

**AN INVESTIGATION
OF
TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY
FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

A thesis submitted by Frances Vivien Whalan BA DipEd MEd

for

the award of

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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ABSTRACT

The subject of this thesis is an investigation of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning. This research expands on prior knowledge of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning in order to develop greater conceptual clarity of this phenomenon. In addition to exploring past research on this concept, I present my study of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning and the conditions that support its development in four New South Wales government schools. The study thus advances both conceptual and methodological knowledge in understanding how teachers' collective responsibility develops at the school level.

Defining the field of literature related to teachers' collective responsibility is both intriguing and elusive as it traverses both sociological and psychological aspects of teaching. The academic research that is theoretically related to teachers' collective responsibility for student learning is reviewed. Five major but interconnected discourses: professional community; professional development; relational trust; accountability; and efficacy are derived from the literature as a framework against which to map the terrain of this seemingly complex phenomenon.

My study uses a mixed methods approach to analyse data from a survey and teacher interviews to explore the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning. A survey was used to measure professional community, satisfaction with professional development related to the school's goals, efficacy, collective responsibility and teacher-to-teacher trust in each of the four case study sites. On-site individual and group interviews with teachers were also conducted in each school to explore in depth cultural, social, and educational perspectives for the development of collective responsibility.

Results from the study provide clear evidence that collective responsibility is positively correlated to such organisational features in a school as the coherence between professional learning programs and the school's learning goals, teachers'

commitment to enact those shared goals and teacher-to-teacher trust. In addition, I found that teachers' collective struggle to address pressing issues for teaching and learning, and pedagogical leadership, when embedded in the organisational capacity of a school, form a complex and dynamic set of factors influencing the development of collective responsibility.

Drawing together these important findings, I propose a five dimensional model to describe the development of teachers' collective responsibility at the school level. The five dimensions - professional development, collective struggle, professional community, relational trust and pedagogical leadership - are presented as a continuum of micro-political conditions interacting at the school level. This model offers new insights into the complexity of collective responsibility as a multi-dimensional phenomenon.

The proposed model has implications for organising and resourcing professional learning at both system and school levels when the focus of those resources is to improve the quality of teaching and student achievement. These findings are also relevant to further research on collective responsibility in providing guidance to teachers, school leaders and school communities in constructing positive environments for whole school, large scale improvements to enhance student achievement.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR STUDENT LEARNING

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The research reported in this thesis expands on prior knowledge of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning in order to advance the conceptual and methodological understanding of this phenomenon. Throughout the educational literature the use of the term *collective responsibility* is associated with increased student achievement (Lee & Smith, 1996). Increased student achievement in terms of teachers' collective responsibility is also identified with teachers' high expectations for all students and potentially leads to more equitable distribution of learning for students from all backgrounds (Lee & Loeb, 2000; Lee & Smith, 1996). In addition, Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas & Wallace (2005) consider that collective responsibility is a characteristic of professional community creating a strong desire and shared belief that teachers work to do their best to advance all students' learning. Further, these scholars also concluded that "collective responsibility helps to sustain commitment, puts peer pressure and accountability on those who do not do their fair share, and eases isolation" (Bolam et al, 2005, p.8).

If, as the literature suggests, teachers' collective responsibility is an important attribute of a school's professional community and has benefits for student learning gains, then further investigation of what this phenomenon looks like and how it develops can make a significant advance in the scholarship in this field of educational research.

As claimed in previous research, the development of collective responsibility builds organisational capacity to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning, grows a sense of collective efficacy and encourages a greater sense of ownership for the quality of students' learning (Kruse, Louis & Bryk, 1995). These findings suggest the presence of teachers' collective responsibility is a desirable and important feature of a school community. Further, deeper understanding about teachers' collective responsibility has the potential to moderate critical issues of professional uncertainty and isolation when schools are faced with the pressing need for reform (Bolam et al, 2005). Such benefits of collective responsibility are documented in a small but important body of previous international research. However, how collective responsibility develops in a school and the resources and organisational conditions necessary for its development is a conceptual gap in the current research that warrants further investigation.

Definitions and conceptual understandings of teachers' collective responsibility are wide ranging and can be contradictory. Collective responsibility has been defined, on the one hand, as indistinguishable from personal views about efficacy, responsibility and commitment to all students' learning as an *input* to the formation of professional community (Lee & Smith, 1996). To make this point, Bolam et al (2005) conceptualised collective responsibility as one of eight key characteristics of professional community. In their model, collective responsibility has both a reciprocal influence on processes for teachers' individual and collective professional learning in the operation of a school, and on developing a shared understanding of the goals for teacher and student learning. On the other hand, collective responsibility has been described as an *outcome* of professional community, school cultural context and teacher background, including satisfaction with teachers' present teaching situation (Louis, Marks & Kruse, 1996). In addition, collective responsibility was considered to be a component of the broader concept of professional community where "teachers' actions are governed by shared norms focused on the practice and improvement of teaching and learning" (Bryk, Camburn & Louis, 1999, p.753).

More recently, collective responsibility is conceptualised in terms of reciprocal obligation and relational trust among teachers, and between teachers and school leaders (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). These ideas suggest that benefits are derived from approaching the work of teaching as a collective rather than individuals (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Kruse & Louis, 2009). As such, collective responsibility is reported to be a key characteristic of school-wide professional commitment to work together within the infrastructure of professional community in order to sustain high levels of accountability for student achievement (Bolam et al, 2005; Olivier & Hipp, 2006). These definitions and conceptual understandings are explored in more detail in Chapter 2.

While there are a small number of studies specifically focusing on the collective responsibility of teachers, I demonstrate that this phenomenon is connected to a wider body of educational literature that includes discussion of professional community, professional development, relational trust, accountability and efficacy. Analysis of this related literature contributes to greater conceptual clarity and understanding about what collective responsibility is and the conditions that support its development at the school level.

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS

In educational contexts it is reasonable to expect that an individual teacher takes responsibility for the quality of their work, is accountable for their students' learning, and makes an effort to teach well (Louis, Kruse & Bryk, 1995). At an individual teacher level, taking responsibility for student learning has been acknowledged as having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and quality of students' learning (Griffiths, Gore & Ladwig, 2006; Newmann & Associates, 1996; Newmann, Marks & Gamoran, 1996; Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, 2009). There is also evidence that the quality of the classroom teacher is the major in-school influence on student achievement (Dinham, 2008; Hattie, 2003; Hattie, 2007). Thus taking responsibility for student learning is considered an essential part of

teaching. In addition, the *Draft National Professional Standards for Teachers* (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development, and Youth Affairs (MCEEDYA, 2010, p21) names “collective responsibility” in Standard 7: *Contribute to the school and professional community* as an aspect of outstanding school leaders who demonstrate expertise in current content knowledge and pedagogy with ability to influence the quality of teaching and student learning. Furthermore, collective responsibility as an aspect of professional community is linked to effective practices of expert teachers who lead and:

Initiate activities to develop collaborative working practices to enhance student learning and wellbeing. They promote a professional culture of evidence-based innovation, experimentation, accountability and collective responsibility for student learning. (MCEEDYA, 2010, p.21)

Teachers’ collective responsibility for student learning was first identified in the school restructuring research of the 1990s as a desirable outcome of professional community (Bryk et al, 1999; Louis et al, 1996). At this time there was interest in understanding how fostering teacher collaboration could be harnessed to build shared vision and goals for schooling. At the same time, theorists were interested in understanding aspects of school organisation that worked against efforts to develop collaborative cultures in schools. Key barriers that hindered teacher collaboration were identified as isolation and vulnerability (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), undervaluing the complexity and time it takes to develop professional communities (Achinstein, 2002; Grossman, Wineburg & Woolworth, 2000), and the organisational fragmentation within schools that weakens teacher and student learning (Newmann, King and Youngs, 2000).

In the next section I discuss two important aspects related to why collective responsibility matters: student achievement gains and teacher collegial relationships aimed at improving teacher quality.

Links to student achievement gains

As foreshadowed earlier, teachers' collective responsibility is an important issue because this phenomenon has been linked empirically to students' higher achievement gains and more equitable distribution of achievement in disadvantaged social groups. Lee and Smith (1996) in their evaluation of the significance of collective responsibility for student learning concluded:

Results were very consistent: achievement gains are significantly higher in schools where teachers take collective responsibility for students' academic success or failure rather than blaming students for their own failure ... Moreover, the distribution of achievement gains is more socially equitable in schools with high levels of collective responsibility for learning.

(Lee & Smith, 1996, p.103)

Importantly, these authors also found from their analysis of data collected in 1988 and 1990 as part of the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) that "schools where teachers take collective responsibility for their students' learning are not only more effective but also more equalizing environments for students' learning, where the learning of lower-[Socio Economic Status] students is similar to that of their high-SES counterparts" (Lee & Smith, 1996, p.128). This demonstrates that the organisational capacity of a school to improve students' learning and equity outcomes is influenced by the extent to which collective responsibility is a feature of the school's culture.

In another study, Lee and Loeb (2000) investigated the effects of school size and collective responsibility on teachers' attitudes and students' achievement in Chicago elementary schools. They found that "teachers' collective responsibility, as an organizational property of schools, has a positive influence on student learning" (Lee & Loeb, 2000, p.24). These findings provide an important foundation for further research into the conditions that support the development of collective responsibility for improved student learning.

Collective responsibility and student learning have also been linked to teachers' participation in professional communities where participants take joint responsibility for monitoring the quality of instruction, pedagogy and student learning. There is evidence in the research that collective responsibility extends to increased assistance between teachers in designing instruction, and taking on additional responsibilities to facilitate collaboration with colleagues which in turn creates opportunities for student learning (Kruse et al, 1995). Such actions may occur within the organisational activities for professional development when teachers engage in collaborative dialogue about the quality of the school's programs and practices, the quality of assessment tasks and strategies for assessing student performance. This type of collegiality is more than seeking casual assistance from another colleague. It is organised, purposeful and built into the organisational capacity of a school.

Links to collegiality

Another reason that collective responsibility matters is for the development of collegiality. In this way, collective responsibility has been described as being reliant on the establishment of cultural norms emerging from group attitudes about the consistency and quality of teaching across classrooms within a school. For example:

When collegial relations are at their strongest, teachers are professionally interdependent and conceive of their work as a joint enterprise. Instruction becomes more than the endeavours of individual teachers in professionally isolated classrooms, emerging as a collective enterprise in which teachers strive together toward common goals for student learning. In instances in which professional interdependence is strong, teachers pay attention to the overall performance of the school as well as their own efficacy.

(Louis et al, 1996, p.764)

Collective responsibility among teachers to achieve a shared purpose for student learning is considered a resource for school reform and organisational change. It is linked to teachers' engagement in and value placed on professional development in

a culture of collaboration, openness and trust directed at achieving a school's goals for improvement (Newmann et al, 2000). Similarly, collective responsibility is likely to be present when collegial learning experiences are organised around the goals and priorities for reform, where the school community determines the core purposes for teacher collaboration so that "teachers actively, collaboratively, and systematically seek answers to their own dilemmas of practice" (Wood, 2006, p.709).

Further, some studies indicate that there is a strong relationship between professional community and teachers' beliefs about their responsibility for student learning (Lee & Smith, 1996; Louis et al, 1996). There is wide recognition that systemic efforts to reform the social organisation of schools have been impeded by the isolating nature of teachers' work practices that are structured around individual teacher accountability. According to Valli, Croninger and Walters (2007), where teachers are held individually accountable for the success of their students there is little incentive for teachers to develop shared goals or collaboratively plan, teach and assess student learning using shared resources.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite its importance, prior research in defining and measuring collective responsibility and how it develops provides limited insights. *Collective responsibility* is a term referred to in the literature without consistency of definition, measurement or clear understanding of the benefits for teachers, schools and systems. While there is widespread reference to collective responsibility, to date, research about what collective responsibility looks like, how it develops within a school community, and what impact it has on teachers and their work is scarce in the educational literature.

Definitional issues

There is a tendency for education theorists and systems to adopt the term *collective responsibility* as a desirable attribute for, or outcome of, the organisation of teachers' work, without describing the complexities of how it develops or what it looks like in school communities. Like many other terms in education,

(professionalism, reflective teaching, engagement to name a few) collective responsibility has been used for multiple purposes and without clarity or consensus around its meaning.

A lack of clarity in the way the term collective responsibility is used is, in part, due to the limited depth of evidence reported in the prior research. To date, this evidence has been primarily drawn from quantitative analysis of large national data sets not explicitly designed to measure collective responsibility. The data sets available at the time were derived by clustering a number of different items together as an overall indicator of collective responsibility.

Methodological issues in prior studies

Linked to definitional problems outlined above, are a number of methodological issues in the way collective responsibility has been measured. Previous scales used to measure collective responsibility included individual teacher beliefs about: their efficacy as agents of effective instruction; their students' capacity for successful learning; the degree of control they have over school-based issues, such as how the curriculum is taught and how students are disciplined; and the influence of non-school factors related to, for example, student drug use (National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988). Using this data, individual scores are aggregated to give a collective measure of teacher behaviour and beliefs (see Lee & Smith, 1996). This approach limited the investigation of collective responsibility, as a group phenomenon, to an aggregation of items measuring individual teacher responsibility.

The measure used for collective responsibility in Lee and Smith's (1996) study was based on aggregating individual teacher responsibility scores. With no previous measure available to inform their research, Lee and Smith identified features of teacher responsibility to develop a composite of items drawn from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS, 1988) database. These items measured teachers' effort and sense of efficacy attributed to school rather than non-school factors. The composite measure of collective responsibility included several related

ideas: “teachers’ internalizing responsibility for the learning of their students, rather than attributing learning difficulties to weak students or deficient home lives; a belief that teachers can teach all students; willingness to alter teaching methods in response to students’ difficulties and success; and feelings of efficacy in teaching” (p.114). By adopting the NELS items for their study, Lee and Smith (1996) acknowledged the imperfections of using aggregates of individual measures to calculate a collective measure. They concluded:

Aggregates of individuals’ attitudes are only imperfect indicators of collective attitudes. In this case, an aggregated measure of teachers’ responsibility for learning would not include the notion of teachers’ assuming responsibility for colleagues’ students.

(Lee & Smith, 1996, p.110)

Similarly, the methodological issues and dilemmas confronting Lee and Smith (1996) were noted in the research on collective efficacy by Goddard, Hoy and Hoy (2004). Their research was contextualised within social cognitive theory to argue that the choices teachers make in their teaching practices are strongly related to their efficacy beliefs. In my view, measuring collective responsibility as an aggregation of behaviours that describe individual teacher responsibility oversimplifies a complex phenomenon comprising multidimensional aspects of professional interactions, relationships and behaviours.

Later research on collective responsibility called for broader measures to include group behaviours or attitudes related to trust, collaboration and mutual respect, as conceptualised by Bryk and Schneider (2002) and Halverson (2006). Still more recently Kruse and Louis (2009) defined collective responsibility as a community where “all members feel accountable for all students” (p.8). They conceived that collective responsibility occurs within professional community tied to organisational learning and trust reported in the literature as cultural features of a school that influence student learning.

The small number of international research studies since the phenomenon of collective responsibility was reported in any detail (Bolam et al, 2005; Lee & Loeb, 2000; Lee & Smith, 1996; Louis et al, 1996) and the cursory references in more recent literature (Halverson, 2006; Lavie, 2006; Wood, 2006) suggest that this phenomenon is difficult to define and measure. In addition, international research on collective responsibility has not been extended to in-depth school case studies documenting how collective responsibility for student learning does or does not develop in schools. The richness that can come from case study is critical in teasing out some of the confusion currently surrounding the theoretical discourse related to collective responsibility. To investigate the apparently complex nature of collective responsibility, a multidimensional approach to the question of how collective responsibility develops in a school is required.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Given the importance of this topic and the limitations of existing research my question is: *What does teachers' collective responsibility for student learning look like and what are the conditions that support or hinder the extent of its development within a school context?*

My investigation of what collective responsibility looks like in a school and the conditions that support or hinder the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning at a school level is situated within the professional and social context of public schools in New South Wales (NSW). Teachers' professional and personal interactions are the building blocks for developing common understanding and shared goals for student learning. The organisational structure of schools, where students progress from one primary grade to the next or from one secondary subject or teacher to another, create a context in which teachers rely on the efforts and capacity of their colleagues to develop students' prerequisite knowledge and skills to meet the demands of the next stage of learning.

On one level, teachers' acceptance of accountability to deliver grade-appropriate curricula relies on a norm of generalised reciprocity "grounded in common understandings about such matters as what students should learn, how instruction should be conducted, and how teachers and students should behave" (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p.30). At a deeper level accountability and collective responsibility are closely linked. Kruse et al (1995) label this connection "collective obligation for performance" (p.27) which suggests that all teachers have a responsibility to contribute to the achievement of all students in the school.

In sum, the school's organisational structure and teachers' professional and personal interactions and accountability, have important consequences for how teachers as a group develop a sense of collective responsibility to each other as professionals and for their students' learning. Therefore, the underlying theories, related discourses and methodologies that inform a deeper understanding of the conditions that promote such behaviour, attitudes and practices are central considerations for my study.

The scope of the study focuses on teachers' collective responsibility and as such is interested in gathering data from teachers that deepens the current understanding of how collective responsibility develops in a school. Given this definitional context the study does not include student, parent or community perspectives on collective responsibility.

THEORETICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL CONTEXT FOR STUDYING COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

My study uses naturalistic inquiry to investigate how teachers work together and interact within the organisational context of a school. Naturalistic inquiry proceeds from the premise that the contextual nature of collective responsibility is best studied in the natural setting in which it occurs. Situating my study in this context is

crucial to describing the mutually shaping influences and multiple perspectives of a complex phenomenon like collective responsibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The social organisation of teachers' interactions outside the classroom has been reported as being most effective when organised to support the joint enterprise of teaching. Characteristics of such joint enterprise have been described in previous research as group practices that are founded on shared norms and visions for improving student achievement, built on qualities of openness, trust and mutual support (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Grossman et al, 2000; Hoy, Smith & Sweetland, 2002; Louis et al, 1996). Teachers' collective responsibility for student learning has been attributed to such practices emerging in schools where teachers engage in the collaborative work of organisational reform with a focus on improving the quality of teaching.

Pedagogical context for the study: *Quality Teaching in NSW public schools*

At the time my research was conducted (2005-2009), public schools in New South Wales (NSW) were trialling a model of pedagogy, known as Quality Teaching, in response to a system-wide reform effort by the NSW Department of Education and Training (NSWDET) to improve the standard of classroom instruction and assessment practice¹. While the implementation of Quality Teaching was not a mandated policy for NSW schools, a focus on pedagogy to improve teaching has been a system priority for professional learning since 2004.

Quality Teaching has been a major systemic initiative in NSW public schools. Since 2003, implementation of the model in teaching and assessment practice has the potential to provide teachers with a common language to discuss their teaching and to plan instruction that improves the standard of intellectual challenge and student engagement. This model also has equity implications for the design of classroom and

¹ The Quality Teaching model was developed by James Ladwig and Jennifer Gore in association with the NSWDET in 2003. This model built on the replication of previous research on *Authentic Pedagogy* (Newmann & Associates, 1996) and on *Productive Pedagogy* developed for the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS, 2001).

assessment practices in schools with low socio-economic levels and other educationally disadvantaged groups.

Quality Teaching, which is based on three dimensions - Intellectual Quality, Quality Learning Environment and Significance - each with six elements (see Appendix A):

Focuses teachers' attention on the depth evident in what students are learning, the extent to which classrooms are truly positive environments which support student learning, and the extent to which learning experiences provided for students have meaning beyond doing school work for the sake of getting through school.

(Griffiths et al, 2006, p.11)

The implementation of Quality Teaching was supported by the publication of support materials² designed to engage teachers in substantial and collaborative professional development. The materials included a range of strategies and resources to support teachers' initial engagement with the model (videotaped lessons and sample assessment tasks) and a coding framework for each of the elements for both classroom and assessment practice. Teachers are encouraged to use the coding framework first with the videotaped lessons and assessment tasks to engage in professional dialogue (NSWDET, 2003c & d). These resource materials aim to deepen teachers' understanding of the model.

There has also been systemic expectation that teachers would have access to professional development in how to apply new learning and understanding of the dimensions and elements of Quality Teaching in their own teaching (NSWDET, 2003).

² The suite of documents published by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training to support the implementation of the Quality Teaching includes:

1. Quality teaching in NSW public schools: A discussion paper
2. Annotated bibliography
3. Classroom practice guide
4. Assessment practice guide

Documents 1 and 2 can be accessed from

<http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/qualityteach/index.htm>

Documents 3 and 4 are available for purchase through the NSW Department of Education and Training.

In practice, given that the implementation of Quality Teaching was voluntary, and even though, in 2004 at the commencement of the implementation phase there were specific policy priorities and some resources allocated to support the implementation of Quality Teaching (consultancy and process materials cited in the footnote below), the capacity of schools to adopt the model was variable and implementation inconsistent from school to school. Beyond 2005 there were fewer systemic resources to sustain the focus on Quality Teaching.

Nevertheless, consideration of Quality Teaching as a context to support the development of collective responsibility in my study is important for two reasons. The first reason is the connection to prior research studies investigating collective responsibility that found links between teachers' explicit focus on the quality of teaching and efficacy beliefs that their teaching made a difference to student achievement. When groups of teachers in a school held such beliefs, as demonstrated in the study by Lee and Smith (1996), collective responsibility was found to have a positive impact on student achievement gains. The Quality Teaching model has an explicit focus on the areas of instructional effectiveness that promote high intellectual quality in the way knowledge is addressed and acquired. Such teaching requires high expectations for student engagement where teachers create authentic learning environments that connect learning to students' real world contexts.

The second reason relates to the increased likelihood that schools which committed resources and teacher professional learning time to implementing classroom and assessment practices, incorporating the elements of the Quality Teaching model, have the capacity to develop organisational practices that are more likely to support the development of collective responsibility than in schools that have not made these commitments. The links between the Quality Teaching Model and my research are further explained in Chapter 3 as criteria for selecting school sites.

Psychological and sociological paradigms of collective responsibility

The construct of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning is situated within two major theoretical paradigms, the psychological and the sociological. The psychological paradigm attends to teachers' individual beliefs and expectations, the attitudes they hold about students' capacity to learn, and perceptions of colleagues' trustworthiness that they can be relied on to share the responsibilities of teaching students in a school (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Attitudinal links between teachers' expectations and students' capacity to learn is an important consideration in the study of collective responsibility. Both Brophy (1983) and Cooper and Tom (1984) found that teachers' expectations and attitudes about their students' ability to learn influenced student achievement gains. That is, when teachers have high expectations and take personal responsibility for their students' learning, students are more engaged in the learning process and consequently learn more (Lee & Loeb, 2000). Consistent with these findings is research that shows student achievement is linked to the degree of teachers' willingness to take responsibility for the results of their teaching, regardless of the student's ability, socio-economic status or level of perceived disadvantage (Lee & Smith, 1996). In this context, studies of collective responsibility are conducted with a psychological orientation that aligns a teacher's attitude about his or her students' capacity to learn to students' prior academic performance, socio economic status and disposition.

Teachers' efficacy beliefs, their perceived control over decisions about the curriculum they teach, and belief that their efforts make worthwhile gains, are also consistent with the psychological dimension of collective responsibility reported in the educational literature. As Bryk and Schneider (2002) suggest, "unless teachers genuinely believe that they can make a difference in student learning, regardless of the difficult circumstances in which they work, change will not occur" (p.195). Understanding both the psychological nature of efficacy beliefs in affecting change and the sociological perspectives that shape the organisational structures to support teachers, as a community, to hold such efficacy beliefs inform the present study.

