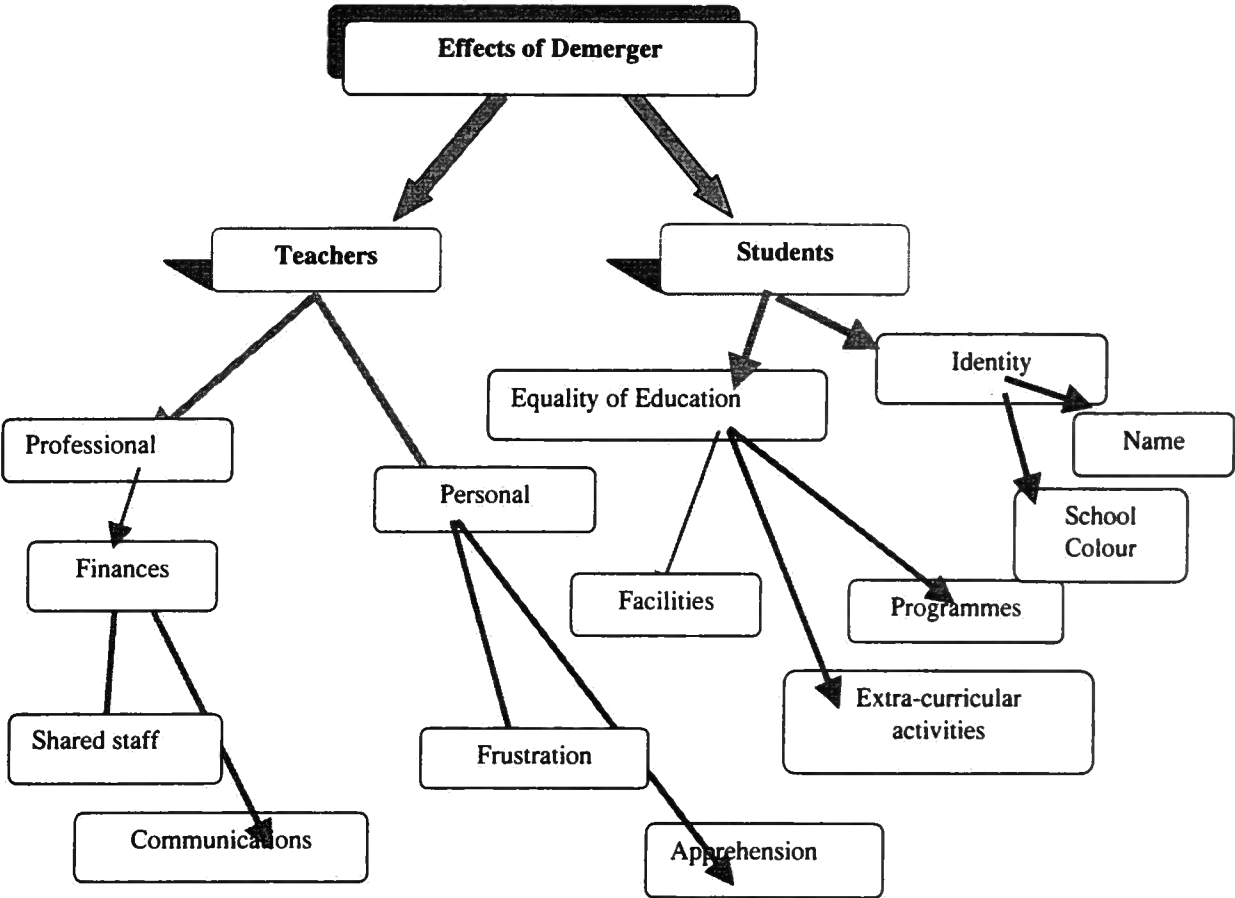
### Open coding example

<p><i>Open coding - examples</i>  Excerpt from interview with P-10 - 1  (participant 10; first interview)</p> <p><b>Interview transcription</b>  <b>Int</b>-Go back to when I asked you if you were, if your idea of a merged school changed. You originally said that it was a good idea.</p> <p><b>P-10</b>- Yeah I was part of the process because we needed something and the only way we thought (and that's not just myself, that was a group of educators in this area.) Um, it was good at that time and it still um, like the timing of Midtown Regional and the whole history is bad. I don't care what you say. They always seem to want to do something when the economics are low and money is tight...  Now the two facilities have separated. What the junior high will end up with I have no idea. I hope they get something that will be conducive to that age group and get more of an identity with the facility...  Um, so the junior high wants computer, they want this, they want that, they aren't going to have the numbers or the staffing in order to accommodate what they actually want.</p> <p><b>Int</b> - So you're in favour of the separation?</p> <p><b>P-10</b> - The separation, no. I mean I don't support it in the sense. If they separated and had new facilities to go to I would really be in favour...if I was going to be there for X number of years then I might be a little more against what has happened. But at the same time something had to happen...  Next year I feel very sorry for them because they're not going to be able to have the programs, because they are reduced in dollars. Dollars make a difference...</p>	<p><b>Open Coding Exercise</b></p> <p>Has support of others for <b>the merged school</b></p> <p><b>Historically the school</b> doesn't have sound timing for initiatives to be developed.</p> <p>Us versus them <b>identity issue</b> (Junior school v. high school)</p> <p>Inappropriate <b>facilities</b> at the junior high.</p> <p>Problem fulfilling expectations for the <b>new, separate school</b>.</p> <p>Doesn't <b>support the demerger</b> as it stands. Factors include no <b>new facilities</b> expected and pending <b>retirement</b>.</p> <p>Demerger will effect <b>programming</b> due to financial constraints.</p>
--	--