A number of theorists have also supported researching collective responsibility using sociological approaches that reflect the social organisation of schools. Louis et al (1995) recognised the importance of the social context of teachers' work. Instead of focusing on teachers as individual workers they suggest, "we must also consider the decisions and actions that teachers take collectively that are directed toward the improvement of the school's performance" (Louis et al, 1995, p.10). Similarly, Lee and Smith (1996) applied a sociological framework to study the effects on gains in achievement for early secondary school students where individual teachers' responsibility for the success or failure of their instruction becomes an organisational characteristic of a school. They concluded:

Teachers' willingness to take responsibility for the learning of their students would become a property of schools – an indicator of collective responsibility or a collective commitment to caring about students.

(Lee & Smith, 1996, p.110)

Whilst it is possible to identify from the literature that such sociological characteristics of teachers' work as joint enterprise, shared commitment and collaborative activity are features of collective responsibility, according to Marks and Louis (1999) these characteristics are not the norm, are difficult to create, and rarely occur in most schools they have studied. Instead, organisational fragmentation that perpetuates teacher isolation is typically embedded across grades and subject disciplines. Contrived collegiality arises from the expediency to form consensus thus avoiding investment in time and resources to share and critique aspects of pedagogical practice (Marks and Louis, 1999). These characteristics act as barriers to the development of workplace learning. Although the efficacy of workplace learning and associated learning theories are outside the scope of my study, the ways in which individuals engage collaboratively in professional learning to develop shared norms and form cohesive cultures are considered important sociological factors to examine.

OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

In Chapter 2 the narrowness of the literature related to research on the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning is described in detail. To elaborate sufficiently the conceptual understanding of the phenomenon of collective responsibility the ideas and theories represented in five relevant discourses related to teachers' collective responsibility are critically analysed. These five multilayered and interconnected discourses theoretically related to collective responsibility are identified from the broad educational literature encompassing the organisational factors that mediate teachers' work. Discourses of professional community, professional development, relational trust, accountability, and efficacy are analysed for their contribution to the development of collective responsibility. The focus and significance of each discourse are analysed and research findings from prior studies are considered for their applicability to the present study.

In Chapter 3 the rationale for the chosen methodology and methods for data collection are outlined. The research question is restated and the criteria for sample selection explained. Differences in the way theorists have previously conceptualised quantitative measures of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning are reported. As noted above, in most studies, collective responsibility has been described as an aggregate measure of individual teacher responsibility. The conceptual difficulty of measuring teacher perceptions as groups of individual teachers is explored. Alternative group measurement approaches are reviewed and propositions posed for using a broad measure of collective responsibility in my study.

Chapter 4 discusses and analyses findings from a survey of 84 teachers. Results of factor analysis and reliability of the scales are reported. Correlations between the mean variables for the whole sample are reported and conclusions drawn to inform analysis of the data captured in the teacher interviews. Relationships between collective responsibility and the sub scales derived from the factor analyses are examined and conclusions posed for factors that are significant to the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning.

In Chapter 5 I introduce four case studies, Greengate and Tall Trees primary schools, and Aran Heights and Jossey secondary schools. The contextual background for each school is outlined. An overview of the aspects of school organisation that contribute to the development of teachers' collective responsibility is presented for each case. Data from the interviews provides a snapshot of how the teachers in each school viewed the presence and development of collective responsibility. Collective struggle, teacher-to-teacher trust and pedagogical leadership are distilled as major themes arising from data analysis in Chapter 5. These themes are reported in detail in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

In Chapter 6 collective struggle as an antecedent for the development of collective responsibility is analysed. Evidence drawn from the data suggests that, in the schools studied, the growth of collective responsibility does not come without a sense of collective struggle arising from a whole school imperative for change or reform. The context of each case study highlights differences in how teachers perceive the nature of their struggle as individual or collective, and how the formation of professional community provides support for teachers' actions to raise student achievement.

Chapter 7 discusses how whole-school reform impacts on the way teachers develop relationships of trust and job satisfaction, and how these connect with the development of collective responsibility. The main findings show that the development of collective responsibility is linked to relational trust in such collaborative environments where teachers work together in supportive relationships, and where open dialogue, risk taking, experimentation, feedback and reflection are encouraged and practised. I comment on examples of how teachers form new professional relationships as they expose the vulnerability of their pedagogical practices and share the challenges of changing their teaching practices. I also draw conclusions about the extent to which these practices contribute to the development of collective responsibility in the four case study schools.

In Chapter 8 I report on the attributes of pedagogical leadership drawn from the interview data that are related to the development of collective responsibility in the

four case study schools. These attributes of pedagogical leadership include the ability to: influence collective efforts to improve teaching; communicate expectations for achieving educational goals for teacher learning and student achievement; and create program coherence. I then discuss the implications of pedagogical leadership for the development of collective responsibility.

In the final chapter, I draw together the findings from the study to propose a five dimensional model for the development of collective responsibility. The model is proposed as a continuum described by three schematic markers. The use of schematic markers crystallises the complex interplay of conditions that impact on the extent to which schools are able to develop teachers' collective responsibility for student learning in a school's culture, where school leaders actively participate in professional learning focused on a school's shared goals and vision for student and teacher learning. Limitations of the proposed model are also discussed. Suggestions for further research are proposed in terms of using the model as a theoretical framework not only for understanding how collective responsibility develops but also as a tool for wider investigation. I conclude by proposing that the results of my research contribute a number of new understandings about what it means to develop collective responsibility and what it looks like in a range of school contexts.

CHAPTER 2

MAPPING THE TERRAIN: DISCOURSES RELATED TO TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR STUDENT LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I review the broad body of literature that is theoretically related to teachers' collective responsibility for student learning. As mentioned in Chapter 1, I acknowledge that the field of literature specifically addressing the phenomenon of collective responsibility is limited to a small number of empirical studies emerging in the 1990s. However, this body of literature is positioned within wider research and scholarship on school restructuring and how it relates to teachers' work and students' learning. Therefore, rather than use a traditional quality screen for the selection of studies and articles for review in order to establish what is known about collective responsibility, the approach I have taken instead draws on a range of related peer reviewed and non-peer reviewed and empirical and non-empirical literature in order to demonstrate the multifaceted, integrated and complex nature of collective responsibility.

To more fully scope and review the related literature I identify five major but interconnected discourses: professional community; professional development; relational trust; accountability; and efficacy as a framework against which to map the terrain of this seemingly complex phenomenon. This approach is consistent with Bove's (1990) approach to intellectual analysis in positioning a phenomenon within a network of related theoretical concepts. I use this approach to analyse the literature within each of the five discourses to provide greater conceptual clarity where the idea of collective responsibility is linked to the discourse identified above.

I conclude this chapter with a summary of the key ideas in each of the five discourses which demonstrate the multifaceted and interconnected nature of collective responsibility for student learning. I use this summary as a framework to gauge the degree to which these conditions exist in each school and are linked to the level of collective responsibility in the case studies.

RATIONALE FOR A MULTIPLE DISCOURSE APPROACH

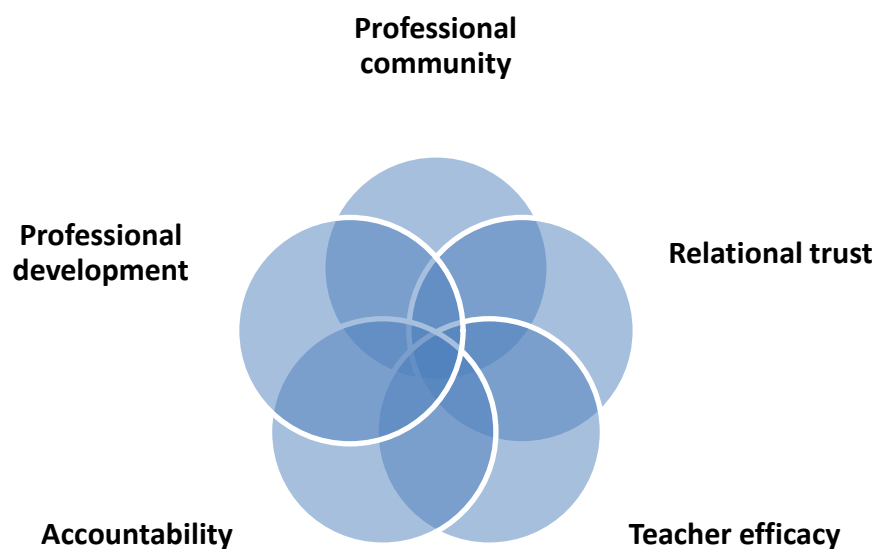
Analysis of socially constructed, multifaceted and complex concepts reported in related academic literature is consistent with Bove's (1990) approach to discourse: "to understand the new sense of 'discourse', one must try to position it, to see it in its own terms, to describe its place within a network of other analytical and theoretical concepts" (p.54). In this way, a critical understanding of the contribution of the related literature can be identified by separating seemingly interconnected conceptual ideas to gain a clearer understanding of the nature of the phenomenon (Lavie, 2006). Given the small but important body of research specifically addressing teachers' collective responsibility, I critically analyse a broader field of literature where the ideas related to collective responsibility converge. Therefore, I propose that collective responsibility can to be examined in relation to five interrelated discourses that emerge in the broad literature addressing this phenomenon.

Five major connections with other areas of research are identified from the core studies on collective responsibility described briefly below and identified in Figure 2.1:

- **professional community** that connects professional interdependence with joint problem solving through reflective dialogue and peer collaboration (Bolam et al, 2005; Bryk et al, 1999; Kruse et al, 1995);
- **professional development** that encompasses processes, activities and experiences that take explicit account of teacher and student learning needs (Bryk et al, 1999; Kruse et al, 1995; Wood, 2006);

- **relational trust** that emphasises the interconnectivity of mutual trust, respect and commitment (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Geist & Hoy, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, 2001);
- **accountability** that depicts teachers' moral purpose and obligation for student learning (Cotter, 2007; Kruse et al, 1995; Kruse & Louis, 2009); and
- **efficacy** that takes into account teacher beliefs about their effectiveness to make a difference to student achievement (Lee & Smith, 1996; Goddard et al, 2004).

Figure 2.1: Five interrelated discourses related to Collective Responsibility



I propose that analysing the literature related to collective responsibility in terms of these five broad areas helps to unravel the multifaceted and interconnected nature of collective responsibility. I discuss the contribution and limitations of these five discourses to theorise more concisely the parameters for investigating collective responsibility in my study.

In the next section, I frame the analysis of the related literature by first considering each discourse in the context of its theoretical relationship with and contribution to the research on how school communities can develop teachers' collective responsibility. Next I examine the definitional approaches within each of the five

discourses to inform how collective responsibility can be defined and measured in my study. Then limitations, benefits and/or tensions within each discourse are elicited from the relevant literature. Last, and where relevant, I examine leadership in the context of the connection between the discourse and collective responsibility.

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

Links to collective responsibility

Professional community in the literature reviewed in this chapter is broadly defined as the professional relationships and actions people take to advance the goals of schooling. Largely this relationship is described as occurring within school cultures that are based on shared norms and values, reflective dialogue, public practice and collaboration (Bolam et al, 2005; Louis & Kruse, 1995). Professional community is connected to collective responsibility in the way teachers' joint efforts develop a shared understanding for and commitment to improving practice in order to benefit all students. The formation of strong professional community occurs where teachers work together to deprivatise classroom practice in order to gain greater consistency in the quality of their teaching (Grossman et al, 2000). Teacher collaboration can lead to sharing expertise and a shared understanding of what matters for the goals of teaching (Lavie, 2006; Louis et al, 1996). These core practices are described as culminating "in a collective sense of responsibility for school operations and improvement" (Bryk et al, 1999, p.755).

A justification for describing collective responsibility as a contextual feature of strong professional community is provided by Kruse and Louis (2009) who succinctly state the connection as:

The essence of professional community is that all adults in a school are presented with the opportunity to work with others to grow and change – and that meaningful and sustained connections are necessary for that to occur. This occurs when teachers take collective responsibility for improving student learning. (p.8)

Seemingly collective responsibility is more likely to develop when core practices such as engaging in reflective dialogue and collaboration on issues of teaching are enacted by the majority of staff as a demonstration of their shared values and high expectations for student learning.

Lee and Smith (1996) also identified strong connections between collective responsibility and the characteristics of professional community; namely, deprivatised practice and increased collaboration among teachers across subject disciplines. While acknowledging that the effects of teacher collaboration, as measured in their study, were modest, Lee and Smith (1996) found that “schools with high levels of cooperative and supportive activity among the staff are places where students learn more in some subject areas, and where learning is somewhat less stratified by social class” (p.131). They linked this empirical finding to the social organisation of schools where teachers interact as a professional community, focused on gains for student learning and social equity. Such gains, they argue, result from teachers taking collective responsibility for student learning.

Similarly, Wood (2006) found that connecting teacher learning through professional community was a desirable and effective practice for developing collective responsibility for student learning. However, Wood (2006) qualifies the likely impact of professional community on building collective responsibility given that:

Teachers are more likely to be rewarded for compliance and conformity than for critical dialog (sic), inquiry, and innovation. It is a particularly difficult agenda to forge given the socialization toward compliance most teachers experience in their workplaces and the current press for accountability.

(Wood, 2006, p.709)

Grossman, Wineburg and Woolworth’s (2000) model for the formation of teacher professional community provides some insight into the development of teachers’ collective responsibility as a group phenomenon. Their model has four dimensions:

(1) formation of group identity and norms of interaction; (2) understanding difference/navigating fault lines; (3) negotiating tension; and (4) taking communal responsibility for individuals' growth. These four dimensions point to a necessity for teachers to find a common language with which to create a collective vision for their work.

Grossman et al (2000) further argue that as professional community develops there is a willingness to take greater communal responsibility for group behaviour. Developing a group identity enriched by openness to multiple perspectives and dealing with conflict openly and honestly is linked to what Lee and Smith (1996) identified as critical aspects for the development of responsibility and commitment to colleagues' growth. These ideas provide a useful and important contribution to the analysis of interview data reported in later chapters.

Defining professional community

Professional community in the literature variously refers to the actions of teachers who have the capacity to generate a group identity based on shared values about teaching and student learning that foster professional growth and interdependence (Achinstein, 2002; Bolam et al, 2005; Preskill & Torres, 1999). In a three year study conducted in a range of school settings, Bolam et al (2005) identified collective responsibility for students' learning as one of eight key characteristics of effective professional community³. As a key characteristic, collective responsibility was described as being multilayered in terms of which teachers share responsibility for groups of students. Collective responsibility was also described in this study as comprising a shared ethos for students' progress and success, and was associated with a high level of shared values, vision and accountability for day-to-day teaching. In this sense a professional community acts as:

*a social system of knowledge production and exchange
among a group that shares a field of practice in which it has*

³ The eight characteristics in Bolam et al's (2005) model of effective professional community are shared values and vision; collective responsibility for pupils' learning; collaboration focused on learning; individual and collective professional learning; reflective professional enquiry; openness, networks and partnerships; inclusive membership; and mutual trust, respect and support.

expertise and about which it interacts, seeking to improve the way things are done.

(Aubusson, Ewing & Hoban, 2009, p.59)

When professional community evolves from school restructuring, related activities usually include a focus on joint problem solving. In this discourse, professional communities are valued as “key agents in shaping teachers’ norms and knowledge and in sustaining change” (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1999, p.381).

According to Gamoran, Gunter and Williams (2005), the formation of strong professional communities is typified as teachers:

- learning from each other by identifying and holding a common purpose; sharing decision making through distributed leadership
- taking collective action that is supported with resources;
- paying attention to both professional and emotional needs for learning; and
- focusing on learning through reflection, inquiry, experimentation and reading.

In addition, having time to openly discuss, experiment with and refine new ideas and ways of teaching are suggested as important practices for forming and sustaining professional communities (Achinstein, 2002; Ben-Peretz & Schonmann, 1998; Bolam et al, 2005; Jackson, 2006).

Not surprisingly, all attributes of professional community may not be present at the one time. As Grossman et al (2000) found in their intervention study of two secondary school faculties, providing time and resources for teachers to engage in critical dialogue created a disruption to the privacy which concealed conflicting views and shielded both weaknesses and strengths from collegial gaze. Teachers were challenged by new forms of social and intellectual interactions for which they initially were unprepared. This was attributed to the conflict and vigorous differences in epistemology that were unveiled.

As a concept, professional community has become synonymous with a multiplicity of forms of professional learning where a group of teachers is involved. A number of

researchers similarly raise concern about the lack of conceptual discrimination in the use of the term “professional community” (Fielding, 1999; Hargreaves, 1991; Little, 1990; McLaughlin, 1987). Dinham (2008) suggests that the range in which organisations form and reform sub and cross-functional groups makes defining a professional community problematic. “Community” within this discourse can be rather tenuous as:

The word community is at risk of losing its meaning. From the prevalence of terms such as ‘community of learners’, ‘discourse communities’, and ‘learning communities’ to ‘school community’, or ‘communities of practice’, it is clear that community has become an obligatory appendage to every educational innovation.

(Grossman et al, 2000, p.6)

Grossman et al (2000), in their attempt to better understand the complexities related to the formation of professional relationships, interrogate the characteristics of a professional community. In their empirical work they establish a deep conceptual connection between a growing sense of community and a growing sense of collective moral purpose.

Thus the discourse of professional community commonly includes the notion of teachers working together (Bolam et al, 2005; Grossman et al, 2000). This notion can be elusive because of the possibility of falsely attributing the presence of professional community where teachers are simply working in groups and the prevailing culture of habits, assumptions and beliefs that, over time, are not challenged or questioned (Hargreaves, 1991).

Two further critical aspects defining community in terms of group behaviour are the distinctions between individual and collective (Lavie, 2006), and collegiality and collaboration (Fielding, 1999). These two definitional dilemmas are noted by Lavie (2006) and discussed below.

First, the conceptual vagueness of the term community can be attributed to the subjectivity of the experience of being in a community. “Sharing technical knowledge, a responsibility for learning, and a commitment to serving the needs of students” (Lavie, 2006, p.784) are suggested as distinguishing features that conceptualise the collective nature of professional community. Lavie (2006) portrays teachers’ engagement in joint decision making, and their willingness to share expertise and open their classroom doors to peer critique as “the antithesis of teacher individualism” (p.784). In contrast, individualism is more likely to be linked with self-protection, resistance to change, balkanisation and taken-for-granted loyalties (Fielding, 1999; Hargraves, 1991).

The second definitional dilemma relates to previous conceptual understandings of ‘community’ contested by Fielding (1999), who challenges the inter-changeability of the terms ‘collaboration’ and ‘collegiality’. In his view:

Collaboration remains a form of individualism because it is, or could be, rooted in self-interest: collaboration is, in effect, a plural form of individualism. In contrast, collegiality is both communal in its ontology and other-regarding in its centre of interpersonal attention: collegiality’s conceptual preferences valorise individuality over individualism and community over contract.

(Fielding, 1999, p.6)

Fielding’s (1999) distinction between collaboration and collegiality is an important contribution for identifying the rhetoric surrounding professional community that is so often used to describe a wide range of situations where teachers work together as a group of individuals focused on school improvement goals. Such rhetoric surrounds the connection of professional community with seemingly desirable goals of nurturing consensus, shared values and social cohesion. At the core of these arguments is the claim that professional communities grow from the demands of ongoing negotiation, regulation and social interaction between individuals as they

come together to broker innovation and to surface and resolve conflict (Grossman et al, 2000).

Professional community discourse emphasises that genuine communities are not safe havens for inaction, free from critique or challenge. Rather, members “must believe in their right to express themselves honestly, without fear of censure or ridicule” (Grossman et al, 2000, p.38). In the next section I examine a critical set of characteristics for professional communities and a contrasting interplay of teacher collaboration and isolation as critical factors in the development of collective responsibility.

Characteristics of professional communities

The field of literature on professional community agrees that the key characteristics of a professional community, related to teachers’ collective responsibility for student learning, include the growth of professional interdependence, sharing expertise, engaging in critical reflection, negotiating conflict, democratic decision making and building organisational capacity. How these key characteristics are related to collective responsibility is discussed below.

Embedded in the discourse on professional community is the idea that the **growth of professional interdependence** arises from teachers jointly addressing educational problems by sharing what works, as well as what does not. The argument that professional interdependence is linked to collective responsibility is related to teachers’ focus on a learning orientation that empowers sharing within and across networks of schools for the common good, rather than individualistic or competitive gain (Jackson, 2006).

A second characteristic of professional community is related to teacher learning that supports the **development and sharing of technical expertise** directed towards the professional community’s goals for change. Gamoran et al (2005) conclude that teacher learning “may be enhanced and supported by the presence of like-minded colleagues engaged in a common enterprise” (p.112), where powerful ideas are

created and exchanged within a supportive collegial culture. By association a similar willingness to share technical expertise developed within a collaborative culture is reflected in the literature on collective responsibility reported earlier in this chapter. Processes for **reflection**, where teachers share and critique instructional practice, represent a third characteristic of professional community related to collective responsibility. Professional learning that supports the development of professional community is described in the literature in terms of teachers jointly engaging in critical examination of and reflection on their work. Kruse et al (1995) write about reflective dialogue as a rich forum to develop shared norms and core values of teaching communities that are capable of generating high standards of practice. When reflection is involved, it is a powerful source of group collaboration as teachers engage in cycles of critiquing their ideas and practices. Ideas are also expanded and others' perspectives embraced by "uncovering competing ideologies and interests" (Achinstein, 2002, p.426). In turn, critical reflection encourages teachers to invite and search for dissenting views and disagreement. Professional communities are therefore made up of individuals who "are mindful about how they express dissent and negotiate disagreement" (Grossman et al, 2000, p.9).

A fourth characteristic of professional community is individual differences that lead to **conflict** which are harnessed as productive contexts for the development of professional community. Associated with the notion of conflict is a desire to change, supported by a culture of collaboration (Achinstein, 2002; Grossman et al, 2000; Little, 2003). In contrast, where the culture requires conforming to a strict set of norms, the process of community formation is at risk, a possible result being to impede change processes. In this case, teachers are more likely to band together to resist change, rather than mobilise their efforts to support change (Gamoran et al, 2005).

Associated with negotiating conflict, is a fifth characteristic of professional community, the presence or absence of **democratic values** and processes that become a foundation for school **decision making** (Marks & Kruse, 1998). Where democratic values are present, teachers are empowered to engage in "critical

reflection to bring about meaningful changes and transform educational praxis into forms of collective praxis” (Lavie, 2006, p.786).

Lastly, **building organisational capacity** to support change is a sixth characteristic of professional community related to collective responsibility. Where teachers reconceptualise their work and systematically exchange ideas in seeking answers to teaching dilemmas, they undergo intellectual renewal. Related concepts include open dialogue that equips teachers with a wider set of ideas and strategies as part of their professional growth (Marks & Louis, 1999; Wood, 2006). Furthermore, Bolam et al (2005) identified such practices for building organisational capacity as factors to sustain an effective professional community. These include the provision of resources, and structures, that facilitate individual and collective learning focused on student achievement. They concluded that “the idea of a professional learning community is one well worth pursuing as a means of promoting school and system-wide capacity building for sustainable improvement and pupil learning” (Bolam et al, 2005, p.145).

In analysing the literature around a prescribed set of characteristics related to collective responsibility there is the danger of romanticising the effort, resources and commitment required to establish strong and sustained professional communities. According to Bolam et al (2005), the formation of community can disrupt the social and organisational norms that may encompass a school’s culture developed over a considerable period of time. In other words:

Professional community presents many threats to the current work of the school. It asks school personnel to work in new ways, to form closer and more collaborative working relationships and networks; it requires a new and more pervasive infrastructure including serious rethinking of the use of time in schools; it presents a paradox of more responsibility and collective action on the one hand versus a loss of independence on the other.

(Shaw, 1999, p.151)

Further, professional communities, built on tenuous foundations are in danger of being “temporary illusions of safety” (Ennis & McCauley, 2002, p.170) where “the formation and maintenance of such communities are said to be rare” (Aubusson, Ewing & Hoban, 2009). Taken together these views suggest professional communities are not easy to create or sustain and so by extension, if collective responsibility is linked to professional community, then it is also likely to be difficult to develop.