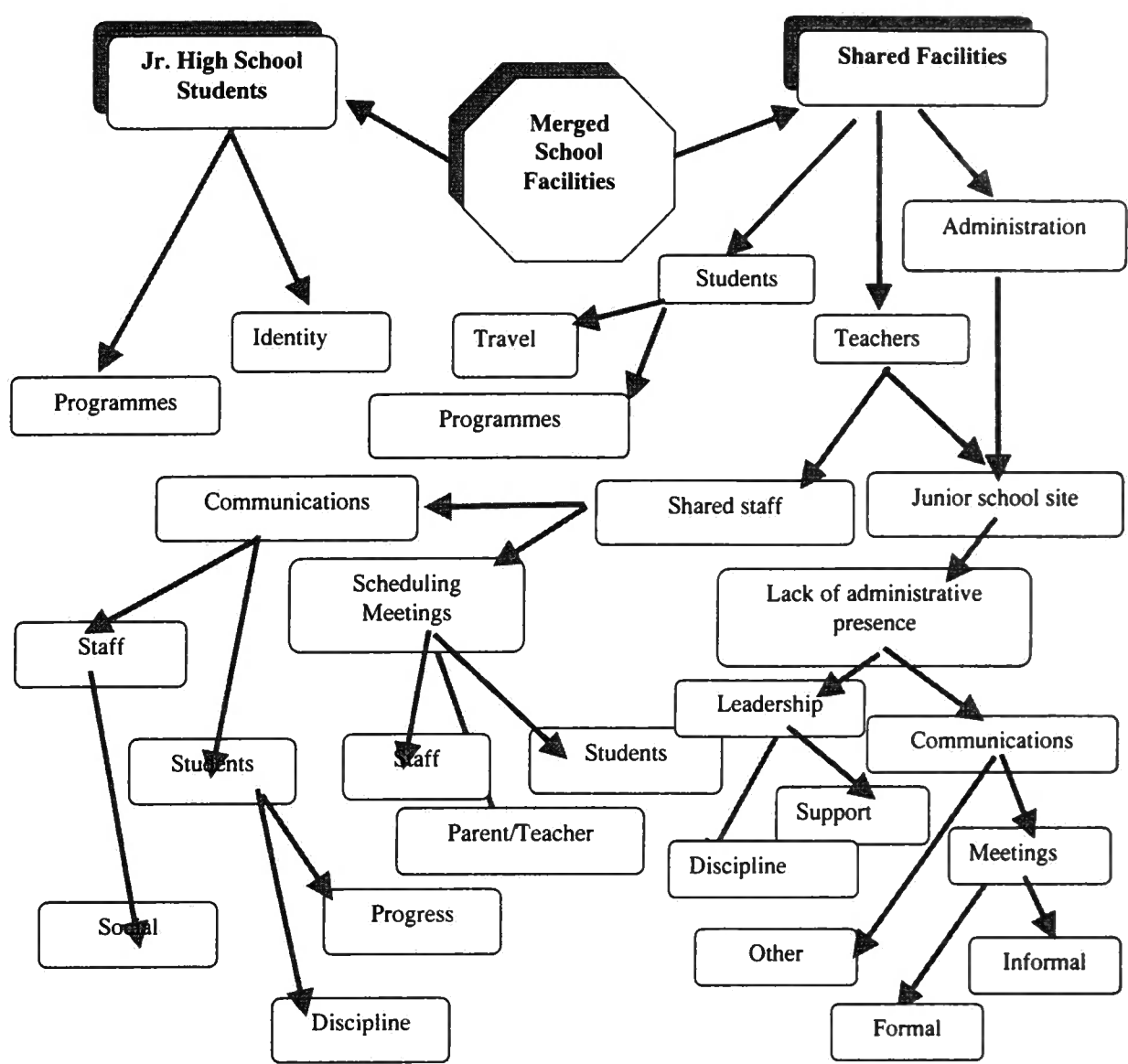
APPENDIX 6

Logic Diagrams

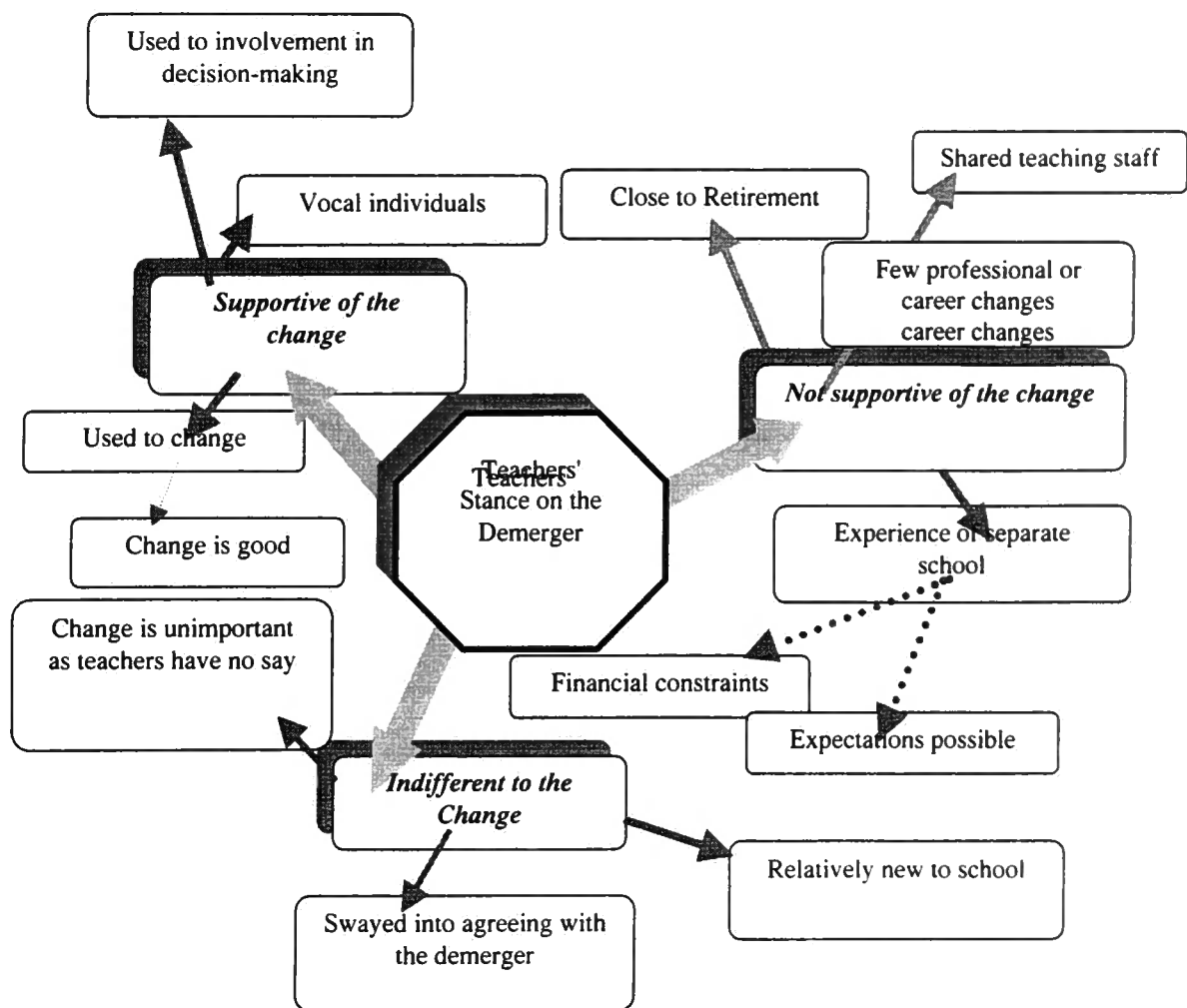
Logic Diagram 1. "Effects of Demerger"



Logic Diagram 2. "Merged School"



Logic Diagram 3. "Change Support"