Tensions in the formation of a professional community

The discourse of professional community compares the reality of teacher isolation and the necessity of teacher collaboration for the formation of professional communities. Tension exists between the imperatives to form professional community and a tendency for teachers to work in isolation. As Grossman et al (2000) explain:

Within professional community, the collective learning of the group is necessary but not sufficient. In the existing structure of schooling, teachers return to their respective classrooms individually, not collectively. Given the reality of schooling and the likelihood that it will persist into the foreseeable future, the collective must serve as a training ground for individuals to think in new ways, to learn to listen for and try out new ways of knowing. (p.33)

Forming a professional community requires modifying the way teachers interact and work which poses challenges as well as opportunities for teacher collaboration. In practice, school communities are composed of heterogeneous cultures where diverse opinions and beliefs are held by members of those groups. Teacher collaboration can both surface tensions and accommodate diverse opinion. A strong professional community can address difference by valuing inclusion, dealing openly with conflict, and respecting diverse perspectives through critical reflection (Gamoran et al, 2005; Grossman et al, 2000; Lavie, 2006).

Engagement in collaboration requires exposing the micro-politics of power, influence, control and conflict in a school struggling to develop a professional community (Achinstein, 2002; King, 2002). As such:

Conflict can be an event whereby individuals or groups clash, in which divergent beliefs and actions are exposed. It is also a process whereby individuals or groups come to sense that there is a difference, problem, or dilemma and thus begin to identify the nature of their differences of belief or action.

(Achinstein, 2002, p.425)

In what may appear a contradictory approach to forming a professional community, taking a confrontational stance on conflict has the potential to build a strong community. It is suggested that this is because teacher engagement requires new forms of social and intellectual participation (Grossman et al, 2000). Suppressing dissenting voices increases the risk of maintaining a false sense of unity (Achinstein, 2002). Achinstein (2002) studied two school-wide urban teacher professional communities engaged in collaborative reform initiatives. Using a case study approach employing ethnographic techniques, she explored how each community addressed conflict and dealt with differences between teachers. This research highlights the critical nature of both consensus and conflict for developing and sustaining opportunities for open and reflective dialogue in the formation of professional community.

Limitations to the formation of professional community

As previously stated, assumptions that professional communities are based on shared values, social interdependence, inclusiveness and collective commitment embody the discourse on professional community. Collaboration exists in a cultural context bound in the dynamics of confrontation between individuals' values and beliefs, and the continual negotiation to attain consensus and agreement. In contrast, Lavie (2006) argues that these assumptions represent a set of idealistic visions of teacher collaboration that are "riddled with equally sounding rhetoric" (p.775). The formation of professional community is therefore limited when based

on assumptions that teachers have the social capital to interact in ways that promote collaboration.

Collaboration is associated with developing shared goals, values and beliefs held by teachers who work together in a school. The extent to which teacher collaboration becomes an effective resource for teacher learning is influenced by widely differing social, cultural and contextual factors within a school. In contrast, the heterogeneous nature of schools highlights the different debates, opinions and approaches that develop within a school community:

It seems fairly unlikely that consensus on values, visions, and beliefs could be easily attained – or even desirable. If teachers are to get involved in collaborative processes they are not used to, and take part in dynamics that confront them with beliefs and positions that have thus far been held in private, it seems wise to expect that these processes will be built on the basis of initial disagreements and continuous negotiation of divergent approaches.

(Lavie, 2006, p.793)

Lavie concludes that teacher collaboration is multifaceted and that there is as much to investigate about teacher isolation as there is about the “romance of teams” (Lavie, 2006, p.774).

Again a school’s capacity to manage such tensions and the changes required to the dynamics of social interactions highlight tensions that can contribute productively to deepen teachers’ social interactions or alternatively, can undermine whole school change efforts to develop strong professional communities. A further limitation to the formation of professional community is apparent where teachers work in professional or geographical isolation, some by choice and others by organisational design, and do not have access to the type of professional social interaction necessary to form community. In a range of settings, teachers’ autonomy may also be perpetuated by the limiting design of school buildings and classrooms.

Teacher isolation, lack of or resistance to collaboration, and the effects of such behaviours on the formation of professional community, are important to understand in terms of the contested nature of shared purpose and norms among teachers and how these play out in the development of collective responsibility. The investigation of teacher isolation was the subject of a body of research conducted in the 1990s to better understand the cultural and social norms that impact on teaching practices (Bowring-Carr & West Burnham, 1997; Grossman et al, 2000; Huberman, 1993, Talbert & MacLaughlin, 2002). Based on extensive ethnographic research of individual North American teachers' practice, Huberman (1993) concluded that, in general, the individual teacher works in an isolated and context-sensitive environment. It was found that the dominance of subject integrity in curriculum delivery, the balkanisation of faculties in secondary schools, the delivery of curriculum in closed classrooms, and the lack of traditional collegiality can all contribute to teacher isolation (Bowring-Carr & West Burnham, 1997; Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS), 2001; Talbert & McLaughlin, 2002). Such obstacles to the formation of professional communities can also threaten teachers' willingness to take responsibility for their colleagues' professional growth, as well as their commitment to improving their own teaching and resulting impact on student learning (Grossman et al, 2000).

Structural arrangements for professional learning can permeate the dominant ways teachers engage in individual learning when faced with systemic and imposed change. Accordingly embedded cultures threaten the pursuit of professional communities. They represent an inherent tension in the organisation of teachers' workplaces and how teachers interact and engage with matters of teaching and the serious business of professional development. In other words:

The extent to which professional development is structured as an individual or collaborative activity, the extent to which it fosters professional inquiry, and the extent to which it promotes teacher influence in the school all affect professional community.

(Newmann et al, 2000, p. 264)

In considering the intersection between professional community, professional learning and collective responsibility a deeper examination is required of professional development and the activities that bring teachers together to focus on solving the problems of teaching.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Links to collective responsibility

The relationship between professional development and collective responsibility is found in the strong evidence in the literature showing that collaboration and inquiry are linked to the development of values that collectively shape teachers' practices and expectations for student learning. In this section, to develop conceptual understanding of collective responsibility I examine how professional development is framed by various attempts to define it, particularly in its relationship to professional community.

The collaborative nature of professional development has a role in creating and sustaining forms of inquiry that are linked to the development of collective responsibility. King (2002) makes an explicit link between professional development that promotes schoolwide inquiry and professional community by highlighting that "although teachers can engage in careful inquiry about their individual practice, inquiry as a *collaborative activity* among teachers at a school is what contributes to professional community" (p.244). Further, Newmann et al (2000) found teachers' collaborative engagement in dialogue around the scrutiny of their practice and its impact on student learning creates the capacity for teachers to learn from each other. At the same time teachers' engagement in these processes acts to break down the traditional barriers of isolation.

The organisational capacity of a school⁴ that advances student achievement through teacher learning situates professional development within a context of professional community. The extent to which professional development addresses aspects of a school's organisational capacity to bring about student achievement gains has been linked to collaboration and collective responsibility among staff. As Newmann et al (2000) explain "professional development is likely to advance achievement of all students in a school if it addresses not only the learning of individual teachers but also other dimensions of the organizational capacity of the school" (p.260). Accordingly, teachers' engagement in professional development influences a school's capacity to engage in critical and complex investigation of values, beliefs, practices and theories. When enacted as collective inquiry schools can "collectively confront issues in a systematic and continuous way" (King, 2002, p.244).

Defining professional development

Much of the discourse on professional development is focused on defining the boundaries of what constitutes effective professional development and identifying its shortcomings when it fails to lead to improvements in teaching and student learning. A national project commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) mapped the nature, purpose and provision of systemic and school initiated professional development in Australia. The report of the project, *PD 2000 Australia: A National Mapping of School Teacher Professional Development* (McRae, Ainsworth, Groves, Rowland & Zbar, 2001), noted the difficulty in defining the boundaries of what comprises professional development activity:

Some teachers argue cogently that most of the things they do entail professional development of one sort or another. They think constantly about their work and ways in which its effectiveness could be improved; they talk about these matters with their colleagues and trial and assess new ways of working as a matter of course ... In addition, some modes

⁴ School organisational capacity is defined by Newmann, King and Youngs (2000) as comprising teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions; professional community; technical resources; program coherence; and principal leadership.

of professional development, an increasing number and volume, are systematically interwoven with conventional job performance. Thus there is some significant difficulty in distinguishing and circumscribing professional development activity.

(McRae et al, 2001, p.1)

This description highlights the difficulty in demarcating professional development as one form of individual or social enterprise. According to Guskey (2000), professional development is a threefold process. It is intentional, beginning with a clear statement of purpose and goals; ongoing, to keep abreast of the continually expanding knowledge base; and iterative, because change is incremental.

Consequently:

Professional development is defined as those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students. In some cases, it also involves learning how to redesign educational structures and cultures.

(Guskey, 2000, p.16)

Further, Bredeson (2003) conceptualises professional development in terms of “learning opportunities that engage educators’ creative and reflective capacities in ways that strengthen their practice” (p.34). This conceptualisation of professional development assumes the transferability of new learning (knowledge, skills and attitudes). In definitional terms, both Guskey (2000) and Bredeson (2003) agree that the transfer of learning into practice is a key goal of professional development that can influence teachers to change their practices. Other researchers, however, are not as confident about the potential results of teachers’ engagement in professional development activities. These limitations and shortcomings are discussed below, but firstly the key characteristics of professional development are briefly outlined.

Characteristics of professional development

From a review of the literature, Borko (2004) conceptualised the characteristics of a professional development system in terms of four elements: the professional development program; the teachers (who are learners in the system); the facilitator (who guides the construction of new knowledge and practices); and the context in which the professional development occurs. Using a *situative*⁵ perspective to extract the design elements of professional development from prior research, Borko (2004) argues “high-quality professional development programs can help teachers deepen their knowledge and transform their teaching” (p.5). However, a qualification that needs stating is that teachers’ perceptions of what constitutes high quality professional development lie in the value they place on its benefits for practical use and advancing their professional learning.

In addition, it has been suggested that professional development is most effective when it takes place in long term relationships. The observation that effective professional development focuses on the transferability of new learning (knowledge, skills and attitudes) into practice (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1999; Flores, 2005) is as prevalent in the discourse of professional development as the critique of the failed nature of traditional one-off expert-delivered professional development (Aubusson et al, 2009; Boyle, Lamprianou & Boyle, 2004; Fullan, 2003; Lieberman, 1995). These viewpoints highlight that structures and cultures that support teachers’ professional learning are essential to successful knowledge transfer. These perspectives also acknowledge that professional development should be driven by teachers’ local, individual and collective needs and expertise. Such characteristics describe how engagement in professional development facilitates interdependency and enables teachers to transform their work from an individual to a collective enterprise.

⁵ Borko (2004) uses the term *situative* to account for both individual and socio-cultural features that characterise a constructivist approach to learning. The term draws from the disciplines of anthropology, sociology and psychology, where learning is socially organised, and results in change to both the individual’s use of knowledge, and how the group of learners develops a cultural identity.

Other empirical evidence suggests the transformation of professional development into classroom practice is unlikely to occur without support from professional community (Garet, Porter, Desimore, Birman & Yoon, 2001; Little, 2003; Spillane & Louis, 2002). That is, collaborative relationships arising from a shared vision and agreed expectations for student achievement must be present in the design of professional development for it to be effective (Lavie, 2006).

Benefits and tensions of professional development

Professional development organised around collaborative participation in critical reflection and conversations about student learning and achievement (Little, 2005) is described in the educational literature as attracting benefits for teacher learning and school capacity (Garet et al, 2001; Newmann et al, 2000). Garet, et al (2001) were interested in the effects of professional development, including on aspects of teacher collaboration, on improvement in teaching and on student outcomes. They used data from the Teacher Activity Survey (Eisenhower Professional Development Program, 1999) to examine the relationship between professional development (collective participation, content knowledge, active learning, time span and program coherence) with teacher outcomes (teachers' enhanced knowledge and skills and change in teaching practice). The benefits of collaborative professional development were thus identified as: "collective participation of groups of teachers from the same school, subject or grade is related both to coherence and active learning opportunities, which in turn are related to improvements in teacher knowledge and skills and changes in classroom practice" (p.936). The effectiveness of schools in addressing coherence for teacher professional development goes part of the way towards explaining why some schools are more successful than others in boosting student achievement (Louis et al, 1996; Newmann et al, 2000).

Critical reflection in and on practice requires considerable commitment, time, trust and openness to address sometimes highly complex problems. Working through collaborative processes that generate solutions to problems of practice requires substantial time, professional etiquette and discipline. Professional development, designed to include time and resources for reflection, requires a high level of trust

that “leads to deepened understandings of the process of instruction and of the products created within the teaching and learning process” (Bryk et al, 1999, p. 754).

Another benefit is that professional development involving critical conversations exposes personal beliefs about teaching when teachers examine the quality of instruction in relation to gaps in student achievement. Public critique of basic assumptions about teaching, in the view of Bryk et al (1999), leads teachers towards a better understanding of their own learning and abilities. These researchers advocate that professional development should focus reflective dialogue on academic content, intelligent use of generic teaching strategies, the development of students’ cognitive and social abilities, and equity and justice in the social conditions of schooling. However, Fullan and Hargreaves (1998) caution that ‘reflective practice’ is in danger of become merely rhetoric in the landscape of professional development activities. Reducing reflective activity to a single event or episode as a “quick fix” to complex educational challenges perpetuates such rhetoric.

According to Achinstein (2002), how teachers engage in reflective dialogue, debate and critique exposes the nature of group cohesion and how conflicting ideas are processed. Hence, one outcome may be exposure to conflicting ideology, while another may be the suppression of dissenting voices in favour of consensus. What is important to recognise is that:

Teachers, individually and collectively, hold values that shape their practice. The content of a teacher community’s ideology, especially as it pertains to values about education, schooling, and students does matter. These conceptions frame how school is enacted.

(Achinstein, 2002, p. 427)

In the context of reflection, Ball and Cohen (1999) pose the question: “What might it take to learn in practice, and to learn from practice?” (p.10). This research suggests that for teachers to learn in and from practice, an inquiry-based approach to teaching and professional development is required. An inquiry-based approach

privileges evidence over intuition, where data is collected systematically from multiple sources to identify or confirm issues of concern. By questioning, investigating, analysing and problematising, it is contended that “teachers must be actively learning as they teach” (Ball & Cohen, 1999, p.11).

There are three important issues arising from this argument. First, learning in practice requires teachers to simultaneously teach and analyse their practice. This explicitly explains why a strategy is effective or not (Killen, 2003). Second, the outcome of an inquiry-based approach to teaching should be the knowledge to improve teaching. Reflection reduced to isolated instances fails to manifest sustained changes in instructional practices. The capability to analyse and apply new knowledge to improve learning experiences for students is strengthened by robust and collaborative reflective processes (Aubusson et al, 2009). Third, to apply new knowledge teachers need to be risk takers, to experiment with new instructional approaches, and to gather evidence about the impact on student learning of these new strategies (Boyle et al, 2005).

Tensions

While the arguments above point to desirable and logical designs for professional development and for it to be situated in collaborative contexts, ultimately teachers can elect to act as individuals in isolation or act collectively, to address issues or problems related to teaching practice and student learning. Huberman (1993) cites a range of empirical studies that contest the assumption that “collaborative activity that occurs outside the classroom will translate automatically into instructional changes inside the classroom, even when such changes are apparently agreed on or are derived logically from inter-school interactions” (p.25). It is important to recognise that teachers can retain their individual beliefs and practices or adopt new practices, depending on their perceptions about whether a reform will make a difference, whether there is benefit to be derived from participation and if the professional development is considered worth the investment of professional time and effort (Boyle et al, 2005). Again this conception of the efficacy of professional

development aligns with Elmore's (2002) concern that there are no guarantees that professional development will impact on teaching practice.

Therefore, collaborative efforts of teachers to engage in professional development in order to improve classroom practice and student outcomes involve a tension between effort and efficacy (Garet et al, 2001; Grossman et al, 2000). Lavie (2006) explores this salient tension between collaborative efforts that problematise the aims of teaching and the effectiveness of teacher collaboration "to develop supportive relationships that empower schools to move forward in the critical stage of the reform process" (p.786). He concludes that there are a number of dilemmas related to collaborative forms of professional development that impact on its effectiveness (Lavie, 2006).

The first dilemma is the sociopolitical context of community life that nurtures the language of sameness, 'group think' and consensus which can work against reform. Second, the effectiveness of professional development is affected by the dynamic nature of schools. In terms of the evolutionary process of collaboration, school communities are subject to constant reformulation to include changes in personnel and ideas. The third problem is the tension between hierarchical and democratic structures that "can help to develop socially critical processes of change as well as perpetuate current power arrangements and the status quo" (Lavie, 2006, p. 792). Getting the balance right to realise the potential benefits of collaborative professional development so widely reported in the literature involves understanding and responding to the value orientations present in a school at any one time.

These findings have important implications for my study in that it needs to include examination of the way professional development is organised in a school, how teachers describe their participation and benefits and limitations arising from their participation.

Limitations of professional development

A number of shortcomings and limitations of professional development have been identified in the literature. Lieberman (1995) synthesised an extensive list of limitations in the way professional development has been traditionally organised which still has remarkable currency today. At the centre of these limitations is the proposition that professional development opportunities have ignored teachers' work contexts and internal expertise to generate sustainable solutions to specific needs and problems of practice (Boyle et al, 2005). Strategies for change are short term and are not matched with the necessary resources, time and knowledge generated from teachers teaching teachers. Furthermore, norms of privacy, prevalent in forms of professional development that do not pay attention to professional community, reduce the opportunities for conflict to be exposed and ideas to be publicly critiqued.

Professional development models that address these limitations have been identified as requiring three elements: a focus on changing the culture as well as its organisation (Lieberman, 1995); longer term resources to enable sustained focus on classroom practice through observation of colleagues and sharing practice (Boyle et al, 2005) and engagement in regular reflection and sharing as a community to understand and address school-related problems (Aubusson et al, 2009). Redefining professional development in these terms is claimed by Lieberman (1995) to result in expanded and positive effects on school change and classroom practice. Taken together these ideas frame the elements of effective professional development. If present in a school, such professional development has the potential to support teachers' collective responsibility for student learning.

However, these practices are not easily achieved nor is there a guarantee they automatically translate into achievement gains. In Elmore's (2002) view there is difficulty in determining what constitutes effective professional development, and if or how teachers' engagement in such activity actually results in the transformation of classroom practice. In other words, the concern is that the variability of professional development and coverage of such a vast spectrum of activities reduces

the capacity for teacher learning to transfer into instructional practice. These activities range from short-lived, “hit-and-run” workshops to implement new policy, rules or requirements, to long-term individual or group-inquiry, guided by professional standards and sustained effort. According to Elmore (2002), the assumption that effective professional development practices are widespread is simplistic. Rather, he states “the connection between professional development, as it is presently practised, and the knowledge and skill of educators is tenuous at best; its relationship to the imperative of improving instruction and student performance is, practically speaking, nonexistent” (p.6).

Newmann et al (2000) and Little (2005) also contribute to the discourse of professional development. It is argued that without professional community the extent to which teachers have opportunities to collaborate and engage in reflective dialogue with colleagues on aspects of teaching that matter for student learning is limited or worse “violates key conditions for teachers’ learning” (Newmann et al, 2000, p.259). In contrast Little (2005) makes the point that:

Robust teacher communities stand out for their relentless focus on student learning, student experience and student success; their willingness to take (and tolerate) initiative on matters of teaching practice; and the value they place on the ideas, feedback and resources they derive from ties to individuals, groups and organizations outside the school. Such communities are well positioned as sites of ongoing teacher learning – and to both seek and benefit from participation in well designed professional development.
(p.50)

The structure of professional development described by Little (2005) involves complex relationships. It requires reconceptualising teachers’ work beyond classroom management and curriculum implementation to widen their reflection on, responsibility for, and professional judgement of, quality teaching practices (Wood, 2006). The design of professional development suggested by Little (2005) and Wood

(2006) has not been typical of teachers' engagement in professional development. This further supports the view that: "highly targeted work with teachers around specific curricula and teaching practices" (Elmore, 2002, p.6), that develops teachers' knowledge and skills, is not the norm.

Professional development and leadership

Another important facet of professional development identified in the literature is the influence of educational leadership. To highlight the link between professional development, leadership and the development of collective responsibility I draw from a study conducted by Newmann et al (2000) who consider:

To improve achievement of all students in a school from one academic year to the next, teachers must exercise their individual knowledge, skills and dispositions in an integrated way to advance the collective work of the school under a set of unique conditions. The collective power of the full staff to improve student achievement schoolwide can be summarized as school capacity.

(p.261)

These researchers conceptualised a model of professional development that addressed factors and processes found to build school capacity. The inclusion of leadership in their model was based on the view that school principals not only have authority but also a primary responsibility to ensure that the technical resources for effective professional development can be accessed by the whole staff. The study found that effective leaders were influential both in shaping the school's goals and in structuring "collaboration and collective responsibility among the staff to achieve the goals" (Newmann et al, 2000, p.263).

As part of Newmann et al's (2000) study nine elementary schools were selected based on criteria that included the extent to which teachers in the school participated in structured and sustained schoolwide professional development focused on improving student achievement. From their analysis of data collected

through teacher interviews and field observations they were able to draw a number of important conclusions about the relationship between school leadership, the organisation of professional development and why some schools addressed building capacity more comprehensively than others. School leadership was found to be critical in building school capacity where the principal was effective in exerting a powerful influence on school culture and the design of professional development. In addition, where the principal secured external resources and exerted leadership to shape program coherence across an agreed set of initiatives, the school was more likely to use professional development as a comprehensive strategy for school improvement and capacity building.

This research draws attention to those approaches for professional development that are linked to school organisational capacity to bring about improvement in student learning. Leadership capacity to structure comprehensive and coherent professional development programs, and to identify a common focus for teachers' work through shared ownership and collaborative problem solving, are key factors for developing teachers' mutual trust, respect for expertise, openness and accountability (Banicky & Foss, 1999; King & Newmann, 2001; Newmann, et al, 2000). In this way the discourse of professional development highlights the centrality of relational trust for achieving productive collaborative relationships focused on school improvement.

RELATIONAL TRUST

Links to collective responsibility

The logic for the inclusion of relational trust as a discourse related to collective responsibility is that building trust between teachers leads to the development of school cultures that promote teacher collaboration. Similarly, collective responsibility is linked to the discourses of professional community and professional development where trust is a key feature in building relationships and collaboration (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Geist & Hoy, 2004; Halverson, 2006; Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Relational trust is built on a set of mutual interdependencies that includes reciprocity between teachers and teachers, and between teachers and leaders where they know their efforts and intentions are valued (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Relational trust is voluntary and requires the suspension of power roles and judgement when implementing reform initiatives and new practices aimed at improvement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Ennis & McCauley, 2002). Similarly, collective responsibility depends on developing a sense of communal trust to take greater initiative and ownership in collective efforts to improve the effectiveness of the school and to develop shared leadership roles and high expectations for all students (Kruse & Louis, 2009).

Defining relational trust

Relational trust is underpinned by teachers' willingness to fulfil their professional obligations on the shared task of educating children. Theory developed by Bryk and Schneider (2002) defines relational trust as functioning on two reciprocal levels. First, trust is discerned on an intrapersonal level that is grounded in social respect, fostering a sense of connectedness and personal regard for the opinions of others even when people disagree. Personal reliability, moral integrity and competence define relational trust at this level as one fulfils his or her obligations "in respectful and caring ways and for what are perceived to be the right reasons" (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p.128). Second, at the interpersonal level, trust is defined by power, dependency and role relations that mutually coexist within the structural and social interdependence of members in a school community. The routines, expectations, decision making and behaviour of individuals are constructed over time and influenced by the social milieu that constrains or enhances how the participants interact. The efficacy of such interpersonal relationships is particularly salient when teachers' sense of vulnerability is heightened during periods of reform (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Alternatively, in another study, Robinson (2007), in her meta-analysis of international literature linking school leadership and students' academic success, defines relational trust as involving a:

willingness to be vulnerable to another party because one has confidence that he or she will fulfil the obligations and expectations relevant to the shared task of educating children. It is a willingness to be vulnerable under conditions of risk and interdependence, rather than a feeling of warmth or affection. (p.18)

In this way, relational trust in a school is associated with collective responsibility, through teachers' willingness to accept the risk of exposing their practice to the scrutiny of others they trust, care about and respect. However, Ennis and McCauley (2002) suggest such forms of trust are rare in schools and "not easily acquired or bestowed" (p.150).