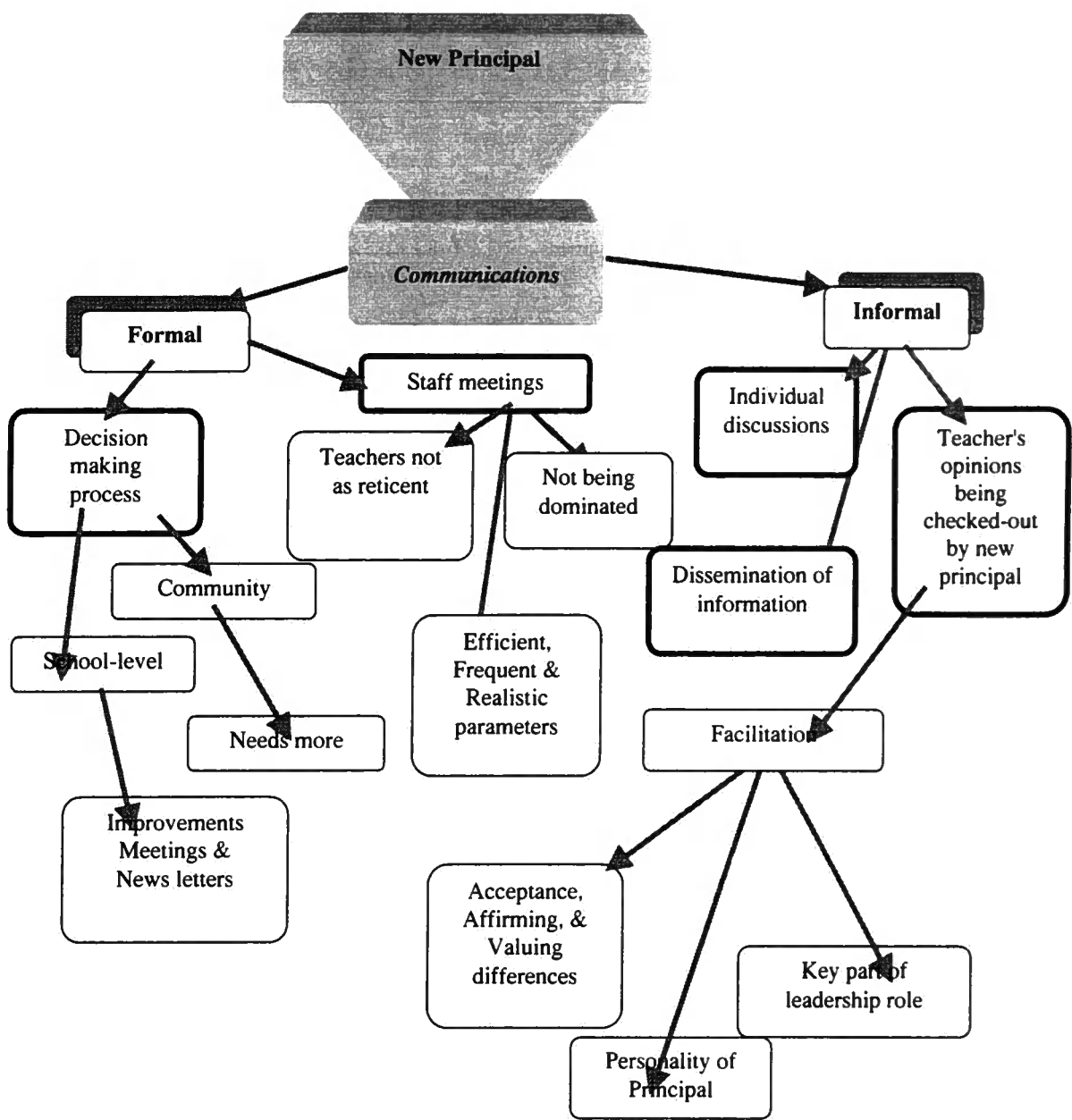


**OPERATIONAL NOTE:**

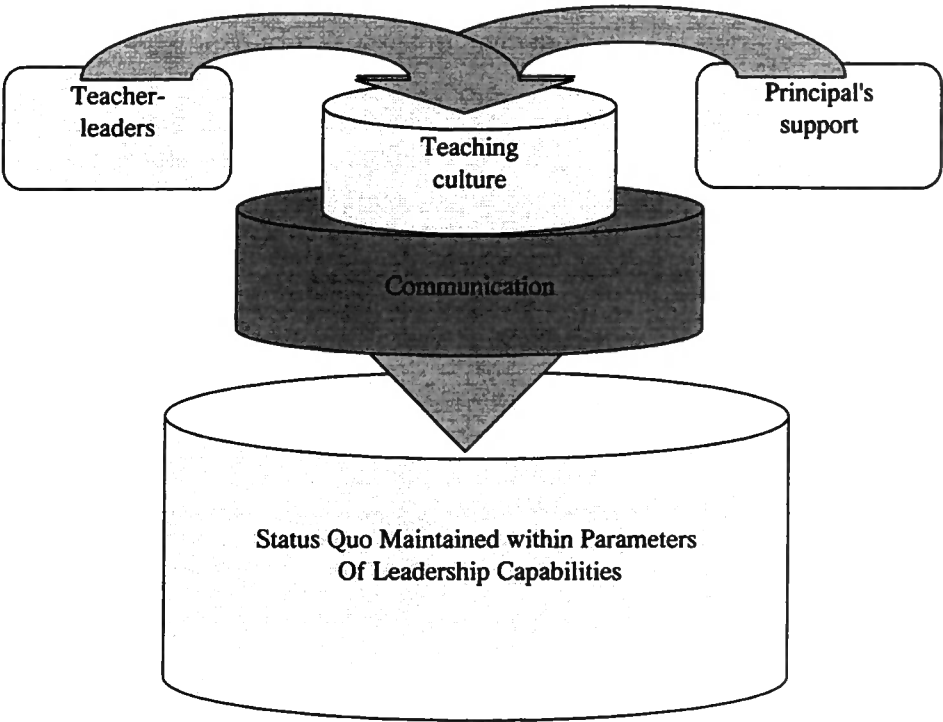
- ◆ Ultimately those teachers who were against the separation of the administrations did not defend their position with the vigour of the demerger proponents. Those seeking the demerger actively vocalised their stance and seized opportunities to promote their cause. At this point it is noted that this 'failure' of one group to confront another, as has been discussed, seems typical of this staff's inability to address difficult issues, even when it seems fundamental. This needs to be pursued in the next interview series.



Logic Diagram 4. *"New Principal"*



**Logic Diagram 5.**                    *"Maintaining the Status Quo"*



## APPENDIX 7

### Paradigm Models

<i>Merger</i>	218
<i>Demerger (a)</i>	219
<i>Demerger (b)</i>	220
<i>Supportive of Demerger</i>	221
<i>Non-supportive of demerger</i>	222
<i>Indifferent to the Demerger</i>	223
<i>Strong Collegial Relationships (a)</i>	224
<i>Strong Collegial Relationships (b)</i>	226
<i>Ability to Cope</i>	227
<i>Informal Facilitation</i>	228
<i>Coping Strategies</i>	229
<i>Communication Breakdown</i>	230
<i>Support</i>	231
<i>Reticence</i>	232
<i>Inability to Functioning in Leadership Roles</i>	233
<i>New Principal</i>	234
<i>Leadership</i>	235
<i>Effective Communications</i>	236
<i>Empowerment</i>	237
<i>Effective Teaching Culture (a)</i>	238
<i>Effective Teaching Culture (b)</i>	239

## ◆ Paradigm Model With *Merger* as the Phenomenon

### CAUSAL CONDITION → PHENOMENON

Poor facilities

Merger

Educational inequality

### PROPERTIES OF

No library

No gymnasium

No cafeteria

Narrow corridors

Inadequate toilets

Mobile units

### SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS

Finances → strained

Facilities → poor

Resource → limited

### MERGER MANAGEMENT CONEXT:

Under conditions where schools have: strained finances, poor facilities and limited resources, then...

### STRATEGIES FOR MERGER MANAGEMENT:

Establish a formal alliance with a well resourced, closely located school and share administration and facilities.

### INTERVENING CONDITIONS

Finances	experience	tradition	scheduling
programs	student welfare	extra curriculars	discipline
communication	jr high philosophy	careers	school board
change	roles	new facilities	leadership
ed. equality	identity	apprehension	personality
mentoring	staff meetings	socialisation	flexibility
equipment	isolation	student's travel	mail
photo copiers	territories	rivalry	support
professionalism	community based	teacher share	facility share

### CONSEQUENCES

Some teachers actively advocate a demerger, which leads to the ultimate separation of the two schools. As a result of the intervening conditions, teachers divide themselves according to their approval of the demerger. The three groups are- supportive; non-supportive; and indifferent, but supportive.

**OPERATIONAL NOTE:** Considering the demerger as the phenomenon, it is necessary to place the demerger within the two stated 'causal condition' contexts. The interview participants identified both educational inequalities in the form of poorer educational opportunities as well as lack of leadership as informing their decision to advocate the demerger.

◆ **Paradigm Model when *Demerger (a)* is the phenomenon**

**CAUSAL CONDITION**

*Lack of leadership*

**PHENOMENON**

Demerger

**PROPERTIES OF:**

Poor communications

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS:**

Mail misdirected————→frequently

Information not passed on————→regularly

Teachers' lack input————→regularly

**DEMERGER MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where mail is frequently misdirected, information is not regularly passed on to teachers, and teachers' input is not allowed, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR *LACK OF LEADERSHIP* MANAGEMENT:**

Certain teachers will advocate the importance of having own administration as a means to achieve equality of education for students currently having to share facilities in another building.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

Loyalty to administration

Experience of separate administrations

Used to involvement

Inadequate educational equality

Opinion not of consequence

**CONSEQUENCES**

Teachers divided according to their understanding of the consequences of a demerger.

♦ **Paradigm Model when *Demerger (b)* is the phenomenon**

**CAUSAL CONDITION** —————→ **PHENOMENON**  
*Poorer educational opportunities*                      Demerger

**PROPERTIES OF OPPORTUNITIES**

Shared facilities  
Shared teaching staff  
Shared Administration

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS:**

Walking between schools→ regularly  
Sharing library resources→ frequently  
Inability to make decisions→ often

**DEMERGER MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where educational opportunities result in: regularly walking between schools, frequently sharing library resources, and often not having the ability to make decisions, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR DEMERGER MANAGEMENT:**

Teachers will advocate the importance of new facilities and propose a school separation.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

Teachers loyal to the context of the merged school  
Lack of parental involvement

**CONSEQUENCES:**

Teachers divided according to their understanding of the consequences of a demerger.

◆ **Paradigm Model when *Supportive of Demerger* is the phenomenon**

**CAUSAL CONDITION**

Favour benefits of demerger

**PHENOMENON**

Supportive of demerger

**PROPERTIES OF:**

Highly vocal educators

Used to change

Equality of education

Involvement in decision-making

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS:**

during staff meetings————→ regularly

change is positive————→ always

concern for————→ currently

previously, not currently————→ usually

**DEMERGER MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where pro-independence groups are highly vocal, used to change, concerned for the equality of education, used to involvement in decision-making, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR *SUPPORTIVE OF DEMERGER* MANAGEMENT:**

Pro-Independence teachers will actively seek means to secure greater educational opportunities and increase their involvement in decision-making by pursuing a separate administration that advocates new facilities for the junior school.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

Loyalty

Current principal

Anti-demerger teachers

Junior school ethos

**CONSEQUENCES:**

Communications break down and the 'status quo' ethos of the school is jeopardised. Teachers in leadership roles function less effectively. General sense of uncertainty.

◆ **Paradigm Model when *Non-supportive of demerger* is the Phenomenon**

**CAUSAL CONDITIONS**

See consequences of demerger  
as negative

**PHENOMENON**

Non-supportive of demerger

**PROPERTIES OF:**

Loyalty to administration  
Near retirement  
Have experience  
Concern for logistics

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS:**

staff members → long term  
within five years → all  
demerged school → previous  
viability → doubtful

**DEMERGER MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where non-supportive teachers of the demerger are loyal, near retirement, have experience, and are concerned for the logistics of being demerged, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR NON-SUPPORTIVE MANAGEMENT:**

Teachers will express their opinions but not make any overt effort to get other teachers with opposing opinions to comply with their stance on the demerger.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

Ethos

**CONSEQUENCES:**

The demerger is accepted by the majority and the process for demerging is initiated.



◆ **Paradigm Model when *Indifferent to the Demerger* is the phenomenon**

**CAUSAL CONDITION** —————→ **PHENOMENON**

Perceive having no impact on decision

Indifferent to demerger

**PROPERTIES OF:**

Involvement in decisions

Staff members

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS**

not involved in —————→ regularly

relatively new —————→ all

**DEMERGER MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where teachers indifference to demerger are not regularly involved in decision making and are all relatively new staff members, then....

**STRATEGIES FOR INDIFFERENCE TO DEMERGER:**

Teachers deny their role in the process of making the decision to demerger.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

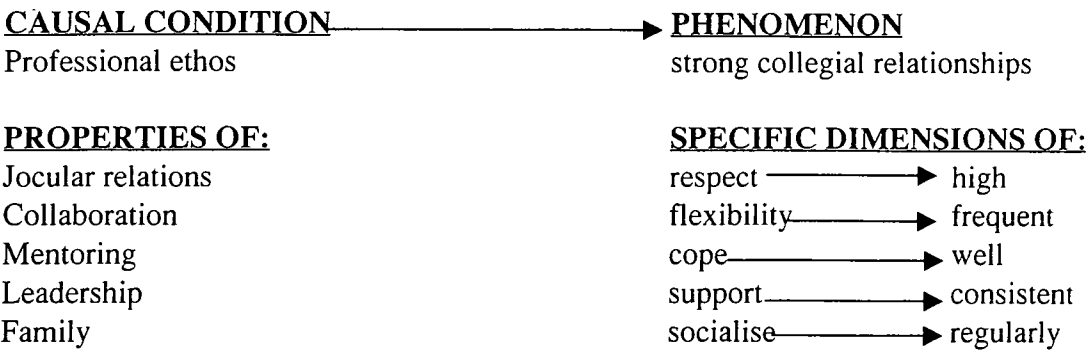
Opinions are not challenged

Ethos

**CONSEQUENCES:**

Teachers support the most convincing group which in this instance are the *supportive of demerger* group.

◆ **Paradigm Model when *Strong Collegial Relationships (a)* is the phenomenon**



**STRONG COLLEGIAL RELATIONSHIPS MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where respect is high, teachers are frequently flexible, cope well, consistently offer support and socialise regularly, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR STRONG COLLEGIAL RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT:**

- Avoid confrontation
- Tell jokes
- Spare time for talking
- Eat lunch together
- Acknowledge special occasions of staff members
- Value each other, including auxiliary staff

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

*Uncertain at this point if there are any. See operational notes below.*

**CONSEQUENCES:**

Rewarding educational and professional experiences for students and teachers.

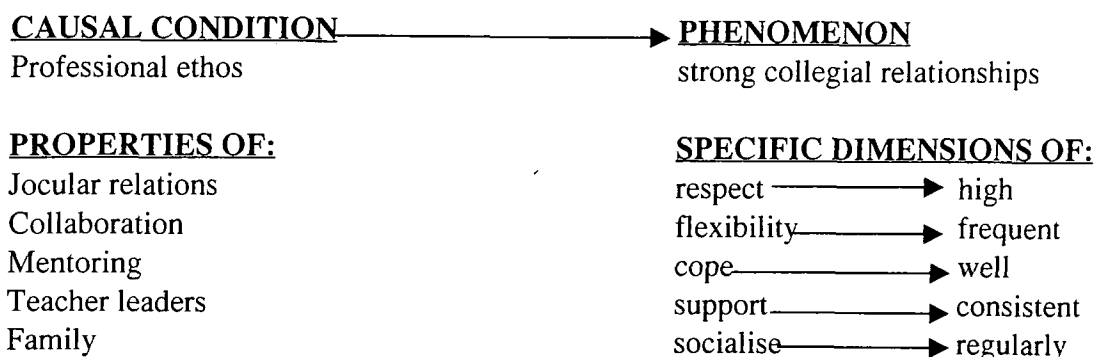
**THEORETICAL NOTE:**

- ◆ Analysis of the second interview data establishes intervening conditions and the consequences with respect to **Strong Collegial Relationships**. The following paradigm model defines these.

## OPERATIONAL NOTES:

- ◆ There were several instances when teachers participating in the interviews were hesitant to discuss their colleagues. The staff promotes an unwavering culture of strong collegial relations. This is not completely convincing though and there seems to be something going on that is undermining their relationships. Although it is likely that the teachers were being professional by not engaging in 'gossip', there seems to be a huge issue to do with respect among the teachers at the junior site, which requires further data.
- ◆ It appears that the teaching culture applies to informal meetings between teachers, but not formal discussions such as staff meetings. It is necessary to explore the difference between these two domains.
- ◆ There appears to be a notion that all is not well among the staff at this stage in the inquiry although participants are not willing to discuss this specifically, once again returning to the original assumption about respect. This requires some thought on how to proceed with this line of inquiry and include it in the next series of interviewing.
- ◆ The hierarchical nature of the data is beginning to become evident as the categories are related to one another.
- ◆ Former principal suggests that having an administrator in the school was **the** main issue. With the new principal's discussion of loyalty to the former administration, this makes some sense. Question-Did the teachers not want to be perceived as having a non-confidence vote in the former administration and therefore go another route that didn't make administration the primary issue?