In seeking to define this concept, others associate relational trust with increased school capacity for curriculum alignment across classrooms, and accountability in terms of curriculum content and how that content is taught (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Fullan, 2003). These effects of relational trust are also associated with increased responsibility for organisational improvement (Louis, 2007). Further research on relational trust contains evidence that teachers' social exchanges enhance their collective capacity to deepen levels of reciprocal trust and organisational change as mutually inclusive actions (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Thus collective responsibility and relational trust are drawn from similar discourses in scholarship focused on organisational improvement.

It should also be highlighted that the research on relational trust draws from both psychological and sociological research perspectives in the way teachers professionally interact with colleagues. Relational trust discourse from psychological perspectives highlights individual choice that is based on prior experiences in trusting another colleague, being exposed to vulnerability, or engaging in collaborative activity that requires a degree of risk (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). From a sociological perspective, the organisational conditions that characterise relational trust; namely, mutual respect, commitment and collegial support, are valued as

resources for school improvement (Bolam et al, 2005; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Louis, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

According to Bryk and Schneider (2002), the psychological and sociological perspectives on relational trust are complementary: “relational trust is rooted in a complex cognitive activity of discerning the intentions of others . . . formed both by the institutional structure of schooling and by the particularities of an individual school community with its own culture, history and local understandings” (p.22). These social-psychological considerations played a major role in how these researchers theoretically conceptualised relational trust for analysing the actual school dynamics in Chicago school communities. The results included higher levels of trust among teachers and long-term gains in student academic achievement in reading and mathematics. They therefore proposed that relational trust has analytical and policy implications as a social resource for school improvement.

Characteristics of relational trust

A number of researchers have identified key characteristics of relational trust which further clarifies its role in developing collective responsibility. Relational trust is characterised by an interrelated set of mutual dependencies, social and professional bonds, and mutual understanding of teachers’ professional or social obligations and expectations (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Teachers’ confidence in their colleagues; mutual expectations and responsibility that teachers exhibit; vulnerability to risk; and the presence of faculty trust are reported as characteristics of relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Ennis & McCauley, 2002). The development of trust is said to influence teachers’ willingness to work together to achieve innovation and change (Louis, 2007). It is also thought to lead to increased job satisfaction (Van Houtte, 2006) and be associated with competence, self-efficacy and confidence that colleagues have reliable skills and dispositions (Geist & Hoy, 2004). Further, Geist and Hoy (2004) cite mutual respect and dependability, competence to meet collective efforts for improvement and integrity in relation to the shared beliefs and values of the school community as critical factors for developing trust among

teachers. These characteristics thus manifest in both observable behaviour and in teachers' beliefs about their capacity to change and improve.

It is suggested that such characteristics present in the discourse on trust are exhibited by members of a professional community, where there is respect for the instructional role teachers play in the intellectual and social development of their students (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Teacher competency, personal regard for others, and integrity, demonstrated by consistency between words and actions, has been found to generate high levels of relational trust. Trust results when interpersonal exchanges exhibit the above characteristics, and diminishes:

when individuals perceive that others are not behaving in ways that can be understood as consistent with their expectations about the other's role obligations. Moreover, fulfilment of obligations entails not only "doing the right thing," but also doing it in a respectful way, and for what are perceived to be the right reasons.

(Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p.21)

Relational trust therefore entails personal judgements about the trustworthiness of colleagues as they collectively adopt new ideas or reforms aimed at improving learning opportunities and academic achievement for their students.

Benefits and tensions of relational trust

The benefits of high levels of trust and collaboration are reported by Bryk and Schneider (2002) in terms of the potential to generate social capital for organisational learning. Such trust encourages teachers to share their beliefs, question teaching methods, and participate in problem-solving processes. These researchers found that the development of relational trust is facilitated in school cultures where teachers have control over decision-making processes and impeded by highly bureaucratic environments or where teachers "withdraw to the privacy of their own classrooms and repeat past practices, even if they clearly do not work" (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p.117). This study also provides evidence of the power of

relational trust as it was conducted over a seven-year period in more than 400 Chicago elementary schools. They found there were a number of critical benefits arising from the development of relational trust among colleagues in a school. These benefits include a reduction in teachers' sense of vulnerability, as they trial innovative or new and uncertain ideas, and enhanced capacity to engage in school-wide problem solving. Collective decisions about and broad commitment to reform is more likely where relational trust is strong in a school, where school participants are more likely to have deeper engagement in reform initiatives and "relational trust foments a moral imperative to take on the hard work of school improvement" (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p.123).

Furthermore, according to Hoy, Smith and Sweetman (2002), there is "a burgeoning body of research that supports trust as a key element in formulating and maintaining sound interpersonal communication and organizational effectiveness" (p.42). Where relational trust is an organisational norm, teachers aim for more ambitious instruction (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Teachers' commitment and willingness to work hard and do their best inspires the development of relational trust. Conversely, colleagues who resist new approaches, who fail to meet the expectations of their colleagues to work hard, or use practices not seen as appropriate for the students they teach, are labelled as lacking integrity or unable to be trusted (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Additional benefits have been identified in schools with high levels of relational trust, with teachers reporting "a greater willingness to try new things, a greater sense of responsibility for their students, more reach to parents, and stronger professional community involving shared work, more conversations about teaching and learning and a stronger collective focus on student learning" (Robinson, 2007, pp.20-21). The presence of these characteristics is dependent on resources that are available for or sustained by the organisational structures that support change through collaborative teacher professional learning. Tschannen-Moran (2001) used a quantitative study to measure collaboration and trust. From this study the benefits of engaging in the professional development associated with collaboration were similar to the results

Robinson (2007) obtained in schools where there were high levels of trust.

Tschannen-Moran (2001) concluded that:

Engaging with one another in this way can support the risk taking and struggle entailed in transforming practice. For teachers to break down norms of isolation and to sacrifice some of the autonomy they value so highly in order to reap the potential benefits of greater collaboration they must trust their colleagues.

(p.311)

While there is less emphasis in the literature reviewed in the section on the tensions of relational trust, within this discourse there is a contention about the fragility of maintaining high levels of trust: “Even a seemingly strong, resilient web of trust is composed of fragile, easily violated understandings. Disruptions to one part of the web can cause an entire entity to collapse, necessitating a painful, lengthy rebuilding” (Ennis & McCauley, 2002, p.153). In other words, trust can be thwarted by betrayal, undermining and passive resistance as changes are proposed and enacted that disrupt the previous equilibrium of decision making and dynamics of power in a school.

Leadership and relational trust

Research studies report that there are a number of essential conditions for relational trust to develop between a school principal and teachers. Clearly there is a role for principals to develop relational trust as they can exert considerable authority over teachers’ work lives and the instructional resources that support their work. In return the willingness of teachers to support the efforts and intentions of the principal impacts on the efficacy of their decisions. For example, Bryk and Schneider (2002) cite the level of goodwill existing between the principal and teachers as being critical to the likely success of a new initiative succeeding. Louis (2007) argues that a reserve of trust must be developed and nurtured prior to leading a change process, particularly if the nature of the reform changes teachers’ work practices.

Tschannen-Moran (2001) found that the trustworthiness of the principal was positively correlated to the level of collaboration, the most likely effect being the principal's ability to make use of teachers' knowledge and expertise. Teachers' trust in principals is also positively correlated with pedagogical leadership.

Leaders who participate with teachers learn more about what their staff are up against, and thus provide them with more real support in making the changes required to embed their learning in their daily practice. We know that leadership works indirectly by creating the conditions that enable teachers to be more effective with students.

(Robinson, 2007, p. 16)

In a meta-analysis of eleven international research studies, Robinson (2007) examined the direct and indirect links between leadership and student outcomes. The five leadership dimensions that emerged, with effects ranging from small to educationally significant, respectively are: ensuring an orderly and supportive environment; establishing goals and expectations; strategic resourcing, planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching curriculum; and promoting and participating in teacher learning and development.

Under the dimension of ensuring an orderly and supportive environment, Robinson (2007) proposed four determinants of relational trust. Social respect was considered as the most basic of leadership qualities in building relational trust. Next was the important and critical role of a principal's leadership and the reciprocity between teachers and the school leaders, demonstrated by their mutual trust that both groups are competent to transform vision into practice. It is argued that "school improvement requires sustained collective effort" (p.19) which necessitates school leaders being proactive in dealing with oppositional and undermining behaviour. Personal regard for others in relation to how a principal shows concern for teachers' career planning and professional development was considered to be a third criteria for relational trust. Last, Robinson (2007) identified the integrity of a school leader to

have the conviction of their word and to take action consistent with their espoused moral and ethical principles as being a critical determinant of relational trust.

Hence, in relation to developing collective responsibility among teachers in a school, it is critical that a leader considers staff concerns about the effectiveness of change strategies to tackle pressing educational challenges; has an understanding of contextual constraints; and has the capacity to build a culture of trust, while determining the school's goals and expectations (Robinson, 2007). For this reason, these ideas are pursued as a framework for analysing the interview data on pedagogical leadership and collective responsibility reported in Chapter 8.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Links to collective responsibility

Teachers' collective responsibility and accountability appear to be closely linked, inseparable from teachers' sense of agency in their motivation and beliefs that shape their practices. While collective responsibility and accountability are not equivalent they overlap through teachers' professional relationships (Cotter, 2007). Further, woven through the discourse related to collective responsibility is the concept of accountability among a school's staff to ensure that all students learn. It is suggested that:

Responsibility and accountability are closely linked. Collective obligation for performance suggests that all teachers should contribute to the achievement of all students in the school.

(Kruse et al, 1995, p.27)

This nexus between accountability and collective responsibility is derived from a commitment to deliver the best outcomes for students and achieving this through collaborative structures in place in a school where teachers explicitly focus on improving the quality of teaching. In a sense what is described as shared responsibility (Aubusson et al, 2009) cannot be separated from teachers' group-level desire to do the best for their students as an expression of their collective efficacy.

As Dinham (2008) succinctly states “accountability is to the group, more than to externally imposed accountability measures; group accountability and self-accountability are powerful influences on the learning community’s ethos and action” (p.113). Such forms of collaboration, while less recognised in high stakes teacher accountability policy circles, are supported by studies of the social organisation of schools as contributing to the key determinants of what and how well students learn (Valli et al, 2007).

Increased school accountability can have a direct impact on creating competitive environments (Dinham, 2008). These environments tend to isolate teachers and balkanise faculties, rather than encourage coordination and interdependence that can be achieved through forming professional community. In contrast, McLaughlin and Rhim (2007) argue that accountability frameworks “offer opportunities for achieving equity in public schools by improving academic outcomes for all students” (p.26). A key issue this raises is the effectiveness, and challenges internationally for education systems, of high stakes accountability frameworks.

Defining accountability

Internationally, there is currently high stakes accountability for schools, leaders and teachers to transform the way schooling takes place (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2009). This pressure is situated in a context where school leaders and teachers are addressing complex and interconnected challenges facing education systems in uncertain economic times and in an era of rapid technological change. Through systems of increased accountability, transparency and public reporting of educational outcomes, educational leaders and schools are managing the tensions between high demand for improved outcomes and the constraints of high stakes accountability policies requiring compliance (Gurr, 2007; Wood, 2006).

In the United Kingdom, accountability for school performance is subjected to external review by The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills inspection agency (Ofsted). Ofsted conducts cyclical inspections of schools

involving high stakes accountability and potentially high risk for schools depending on the aims of each review. This agency also has powers to intervene in response to parental complaints. In addition, local authorities have strict powers for intervention through the *Education and Inspections Act (2006)* (OCED, 2009). Although the English school inspection system has also developed a more streamlined school self-assessment system reflecting a consensus view that external inspection is not sufficient, the high stakes outcomes associated with external assessment remains a dominant form of school accountability (Gurr, 2007). In contrast to the imposed top down external accountability system in England, in Finland evaluation of school efficiency is managed primarily through a bottom up school self evaluation process which is relatively non-controversial (OECD, 2009).

In United States districts and schools, the stress and pressure from the global economic crisis have accelerated the imperative for deep and large-scale reform. Under the new federal administration of President Obama over \$100 billion of economic stimulus funding is flowing into education systems through the *Reinvestment and Recovery Act 2009* with associated amendments to *The No Child Left Behind 2001* federal legislation (OECD, 2009; Sharratt & Fullan, 2009).

In Australia, there is a systemic move towards national curriculum, national assessment standards for student achievement and national professional teaching standards, all of which combine to create an environment of changed accountability structures. "The new century saw a renewed emphasis on accountability in all Australian states, with schools and teachers increasingly being required to show evidence of improved student learning outcomes as evidence of improvement in teachers' performance" (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2004, p.34-35). Increasingly, systems set up to monitor school and teacher performance rely on the collection of student outcomes data from nation-wide standardised testing at regular cohort intervals. From 2008, National Partnerships in education mark a new way in which Federal and State Governments in Australia aim to work together to achieve better outcomes for students. These National Partnerships are built around a political platform of reforms outlined in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for

Young People (2008)⁶. For schools participating in National Partnership programs, high stakes accountability and reward payments are linked to professional development strategies to improve teacher quality, student outcomes in literacy and numeracy and strengthened community engagement. Data driven accountability is determined by measures of student performance in national literacy and numeracy assessments.

In both the Australian and United States education reform movements of the first decade of the 21st century there has been increased pressure by education policy makers to use value-added models based on national testing to implement teacher accountability systems (Valli et al 2007). Test-based accountability is therefore a central platform driving educational change. There is increasing political pressure to isolate and measure individual teacher effects on student achievement. Valli, et al (2007) caution against this since complex factors such as student mobility and team teaching confound such measures. Such accountability policies also tend to isolate individual teacher contributions yet seek to connect teacher effects with schools' efforts to measure the impact of reform policies (Wood, 2006; Valli et al, 2007).

At a time of demand for large-scale reform there is also a recurring theme embedded in accountability discourse that teachers have a moral responsibility to contribute to the achievement of all students in a school. This can be seen in both the label No Child Left Behind and the goals of the Melbourne Declaration (2009). Sharratt and Fullan (2009) refer to school leaders' and teachers' responsibilities to commit to a shared vision and high expectations as a moral imperative to plan and implement effective teaching and learning for all students. In the same way, collective responsibility is reliant on teachers' willingness to take responsibility for both their colleagues' and students' learning. In these contexts accountability is

⁶ The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young People (2008), which supersedes the Adelaide Declaration (1999) and Hobart Declaration (1989) aims to deliver Australian schooling that promotes equity and excellence; and that all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.

linked to an expectation that teachers put their practices under public scrutiny as they struggle with key issues of practice. Such issues include the quality of instruction, impact of their decisions on student achievement (King, 2002; Wood, 2006) and practical and wise reasoning that leads to morally-informed action (Kemmis, 2006).

Benefits and tensions of accountability

Two distinct but not mutually exclusive schools of thought are present in the discourse of teacher accountability for student learning. These two ideas are linked to the quality of teaching instruction in high stakes accountability climates through: (1) policy-driven test-based accountability and (2) accountability to professional community as a consequence of teachers' work organisation. These ideas have implications for the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning and are further explored below.

Policy-driven test-based accountability

One view identified in the literature is that policy-driven, test-based accountability is a lever for educational change. That is, by establishing challenging assessments to measure student performance against specified standards, schools strive to meet annual performance goals. In a climate of accountability there are consequences for schools that fail to do so (McLaughlin & Rhim, 2007). As McLaughlin and Rhim (2007) found, "rigid performance targets, coupled with these consequences, have pressured educators to raise student achievement, and have produced mixed results" (p.27). Their study of when the policy climate raised accountability stakes, found that teachers reported workload intensification, greater hierarchical control, loss of flexibility in teaching and that instructional quality had declined. In this context, standards-driven accountability is viewed as encouraging cultures of competition and blame in preference to collaborative cultures where teacher accountability is shared (Moller, 2005).

Similarly, Valli, et al (2007) acknowledge the negative effects of high stakes accountability policies, cautioning that:

disentangling teacher effects from school effects is more complex than generally acknowledged ... and could have a detrimental impact on other reform initiatives, particularly those that encourage greater collaboration among teachers and more equitable distribution of teachers' resources.
(p.637)

Associated with such thinking is the politics of accountability that assumes teachers work in isolation, and that individual teacher effects on student learning can be isolated and measured.

In policy-driven climates teachers can feel they have little agency in influencing public education policy. There appears to be a mismatch between the expectations of teachers' performance and the recognition they receive: "Teaching is work that demands relational labor, but renders it devalued and invisible in most accountability measures" (Wood, 2006, p.710). The argument Wood presents here is that, if the collective work of teachers is to become a valued organisational resource, teacher communities require more than technical skills to support its development. Accountability for high quality teaching becomes a cultural asset of school organisation where one teacher turns to another and together they take responsibility for effective solutions to problems of practice. However, cultural shifts in relation to accountability, from the responsibility of individual teachers to a shared commitment for student learning are not easily achieved because teachers are required to expose a level of vulnerability about their knowledge and expertise (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Accountability and professional community

The second view is that where accountability is connected with professional community teachers' work is situated within the organisational structures of school communities. This highlights the complexity of workplace relationships, where there is collective, schoolwide accountability for achievement gains.

By deepening their collective responsibility for finding and solving problems, selecting tasks and foci, people become more accountable for meshing the larger goals and vision of the school with the smaller tasks of daily leadership and management.

(Kruse & Louis, 2009, p.10)

The link between professional community and collective responsibility here is based on the premise that teachers are supported with school resources to take joint responsibility for instructional design by coming together to progress the collaborative work of teaching and learning (Valli et al, 2007). Furthermore, Bolam et al (2005) identified collective responsibility as one of five key characteristics of professional community, because “collective responsibility helps to sustain commitment, puts peer pressure and accountability on those who do not do their fair share, and eases isolation” (p.8).

Teachers’ accountability to each other as members of a community is intertwined with their rights and responsibilities to engage in genuine collaboration involving open critique “without fear of censure or ridicule” (Grossman et al, 2000, p.38). In this way, accountability is related to the development of relational trust and reciprocal responsibility. Similarly, teachers who have access to high-quality professional development have reciprocal responsibilities to produce better teaching.

In communities that place a high value on responsibility, teachers are expected to contribute to the resources for collaborative professional development. In addition they are expected to engage in thoughtful and intelligent contributions to collaborative efforts for open and honest dialogue and reflection, while demonstrating “enormous social skill and negotiation to prevent hurt feelings and shutdown. Learning to argue productively about ideas that cut to the core of personal and professional identity involves the skilful orchestration of multiple social and intelligent capacities” (Grossman et al, 2000, p.38).

Thus in accountability discourse, the strength of moral purpose for student learning is a powerful influence on collective responsibility. Educational theorists within this discourse argue that moral purpose (Fullan, 2003) and teachers' obligation for students' performance (Kruse et al, 1995) must go beyond the responsibility of the individual teacher to become the collective work of teachers in a school. The concept of group level accountability is often manifest in not wanting to be "the one to let their team down" (Aubusson et al, 2009, p.69).

Accountability and leadership

Leadership strategies that focus on accountability-oriented policies are often counter-productive to motivating teachers towards enthusiasm, innovation and dedication to change. It has been found that creating collaborative cultures of interdependency and accountability are difficult to negotiate as teachers are partitioned into faculties, subject areas and grade levels. This works against developing trusting relationships required for professional conversations about the traditionally private and isolated work of teaching (Moller, 2005; Wood, 2006).

School leaders and teachers have reciprocal roles to play in accountability for high quality teaching and the development of collective responsibility. As Kruse and Louis (2009) state "collective responsibility, in which all members feel accountable for all students, is at the core of intensified leadership" (p.8). While accountability can be imposed through external and internal policies, it is up to teachers to commit to the shared goals and practices required to implement effective solutions. Wood (2006) suggests teachers may draw on each others' expertise and support to take collective responsibility for embedding reforms in the professional culture of the school. In this way a leader's accountability to achieve policy reforms requires the support of teachers to take a collaborative and responsible approach. On the one hand:

If teachers are to take seriously their responsibility to ensure all students are learning, then they need opportunities to discover for themselves how collaboration can develop professional judgement and expertise and to rid themselves

of habitually looking to those outside their profession for answers.

(Wood, 2006, p.731)

On the other hand, Robinson (2007) advocates that school leaders are accountable for ensuring resources are available for teachers' professional learning. In other words, respect for pedagogical leadership is enhanced when leaders participate in that professional learning with their staff. In high achieving schools, principals are more likely to be valued by the staff. They are accessible and knowledgeable about instructional matters. Further, they lead the organisation of coherent programs for professional development that address elements of reform aligned to shared pedagogical purpose for their school's context (Newmann et al, 2000).

SELF AND COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

Links to collective responsibility

Studies of efficacy and collective efficacy are an important inclusion in my study because they draw from the same educational discourses as collective responsibility. Yet, they also have distinct theories and practices which contribute to understanding the complexity of collective responsibility. Collective responsibility and collective efficacy, while related, are theoretically distinct constructs. This difference is located in the measurement approaches used by Goddard, Hoy and Hoy (2004) to distinguish between aggregated means of individual efficacy and group-level consensus about their sense of collective efficacy. They conceptualise collective efficacy beliefs as a group-level judgement about competency. This means collective responsibility for student learning is conceptualised as group-level accountability to each other as colleagues and to the students in the school.

Defining self and collective efficacy

The discourse on efficacy locates teachers' sense of efficacy as a behavioural phenomenon of teacher beliefs and attitudes about their work (Bandura, 1977; Ashton & Webb, 1986). Present in the efficacy discourse is a view that teachers'

judgements about their efforts in teaching will be worthwhile and will positively influence students' learning. Ashton and Webb (1986) define efficacy as "teachers' situation-specific expectation that they can help students learn . . . and consists of two independent dimensions: sense of teaching efficacy and sense of personal teaching efficacy" (p.3). Essentially efficacy is related to a teacher's sense that they can influence student learning and a teacher's belief in his or her own teaching competence. As such it is a psychological construct.

Further, according to Oliver and Hipp (2006) collective efficacy "reflects the group members' perceptions of their collective ability to embrace a no-excuses approach to teaching and learning. Teachers with a strong sense of collective efficacy believe they can collectively make a difference in the learning and success of their students" (p.507). While collective efficacy and collective responsibility share similar group definitional characteristics their conceptual difference is articulated as:

In our conceptualization of responsibility for learning, teachers' expectations about their students' ability to learn might be synonymous with their sense of efficacy in teaching: a personal attitude that teaching is worth the effort. The message teachers receive from their students' learning might increase their own locus of control, which is implied by the notion of self-efficacy. Internalized locus of control could, in turn, foster an attitude of organizational commitment or "responsibility". Whether the notions of expectations and self-efficacy are separate or linked is, of course, an empirical question.

(Lee & Smith, p.109)

Teachers' beliefs in their competency in teaching shape the prevailing school culture that pervades every facet of school life (Ashton & Webb, 1986).

Benefits and limitations of efficacy

Efficacy has a number of benefits and limitations. Efficacy judgements are future-oriented and not necessarily accurate predictions about individual or group capacity

to influence students' or colleagues' achievements. In schools where teachers report high levels of efficacy, there are high levels of expectation that the success of their teaching will make a difference to student achievement. Conversely, where efficacy perceptions are low, teachers, in risking failure, are less likely to change their teaching methods, even when students appear not to be achieving the desired learning goals (Goddard et al, 2004).

One of Lortie's (1975) early studies on teacher efficacy, included indicators of an individual teacher's sense of self-efficacy exhibited in psychological rewards. These rewards include teachers' enjoyment of their work, task-related satisfaction, reaching classroom objectives, and feelings of gratification when they have influenced their students to achieve desirable results. In this study Lortie (1975) examined why teachers enter the profession and their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the level of professional development and collegiality they experienced. Data on collegial norms were collected from a sample of 95 teachers and discussed in terms of maximising the individual teacher's psychological rewards. It was found that "psychic rewards consist entirely of subjective valuations made in the course of work engagement; their subjectivity means that they can vary from person to person" (Lortie, 1975, p.101). Teachers turned to each other for reassurance, had an interest in those who work alongside them but did not work closely together, and resented "colleagues who fail to hold up their end of the less pleasant schoolwide tasks" (Lortie, 1975, p.193). These results highlight that in this study, teachers' sense of collective efficacy was found to be limited to their capacity to act as a group to obtain extrinsic rewards from teaching, such as collective bargaining to secure higher wages. Therefore, in the absence of professional community, efficacy remains an individual benefit that does not extend to collective responsibility for learning for all students in a school, or extend to supporting the learning of colleagues.

Similarly, Ashton and Webb (1986) addressed the nature of teachers' efficacy attitudes. Their study consisted of two phases of data collection in the 1980s in two middle schools to examine the social-psychological and school organisational contexts of teaching. Their analysis of the data found that "there was little evidence

that teachers worked collectively to assuage one another's doubts or to bolster their flagging self-esteem" (p.45). Not surprisingly, they also found that the social organisation of teachers' work isolated them from their colleagues, where they received little recognition or assistance and, in most cases, teachers were not concerned by their degree of isolation from colleagues. In other words, when a professional community is absent in a school, collective efficacy is limited by its capacity to realise the benefits that can arise from collaborative efforts to improve all students' learning outcomes which has implications in my study of teachers' collective responsibility.

OVERVIEW OF THE FIVE DISCOURSES

Mapping the terrain of these five related discourses contributes more detail to the conceptualisation of collective responsibility than prior research specifically on collective responsibility. While I have identified five discourses in the literature that are theoretically related to the development of collective responsibility it is clear that categorising this broad educational literature into distinctive discourses places artificial boundaries around a set of interrelated ideas. In reality, boundaries between professional community, professional development, relational trust, accountability and efficacy are intertwined (see Figure 2.1). Such intertwined ideas stem from the desirability to develop normative cultures driven by interests, values, visions and beliefs.

The interconnectivity between the five discourses related to collective responsibility is concisely described by Olivier and Hipp (2006) who state that "collective efficacy can set the stage for developing a high-performing learning culture in which teachers help to expand collective responsibility within their professional learning community" (p.507). However, distinguishing between the discourses is less important, for the purposes of my study, than mapping the ideas that constitute a framework for investigating the conditions that enable or hinder the development of collective responsibility reported in later chapters.

The framework conceptualised in Table 2.1 provides a summary of the key ideas in each discourse. The focus for each of the five discourses is identified as well as the significance of each to the development of collective responsibility. The five discourses describe, in different ways, how teachers' work practices are defined by particular beliefs and relationships with other teachers and school leaders. In each discourse the links to collective responsibility are related to the extent to which shared beliefs and values are collectively developed.

Common to each discourse is the notion that teachers interact around joint problem solving in relation to matters of teaching. Such opportunities for the collaborative work of teachers provide a context for the development of collective responsibility. Each discourse, through different lenses, draws connections between the collective efforts of teachers and the impact on student achievement gains. For example, the interconnections between the theoretical ideas concerning how individual teachers engage in the collective pursuit of developing shared goals for instructional improvement highlight the intersection between professional development and professional community. Teachers' willingness to engage collaboratively to advance their own learning, with a view to improving the achievements of their students, is therefore connected to the development of collective responsibility in the discourses of accountability, relational trust and professional community. While collective efforts and attitudes are desirable for and almost certain to be a critical factor in the development of collective responsibility, how they develop and manifest in individual school contexts is a key issue for investigation in the present study.

Table 2.1: Main themes emerging from the discourses related to collective responsibility

Discourse related to collective responsibility	<i>Professional community</i>	<i>Professional development</i>	<i>Relational trust</i>	<i>Accountability</i>	<i>Efficacy</i>
Focus of discourse	The professional actions of teachers to generate a group identity are based on shared values that foster professional growth and interdependence. Knowledge is exchanged and expanded through joint problem solving, reflective dialogue and deprivatising classrooms to share practice.	Involves teachers in processes, activities and experiences that can facilitate collaborative professional learning when structured around the goals of professional community.	A property of the social organisation of schools, characterised by teachers' willingness to fulfil their professional obligations to and with colleagues in the shared task of educating children.	In policy and organisational contexts where the expectation is that students learn, teachers' practices are under scrutiny as they address key issues related to the quality of instruction and the effect of their decisions on student achievement.	Teachers' individual or group judgements about the competency of their efforts in teaching as worthwhile in positively influencing students' learning.
Significance for collective responsibility	The development of collective responsibility is empirically linked to aspects of professional community. Such aspects include teachers' interactions where teachers commit to professional practices that focus on gains for student learning and social equity.	Engagement in forms of collaborative professional development has potential to advance the development of collective responsibility as teachers develop new knowledge, skills or dispositions that enhance student learning.	Relational trust is linked with collective responsibility in terms of interdependence, mutual respect and support among teachers in their effort to advance student learning.	The various forms of accountability impacting on schools and within systems may produce a context or imperative for collective responsibility to develop.	When teachers believe individually or collectively in their capacity to make a difference, it is likely that collective responsibility will develop or be strengthened.

CONCLUSION

The literature reviewed in this chapter was selected because, in a broad educational sense, it is theoretically related to the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning. The multiple discourses summarised in Table 2.1 point to the complex and multifaceted nature of this phenomenon. This literature needs to be interpreted in terms of a school's unique situational context and how appropriate reform efforts focus on the particular social organisation of teachers' work.

From the literature reviewed it is hypothesised that professional community, professional development, relational trust, accountability and efficacy have important roles to play in the development of collective responsibility. Taken together these five discourses form a useful framework to investigate the phenomenon of collective responsibility in greater depth than previous studies. The framework also provides a set of theoretical lenses that informs the methodology for the present study. In addition, the framework provides a trajectory for analysing the data to gauge the degree to which these characteristics are present and the extent to which collective responsibility has developed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the methodology I have chosen for researching the complex and multi-faceted phenomenon of collective responsibility is outlined. I describe and justify the quantitative and qualitative methods I have used to investigate collective responsibility in four sites using case study methodology. I describe how this approach combines the quantitative methods used in prior studies (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Lee & Smith, 1996; Louis et al, 1996) with the richness that stems from multiple perspectives collected through case studies that include data from both individual and group interviews.

MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

Case study is the methodology chosen for my study as it is the most appropriate approach to address the research question because it allows the combination of complementary quantitative and qualitative methods. Using a survey permits correlation analysis of the data using variables based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. In addition, case study methodology facilitates in-depth analysis of interview data from multiple schools that attends to the descriptive nature of the research question.

As previously stated the question: *What does collective responsibility look like and what are the conditions that support or hinder the extent of its development within a school context?* arises from the importance attributed in prior studies to the presence of collective responsibility in a school and its link to student achievement gains and greater equity across students' social class groupings (Bryk et al,1999; Lee & Smith,1996; Louis, Marks & Kruse,1996). While it is possible to identify factors in the literature that are

related to the presence of collective responsibility such as professional development, professional community, teacher efficacy, relational trust, and accountability, to date there has been a little research about how teachers' collective responsibility develops as a result of the interaction of these and possibly other factors.

Multiple case study methodology allows each of the four selected cases to be studied both quantitatively and qualitatively to develop a full understanding of the extent to which collective responsibility is present and of the conditions that support or hinder its development. This approach to investigating collective responsibility recognises that multiple contextual realities operate within a school community. It was important for my study to research the conditions that build collective responsibility within school contexts and to investigate this phenomenon in its natural setting in order to understand its context and complexity from in-depth collection of rich sources of evidence (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2006).

The rationale for selection of multiple case studies was based on decisions first, to investigate the phenomenon of collective responsibility across a range of school types (primary and secondary; metropolitan and regional; small and large student and teacher population) and second, to provide sufficient data for comparison and contrast of what collective responsibility looked like in that range of schools. Case study methodology also facilitated the use of complementary quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data for my study. A purely quantitative or qualitative approach would not have sufficiently captured the complexity of the relationship among the key variables identified in the theoretical framework in my study described in Table 2.1. Four schools were therefore selected for study with both teacher surveys and onsite interviews conducted.

In analysing and reporting the data, case study methodology provides a strategy for discussion of the findings not as generalisations but rather as evidence in the four sites, advancing our knowledge about and understanding of the development of collective

responsibility. The cases also yield insights and learning in their own right to build an in-depth understanding of the unique, unusual and/or complementary features of collective responsibility. In addition, the literature reviewed in the previous chapter identifying the theoretical links between collective responsibility and professional community, professional development, relational trust, accountability and efficacy, assists in crystallising the focus for the investigations. These five discourses help to define the scope of the study and support the choice of the mixed methods approach used for data collection and analysis.

Selection of school sites

In order to investigate the development of collective responsibility it was important to identify sites where teachers had a history of engaging in collaborative professional development activities capable of building professional community. I was also interested in researching the relationship between teachers' efficacy, accountability and relational trust among teachers with the development of collective responsibility in these sites. Cases were screened using preliminary evidence from knowledgeable key personnel that there was a likelihood that collective responsibility could be observed and measured thus avoiding the situation where a selected case is not viable or represents something outside the focus of my study (Yin, 2006).

In addition, site selection was based on a reported school-wide commitment to engage with the Quality Teaching model as a strategy for improving the quality of teaching where professional development reflected some or all of the elements cited above. Thus, each of the four schools selected for the study had received funding from the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (AGQTP)⁷. Funding from this program provided school teams with access to collaborative school-based models of professional development that focused on teacher learning to improve the quality of their classroom

⁷ The Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (2001-2009) provided significant external funding to Australian states and territories to implement focused school-based professional development across a range of pedagogical, equity and curriculum priority areas (see www.qtp.nsw.edu.au).

practice and to raise student achievement in a specified priority area. As a result each school had access to support and resources as a foundation for collaborative professional learning. A requirement for participation in the Australian Government funded programs was to use the funding to resource teachers' professional learning to implement the Quality Teaching model, first with project teams and then extending into the whole school. A likelihood that these attributes would be present or developing in funded schools provided a logic for the selection of these four school sites.

Criteria for selecting school sites

The intention was to select two primary and two secondary government schools in New South Wales with prior involvement in an AGQTP funded activity. The four sites were identified in consultation with regional educational consultants and from published reports of the schools' involvement in and progress with implementing Quality Teaching. In addition, the four schools were identified on the basis of reported strong professional community supporting collaborative professional development focused on improving the quality of instruction and student learning outcomes.

The criteria identified below, drawn from the literature related to collective responsibility reviewed in Chapter 2, guided the selection of schools. These criteria are based on historical and structural features for school-based professional development where teams of teachers, through a collaborative culture of inquiry had:

1. identified the implementation of the Quality Teaching model (NSWDET, 2003) as a priority for teacher professional learning;
2. reviewed student work to diagnose problems and to design lessons at an appropriate level of difficulty (Garet et al, 2001);
3. collectively focused on student work and student learning (Louis et al, 1996; Little, 1999);
4. observed classroom practice including observations by colleagues to receive feedback and discuss goals for and effects on students' learning (Garet et al, 2001);

5. communicated with colleagues to share solutions to teaching problems (Garet et al, 2001; Hawley & Valli, 1999);
6. developed goals for student learning, and received guidance about what to teach and how to teach syllabus content in order to achieve these goals for student learning (Garet et al, 2001);
7. built collaborative relationships and professional interdependence as they strived to achieve common goals for student learning (Louis et al, 1996).

These criteria were used as a checklist in discussions with school principals and consultants who had worked with the schools to gain a preliminary picture of how the teachers' previous professional development experiences aligned to the purpose of this study. As a result of these discussions Greengate and Tall Trees primary schools, and Aran Heights and Jossey High Schools⁸ were invited to participate in the study. The issue of principals and consultants who have vested interests in promoting positive aspects of their schools and the schools in which they work is acknowledged as a limitation for using self-reporting as a process for selecting schools in my study. However, it was important to select schools where there was a willingness of key personnel to participate in the study and acknowledge this as a limitation.

Site visits

Site visits for data collection occurred between May and September, 2007. Table 3.1 below provides an outline of the schedule and duration of site visits at each school.

Table 3.1 Schedule of site visits

School	Date	Duration
Greengate Public School	May, 2007	5 days
Aran Heights High School	June, 2007	5 days
Jossey High School	July, 2007	6 days
Tall Trees Primary School	September, 2007	5 days

⁸ The names of the four schools were changed to protect their identity.

Sampling method

Purposive sampling targeted two subpopulations in each of the four schools. All teachers in each school were invited to complete a survey with those who responded forming the larger subpopulation. The second, smaller subpopulation was comprised of teachers who identified as participating in collaborative professional development activities designed to improve the quality of teaching. Such activities included being a member of a teaching team drawn together through a common issue or challenge requiring improvement or change in classroom instruction and teaching methods.

At the teacher meetings, typically three weeks prior to conducting research site visits, teachers were provided with an information letter outlining the purposes of the study, how the data would be collected and reported and the approach to protection of respondents' privacy (Appendix B). An invitation was extended to all teachers in the four school sites to complete the survey. Strategies for maximising the survey response rate were to conduct a site visit to explain the purpose of study and address questions about its significance, as well as implications of the research for the school. At the same time teachers who had prior experience in collaborative professional development activities were invited to volunteer to participate in individual and/or group semi-structured interviews.

MIXED METHODS APPROACH

The application of mixed methods research in the present study relies on the view that educational phenomena like collective responsibility are complex and constructed in the socio-political contexts of schools. To understand collective responsibility in a more multi-dimensional way as reported in the previous chapter I propose that it should be studied using multi-disciplinary, multi-method approaches which allow it to be investigated from the perspectives outlined in Table 2.1.

A mixed methods approach enables the investigation of collective responsibility using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. A single method for data collection and analysis is inadequate to capture the nature of such complexities (Smith, 2006). A quantitative instrument like a survey is useful in collecting data based on pre-determined variables that are theoretically related to the phenomenon of collective responsibility. However, for my study a survey alone was not considered an adequate measure of a phenomenon that required both in-depth and open-ended data to explore the contextual differences between schools and individual perceptions within those schools (Teddle & Tashakkori 2003).

My study required a research design that recognised collective responsibility exists in a context of co-construction of knowledge dependent on human interaction. Such interactions in reality are complex and contingent on the context in which teachers' work takes place. Further "mixed methods data analysis allows the researcher to use the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative techniques so as to understand phenomena better" (Onwuegbuzie & Teddle, 2003, p.351). Employing mixed methods approach also afforded the opportunity in my study to replicate methods from previous quantitative research and use an interview protocol to establish whether there were other variables at play that could not be investigated through a survey.

To answer the research question in sufficient depth, complementary quantitative and qualitative approaches (Maxwell & Loomis, 2002) are appropriate choices for the present study. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in a complementary design to gather and analyse the evidence using *variance theory* and *process theory* (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2003). Using variance theory enabled analyses of the survey data to determine the differences and correlations between pre-determined variables identified from the literature as being theoretically related to collective responsibility. Qualitative methods included interviews and field observations to provide in-depth, inductive and open-ended data collection of interviewees' understanding of collective responsibility and their

interpretation of the context in which it develops. Using process theory facilitated the analyses of textual data to develop a detailed description of collective responsibility pertinent to each case study and to generate further theoretical understanding.

In establishing procedures for trustworthiness of the claims I drew from three of Cresswell's (2007) eight validation strategies. I acknowledged from the outset researcher bias that may have impacted on the approach to the study and interpretation of the data. I used member checking to establish credibility of the interpretations of the data as the analysis progressed. I also used rich and thick description to capture and convey a full picture of the phenomenon being studied.

QUANTITATIVE METHODS

Previous studies measuring collective responsibility at the school level are situated within professional community, professional development, relational trust, accountability, and efficacy, as discussed in the previous chapter. There is evidence with this associated literature that collective responsibility is linked to indices measuring the impact of professional community on teachers' work, their personal efficacy, and their belief that their efforts will make a difference to student achievement (Lee & Smith, 1996; Louis et al, 1996; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). However, the problematic nature of defining a construct to measure collective responsibility as a transportable construct, from the United States concept where it was previously studied to the NSW context, lies in the various ways researchers have defined and set out to measure it (Ladwig, 2002).

Conceptual differences in the measurement of Collective Responsibility

Two distinctive theoretical dimensions are represented in the literature on how the construct of collective responsibility has been conceptualised and measured. Previous studies frame the construct of collective responsibility in terms of two dimensions, teacher efficacy and teacher responsibility at both the individual and group or

organisational level. As Schon and Teddlie (2008) state: “change processes are most successful when they address the needs of the organization as well as those of the individuals in the organization . . . both of which have collective and individual needs” (p.143). Table 3.2 below summarises these two distinct theoretical dimensions.

Table 3.2 Theoretical perspectives contributing to development of the construct of collective responsibility

	Teacher efficacy	Teacher responsibility
Individual perspective	<p><i>Quadrant 1</i></p> <p>Personal attitude that teachers have a locus of control and teaching is worth the effort (Lee & Smith, 1996); Individual teacher self-efficacy as psychological rewards (Lortie, 1975; Ashton and Webb, 1986) teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs about their capacity to help students learn.</p>	<p><i>Quadrant 2</i></p> <p>Personal attitudes and beliefs about responsibility for student learning, as measured by CORS (Louis et al, 1996) and NELS scales (Lee & Smith, 1996), aggregated to give a normative school-wide measure, capturing the degree to which teachers share these attitudes.</p>
Collective perspective	<p><i>Quadrant 3</i></p> <p>Collective efficacy beliefs, conceptualised as a group-level judgement about competency and mutual obligation to each other as colleagues and to the students in the school (Bandura, 1977; Goddard et al, 2004).</p>	<p><i>Quadrant 4</i></p> <p>Sense of collective responsibility among teachers, who take actions jointly to help each other reach high standards for student achievement, school improvement, collegial trust and respect (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).</p>

These two different approaches, aggregating individual (Quadrants 1 and 2 in Table 3.2) and aggregating group perspectives (Quadrants 3 and 4 in Table 3.2), have both been used

in previous studies to measure the dimensions of efficacy and teacher responsibility. Teachers' views about their personal self-efficacy, professional reward for effort and individual responsibility for student learning regardless of socio economic status or prior achievement conceptualise individual measures. Perceptions of teacher efficacy and responsibility, measured at a school level, teachers' shared beliefs about the effectiveness of their efforts in teaching and their commitment to all students' learning in their school provide group measures of collective efficacy and responsibility.

Teacher efficacy dimension

Quadrants 1 and 3 in Table 3.2 describe the different approaches to defining and measuring teacher efficacy in prior studies. Quadrant 1 conceptualises individual teachers' efficacy as the belief that they hold the locus of control to positively impact on student learning and that their efforts in teaching are worthwhile. Research into teacher efficacy has been conducted to determine the significance of its relationship with student achievement and teachers' classroom management strategies. Ashton and Webb (1986) identified two related dimensions of efficacy: a general sense of efficacy that teaching can influence student achievement; and a sense of personal efficacy related to a teacher's assessment of his or her own teaching competence to design and modify classroom instruction.

Efficacy beliefs have also been perceived as a reflection of a teacher's psychological reward for teaching (Lortie, 1975) as reported in Chapter 2. In this context, measures of individual efficacy include a teacher's sense of pride and accomplishment in his or her work and related student achievement, or a sense of despair when confronted with difficulties thought to arise from his or her own inadequacies.

In Quadrant 3 of Table 3.2, collective efficacy is conceptualised as teachers' beliefs and judgements that the school has the organisational capacity for teachers to work together to design and implement courses of action that raise students' academic achievements. Collective efficacy is a recently developed construct and an emerging concern for

educational researchers. Collective efficacy within an organisation is concerned with the beliefs and judgements of group members that the school has the organisational capacity for teachers to work together to design and implement courses of action that raise students' academic achievements (Goddard et al, 2004).

A theoretical relationship between the way researchers have conceptualised the statistical measurement of collective responsibility and collective efficacy can be explained in the way Bandura (1997) and Goddard et al (2004) have defined collective efficacy as providing a school with the capability to undertake organisational change:

Aggregating individual perceptions of group (as opposed to self) capability serves to assess perceived collective efficacy as an emergent organizational property by combining individual group members' interdependent perspectives on group capability. Questions about group capability elicit perspectives on obstacles, constraints and opportunities of a given social system more readily than do items asking individuals about their self-capability, which varies more as a function of individual (as opposed to group) differences. (Goddard et al, 2004, p.7)

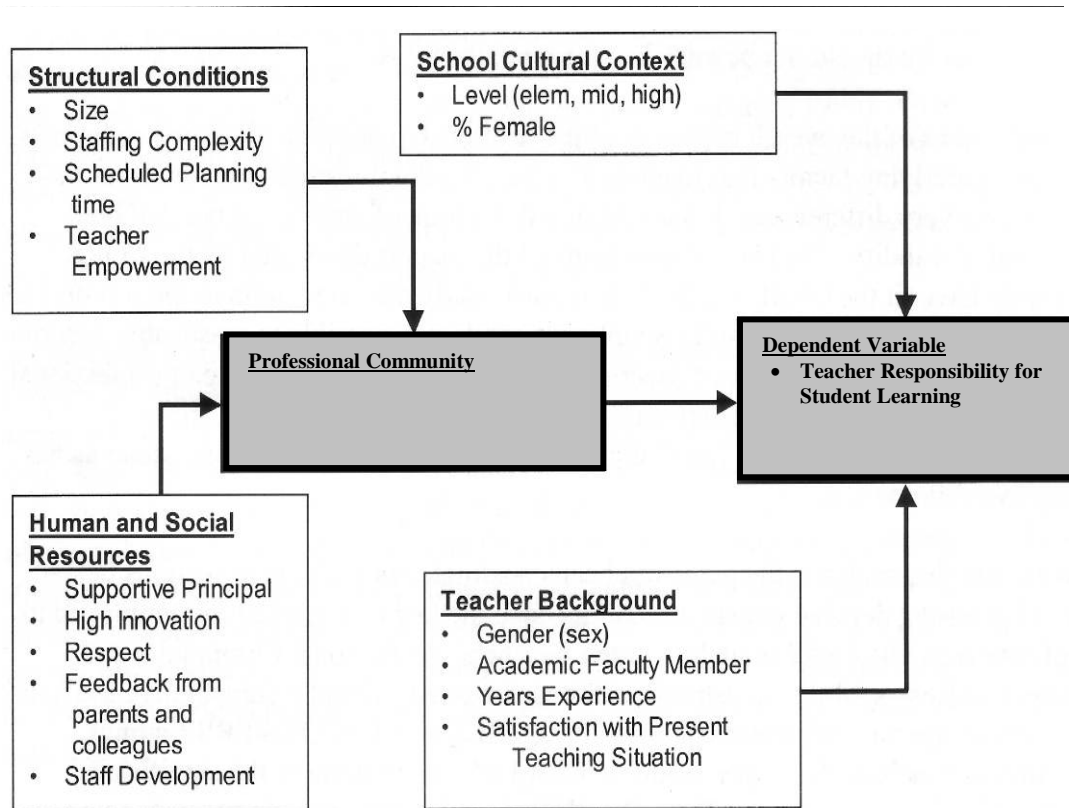
Theoretically, Goddard et al (2004) agreed with Bandura (1997) that perceived collective efficacy was a collective or group attribute rather than simply an aggregation of perceived individual self-efficacy scores. Similarly, the logic for measuring a group phenomenon at the organisational level is proposed by Van Houtte (2005) who argues that it is problematic to assume that aggregation of individual perceptions stands up as a valid group or organisational measure. Van Houtte cites three reasons why this approach lacks conceptual clarity and is therefore problematic. First aggregating individual perceptions assumes that each individual shares an accurate understanding of the existing situation. Second, the validity of the method is based on the assumption that individuals experiencing the same situation are likely to give a similar description of the situation. Third, aggregation stresses perceptual similarities and minimises perceptual differences.