◆ **Paradigm Model when *Strong Collegial Relationships (b)* is the phenomenon**



**STRONG COLLEGIAL RELATIONSHIPS MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where respect is high, teachers are frequently flexible, cope well, consistently offer support and socialise regularly, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR STRONG COLLEGIAL RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT:**

Avoid confrontation  
Tell jokes  
Spare time for talking  
Eat lunch together  
Acknowledge special occasions of staff members  
Value each other, including auxiliary staff

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

Individuals lacking social skills  
*Leaders* inability to cope with the effect or consequence of decisions  
Principal not housed within the site

**CONSEQUENCES:**

Breakdown of communications  
Staff leaders not able to fulfil role  
Reticence

**THEORETICAL NOTES:**

- ◆ Each of the **consequences** requires analysis as a phenomenon.
- ◆ "Support" needs to be subjected to a paradigm model as it does not seem to be considered a function of leadership (principal's), but as a characteristic of the teaching culture maintained by the teachers themselves.

◆ **Paradigm Model when *Ability to Cope* is the phenomenon**

**CAUSAL CONDITION** —————→ **PHENOMENON**  
Effective Teacher Leaders                      Ability to cope

**PROPERTIES OF EFFECTIVE  
TEACHER LEADERS:**

Experience  
Prioritising  
Separate emotions  
Have a variety of interests

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS:**

job satisfaction —————→ high  
happy —————→ frequently  
support —————→ regular

**COPING MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where teachers experience high in job satisfaction, are frequently happy and regularly supported, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR COPING MANAGEMENT:**

Teachers may choose not to discuss sensitive issues nor engage in confrontation. Teachers talk among themselves and seek the advice of their colleagues. Teachers are encouraged to support one another and maintain a professional attitude at all times.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

Communication breakdown  
Leadership fails

**CONSEQUENCES:**

Teachers may become reticent, no longer seeking the advice of other teachers, nor do they talk among themselves for fear that they will be charged with talking about others behind their backs.

◆ **Paradigm Model when *Informal Facilitation* is the Phenomenon**

**CAUSAL CONDITIONS**

Mentoring

**PHENOMENON**

Informal facilitation

**PROPERTIES OF MENTORING**

Support

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS**

Advice —————> personal

Information —————> shared

Advice —————> professional

Management —————> strategies

**TEACHING CULTURE MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where mentoring has; personal and professional advice, shared information and management strategies, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR INFORMAL FACILITATION MANAGEMENT:**

Teachers are encouraged to work together. Teachers value the experiences of their colleagues. Teachers constantly check each other out.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

Threats to teachers in leadership roles

Breakdown of communication

Relationship strain

**CONSEQUENCES:**

Typically the staff experiences high levels of job satisfaction and pride in their workplace which teachers feel benefits the students.

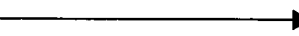
**OPERATIONAL NOTE:**

Having examined the data, establishing paradigm models and logic models, there appear to be two categories to which all others categories and sub-categories seem relative. These are the categories of the "**teaching culture**" and "**leadership**". Bearing this in mind, the categories need to be integrated to identify the core category by which the relationship between these and other sub-categories is defined. Integration proceeds by detailing the story line of the analysis.

### ◆ Paradigm model when *Coping Strategies* is the Phenomenon

## CAUSAL CONDITIONS

## Teaching culture



## PHENOMENON

## Coping strategies

### PROPERTIES OF TEACHING CULTURE:

Collegial relations

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS:**

Supportive  $\longrightarrow$  always

Mentoring  $\longrightarrow$  continuous

Camaraderie  $\longrightarrow$  high

Laughter  $\longrightarrow$  frequent

Special occasions → recognised

**COPING STRATEGIES MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where coping strategies are: always supportive, continuously mentoring, high camaraderie, frequent laughter and special occasions recognised, then...

### STRATEGIES FOR COPING STRATEGIES MANAGEMENT:

Maintain a professional attitude, become reticent if necessary as not to engage in confrontation.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

## Mentoring system fails

Teacher leaders unable to fulfil roles.

**CONSEQUENCES:**

Personal coping resources function in place of collegial strategies based on collegial relationships.

◆ **Paradigm Model when *Communication Breakdown* is the Phenomenon**

**CAUSAL CONDITIONS**

Appointment procedure for principalship

**PHENOMENON**

Communication breakdown

**PROPERTIES OF:**

Teachers not able to function  
in leadership roles  
Teachers not able to  
support one another.

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS:**

Mentoring —————> restricted  
Collaboration —————> reduced  
Frustration —————> high  
Apprehension —————> frequent

**DEMERGER MANAGEMENT CONTEXT**

Under conditions where communications breakdown are restricting mentoring, reducing collaboration, highly frustrating and frequently apprehensive, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATIONS BREAKDOWN:**

Teachers look to themselves to cope with the practicalities of carrying on with their work and the emotions they experience.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

Respect for each other  
Lack of social skills

**CONSEQUENCES**

As a result of the respect/professional ethos the teachers have for each other at the junior site, they are not willing to engage in confrontation and therefore, resolve the problems associated with the breakdown of communications.



### ◆ Paradigm Model when *Support* is the Phenomenon

**CAUSAL CONDITIONS:** —————→ **PHENOMENON**  
Teaching Culture Support

**PROPERTIES OF TEACHING CULTURE:**

## Jocular relations

## Collaboration

## Mentoring

## Teacher leaders

## Family-like

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS:**

respect  $\longrightarrow$  high

flexibility → frequent

cope  $\longrightarrow$  well

socialise → regularly

**TEACHING CULTURE MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where teaching culture is: highly respectful, frequently flexible, copes well, and has regular socials then...

### STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORT MANAGEMENT:

Teacher leaders and principal role model acceptable behaviour.

**Maintain relationships with retired teacher leaders.**

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

## Appointment procedures for Principalship

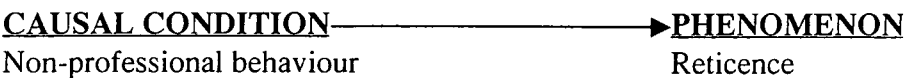
**CONSEQUENCES:**

Severe communications breakdown staff-wide.

### THEORETICAL NOTES:

- ◆ It has been noted that two distinct domains with different manners exist within the junior site. Within the staff meetings, the mood is serious whereas the mood within informal settings, such as the staff room is quite jocular.
- ◆ Most participants identified the difference between the staff's manner. Within the staff room, the culture is light, fun, jocular and supportive. On the contrary during staff meetings the manner is serious and often confrontational. Although the teaching culture has strict codes of behaviour, some teachers are recognised as being confrontational, argumentative and difficult during formal discussions.
- ◆ Individuals who fail to value the opinions of their colleagues by confrontation, arguments and put-down's go against the prevailing culture. Consequently, many teachers have consciously opted not to participate in the typical public discussion forums. Instead many teachers favour private, non-threatening discussions with individuals of like-mindedness and who share the professional ethos dictated by the teaching culture. The new principal supports this mode of communication, the influence of which is evident in the following diagram.

◆ **Paradigm Model when *Reticence* is the Phenomenon**



PROPERTIES OF NON-PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Confrontation  
Argumentative  
Critical of others opinions  
Public put-down's

SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS

Aggressive	→	usually
Opinionated	→	always
Difficult	→	typically

RETICENCE MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:

Under conditions where non-professional behaviour is: usually aggressive, always opinionated and typically difficult, then...

STRATEGIES FOR RETICENCE MANAGEMENT:

Teachers avoid confrontation by engaging in small group discussion with teachers of likemindedness.

INTERVENING CONDITIONS:

Teaching culture  
Leadership roles  
Experience  
New Principal

CONSEQUENCES:

The teachers have an opportunity to express their opinions and have them considered without the risk of being publicly embarrassed for their opinions.