These three assumptions mean that such an approach is problematic because it does not take into account that individual perceptions are never independent from individual experiences and therefore aggregation is more likely to represent multiple perspectives of the phenomenon being measured (Van Houtte, 2005).

Teacher responsibility dimension

Quadrants 2 and 4 in Table 3.2 describe different approaches to defining and measuring teacher responsibility in prior studies. Quadrant 2 represents teacher responsibility following the work on professional community by Louis et al (1996) and Lee and Smith (1996). As discussed in Chapter 1, these two key studies conceptualised teachers' responsibility for student learning as an organisational property of teachers' work and dependent on the presence of professional community. In relation to the methodology used, Louis et al (1996) developed an analytical framework to investigate the relationship between professional community and teacher responsibility for student learning (see Figure 3.1 below).

Figure 3.1 **Analytical framework: Professional community and teacher responsibility for student learning** (attributed to and cited in Louis, Marks and Kruse (1996, p.759): CORS–SRS)



To investigate the influence of professional community on the development of teachers' responsibility for student learning, Louis et al (1996) drew from existing data collected in the CORS School Restructuring Study (CORS–SRS). This study involved the collection of data from 24 restructuring schools, surveying more than 900 teachers, between 1991 and 1994. A composite scale of ten items was grouped as a measure of teacher beliefs about "the extent to which teachers consider their students to be capable of successful learning and consider themselves to be responsible and effective agents in instructing students" (p.768). Six items required responses to statements about teachers' individual attitudes to their teaching efforts and students' abilities; for example, "I sometimes feel it is a waste of time to try to do my best as a teacher (reversed)" and "Many of the students I teach are

not capable of learning the material I am supposed to teach them (reversed).” Four items were statements framed at the school level; for example, “I feel responsible for the students I teach but not for other students in the school (reversed)” and “Teachers are expected to help maintain discipline in the entire school, not just their classroom.” Results of their analysis indicated that when collegial relations between teachers are strong, teachers are more likely to demonstrate a shared commitment to the school’s goals to improve student learning. Further, in an analysis based on the same study, Louis and Marks (1998) reported that “the development of strong professional communities within schools was associated with an increased sense of collective responsibility for student learning” (p.534).

It was not surprising that, from their analyses, Louis, Kruse and Marks (1996), Louis & Marks (1998) and Marks & Louis (1999) reported similar findings to Lee and Smith (1996) about the strong relationship between professional community and teachers’ collective responsibility for student learning, as they used similar composite scales. A key difference, however, lay in how Lee and Smith (1996) placed an emphasis in their commentary on the appropriateness of their approach to aggregate individual teacher attitudes to give a collective measure.

In their approach, Lee and Smith’s (1996) conceptualisation of teachers’ collective responsibility for student learning was premised on what they saw as a relationship between teachers’ expectations about students’ ability to learn and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy (defined as a personal attitude that their efforts in teaching were worthwhile). This conceptualisation was influenced by Rosenthal and Jacobson’s (1968) seminal study that examined the impact of teacher expectations on student performance which used experimental manipulation of teacher beliefs about students’ ability to learn. From a psychological perspective this study showed that teacher attitudes and expectations about the capacity of their students to learn and perform substantially influenced actual student learning. Lee and Smith (1996) concluded from the findings from

Rosenthal and Jacobson's study, and others that followed (including Brophy, 1983; Cooper & Tom, 1984), that teacher beliefs about students' ability to learn influence actual student achievement. This result suggested that "teachers' expectations about their students, as well as their willingness to assume personal responsibility for the results of their teaching, have important consequences for learners" (Lee & Smith, 1996, p.108).

These studies formed a framework for the design of Lee and Smith's (1996) seminal study of collective responsibility. They constructed a composite scale for collective responsibility which consisted of twelve items constructed by principal components factor analysis using items selected from National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS, 1988). The twelve items addressed several related ideas: "teachers' internalizing responsibility for the learning of their students, rather than attributing difficulties to weak students or deficit home lives; a belief that teachers can teach all students; willingness to alter teaching methods in response to students' difficulties and success; and feelings of efficacy in teaching" (Lee & Smith, 1996, p.114). Most survey items were in the form of "I", "me" and "my" referent statements such as "I can get through to the most difficult student"; "Students' success or failure is due to factors beyond me"; and "It is a waste of time to do my best at teaching." In sum, their measure included several related ideas that incorporated teachers' efficacy beliefs that their teaching methods made a difference to students' learning rather than the learning abilities and backgrounds students bring into the classroom.

In developing their scale for collective responsibility Lee and Smith (1996) acknowledged two dilemmas they needed to resolve. The first was related to the closeness of the items to efficacy. They addressed this issue by arguing that "the components are strongly correlated and form a psychometrically coherent factor. This view suggests that personal views about efficacy, responsibility, and commitment to all students' learning are indistinguishable (at least as they are measured in a questionnaire format)" (Lee & Smith, 1996, p.115).

Defining collective responsibility as a group measure of individual attitudes posed a second measurement dilemma. Lee and Smith (1996) were working from the premise that a composite measure can be aggregated because it captures the extent to which individual teachers in a school share these attitudes and beliefs. Labelling their measure 'collective responsibility' was based on aggregated individual teacher attitudes and commitment to teach all students, regardless of prior achievement, socio-economic background or willingness to learn. They see this as:

Where teachers' attitudes in the aggregate are seen as characteristics defining schools ... teachers' willingness to take responsibility for the learning of their students would become a property of schools – an indicator of collective responsibility or a collective commitment to caring about students.

(Lee & Smith, 1996, p.110)

To justify the reliability of this construct, Lee and Smith (1996) used factor analysis to guide the construction of each composite scale, arguing that this maximised the conceptual and psychometric soundness of the factors.

Based on these arguments, items in the scale used by Lee and Smith (1996) as a measure of teacher responsibility are worthy of consideration in the present study. Lee and Smith's (1996) approach does not address the way teacher learning is organised around a collective focus for student learning across classes and over time. However, their measure is consistent with the way they defined collective responsibility as a set of individual beliefs about teacher interactions with teachers and students that can be grouped as a collective measure.

In Quadrant 4 of Table 3.2, an important contribution to educational research on collective responsibility was presented in the longitudinal research conducted in Chicago primary schools by Bryk and Schneider on relational trust. Bryk and Schneider's (2002) construct for relational trust draws on a diverse range of fields, including research in

sociology, philosophy, political science, economics and psychology to develop “an explicit focus on the distinctive qualities of interpersonal social exchanges in school communities, and how these culminate in an organizational property that we term *relational trust*” (p.12)⁹. Data were collected through the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR, 2000) reform program aimed at the decentralisation of school governance, which was trialled in more than 400 urban Chicago elementary schools and tracked over a seven-year period (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Surveys were implemented to collect data to investigate key elements of the reform process, including school organisation, parent involvement, and the relationship between community resources and student learning. The data were analysed to assess, among other effects, the impact of the quality of relational trust among teachers on school improvement, judged by gains in student achievement.

In particular, one index in the relational trust data set measured collective responsibility. This construct is described as a “focus on the extent of a shared commitment among the faculty to improve the school so that all students learn” (CCRS, 1997, p.35). Using the Rasch modelling process, items were ordered on the scale according to how likely teachers are to endorse a statement to produce “an interval scale that determines *item difficulties* and *person measures*” (CCRS, 1997, p.25). Two scales, one for teacher to teacher trust (COLG, 1997, p.34) that focused on teacher to teacher learning, and the second for collective responsibility (COLR, 1997, p.35) measured aspects of teacher responsibility for students’ academic and social development, standards for professional practice and responsibility for school improvement. This measure of relational trust between teachers is premised on the assumption that classroom teachers “rely on the good efforts of teacher colleagues in earlier grades to develop students’ prerequisite knowledge, skills and dispositions in order for grade-level appropriate work to occur in their classrooms” (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p.30). In this scale, trust and respect among colleagues are measures of teachers’ willingness to expose their vulnerabilities and offer

⁹ Bryk and Schneider (2002) attribute the inspiration for their conceptualisation of *relational trust* to Robert Putnam (1995) (the theory of social capital and democratic institutions); Francis Fukuyama (1995) (the economic realm of social trust); both related to James Coleman’s theory of social capital; and philosophical and religious writings by Hertzberg (1989) and Blau (1986).

their expertise to support their colleagues' professional growth. Together, these two scales provide a useful inclusion in my study since they contain two critical elements I am investigating: teacher-teacher trust and teacher responsibility at the school level.

By drawing broadly from the range of studies as summarised in Table 3.2 above, I have demonstrated that collective responsibility can be conceptualised as operating across two dimensions: (1) individual teachers' responsibility for student learning that includes standard measures of self-efficacy (Lee & Smith, 1996); and (2) collective responsibility, where teachers share common goals and high expectations for students' achievement (Spillane & Louis, 2002; Garet et al, 2001; Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Teacher efficacy and teacher responsibility: Implications for scale development

For my study the key points from quantitative scales used in previous research are whether items related to efficacy are measures of teacher responsibility or theoretically distinct concepts; and does aggregating individual measures produce a group or collective measure. While aggregation of individual responses to give a school measure represented one approach to measuring collective responsibility as in Lee and Smith's (1996) study, this method alone is inadequate for measuring collective responsibility in my study. What is conceptually problematic, and addressed in the present study, is whether the aggregation of personal responsibility represents an accurate summation of a group perception of collective responsibility. In other words, if the majority of teachers rate their individual responsibility for student learning as high, does it necessarily equate to teachers taking collective responsibility for student learning, or are these two conceptually different measures? I argue that, in terms of my study, these approaches are conceptually different and this is explored further in the empirical analysis in the next chapter.

Survey development

In the context of my study, as previously discussed, Louis et al (1996) and Lee and Smith's (1996) findings were ground-breaking in the area of collective responsibility. The measure of individual teacher responsibility developed by Lee and Smith (1996)¹⁰ which aligns efficacy and teacher responsibility (Quadrant 2, Table 3.2) has a place in studies of collective responsibility. However, Bryk and Schneider's (2002) scales, measuring group attitudes to teacher responsibility and relational trust (Quadrant 4, Table 3.2) was included in the survey instrument in my study as a group measure because it more closely represented the phenomenon under investigation in my study.

Based on the argument presented above, I developed a survey instrument drawing from both individual and group measures of efficacy and responsibility to collect quantitative data in the four case study schools (see Appendix C). The survey instrument was comprised of scales that measured the following variables: professional community, individual teacher responsibility and group responsibility as two separate variables, teacher-to-teacher trust, and experiences of professional learning related to Quality Teaching. These variables are theoretically related to collective responsibility, as outlined in Chapter 2.

There were 14 questions comprising a total of 59 items in the survey. Items in questions 1-4 are measures for personal background characteristics differentiating teachers within schools by gender, teaching status and years of teaching experience.

Items in questions 5 and 6 are measures determined by Louis et al (1996) as significant for the development of school-wide professional community in terms of deprivatisation of classroom practice through lesson observation.

¹⁰ Lee and Smith (1996) acknowledged the limitation of their measure of collective responsibility as aggregates of individual measures were an imperfect indicator of collective attitudes (see p. 110).

Items in questions 7-12 were drawn from the Systemic Implications of Pedagogy and Achievement in NSW Public Schools (SIPA) survey. These items were originally constructed from research conducted by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools (CORS) (Louis et al, 1996). While items in question 7 were related to frequency and type of feedback on teaching, items in questions 8-10 measure aspects of professional learning, question 11 measured the reported effectiveness of professional learning experiences and the level of consistency between professional learning and school culture, and question 12 provided a measure of professional community. Items in question 13 measured individual teacher responsibility for student learning following the work of Lee and Smith (1996) and Louis et al (1996) and include several related ideas about teacher efficacy: a belief that teachers' work makes a difference to all students' achievement regardless of socioeconomic backgrounds; teachers' self-efficacy; and teachers' willingness, interest and care for how and what students learn. Lastly, items in question 14(a)-(i) comprised a measure of group perceptions of collective responsibility in a school and items in question 14 (j-o) measured teacher-to-teacher trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

QUALITATIVE METHODS

As mentioned above, in addition to the survey, data were collected from semi-structured individual and group interviews, field observations and document collection during periods when I was present in the schools between May and September 2007. Site visits were conducted over four to six school days in each school. Initial site visits were followed up with member checking and discussion of preliminary reports with the school leadership group. Taking such a qualitative approach allowed a richer understanding of collective responsibility than in previous research that has largely used quantitative methods only.

Individual and group interviews

In each of the four schools data were collected through semi-structured individual (Appendix D) and group interviews (Appendix E). Interviews were an efficient means of collecting subjective data about group and individual experiences of the activities, events and actions related to my research topic. As Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander (1995) confirm “this type of in-depth interviewing enables the researcher to examine the dynamics of the group, and to interpret the views of the members of the group irrespective of whether their views are consensual or in conflict” (p.71). Where teachers’ timetables made it possible, teachers participating in the group interviews were followed up with individual interviews to tease out different viewpoints, to explore in further depth issues raised by the group, and to clarify or triangulate early analytical insights.

I conducted each interview which lasted 30 to 40 minutes. All the interviews were digitally audio-recorded and transcribed where participants gave informed consent. Hand written notes were taken during interviews with interviewees who did not give their consent for audio recording. At the beginning of the interview, issues of confidentiality were discussed and a rapport was established with the interviewees. Signed consent forms were collected. The conditions for conducting each interview were also negotiated with the teachers, including the time and date for the interviews, length of time required for the interviews, purpose and aims of the interviews, purpose of tape recording interviews and follow-up processes for member checking.

Where possible interviews were conducted first with members of the senior executive, then with groups of teachers, and followed up with individual interviews. The senior executive, group and individual interview protocols were semi-structured around a schedule of topics guiding the questioning rather than a rigid sequence of questions (Appendix D,E & F). A semi-structured interview approach was preferred to facilitate the dynamics and interactions among the interviewees in the explication of topics for discussion. This approach provided greater flexibility than a survey-style closed question

interview and directed the teachers to focus on the content of the issues that were central to the research question. However, it is acknowledged that such an approach can be susceptible to interview bias.

Group interviews

The purpose of group interviews was to encourage teachers' participation in open and interactive discussion by providing a social context for the research. Therefore, group discussions provide an opportunity to explore how the teachers interact as well as how they think and respond to the topic of collective responsibility (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In the interviews, teachers' views about internal agreement within the school, how they came to a consensus on school goals and how they resolved differences and conflict were investigated. Questions also probed how teachers' access to professional development was structured and their judgement of how effective these opportunities had been on influencing their classroom practice and the way in which they worked together. Secondly, the group interviews facilitated participants' reactions to and allowed them to build on the responses of other group members, thereby adding to the depth and diversity of responses. This was particularly relevant in gaining an understanding of social and professional interactions, relational trust and interpersonal relationships among different individuals and groups (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Minichiello et al., 1995).

As much as possible I let conversations flow within the group interviews, directing probing questions only to clarify or delve deeper into an issue, or to ensure that all participants' voices were heard. I was aware that the internal dynamics of the group may have influenced individual participant responses. I addressed this issue by interviewing senior executive and new teachers separately to attempt to minimise the constraining effects of perceived power imbalances.

In some group interviews individual interviewees were more articulate, had greater depth of experience or were more confident to speak up. It was possible that the direction taken

and ideas expressed in group interviews were dominated by one or more group members; and conversely some group members may have been intimidated, uncomfortable or reluctant to express a counter view (Minichiello et al, 1995). By conducting individual interviews, I was able to address some of these issues.

Individual interviews

In the individual interviews a deeper understanding of the teachers' private interpretations, points of view and different perspectives about the research topic were explored. I opened with questions such as "I'm interested in understanding how collaboration amongst teachers in your school operates," "what do you understand by the term collective responsibility?" and "how do you see your idea of collective responsibility present in your school?" In addition, I structured the individual interviews to probe, more deeply than was possible in the group interviews, teachers' perceptions of what collective responsibility meant and what evidence they drew from in their school to describe this phenomenon. From teachers' responses a flow of conversation was encouraged, with the discussion focused on factors related to the organisation of professional development, the degree of collegiality and trust among teachers, teachers' experience and practice in implementing the Quality Teaching model and commitment of the whole staff to consistency in the quality of a continuum for student learning across all stages.

While I adhered to an interview format to maintain consistency in the data collection process (see Appendix E) during successive interviews in each school, I slightly modified and improved the format as experience showed that some questions were more productive in some schools than others, particularly where teachers reported that engagement with the Quality Teaching model had been limited to one-off staff meetings or isolated external expert delivered events. As interviews progressed from school to school, patterns emerged in relation to the strongest determinants of collective responsibility in each school. As teachers' responses illuminated convergence, and in other cases contradictions, related to their views about the conditions that supported or

hindered the development of collective responsibility in their school, these views were tested with successive interviewees to seek possible explanations or clarification. In this way some clarity began to emerge concurrently with the collection of the interview data across the four sites.

Document collection

A number of artefacts were also collected with teachers' informed consent. These included copies of recent school management plans and annual school reports. I also collected copies of policies and procedures developed in relation to professional development practices at each school. In addition, where schools had evaluated professional development activities, copies of these documents were sourced. Not all types of artefacts were available for collection from each school (see Appendix G).

These artefacts provided a source of additional evidence related to how teachers' collective responsibility for student learning was supported or hindered in each school. The artefacts also yielded information related to the organisation of professional development activities and provided insights into how these opportunities contributed to the formation of professional community focused on improving student learning (Halverson, 2006).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DATA SET

Survey data set

Survey data were collected in two primary and two secondary schools. A total of 84 teachers across the four schools completed the survey. The sample group and response rate in each of the four schools is reported in Table 3.3 below. The survey response varied from a relatively high response rate at Jossey High of 78% of the total staff to a low response rate of 12% at Aran Heights High. Greengate Primary returned a response rate of

68% and Tall Trees, the smallest school in the study, returned 29% response rate to the survey.

Table 3.3 Survey response rates

School case	Total number of staff	Response rate		Gender of respondents	
		Number of respondents	% of school staff	Male	Female
Greengate Primary	25	17	68%	2	15
Tall Trees Primary	24	7	29%	1	6
Aran Heights High	100	12	12%	6	6
Jossey High	61	48	78%	14	34
Total		84		23	61

Profile of the survey data set

Characteristics of the data sample for each of the four schools are reported in Table 3.4 below. Of the 68% of Greengate teachers who completed the survey, 52% were permanent full time teachers and 31% were temporary teachers. Of the thirteen permanent teachers, six reported that they had less than three years total teaching experience.

At Tall Trees, the profile of the teachers responding to the survey represented an even distribution across the sample group in terms of prior years of experience and number of years teaching. Forty three percent of teachers recorded having less than three years prior experience at the school, 28% of teachers between four and nine years teaching experience at the school and 43% teachers reported having been at the school for more than ten years.

As stated in Table 3.4, 12 teachers responded to the survey at Aran Heights High School. Of these teachers 17% had been teaching at the school three years or less and equally 17% had more than ten years service in the school. The highest response rate to the survey occurred at Jossey High School. Of the 48 teachers who completed the survey, 23% stated they had less than three years teaching experience. In addition, 50% of respondents reported having less than three years of experience teaching at the school. Only 6% of respondents reported having more than 10 years teaching experience at the school.

Table 3.4 Summary of respondents' teaching experience

School case	Total years teaching experience *			Number of years teaching in present school *		
	(% of total respondents)			(% of total respondents)		
	0-3	4-9	>10	0-3	4-9	>10
Greengate Primary (n=17)	6 (35%)	6 (35%)	5 (30%)	14 (82%)	3 (18%)	0 (0%)
Tall Trees Primary (n=7)	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	4 (50%)	2 (28.5%)	2 (28.5%)	3 (43%)
Aran Heights High (n=12)	2 (17%)	1 (8%)	9 (75%)	2 (17%)	5 (42%)	2 (17%)
Jossey High (n=48)	11 (23%)	12 (25%)	22 (46%)	24 (50%)	19 (40%)	3 (6%)

*Note: not all respondents provided information for these survey items.

Comparison of teaching experience in the four schools

As indicated in Table 3.4 Greengate Primary respondents (35%) and Jossey High respondents (23%) had the largest proportion of respondents in their first three years of teaching. The senior executive team included the Principal, one full-time Assistant Principal, two part-time Assistant Principals and two part-time relieving Assistant Principals. Experienced teachers represented one-third of the staff. Only two full-time

teachers and two part-time teachers had been at the school for longer than six years. The remaining two-thirds of the staff, including two members of the senior executive, had been at the school less than two years or were new entrants into the teaching profession with Greengate being their first teaching appointment.

Survey respondents from Tall Trees Primary (35%) represented the largest proportion with the longest teaching experience in their present school followed by Aran Heights High (17%). Aran Heights High respondents (75%) represented the highest proportion of teachers who had more than ten years total teaching experience followed by Tall Trees Primary respondents (50%). Greengate Primary respondents (82%) had the highest proportion of respondents who were newly appointed to the school.

Descriptive statistics for the data set

Analysis of the survey data for each case study school is reported in later chapters. For each data set the mean, standard error and standard deviation for survey items in questions 10-14 are reported in Appendix H for Greengate Primary, Appendix I for Tall Trees Primary, Appendix J for Aran Heights High and Appendix K for Jossey High.

Interview data set

The interview data set was comprised of digitally recorded and transcribed interviews from the 72 teachers who participated in 54 individual and eight group interviews. The data set, described in Table 3.5 below, provides details for the total number of teachers in each school, the number of group and individual interviews, total number of interviewees, and breakdown of the data set by gender. The two primary schools were of comparable size. Aran Heights was the larger of the two secondary schools but returned the lowest response rate in relation to teachers interviewed. The sample included more females than males affected especially by the small number of male teachers interviewed at Greengate and Tall Trees primary schools.

Table 3.5 **Characteristics of the interview data set**

School case	N =staff in the school	N=group interviews	N=individual interviews	N=total interviewees	Gender	
					Male	Female
Greengate Primary	25	2	14	18	4	14
Tall Trees Primary	24	0	13	13	2	11
Aran Heights High	100	3	12	18	9	9
Jossey High School	61	3	15	23	8	15
Total	210	8	54	72	23	49

Preparation of the interview data

All interview data were transcribed with the exception of three interviewees who did not give permission for their interviews to be recorded. The transcribed interview data were returned to each interviewee for checking. Each school and interviewee was assigned a pseudonym for the purposes of coding and reporting data. The interviews generated data consisting of descriptive accounts of the kinds of professional relationships teachers formed and teachers' perceptions about the presence or absence of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning. All quotes reported in the case studies in the following chapters came from transcriptions of teacher interviews collected during the site visits.

Coding the data

The interview data were systematically coded and analysed to build a picture of the processes for developing collective responsibility. The data were transcribed, replayed and reviewed several times before being coded to analyse the extent to which the five key variables of professional development, professional community, efficacy, trust and accountability existed in each school. A coding frame was developed from these variables using alpha numeric and colour coding to highlight sub-groups in the data for each variable. Highlighted transcribed data were then thematically grouped in electronic files to aid deeper data analysis and reporting.

LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY

As already mentioned, the choice of mixed methods approach for my study was based on the logic that reality is complex and contextual. This approach was chosen because of its capability to employ robust tools to cover several angles; describe the manifestation of the phenomenon in its context; and describe in detail local contextual conditions (Smith, 2006). The small number of case studies is a possible limitation. However, it is generally accepted that qualitative samples are usually small in size (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The scale of study is more often related to its intensive nature and the extent of resources and time available. In addition, the site selection for the present study is acknowledged as a potential limitation. Using a common set of criteria to identify the sites for my study reduced the likelihood of statistical difference across the cases. It was important to identify sites where the phenomenon of collective responsibility was likely to be present so that the conditions for its development and unfolding nature could be investigated (Smith, 2006).

As stated previously the administration of the survey produced variability in the response rates including a disappointing 12% at Aran Heights High School as compared to Jossey High's response rate of 78%. The survey sample could also have been a source of sampling bias due to the respondents self-selecting into the sample or choosing not to be included in the sample through non-response¹¹. In this way those choosing to be in the sample may not be representative of the whole school population. To address this issue the standard error was calculated to determine how well the sample represented the whole school populations. Inspection of the results indicated that the standard error for each school was small in comparison to the mean for each item. It is therefore feasible to conclude that the sample means are similar to the school population mean in each case. Therefore, the sample was likely to be an accurate reflection of the population (Field, 2005).

¹¹ A high rate of non-response is a recognised problem with the administration of surveys.

Site factors were considered to be influential in the survey response rates. For example, at Jossey High, teachers were given time to complete the survey during a regular staff meeting. This procedure was not replicated at the other sites. Overall, teachers in the selected sites appeared more willing to participate in 40 minute interviews than complete a 15 minute survey. Variability in the population size across the four schools may have limited the factor analysis considering responses from Jossey High School represented 48 of the total 84 responses (78%). A factor analysis was conducted using item mean scores to identify clusters of variables. This reduced the data set to a more manageable size while maximising the amount of original data retained. Factor loadings and Cronbach alpha for each variable are reported in the next chapter. To address the issue of variation within the groups as opposed to variation between the groups the percentage of variance was calculated (Field, 2005). The Eigenvalues were inspected and the percentage of variance after rotation was calculated. While some of the information was lost in the factor extraction, the amount of variance in each variable retained is reported and explained in the next chapter.

More sampling error variance is likely to occur when the sample size is small and composed of multiple groups from different schools with different standard deviations in each group. To determine if the sample effect size was inflated by sampling error, a test was run on the mean scale scores in ANOVA using descriptive determinant analysis to calculate (Hays, 1981; Vacha-Haase & Thompson, 2004). The results indicated that there was no statistical difference between the schools and therefore comparison of means is permissible within the context of my study.

Self selection to complete the survey and participate in interviews is acknowledged as another limitation. While the criteria for participating in the interviews was that teachers had participated in collaborative professional development focused on improving the quality of teaching and student learning, in a small number of cases, non-participants in

such processes volunteered to be interviewed. This contributed some interesting and contrasting insights.

Finally, researcher bias is acknowledged as a limitation in my study. The nature of qualitative method design immerses the researcher deeply in the study. Guarding against making judgemental comments and carefully responding by probing rather than signalling agreement or disagreement to a response were important control measures (Cresswell, 2007; Silverman, 2000). To mitigate against potential bias and to ensure the legitimacy of the interpretations represented in the data analyses reported as findings, I used member checking of the interview transcripts, and informant feedback on preliminary analyses. I preserved the integrity of the original data to retain the digital audio files by creating an electronic audit trail to aid the interview data analyses and used rich and thick description in reporting the findings (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003).

CONCLUSION

The methodology described in this chapter addresses the complex and multifaceted nature of collective responsibility. While the limitations of the methodology are acknowledged, using a mixed methods approach facilitates investigating teachers' collective responsibility from a variety of perspectives in multiple sites. The quantitative data affords the use of correlation analysis of the variables identified as theoretically related to collective responsibility. Application of qualitative methods supports the collection of rich and thick descriptions to capture the unfolding nature of collective responsibility in greater depth than previous studies have been designed to investigate. In following chapters the evidence from data collected in four schools to address the research question is presented.

CHAPTER 4

EXPLORATION OF THE VARIABLES RELATED TO COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

INTRODUCTION

In this study I am interested in investigating in greater depth than previous studies a complex set of variables that, as reported previously in this thesis, are theoretically related to collective responsibility. In this chapter I present the results and an analysis of quantitative data obtained from the teacher survey to address two aspects of the research question. The first aspect examined is the statistical relationship among the variables related to collective responsibility drawn from the literature reviewed for my study. The second aspect explains the results from the correlation between individual teacher responsibility and collective responsibility as a group phenomenon. The results of factor analysis using Pearson's Bivariate analysis, examination of scale reliability and the factor structure are presented. This is followed by a discussion of comparisons among seven key variables for collective responsibility arising from the factor analysis. Finally, conclusions are drawn from the correlations that produced a positive relationship with collective responsibility.

PREPARATION OF THE SURVEY DATA

The data set was loaded into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows V15 (2006) to enable statistical analysis. Responses to items in Questions 10-13, which were about Quality Teaching, professional learning, teaching goals and efficacy respectively were coded using a four-point Likert scale, where strongly disagree was coded as 1 and strongly agree was coded as 4. Responses to items in Question 14 in

relation to views about collective responsibility and trust were coded using a five point Likert scale 0 (unsure) to 4 (nearly all). The off scale response alternative, unsure, was coded as 0 and excluded from the computations. It should be noted that eight items framed in the negative required recoding to enable statistical comparison of the means.

For the whole data set, composite scores for each of the items were computed to give mean scale values for each case. In calculating mean scale values missing values were replaced using the mean of nearby points substituting missing values with the mean of valid surrounding values. Mean substitution was only applied where the respondent had answered over half of the items pertaining to the relevant scale. The impact of mean substitution was assessed by inspecting factor loadings for items for each scale computed in SPSS prior to and after mean substitution was applied. There were no discernible differences in the pattern of factors loading after mean substitution. On this basis the judgement was made that mean substitution was an acceptable way to preserve cases for analysis in this small sample situation.

FACTOR ANALYSIS AND SCALE RELIABILITY

Each of the scales comprising variables in Question 10 to Question 14 were then subjected to separate factor analyses to ensure that items in each measure were strongly related to each other. The results for skewness and kurtosis indicated that there was nothing to significantly threaten the factor analysis.

A factor analysis of the survey data was conducted in SPSS using Principal axis factoring with a rotation method Varimax with Kaiser normalisation. Items that loaded on more than one factor loading of 0.40 or above, or that loaded lower than 0.40 on any factor, were eliminated (Stevens, 1992). Eigenvalues were inspected for extraction with items with a value < 1 . The percentage of variance for the extracted items is also reported

acknowledging that some information is lost in the extraction process. Seven independent variables were identified in this factor structure for further statistical analysis.

Factor structure

The seven independent variables identified from the factor analysis are:

- (1) teachers' satisfaction with professional learning on Quality Teaching (PL for QT)
- (2) impact of professional learning on teaching practice (PL impact)
- (3) consistency of the professional development focus on the school's goals (PL consistency)
- (4) shared commitment to the quality of teaching (commitment)
- (5) commitment to the school's goals (shared goals)
- (6) teachers' collective responsibility for student learning (collective responsibility)
- (7) teacher-to-teacher trust (trust)

The factor structure is explained and reported for each variable in Tables 4.1 to 4.7 below. Table 4.1 identifies items that measured teachers' satisfaction with the focus for professional development on Quality Teaching from Q10 of the survey. Items in this scale returned factor loadings from 0.44 to 0.70 with an alpha reliability of 0.79. Items 10 (b) and 10(f) were excluded from this scale as they loaded as a second factor. A decision was made not to include factors with less than three items even if the alpha reliability was greater than 0.5.

**Table 4.1 Satisfaction with the focus for professional development on Quality Teaching
(alpha = 0.79)**

Item	Factor loading	Initial Eigenvalues	Extraction Sum of Squared Loadings
		% of variance	% of variance
Understanding of QT through PL	0.70	0.75	33.80
PL focused on 3 dimensions of QT	0.65	0.65	7.20
Not gained deep understanding of QT through PL	0.64	0.64	
QT for self reflection	0.62	0.62	
PL on QT focused on assessment	0.50	0.54	
PL on QT for classroom practice	0.44	0.52	

Two independent variables resulted from the factor analysis of the items in Question 11 asking respondents to rate the effectiveness of their professional learning experiences and the level of consistency between professional learning and their school culture. Three items that assessed teachers' perceptions about the impact of professional learning on their teaching practice had factor loadings from 0.57 to 0.93 with an alpha of 0.76, as displayed in Table 4.2. Item 11(d) was removed from this factor structure as it had a low factor loading of 0.36.

**Table 4.2 Impact of professional learning
(alpha = 0.76)**

Item	Factor Loading	Initial Eigenvalues	Extraction Sum of Squared Loadings
		% of variance	% of variance
PL has influenced assessment tasks	0.93	33.94	28.23
PL has improved teaching practice	0.61	20.70	15.56
PL supported by other initiatives	0.57	13.23	6.61

A second factor consisted of three items that measured teachers' perceptions of the consistency of the professional development focus on school goals (Table 4.3). These items had factor loadings from 0.61 to 0.78 with an alpha of 0.73. Item 11(e) was not included as it had a relatively low factor loading of 0.32.

Table 4.3 Consistency of the professional development focus on the school's goals (alpha = 0.73)

Item	Factor Loading	Initial Eigenvalues	Extraction Sum of Squared Loadings
		% of variance	% of variance
PL focused on school targets	0.78	9.13	
PL sustained and consistently focused	0.69	7.97	
Curriculum, teaching, learning not coordinated	0.61	7.02	

The factor analysis conducted on the results from Question 12 produced two separate factors. In relation to teachers' personal commitment to improve teaching the items in this variable had factor loadings from 0.65 to 0.89 with a reliability of 0.82 (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Shared commitment to the quality of teaching (alpha = 0.82)

Item	Factor Loading	Initial Eigenvalues	Extraction Sum of Squared Loadings
		% of variance	% of variance
Commitment to quality curriculum and teaching	0.89	74.64	62.47
Shared vision for student learning	0.66	14.90	
Cooperative effort among staff	0.65	10.46	

Results from Q12 also identified the variable for teachers' commitment to their school's goals. This variable had factor loadings from 0.45 to 0.94 with an alpha of 0.73 (see Table

4.5). Two items 12 (e) and (f) did not load against either factor. In relation to item 12(e), assessing whether teachers coordinated lessons with others, issues related to this item were probed in the teacher interviews and results are reported in Chapter 7. Item 12 (f) asking teachers to comment on whether teachers focused on how well students learn rather than how they were teaching (reversed), on a 4 point scale of 1-4, had a mean score of 2.53 and a standard deviation of 0.64. This was also identified as an issue for further investigation through qualitative data analysis.

**Table 4.5 Commitment to school goals
(alpha = 0.73)**

Item	Factor Loading	Initial Eigenvalues	Extraction Sum of Squared Loadings
		% of variance	% of variance
Teachers and executive agree on discipline	0.94	58.58	38.40
School goals are clear to me	0.50	22.72	
Most colleagues share my beliefs	0.45	18.70	

Five of the eight items on Bryk and Schneider's (2002) scale for collective responsibility in Q13 were identified as one variable with loadings from 0.54 to 0.90 with an alpha of 0.86 (see Table 4.6). Two items, 12(b) and 12(f) addressing teacher responsibility to help students and teacher responsibility to help each other, were identified as a second variable but were not considered sufficiently robust as a variable. Item 14(a) teachers' responsibility for student failure did not load on any variable. A possible suggestion for this result is that teachers were not prepared to make a public disclosure on this item in the survey. Further probing of teachers' responsibility for student achievement was addressed in the teacher interviews and is reported in the analysis of the qualitative data in later chapters.

Table 4.6 Collective responsibility
(alpha = 0.86)

Item	Factor Loading	Initial Eigenvalues	Extraction Sum of Squared Loadings
		% of variance	% of variance
High expectations for student achievement	0.90	64.18	56.21
Set high standards for themselves	0.77	14.16	
Feel responsible that all students learn	0.75	11.07	
Take responsibility for improving school	0.73	6.19	
Maintain discipline in entire school	0.54	4.40	

The six items (Q14) in Bryk and Schneider's (2002) original trust scale loaded as one variable ranging from factor loadings of 0.48 to 0.78 with an alpha of 0.83 (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7 Teacher-to-teacher trust
(alpha = 0.83)

Item	Factor Loading	Initial Eigenvalues	Extraction Sum of Squared Loadings
		% of variance	% of variance
OK to discuss feelings, worries, frustrations	0.78	54.92	46.70
Expert teachers respected	0.77	13.99	
Feel respected by others	0.75	12.14	
Respect others who take lead in school improvement	0.72	8.24	
Really care about each other	0.56	6.80	
Trust each other	0.48	3.91	

Teacher Responsibility scale

This scale returned a low alpha (0.49) with the items cross-loading as three variables. As a result, the seven-item scale in Question 13 measuring individual Teacher Responsibility was discarded from further analysis as an independent variable. While the Teacher Responsibility scale was not included as a factor, some items in this scale explored personal attitudes and beliefs about the individual teachers' responsibility for student learning, as measured by Lee and Smith (1996), a correlation analysis was conducted on the individual items with the variables arising from the factor analysis. These results are discussed later in this chapter. Each of the seven variables produced by the factor analysis was computed for mean values. The results are reported in the following section on comparison of means.

COMPARISON OF MEANS

As previously stated, the survey response rate varied across school sites ranging from a response rate of 78% (Jossey High School) to 12% (Aran Heights High School) of the total teaching population in each school. While in itself this is not a surprising result, it did impact on the extent to which statistical analysis was useful in my study.

Table 4.8 reports the mean scores, standard deviations and standard errors of the seven variables for the whole data sample.

Table 4.8 Descriptive statistics for factors computed as mean variables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
PL for QT	84	2.00	3.83	2.96	.05	.41
PL impact	84	2.00	4.00	3.15	.05	.47
PL coherence	84	1.00	4.00	2.95	.06	.53
Collective Responsibility	84	1.60	4.00	3.24	.07	.66
Trust	84	1.83	4.00	3.29	.06	.58
Shared goals	84	1.00	4.00	2.86	.06	.54
Commitment	84	1.00	4.00	3.12	.05	.49

The lowest possible score of 1 represents strongly disagree ranging to a highest possible score of 4 representing strong agreement with the exception of the trust and collective responsibility scales. For these variables, the lowest possible score of 1 represents none of the teachers in the school and the highest possible score of 4 indicates that nearly all teachers at the school, in the view of the respondent, exhibit trust and collective responsibility. The mid-point for each scale was 2.5, so any score above 2.5 indicates agreement. Items worded negatively were reverse coded to produce comparable results.

For all seven variables the mean scores were above the midpoint of 2.5. Inspection of the data indicated that there was very little difference between the schools in terms of satisfaction with their professional learning focused on Quality Teaching (mean 2.96, SD 0.41), that their professional learning had an impact on their teaching (mean 3.15, SD 0.47) and that there was consistency in the content of professional development with the school goals (mean 2.95, SD 0.53). There was also overall agreement that teachers were committed publicly to improving the quality of their teaching (mean 3.12, SD 0.49) and teachers shared in their commitment to the school's goals (mean 2.86, SD 0.54). Overall the data revealed that respondents across the four schools agreed that most teachers trusted each other professionally (mean 3.29, SD 0.58) and that they agreed teachers' displayed collective responsibility for student learning (mean 3.24, SD 0.66).

Table 4.9 Comparison of Means, Standard Deviations and Standard Errors for the seven independent variables by school

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
PL for QT	Greengate PS	17	2.88	.49	.12
	Aran Heights HS	12	3.00	.46	.13
	Jossey HS	48	3.00	.40	.06
	Tall Trees PS	7	2.90	.26	.10
	Total	84	2.96	.41	.05
PL impact	Greengate PS	17	3.02	.48	.12
	Aran Heights HS	12	3.03	.41	.12
	Jossey HS	48	3.23	.49	.07
	Tall Trees PS	7	3.19	.38	.14
	Total	84	3.15	.47	.05
PD consistency	Greengate PS	17	2.71	.44	.11
	Aran Heights HS	12	2.98	.62	.18
	Jossey HS	48	3.07	.53	.08
	Tall Trees PS	7	2.71	.30	.11
	Total	84	2.95	.53	.06
Commitment	Greengate PS	17	3.06	.44	.11
	Aran Heights HS	12	3.11	.52	.15
	Jossey HS	48	3.15	.51	.07
	Tall Trees PS	7	3.00	.51	.19
	Total	84	3.12	.49	.05
Shared goals	Greengate PS	17	2.81	.43	.10
	Aran Heights HS	12	2.97	.47	.13
	Jossey HS	48	2.85	.62	.09
	Tall Trees PS	7	2.86	.18	.07
	Total	84	2.86	.54	.06
Trust	Greengate PS	17	3.19	.53	.15
	Aran Heights HS	12	3.45	.44	.16
	Jossey HS	48	3.28	.61	.10
	Tall Trees PS	7	3.30	.75	.25
	Total	84	3.29	.58	.07
Collective Responsibility	Greengate PS	17	3.40	.60	.13
	Aran Heights HS	12	3.34	.54	.13
	Jossey HS	48	3.09	.68	.09
	Tall Trees PS	7	3.64	.65	.28
	Total	84	3.24	.66	.06

On inspection of the results represented in Table 4.9, across the sample, there were almost no statistically significant differences between schools on these variables. One statistical difference between schools was identified between Greengate Primary and Jossey High for Collective Responsibility (0.55 between the two schools' mean scores approximating one standard deviation) but was not statistically significant. A comparison of means using analysis of variance revealed the differences between the schools did not reach the threshold of significance. This result is not surprising given the sites were purposively identified based on a common set of criteria related to collective responsibility. The sites were selected using these criteria on the basis that if such elements were present there would be a greater likelihood of collective responsibility being an attribute of the school.

Of note however, for Greengate Primary School, was that the mean scores for each variable were below the means for other schools except on the scale for Collective Responsibility. For this variable Greengate had a mean=3.40 (SD 0.60) indicating that while the mean was high there was a range in mean scores from 2.80 to 4.00. In comparison, for Jossey High School the mean scores were at, or above the mean scores for all variables except Collective Responsibility, for which it returned the lowest mean= 3.09 but the largest SD= 0.68.

Analysis of variance and effect size estimations

Analyses were performed to test whether the group means on each of the seven variables differed between schools, using analysis of variance to test the statistical difference and an estimate of explained variance to assess effect sizes. Using results from the analysis of variance the analogous omega squared was computed using the correction formula (Hays, 1981). This test was applied to remove the possible influence of sampling error variance due to the overall small sample size and the uniqueness of the sample (Vacha-Hasse & Thompson, 2004). Inspection of the results reported for in Appendix L indicates that none of the variables were statistically different between schools and the overall amount of variance of these factors explained by school differences was small (between 1-6%).

While these differences may not be noteworthy, deeper comparison of subtle differences between schools is an issue for investigation in the analysis and reporting of the qualitative data in the following chapters. To obtain a further overview of the relationship between variables related to the research question, data from each of the variables were compared, first by whole scales then by selected individual items.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

In the next section, findings related to correlations between the mean variables for the whole sample are reported and conclusions are drawn, informing the analysis of data captured in the teacher interviews in subsequent chapters. The first phase of this statistical analysis was conducted to examine the correlations among the factors for collective responsibility in my survey. Bivariate Pearson product-moment correlations were computed in SPSS to establish the relationship between the seven variables derived from the factor analysis. Statistical significance was assessed using a two tailed test and the results reported in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 **Correlations among variables related to collective responsibility**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. PL for QT						
2. Impact of PL	0.60**					
3. PD consistency	0.24*	0.22*				
4. Commitment	0.28*	0.28*	0.64**			
5. Shared goals	0.33**	0.28*	0.50**	0.60**		
6. Collective Responsibility	0.08	0.03	0.22*	0.41**	0.53**	
7. Trust	0.16	0.13	0.33**	0.50**	0.53**	0.68**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results above show that teachers' collective responsibility for student learning was positively and significantly related to: the consistency of professional

development focused on school goals ($r = 0.22, p < 0.05$); their commitment to improve the quality of their teaching ($r = 0.41, p < 0.01$); teachers' commitment to the school's goals ($r = 0.53, p < 0.01$); and teacher-to-teacher trust ($r = 0.68, p < 0.01$). Teacher-to-teacher trust, as expected, was positively and significantly related to: the consistency of professional development focus on the school's goals ($r = 0.33, p < 0.01$); commitment to the quality of teaching ($r = 0.50, p < 0.01$) and teachers' commitment to the school's goals ($r = 0.53, p < 0.01$).

As expected there were no negative correlations among the seven variables. Consistent with previous studies (Bolam et al, 2005; Lee & Smith, 1996; Louis et al, 1995) there was a moderately high positive correlation between collective responsibility and teachers' commitment to the quality of teaching ($r = 0.41, p < 0.01$). This finding is likely to be associated with teachers' high expectations for the quality of teaching, where there is a culture of accountability for colleagues to take on their fair share of the workload, in their efforts to improve their teaching, and peer pressure on those who do not.

A positive correlation was also found between teachers' satisfaction with their professional learning on Quality Teaching and: teachers' perceptions of the consistency of professional development with school goals ($r = 0.24, p < 0.05$); their commitment to improving teaching ($r = 0.28, p < 0.05$); and to the development of shared goals for the school ($r = 0.33, p < 0.01$). This indicates that for the schools in the study the survey respondents perceived there was alignment between the focus of the professional development and the schools' and teachers' goals to improve the quality of teaching.

In contrast to the above results, there are low and non-significant correlations for the three variables: professional learning for Quality Teaching; professional development consistency; and shared goals; with collective responsibility and teacher-to-teacher trust. This indicates that the extent of the focus on Quality Teaching and the extent of the impact on professional learning reported by these teachers are not significantly related to (or not significantly associated with)

teachers' perceptions of collective responsibility or teacher-to-teacher trust. In part this might be because the types of professional learning experiences associated with Quality Teaching are not rated as strongly connecting with developing trust and collective responsibility by respondents. A further possible explanation is that the organisation of professional learning was not seen by teachers as promoting meaningful opportunities to engage in collaborative processes with colleagues on issues of joint planning for curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. This result could also relate to the way professional development to introduce the Quality Teaching Model was conducted. Further investigation of the low level impact of professional learning related to Quality Teaching held by the teachers in the survey sample is further interrogated with respect to qualitative data in the following chapters.

The results also pointed to a possible issue with having limited opportunities for teachers to get to know their colleagues professionally across the whole school and more widely than their immediate faculty or grade partners. The level of trust in colleagues and its link to collective responsibility as identified in the positive correlations in Table 4.10 required close bonds to form among colleagues across a school, beyond their grade or faculty. These features are consistent with creating a culture of trust and so become a socio-cultural property of schools (Geist & Hoy, 2004, Louis and Kruse, 1995). For the schools in the present study, such strong socio-cultural features were not evident in the results from the survey.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEASURES OF TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Previously, in Chapter 3, I argued that aggregated measures of individual teacher responsibility (Quadrant 2, Table 3.2) and broader measures such as group perceptions about teachers' collective responsibility and teacher-to-teacher trust (Quadrant 4, Table 3.2) were conceptually different. While the results from my study are not conclusive, there are some significant differences between how teachers in my study responded to items about teacher responsibility and how they responded about collective responsibility.

The items drawn from Lee and Smith's (1996) scale for Teacher Responsibility replicated in my study were:

- 13(a) "I feel that I have been successful in providing the kind of education that I would like to provide for students."
- 13(b) "Many of the students I teach are not capable of learning the material I am supposed to teach them." (reverse coded)
- 13(d) "The attitudes and habits my students bring to my class greatly reduce their chances for academic success." (reverse coded)
- 13(e) "My success or failure in teaching students is due primarily to factors beyond my control rather than to my own efforts and ability." (reverse coded)

Correlations between these four items and the items for collective responsibility are reported below. As shown in Table 4.11 there was variability in the correlation between the selected items in the two scales with four items in the group measure of collective responsibility (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) producing no statistically significant correlation with Lee and Smith's (1996) teacher responsibility items.