OPERATIONAL NOTE:

- ◆ Reticence can be a coping strategy for those teachers who have been embarrassed for their opinions and/or feel embarrassed for other staff members who have been publicly criticised for having stated an opinion. Some teachers remain reticent for fear of being publicly humiliated. It is also a characteristic of teachers who feel they have no role to play in decision-making efforts. However, for the purposes of this analysis (having redefined the sample which excludes the teachers indifferent to the demerger within the second interview set), herein reticence is a coping strategy.

◆ **Paradigm Model when *Inability to Functioning in Leadership Roles* is the phenomenon**

**CAUSAL CONDITIONS**

Severe breakdown of communications

—————→ **PHENOMENON**

Inability for teachers to function in leadership roles

**PROPERTIES OF:**

Teachers don't check each other out.

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS:**

Mentoring —————→ restricted

Leadership —————→ inadequate

Collaboration —————→ diminished

Support —————→ irregular

**DEMERGER MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where mentoring is restricted, leadership is inadequate, collaboration is diminished, and support is irregular, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR NOT FUNCTIONING IN LEADERSHIP ROLES:**

Take a vacation and don't think about the situation. Seek leadership from the new principal.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS**

Respect and tradition, "the teaching culture".

**CONSEQUENCES**

The teaching culture defined by supportive relationships is reinvented. Teachers work efficiently and without distraction. Reticent teachers begin to voice opinions. Potentially confrontational situations are contained.

◆ **Paradigm Model when *New Principal* is the phenomenon**



<b><u>PROPERTIES OF LEADERSHIP FAILING</u></b>	<b><u>SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS:</u></b>
Teaching culture under threat	Loyalty————→divided
Teachers become reticent	Opinions————→vary
Small group discussion	Staff————→divided

**DEMERGER MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**  
Under conditions where demerger has: divided loyalties and varying opinions, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR NEW PRINCIPAL MANAGEMENT:**  
Shift the focus to the acquisition of new facilities by requiring a principal only responsible for the junior school site to pursue this goal on their behalf.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**  
School board  
Teachers loyal to context of merged organisation  
Appointment process for the new principal

**CONSEQUENCES:**  
Leadership is available to the teachers at the junior site.  
Decisions are made.  
Communications improve.  
All teachers' opinions are valued and influence decisions.

◆ **Paradigm Model when *Leadership* is the Phenomenon**

**CAUSAL CONDITIONS** —————→ **PHENOMENON**  
New Principal Leadership

**PROPERTIES OF NEW PRINCIPAL:**

Delegates  
Proactive  
Decisive  
Communicative

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS:**

Stress —————→ alleviated  
Security —————→ feeling of  
Decision-making —————→ immediacy

**NEW PRINCIPAL MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where the new principal; alleviates stress, promotes feelings of security and is capable of making decisions immediately, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT:**

Create opportunities for seeking teachers' opinions.  
Disseminate information effectively.  
Run efficient staff meeting with realistic parameters, more frequently.  
Accept that some teachers will be at different stages of adopting the new administration.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

Teaching culture  
Loyalties to former administration  
Experiences of voicing an opinion publicly

**CONSEQUENCES:**

Improved staff relations.  
Compromises.  
Improved communications.  
Improvements to facilities pending.

◆ Paradigm Model when *Effective Communications* is the Phenomenon

**CAUSAL CONDITIONS**

Leadership

**PHENOMENON**

Effective communications

**PROPERTIES OF LEADERSHIP**

Proactive

Decisive

Delegates

Communicative

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS**

facilitative—————▶ usually

Loyalties—————▶ allows for

Meeting parameters————▶ realistic

Informal opinions————▶ valued

**LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where Leadership is: usually facilitative, allows for loyalties, sets realistic meeting parameters and allows informal expression of opinion to be valued, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT:**

Create opportunities to speak with teachers, thereby checking out how they are doing and if there are concerns or opinions that need to be addressed.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS:**

Personal agendas

**CONSEQUENCES:**

Empowerment for all teachers!

**THEORETICAL NOTES:**

- ◆ The fact that the properties of leadership and new principal are identical suggests that these equate. However, it is noted that the properties are characteristics of the new principal and not the position. This particular appointment has been effective because of the leadership qualities of the principal's character. While it may be debated that in seeking a new principal these very characteristics were sought, it goes without saying that the person brings the qualities and not the role that he or she fulfils. The impact that this has on the role of leader is important in making a step toward establishing a core category and relating higher order categories and their sub-categories.

## ◆ Paradigm Model when *Empowerment* is the Phenomenon

### CAUSAL CONDITIONS:

Effective Communication

### PHENOMENON:

Empowerment for all teachers

### PROPERTIES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:

Teachers coping

Voicing of opinion

Decisions being made

"Teaching culture" status quo

### SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS:

Meeting parameters————→ maintained

Informal opinions————→ valued

Makes points on

behalf of other teachers————→ often

### EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:

Under conditions where effective leadership; maintains established, acceptable meeting parameters, values informally solicited opinion, often makes a point on behalf of other teachers, then....

### STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERMENT FOR TEACHERS MANAGEMENT:

Contain potentially volatile arguments during staff meetings. Show that all opinions are worthwhile by seeking these out if necessary and sharing them in staff meetings. Be consistent with strategies.

### INTERVENING CONDITIONS:

Teachers accustomed to having their opinion dominate formal meetings.

Historical state of the meetings.

### CONSEQUENCES:

Some reticent teachers increasingly become more confident in participating in staff meetings and sharing their opinions. Few teachers dissatisfied with having their voice contained.

◆ **Paradigm Model When *Effective Teaching Culture (a)* is the Phenomenon**

**CAUSAL CONDITIONS**

a) Strong Collegial Relationships

**PHENOMENON**

Effective Teaching Cultures

**PROPERTIES OF**

Teacher leaders

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS**

Supportive

Job satisfaction

Approachable

Effective coping strategies

Provide time

Value informal communications

Administration's support

**MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where teacher leaders are; supportive, experience job satisfaction, are approachable and have effective coping strategies, and where administration's support; provides times and values informal communications, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING CULTURE MANAGEMENT:**

Establish acceptable collegial behaviour that consists of checking each other out, tell jokes, collaborate and create a family-like atmosphere of respect, flexibility and social gatherings. And...

Initiate informal communications by sharing experiences and materials, and providing personal and professional support.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS**

Appointment procedures

Personality clashes

**CONSEQUENCES:**

Communications break down affecting collegial relations. Collegial support is replaced with reticence. Teacher-leaders unable to function in leadership roles, coping on a personal level.



◆ **Paradigm Model when *Effective Teaching Culture (b)* is the Phenomenon**

**CAUSAL CONDITIONS**

b) **Effective Leadership**

**PHENOMENON**

Effective Teaching Cultures

**PROPERTIES OF**

Effective Communications

**SPECIFIC DIMENSIONS**

Informal communications

Formal communications

Teacher empowerment

**MANAGEMENT CONTEXT:**

Under conditions where effective leadership provides for, informal and formal communications, and teacher empowerment, then...

**STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING CULTURE MANAGEMENT:**

The principal needs to support and value informal communications; make decisions based on teacher opinion; establish acceptable behaviour; maintain realistic parameters during meetings, have a consistent approach and contain potentially volatile discussions.

**INTERVENING CONDITIONS**

Principal not able to give leadership in formal communications

**CONSEQUENCES:**

Informal and formal communications break down affecting collegial relations and the ability of teacher-leaders to provide support. Teacher-leaders become reticent, coping on the personal level.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, J; Hayes, J; and Hopson, B (1976) *Transition: understanding and managing personal change*. London: Martin Robertson.
- Anderson, Don and Biddle, Bruce (Eds) (1991) *Knowledge for Policy: Improving Education Through Research*. London: Falmer Press.
- Angus, Lawrence. (1993) Democratic Participation of Efficient Site Managment. in Smyth (Ed) *A Socially Critical View of the Self-Managing School*. London: Falmer Press.
- Antika, C. and Brewin, C. (1982) *Attributions and Psychological Change*. London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Ball, Stephen (1993) 'Culture , Cost and Control: Self-Management and Entrepreneurial Schooling in England and Wales' in Smyth, John (Ed) *A socially Critical View of the Self-Managing School*, London, Falmer Press.
- Ball, Stephen and Goodson, Ivor (1985) *Teachers' Lives and Careers*. London: Falmer Press.
- Banister, P; Burman, E; Parker, I; Taylor, M; and Tindall, C. (1994) *Qualitative Methods in Psychology*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Barton, Len (1991) 'Teachers under siege: a case of unmet needs', in *Support for Learning*. 6, 1, 3-8.
- Blase. Joseph and Anderson, Gary. (1995) *The Micropolitics of Educational Leadership*. London: Cassell.
- Beare, Hedley et al. (1993) Leadership. in Preedy, M. (Ed) *Managing the Effective School*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- Bell, J. (1987) *Doing Your Research Project*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Beynon, John (1985) 'Institutional Change and Career Histories in a Comprehensive School', in Ball and Goodson (Eds.) *Teachers' Lives and Careers*, London: Falmer Press.
- Bolman, Lee. (1993) *The Path to School Leadership: a portable mentor*. London: Sage.

- Bottery, Mike. (1992) *The Ethics of Educational Management*. London: Cassell Educational Limited.
- Bond, Tim (1993) *Standards and Ethics for Counselling in Action*. London: Sage.
- Brehn, J. and Cohen, A. (Eds) (1962) *Explorations of Cognitive Dissonance*. New York: Wiley.
- Bromley, D.B. (1986) *The Case-Study Method in Psychology and Related Disciplines*. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.
- Burgess, Robert. (Ed) (1989) *The Ethics of Educational Research*. London: Falmer Press.
- Caldwell, Brian (1992) The principal as leader of the self-managing school in Australia. *Journal of Educational Administration*. (30), 6-19.
- Caldwell, Brian and Spinks, Jim. (1988) *The Self-Managing School*. London: Falmer Press.
- Caldwell, Brian and Spinks, Jim. (1992) *Leading the Self-Managing School*. London: Falmer Press.
- CCCS Education Groups. (1981) *Unpopular Education: Schooling and Social Democracy in Education*. London: Hutchinson.
- CCCS Education Group II. (1991) *Education limited: Schooling and Training and the New Right since 1979*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Chase, Susan (1995) 'Taking Narrative Seriously, Consequences for Method and Theory in Interview Studies.' in Josselson, R and Lieblich, A (Ed), *Interpreting Experience: The Narrative Study of Lives*. (pp. 1-26). London: Sage.
- Cole, Martin and Walker, Stephen. (Eds) (1989) *Teaching and Stress*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Coolican, Hugh (1994) *Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Corrie, L (1995) 'The Structure and Culture of Staff Collaboration: managing meaning and open doors.' *Educational Review*. 47, 1, 89-99.
- Cryns, T. and Johnston, (1993) 'A Collaborative Case Study of Teacher Change: from a personal to a professional perspective.' *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 9, 2, 147-158.

- Cuban, Larry. (1990) A Fundamental Puzzle of School Reform, in Lieberman (Ed) *Schools as Collaborative Cultures*. London: Falmer Press.
- Cuban, L. (1988) A fundamental puzzle of school-reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 70, No. 5, pp. 341-344.
- Darling-Hammond, J. (1990) Teacher Professionalism: Why and How, in Lieberman (Ed) *Schools as Collaborative Cultures*. London: Falmer Press.
- Deal, Terrance. (1990) Healing Our Schools : Restoring the Heart, in Lieberman (Ed) *Schools as Collaborative Cultures*. London: Falmer Press.
- Demaine, Jack. (1993) The New Right and the Self-Managing School, in Smyth (Ed) *A Socially Critical View of the Self-Managing School*. London: Falmer Press.
- Dias, o; Harland, J; and Weston, P (1988) *Professional Practice-implications for teacher development and support*. Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research.
- Dunham, Jack (1992) *Stress in Teaching*. London: Routledge.
- Dunham, Jack (1994) 'A framework for teachers' coping strategies for a whole school stress management policy', in *Educational Management and Administration*. 22, 168-174.
- Erikson, E. (1950) *Childhood and Society*. New York: Norton.
- Flude, M. and Hammer, M. (1990) *The Education Reform Act, 1988: Its Origins and Implications*. London: Falmer Press.
- Fullan, Michael. (1991) *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. London: Cassell Educational Limited.
- Fullan, Michael and Hargreaves, A (Ed) (1992) *Teacher Development and Educational Change*. London: Falmer Press.
- Glesne, Corrine (1989) Rapport and friendship in ethnographic research. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 2, 1, 45-54.
- Gold, Yvonne and Roth, Robert. (1993) *Teachers Managing Stress and Preventing Burnout*. London: Falmer Press.
- Grace, Gerald. (1993) On the study of school leadership: beyond education management. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, XXXX1 (4), pp. 353-365.

- Grace, Gerald. (1995) *School Leadership: Beyond Education Management*. London: Falmer Press.
- Green, Howard (1994) 'Changing Places', in *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 24, 2, 165-173.
- Griffin, Gary. (1990) Leadership for Curriculum Improvement: The School Administrator's Role. in Lieberman (Ed) (1990) *Schools as Collaborative Cultures*. London: Falmer Press.
- Hall, Gene and Hord, Shirley. (1984) *Change in Schools: Facilitating the Process*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Hargreaves, Andy. (1990) Paths of Professional Development: Contrived Collegiality, Collaborative Culture, and the Case of Peer Coaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. (6), 227-241.
- Hargreaves, Andy. (1992) Time and Teachers' Work: An Analysis of the Intensification Thesis. *Teachers College Record*. (94), 87-108.
- Hargreaves, Andy (1994) *Changing Teachers, Changing Times*. London: Cassell.
- Hargreaves, Andy (1995) 'Beyond Collaboration: Critical Teacher Development in the Postmodern Age', in Smyth, John (Ed), *Critical Discourses on Teacher Development*. London: Cassell.
- Hargreaves, David. (1972) *Interpersonal Relationships and Education*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Hargreaves, David (1994) *The Mosaic of Learning*. Demos: London.
- Hammersley, Martyn. (Ed) (1993) *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice*. London: Sage.
- Hatcher, Richard. (1994) Market Relationships and the Management of Teachers. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. (15), 1, 41-61.
- Health and Safety Commission (1990) *Managing occupational stress: a guide for managers and teachers in the schools sector*. London: HMSO.
- Holmes, Gary (1993) *Essential School Leadership*. London: Kogan Page.
- Hopkins, David; Bollington, Rob; and Hewett, Dave. (1989) *Evaluation and Research in Education*. 3, 2, 61-80.

- Josselson, R and Lieblich, A (Ed) (1995) *Interpreting Experience: The Narrative Study of Lives*. London: Sage.
- Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth (1975) (Ed) *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth (1989) *On Death and Dying*. London: Routledge.
- Kyriacou, Chris and Sutcliffe, J. (1978) 'A model of teacher stress', in *Educational Studies*, 4, 1-6.
- Kyriacou, Chris (1980) 'Coping Actions and Occupational Stress Among School Teachers', in *Research in Education*, 24, 57-61.
- Kyriacou, Chris (1981) 'Social Support and Occupational Stress among Schoolteachers', in *Educational Studies*, 7, 1, 55-60.
- Kyriacou, Chris and Harriman, Phillips. (1993) 'Teacher Stress and School Merger' *School Organisation*. 13, 3, 297-302.
- Lee, Raymond. (1993) *Doing Research on Sensitive Topics*. London: Sage.
- Leithwood, Kenneth et al. (1994) *Developing Expert Leadership for Future Schools*. London: Falmer Press.
- Leithwood, Kenneth (1990) 'The principal's role in teacher development', in Joyce, B.M. (Ed) *Changing School Culture through Staff Development-Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*. Virginia: ASCD.
- Lieberman, Ann (Ed) (1990), *Schools as Collaborative Cultures: Creating the future now*. London: Falmer Press.
- Little, Judith Warren (1990) 'Teachers as Colleagues', in Lieberman, Ann (Ed) *Schools as Collaborative Cultures: Creating the future now*. London: Falmer Press.
- Marris, Peter (1974) *Loss and Change*. London: Routledge.
- Marshall, Stephanie (1993) 'Managing the Culture: the key to effective change?' *School Organisation*, 13(3), 255-268.
- McHugh, Marie and Kyle, Margaret. (1993) 'School Merger: a stressful challenge?' *School Organisation*. 13, 1, 11-26.
- McLaughlin, M. and Marsh, D. (1990) Staff Development and School Change, in Lieberman (Ed) *Schools as Collaborative Cultures*. London: Falmer Press.

- Miles, M., Saxl, E. and Lieberman, A. (1988) What skills do educational "change agents" need? An empirical view. *Curriculum Inquiry*. Vol.18, No.2, 157-193.
- Morrish, Ivor (1976) *Aspects of Educational Change*. London: George, Allen and Unwin.
- Morrison, Keith. (1993) *Planning and Accomplishing School-Centred Evaluation*. Dereham: Peter Francis Publishers.
- Mouly, G. (1978) *Educational Research*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Munn, P. and Drever, E. (1990) *Using Questionnaires in Small-Scale Research*. Edinburgh: Scottish Council for Research in Education.
- Neumann, Anna (1995) Context, Cognition, and Culture: A Case Analysis of Collegiate Leadership and Cultural Change. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32, 2, 251-279.
- Newton, Colin and Tarrant, Tony (1992) *Managing Change in Schools*. London: Routledge.
- Nias, J., Southworth, G., Yoemans, R. (1989) *Staff Relationships in the Primary School*. London: Cassell.
- Nias, Jennifer. (1993) 'Leaving the Door Ajar', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 23, 3, 273-276.
- Patton, Michael (1980) *Qualitative evaluation methods*. London: Sage.
- Patton, Michael (1987) *How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation*. London: Sage.
- Paulus, P.B. (1989) *Psychology of Group Influence 2nd Edition*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Pelletier, Carol (1991) 'Teachers' Voices: the missing link in education reform'. *Educational Review*. 5, 1, 49-54.
- Pietrofesa, J. and Splete, H. (1974) *Career Development: Theory and Research*. London: Grune and Straton.
- Preedy, Margaret. (Ed) (1993) *Managing the Effective School*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

- Riseborough, George. (1994) 'Teachers' Careers and Comprehensive School Closure: Policy and professionalism in practice.' *British Educational Research Journal*, 20, 1, 85-104.
- Riseborough, George (1981) 'Teacher Careers and Comprehensive Schooling', *Sociology*. 15, 3, 352-380.
- Rogers, W. (1996) *Managing Teacher Stress*. London: Pitman.
- Rotter, J.R. (1981) 'Generalised expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement', in Hopson, B. and Scally, M. *Teaching Life Skills*. London: McGraw-Hill.
- Rosenholtz, Susan. (1990) Education Reform Strategies: Will They Increase Teacher Commitment? in Lieberman (Ed) *Schools as Collaborative Cultures*. London: Falmer Press.
- Rudduck, Jean (1991) *Innovational and Change*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Sarason, Seymour. (1990) What Are Schools of Education For? in Lieberman (Ed) *Schools as Collaborative Cultures*. London: Falmer Press.
- Sarason, Seymour (1990) *The Predicatable Failure of Educational Reform*. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Saxl, E., Miles., and Lieberman, A. (1990) *Assisting change in education (ACE)*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Serow, R and Forrest, K (1994) 'Motives and Circumstances: occupational-change experiences of prospective late-entry teachers', *Teacher and Teacher Education*., 10, 555-563.
- Shepard, Martin. (1993) 'Out of the frying pan and into the fire?' *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 23, 3, 263-272.
- Sikes, Patricia (1985) 'The life cycle of the teacher', in Ball, Stephen and Goodson, Ivor (Eds) *Teachers' Lives and Careers*. London: Falmer Press.
- Sikes, Patricia (1992) 'Imposed Change and the Experienced Teacher', in Fullan, M. and Hargreaves, A. (Eds) *Development and Educational Change*. London: Falmer Press.
- Sikes, Patricia and West-Burnham, (Eds) (1993) *Mentoring in the Effective School*. Harlow Longham Group.



- Simon, Brian and Chitty, Clyde (1993) *SOS: Save Our Schools*. London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd.
- Smith, P. and West-Burnham (Ed) (1993) *Mentoring in the Effective School*. Harlow: Longman Group.
- Smyth, John. (Ed) (1993) *A Socially Critical View of the Self-Managing School*. London: Falmer Press.
- Smyth, John (Ed) (1995) *Critical Discourses on Teacher Development*. London: Cassell.
- Sparkes, A. and Bloomer, M. (1993) Teaching Cultures and School-Based Management, in Smyth (Ed) *A Socially Critical View of the Self-Managing School*. London: Falmer Press.
- Stein, Mary Kay and Wang, Margaret C. (1988) Teacher Development and School Improvement: The Process of Teacher Change. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 4, 2, 171-187.
- Strauss, Anselm and Corbin, Juliet. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research: grounded theory procedures and techniques*. London: Sage.
- Super, Donald (1957) *The Psychology of Careers*. London: Harper and Row.
- Super, Donald. (1967) *Self-concept Theory*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Sykes, Gary. (1990) Teaching Incentives: Constraint and Variety. in Lieberman (Ed) *Schools as Collaborative Cultures*. London: Falmer Press.
- Sykes, Wendy and Collins, Martin (1988) 'Effects of modes of interview: experiments in the UK' in Groves, Robert *et al.* (Eds), *Telephone Survey Methodology*. New York: Wiley.
- Tomlinson, Peter (1995) *Understanding mentoring: reflective strategies for school-based teacher preparation*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Torrington, D. and Weightman, J. (1993) The Culture and Ethos of the School. in Preedy, M. (Ed) *Managing the Effective School*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- Travers, C. and Cooper, C. (1996) *Teachers Under Pressure*. London: Routledge.
- Walford, G. (1993) Self-Managing Schools, Choice and Equity, in Smyth (Ed) *A Socially Critical View of the Self-Managing School*. London: Falmer Press.

- Waugh, Russell and Godfrey, John (1993) Teacher Receptivity to System-side Change in the Implementation Stage. *British Educational Research Journal*. 19, 5, 565-578.
- Waugh, R. and Punch, K. (1987). Teacher Receptivity to Systemwide Change in the Implementation Stage. *Review of Educational Research*, 57, 3, 237-254.
- Wideen, M.F. and Pye, Ivy. (1994) *The Struggle for Change: The story of one school*. London: Falmer Press.
- Whitaker, Patrick (1993) *Managing Change in Schools*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Wilkin, Margaret (Ed) (1992) *Mentoring in Schools*. London: Kogan Page.
- Woods, Peter (Ed) (1980) *Teacher Strategies*. London: Croom Helm.
- Woods, Peter (1984) in Hargreaves, A and Woods, P. (Eds) *Classrooms and Staffrooms*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Woods, Peter. (1986) *Inside Schools*. London: Routledge.
- Woolfe, Ray and Dryden, Windy (Eds) (1996) *Handbook of counselling Psychology*. London: Sage.
- Yin, Robert. (1984) *Case Study Research: design and methods*. London: Sage.
- Zimbardo, P., Ebbesen, E. and Maslach, C. (1977) *Influencing Attitudes and Changing Behavior*. London: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