Table 4.11 Correlation between items for Teacher Responsibility and items for Collective Responsibility

Collective responsibility items	13(a)	13(b)	13(d)	13(e)
Feel responsible when students fail	-0.13	0.11	-0.18	0.07
Feel responsible to help each other do their best	0.16	-.026	.02	0.05
Maintain whole school discipline	0.12	-.016	0.13	0.09
Take responsibility to improve the whole school	0.17	0.19	0.30(**)	0.23(*)
Feel responsible to help students develop self control	0.12	-0.10	0.17	0.04
Set high standards for themselves	0.30(**)	0.28(**)	0.30(**)	0.20
Feel responsible that all students learn	0.30(**)	0.11	0.11	-0.02
Have high expectations for student achievement	0.25(*)	0.12	0.13	0.04

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The most statistically significant result was related to teacher efficacy with teachers setting high expectations for themselves ($r = 0.30, p < 0.01$); feeling responsible that all students learn ($r = 0.30, p < 0.01$); and as a group having high standards for student achievement ($r = 0.25, p < 0.05$). That is, collective responsibility was positively related to teachers' beliefs that they were effective in providing the kind of education they wanted for their students.

With respect to the group measure for setting high standards, two items in the teacher responsibility scale, both reverse coded, ($r = 0.28, p < 0.01$) and students' learning disposition (attitude and habits) ($r = 0.30, p < 0.01$) returned significant correlations. This result possibly suggests that teachers' perceptions about students' prior achievement influences their expectations for future academic achievement. As stated previously the results from a factor analysis of the items in the Teacher Responsibility scale returned a low alpha and were not included in the correlation analysis. However, analysis of results for the mean and standard deviation for Teacher Responsibility items produced some interesting findings. It is important to note that responses to three items, 13(b, d, e) in the scale were reverse coded to ensure that the results for the means were comparable across the items. The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following Teacher Responsibility items in the survey:

- 13(a) "I feel that I have been successful in providing the kind of education that I would like to provide for students." (mean 3.04, SD 0.52);
- 13(c) "Teachers at this school challenge me to think differently about my teaching." (mean 2.54, SD 0.68);
- 13(e) "My success or failure in teaching students is due primarily to factors beyond my control rather than to my own efforts and ability." (reverse coded) (mean 3.27, SD 0.89); and
- 13(g) "Teachers at this school respect those colleagues who are expert at their craft." (mean 3.20, SD 0.58).

Item 13(g) had the highest mean score (mean 3.20, SD 0.58) related to teachers' respect for colleagues who were expert at their craft. The response to Item 13(f)

“When students in this school do not meet expected learning outcomes, teachers take most of the responsibility” returned a mean 2.5 (SD 0.55) indicating that teachers in the sample were equally divided in their opinion about whether teachers in their school took most of the responsibility when their students did not meet the intended learning outcomes. Returning a mean of 2.3 and a SD of 0.91, the majority of respondents disagreed that the attitudes and habits their students brought to class greatly reduced their chances for academic success.

A further test to obtain a Bivariate Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to identify if there were any significant relationships between the seven items in the Teacher Responsibility scale and the seven independent variables. The results are reported in Table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12 Correlations between variables related to collective responsibility and items measuring Teacher Responsibility

Factors related to Collective responsibility	Teacher Responsibility items						
	13a	13b	13c	13d	13e	13f	13g
PL for QT	.16	.24(*)	.02	.14	.23(*)	-.17	.11
Impact of PL	.12	.16	.08	.10	.30(**)	-.19	.17
PD consistency	.08	.02	.31(**)	.08	.26(*)	.17	.53(**)
Commitment	.25(*)	.08	.40(**)	.13	.18	.15	.49(**)
Shared goals	.33(**)	.23(*)	.18	.30(**)	.35(**)	.02	.46(**)
Collective responsibility	.28(**)	.17	.13	.25(*)	.14	.09	.38(**)
Trust	.12	.08	.16	.05	.23(*)	-.08	.40(**)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Item 13(f) asking respondents whether teachers took most of the responsibility when students did not meet the intended outcomes was the only item that did not significantly correlate with any of the variables in the survey related to teachers' collective responsibility. This finding appears to be consistent with the result for Item 14(a) that was excluded in the factor analysis possibly suggesting that teachers do not see themselves as responsible for students' failure to achieve. Three items, 13(a) ($r = 0.28, p < 0.01$), 13(d) ($r = 0.25, p < 0.05$) and 13(g) ($r = 0.38, p < 0.01$), produced a significant correlation with the variable of collective responsibility. This suggests that these items for teacher responsibility are positively correlated with collective responsibility when teachers feel that they are successful at providing the kind of education they value for students but acknowledge that the effectiveness of instruction is mediated by the attitudes and habits students bring to class.

Correlation analysis for excluded items

Three items did not load in the factor analyses against any variable. These items were correlated independently with the seven independent variables arising from the factor analysis to test for the possibility of significant relationships. The three items were:

- 12(e) "I make a conscious effort to coordinate the content of my lessons with other teachers.";
- 12(f) "At this school teachers focus on what and how well students are learning rather than how they are teaching."; and
- 14(a) "Teachers feel responsible when students in this school fail."

The results for the correlations between the factors related to collective responsibility and items not loading with the theoretically related scales are presented in Table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13 Correlations between variables and excluded items

Factors	Items		
	12(e)	12(f)	14(a)
1. PL on QT	0.23*	-0.02	-0.16
2. Impact of PL	0.12	-0.16	-0.02
3. PD Consistency	0.14	-0.07	-0.06
4. Commitment	0.24*	0.19	-0.05
5. Shared goals	0.14	0.19	-0.06
6. Collective responsibility	0.27*	0.13	0.05
7. Trust	0.10	-0.01	-0.06

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The item asking teachers if they felt responsible for students' academic failure (14a) did not correlate significantly with any of the variables theoretically related to the development of teachers' collective responsibility. This result suggests that teachers do not connect responsibility for their teaching directly with students' academic achievement. This finding is also consistent with prior research studies (see Lee and Smith, 1996) suggesting that teachers consider such variables as lack of control over the curriculum, students' prior record of academic achievement, students' attitudes and learning habits, and factors beyond their control contribute to student failure more than their efforts at teaching. Similarly, the item asking whether teachers focus on what and how well students are learning rather than how they are teaching (12f) produced no significant correlations with the variables related to collective responsibility.

With respect to item 12(e) seeking teachers' responses to the level of coordination of lessons between staff, there was significant positive correlation with collective responsibility ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.05$); professional learning focus on Quality Teaching ($r = 0.23$, $p < 0.05$); and teachers' commitment to improve the quality of their teaching ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.05$).

In summary, there is some conceptual overlap between teacher responsibility and the variable of collective responsibility in my study. Two items from Lee and Smith's

(1996) scale positively correlated with the mean variable for collective responsibility. That is, from my analysis it is possible to conclude that teacher responsibility for the success of their teaching to provide the kind of education they want for students is an aspect to consider in the development of collective responsibility. Similarly, teachers' beliefs that their efforts can impact on students' achievement beyond the attributes for learning that their students bring to the classroom could also be considered to be related to the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning.

CONCLUSION

With respect to my research question investigating conditions that support the development of collective responsibility for student learning, the analysis of the survey data suggests that teacher-to-teacher trust and teachers' shared understanding and commitment to a school's agreed goals as elements of professional community are positively correlated with teachers' collective responsibility for student learning. These findings are consistent with prior studies that identified collective responsibility as an outcome of professional community (Louis et al, 1996). This is also consistent with Bryk and Schneider's (2002) study that found relational trust within a faculty was dependent on a shared commitment to common practices which set standards for how instruction should be conducted.

In relation to the conditions that support or hinder the development of collective responsibility, professional development focused on Quality Teaching appears to have no statistically significant correlation with collective responsibility or teacher-to-teacher trust. In this case, professional development refers to the quality of professional learning experiences and teachers' engagement in professional development to further their understanding of Quality Teaching.

Given the implementation of Quality Teaching was not mandated, and the initial resource support for teachers' professional learning was not sustained across the government system in New South Wales it is not surprising that there was lack of

consistency in the professional development. A number of differences across schools in implementation timelines, as cited in the contextual background in Chapter 1, may also account for the lack of correlation between collective responsibility and professional learning for Quality Teaching.

Analysis of the qualitative data is required to build on and expand the findings from the survey data, especially in relation to the impact of Quality Teaching on the development of collective responsibility. In addition, in the future it may be useful to explore the relationship between professional learning for Quality Teaching and its impact on collective responsibility now that the model has had a longer period, since my data were collected, to influence the development of teachers' understanding, expertise and confidence to implement Quality Teaching.

CHAPTER 5

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY IN FOUR SCHOOLS

OVERVIEW

In the following four chapters, I provide an analysis of interview data, integrated with descriptive statistics from the survey where these contribute to the contextual picture of the respondent group. Five major themes emerged from the coding of the interview data: (1) the organisation of professional development; (2) teachers' perspectives about collective responsibility; (3) teachers' sense of collective struggle focused on improving all students' achievement; (4) teacher-to-teacher trust; and (5) pedagogical leadership. As expected the scope and depth within each of these themes varied in each school.

In reporting the analysis of the qualitative data, schools and interviewees have been assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. Some interviewees are more frequently quoted or used as examples than others because they had particular experiences and views that provided unique or different perspectives or they were particularly insightful and articulate in their discussions about the phenomena being investigated. Others were more able to articulate the complexity of elements in their school that supported or hindered the development of collective responsibility. Contrasting views at each school are also represented in the analysis.

INTRODUCTION

In this section I begin with a contextual overview of each of the four schools, Greengate and Tall Trees Primary and Aran Heights and Jossey High schools. I describe each school's unique educational setting and provide background contextual information about the organisation of professional development in each school. This information provides a rationale for how the school's educational goals

were established and related teacher professional learning organised (Schon & Teddlie, 2008). Included in the contextual information is an analysis of how professional development was organised in each school to explicitly focus on Quality Teaching.

The contextual overview for each school is followed by an elaboration of how the interviewees described collective responsibility in their own schools. Specifically, from the data in my study, teachers variously described collective responsibility in terms of: professional community (teacher collaboration focused on student learning, deprivatising practice and commitment to shared goals); trust (professional relationships) and accountability (duty of care/moral purpose and responsibility for providing students with a continuum of learning). Other aspects of collective responsibility, like efficacy, are at times interwoven into the analysis in this chapter, not as discrete topics but when associated with individual interviewees' perspectives on collective responsibility. Some of these aspects are reflected in the literature reported in Chapter 2 while others were extracted because of the frequency and/or consistency with which they are raised by interviewees. Consequently, not all these aspects are discussed in each school study.

GREENGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

We all have a real love for the kids here and ... empathy towards them. At this school we've got a relationship with our kids. You empathise with them so much more. And you're so much more patient with a child that's misbehaving if they've been in Afghanistan for the last four years. (Shelly)

* * * *

Contextual overview

Greengate Primary School is located in a multi-cultural district in south-western Sydney. The student population includes 35 ethnic backgrounds, with students predominantly from Pacific Islander, African, Middle Eastern, Asian and Anglo-Australian communities. A significant number of newly enrolled students do not speak English, being refugees requiring government assistance to adjust to schooling in their new environment. The student population, while stable at around

400 students, is generally transient for two main reasons. First, families with refugee status move to more permanent housing or leave the school because their temporary visas expire, and similarly new families move into the area. Second, students move between parents, grandparents and care givers for varying periods of time as a result of parental separation or dysfunctional family circumstances.

While Greengate is situated in a typically suburban setting, it had a distinct eco-sustainable environment. The Principal had actively sought funding to improve the physical environment of the school, replacing buried asbestos and asphalt playground surfaces with turf, and installing water tanks and solar panels. The local Member of Parliament's children attended Greengate. Local officials were also regular visitors to the school with photos in the entrance foyer and local press clippings attesting to their presence and support. Overall, to the outsider, Greengate presents as a school with a positive and welcoming climate. Teachers describe students as enjoying school life and valuing the opportunity for learning and security that the school offered. The school displays strong links with its multi-cultural parent community. Parents were visible and formally welcomed at morning assemblies. One teacher reflected that:

It's certainly a more relaxed and settled and happy, cohesive community if you know the parents. Parents seem to interact. It's a harmonious environment. (Gerard)

The school organises excursions for newly arrived parents and carers as a way of familiarising them with what their children might experience. Multi-cultural days are also an integral element of the curriculum.

Professional development

In 2007 the school was the recipient of funding for professional development, tied to systemic priorities for teacher learning, from the NSW State Government. In addition, Greengate's Principal actively sought external funding, both State and National, to supplement the school's allocation for professional learning. At the time of the study a number of teachers were involved in externally funded projects, such as an environmental education 'Blue Earth' project, English as a Second Language

(ESL) pedagogy project and two middle years initiatives with local partner schools, one focusing on information and communication technologies (ICT), and the other on values education. These projects provided opportunities for teachers to collaborate on teaching and learning activities across Stages and in some cases across schools.

In addition, during the previous year (2006) six early-career teachers and three mentors participated in an Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (AGQTP)¹² designed to support teachers in their first year of teaching. One of the funding requirements was that teachers engaged with the NSW Quality Teaching model (2003) to guide their professional learning, teaching and classroom management. With respect to teachers' engagement in professional learning to implement Quality Teaching the survey results revealed that while 81% of the 17 respondents felt that Quality Teaching had been favourably received by the staff (mean 2.82; SD 0.39), and 86% indicated that they had gained a practical understanding of Quality Teaching, in contrast 65% stated that they had not gained a deep understanding of the Model through professional development activities (mean 2.94; SD 0.83). Further, 59% of respondents agreed that they used the Quality Teaching Model as a tool for self-reflection (mean 2.71; SD 0.69). However, more than 90% of the respondent group agreed professional learning related to Quality Teaching focused on improving classroom practice (mean 3.12; SD 0.49) and to a lesser extent (64%) on assessment practice (mean 2.77; SD 0.66). Given these mixed results and the limited number of references interviewees made to actual examples of implementing Quality Teaching in their practice it appears that there was not a sustained effort beyond the involvement of those teachers in the AGQTP program referred to above.

¹² Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (AGQTP) was a national source of funding for teacher professional development focused on raising the quality of teaching in classrooms.

Organisation of professional development

There is a professional learning team led by the Principal and as far as I know they get together and they're the ones who decide what's going to ... it seems to be driven by people's perceptions of, or leaders' perception of, 'oh well, we should be doing this and we should do that'. I don't think it's totally responsive to the needs of the teachers in the school. (Deanna)

* * * *

Two years prior to the present study a number of changes occurred at Greengate Primary School that shaped the focus for current professional development activities. A team of teachers conducted an internal school review of literacy teaching where teachers, parents and students were interviewed. Following the review, two Assistant Principals, with support from the then newly appointed Principal, presented the staff with a school-based professional development plan. The plan was drafted in response to low student achievement data reported in the Basic Skills Test (BST) results for Year 3 and Year 5 students¹³. Around the same time, at the end of 2005, five experienced teachers from Greengate took up positions in other schools. In 2006 seven teachers in their first year of teaching were appointed to the school. Six of the new teachers were targeted graduates¹⁴.

Focus of professional development

As part of the professional development plan, student achievement targets were set as a focus for improving literacy and numeracy results. The school day was also reorganised to accommodate major blocks of time for the explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy. There was some reported resistance among the staff to this reorganisation of the school day and related professional development. The majority of interviewees were critical about the professional development focusing on literacy and numeracy initially being almost exclusively led by the Principal at after-school meetings. There was also resistance from some experienced staff members to

¹³NSW students in Years 3 and 5 at the time of the study participated in standardised tests called Basic Skills Tests (BST) which provided data on the levels of student achievement in literacy and numeracy. The results from these tests are widely used by schools and regions to set achievement targets and to fund support.

¹⁴ A targeted graduate is a teacher identified through a merit process based on university results and performance at a pre-service interview. A targeted graduate receives a permanent appointment to the NSW public school system.

attendance at the newly scheduled fortnightly after-school professional development sessions, for example:

There was a bit of angst where teachers didn't feel as though they were being valued and certainly when [the new Principal] came in, ... a lot of teachers left and a lot of really good people left too but that's because they didn't like change and they felt as though they were not being valued.
(Raelene)

Nonetheless, descriptive results from the survey data indicated that 75 % of respondents agreed that curriculum, teaching and learning materials were coordinated across Year levels (mean 2.71, SD 0.59). Sixty two percent of respondents agreed that professional learning was sustained and consistently focused (mean 2.65, SD 0.70) and 87% agreed that professional learning was focused on school targets (mean 2.94, SD 0.43). In the case of Greengate, the school's targets were explicitly focused on improvement of students' literacy and numeracy achievement.

Analysis of the interview data, however, revealed mixed reactions among the teachers to the decision following the internal school review previously referred to and the plan to focus on literacy and numeracy. One teacher expressed support for the explicit focus on literacy and numeracy, reasoning that:

Every single person within the staff room knew what the focus was. They knew what direction we're headed, we knew ... why we're focussing on literacy so much. And it's, I think it's whole school. We're heading in the right direction. Everyone knows. There's not one person in the dark about this and ... I think it's refreshing. (Jamie)

Another teacher's view was that the responsibility for improving the level of literacy and numeracy achievement was directed exclusively at Years 3 and 5 teachers because they were held accountable for students' BST results. For example, Shelly stated that she felt under pressure about her students' results:

I had the Basic Skills Test [class]. I felt a lot of pressure for my kids to do well. You know that reflects on our school. So it was basically just up to me to get the kids practising, doing practice papers every week. I don't feel like we were really supported very much in that respect.

Teachers who were not teaching Years 3 or 5 also expressed their concern at being excluded from a level of professional development they had previously experienced. Andrea felt she was missing out on opportunities she had in previous years: "I don't have a class who does the Basic Skills Test this year, I noticed my support is lower than what I had last year round."

Overall, the majority of teachers interviewed accepted the Principal's direction to raise student performance by targeting BST literacy and numeracy results in Years 3 and 5. The Principal was described as the 'lead architect' for directing whole-school professional development sessions addressing these priorities. Scheduling of these meetings at Greengate was reported as being ad hoc. The schedule of meetings was frequently interrupted by other priorities taking precedence. According to one teacher, the Principal's decision to focus on basic skills in the literacy and numeracy blocks was not followed through with focused professional development activities that supported teachers with the relevant knowledge and skills: "I've heard the Principal say, 'Oh yeah make sure that you do some basic skills practice.' That to me, that's not supporting, that's just, you know, telling us. It's something we've got to do but when you don't know how to go about doing it, it's difficult" (Shelly).

While on the surface this direction for professional development appeared not to be questioned or openly challenged, there was a level of concern about the sole focus on BST results as the driver for improving literacy and numeracy:

It's certainly a push from executive level. I find that ... there's a bit of pressure there and I really disagree with it but I find that there's a big push on Basic Skills result and improving in between Year 3 and Year 5. (Andrea)

In addition to the focus on raising BST results, professional development for teachers at Greengate Primary School incorporated a range of in-school strategies to enable teachers to share their expertise:

A lot of it is done through either external, attending courses because you had the need in your classroom. Other times it's by somebody coming back to the school and presenting what they've learnt at the staff meeting. Other times it's just general chit-chat in the staff room. You pick up different things from that. Sometimes people will share resources that they have collected from courses or just general things that they use in the classroom. (Anna)

However, the Principal's decision to nominate certain teachers to participate in externally funded projects or to attend offsite expert-led courses was not always transparent to some teachers, with some commenting that:

I don't think the process is very transparent. I really have no idea how different people got to go to different courses. I don't know what's offered to suggest to the group that I supervise. (Ruth)

I feel that maybe our professional learning comes almost from the outside as to what courses are being offered and we pick up from that rather than it coming from us saying these are our needs, what is out there, that thing, I feel that it's coming from the outside in more than going out. (Marilyn)

The value of sourcing so much of the school's professional development from outside the school was also a topic of concern:

We've had no accountability. We haven't had to show accountability at a school level in the past. ... We don't know what impact it's having on our teaching or the kids' learning. (Linda)

On the other hand, one of the specialist teachers made reference to the value of her experience in participating in an externally funded initiative:

I think it has been really good that I've been able to establish those closer bonds with the people that I've been working with. (Tracey)

In summary, the organisation of and decisions about professional development at Greengate rested with the Principal. While staff input was valued as a way of sharing newly acquired expertise from external courses it appeared that teachers would have preferred greater devolution of responsibility for the organisation of and how they participated in professional development. Opportunities for professional development across stages were mostly directed by whatever sources of external funding came their way. The Principal nominated who would participate in such projects and was instrumental in undertaking the work to acquire the funding.

Collective responsibility

Sometimes you have that gut feeling that there is something going on but you don't know what it is, but that collective ethos I don't think it is quite all the way there. (Principal, Greengate)

* * * *

Teacher collaboration

The Principal reported that, in consultation with the executive, he determined how the collaborative work of teachers was organised at Greengate Primary School:

We kind of developed a bit more of a learning focus, more new research focuses. [We decided] that all teachers would be involved in some type of project whether they saw [the purpose of] it or not. And that in some cases they had to be steered into the projects. (Principal)

To a large extent this approach determined how and which teachers worked together.

The survey data revealed that for all respondents there was agreement that teachers shared common beliefs about the goals of schooling (mean 3.06, SD 0.47). Again, all teachers who completed the survey agreed or strongly agreed that there was a great deal of cooperative effort among the staff (mean 3.00, SD 0.71) and that teachers made a conscious effort to coordinate the content of their lessons with other teachers in their grade (mean 3.18, SD 0.39).

For some, collaboration operated in the form of a very close professional bond with the teacher on the same grade, in the classroom next door. This was almost to the exclusion of other colleagues, for example: “We’re a two-men (sic) team . . . I find myself secluded so I find that it’s just Anna and me, no one else, like there are no superiors who are involved with my everyday work, my weekly work” (Jamie). Stage teams¹⁵ were also consistently reported by interviewees as the primary collaborative structure in the school. Without exception, all classroom teachers who were interviewed talked about stage team planning and working closely with their stage partner as the most productive form of collaboration. A typical comment was encapsulated by Penny, who recounted: “Our stage works together really well, particularly my grade partner. We focus, we know each other’s kids, we know how to work together and we write programs for them.” Shelly confirmed that collaboration among teachers is “very collegial within stages more so than anything”.

Two further views about the structure and extent of collaboration at the stage and grade level are described below:

There is quite a lot of collaboration and collegiality amongst the teachers. Immediately I see it within my stage, teachers helping one another and almost pacing one another as well to say, “I’ve just done this today, this is how I went”, “I would do it like this, I would do it this way.” So there’s a lot of dialogue which happens, which is great. I see it as a useful

¹⁵ In NSW the curriculum is organised around stages of learning. In primary schools a student progresses through Early Stage 1 (Kindergarten), Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) and Stage 3 (Years 5 and 6) representing seven years of schooling. Stage team refers to the group of teachers of students in a particular stage.

tool for the team because that way everybody is kept abreast of how others are going, and what does and doesn't work, which is great. (Marilyn)

I think it's particularly evident for those who are on the same stage or grade level. I know at the moment I am working with a teacher almost next door. We're both on the same stage and we pretty much bounce ideas off each other all the time. (Andrea)

However, team planning was not always reported as being inclusive of all stage team members. One experienced teacher who was newly appointed to the school, described how he felt at not being included in a stage team planning session:

I guess I felt a bit left out [because] I wasn't being included. They were planning on the computer, seemed to be planning. I think that they have more of that team teacher, team teaching environment. So I thought, well that's fine, I mean I can understand that ... they weren't involving me. And initially I was a bit deterred. But then I sort of understood, reflected that maybe they're working in a team-teacher environment and it wasn't necessary for me to be involved. (Gerard)

A similar experience of being overlooked for inclusion in joint planning sessions was reported by one of the school's specialist teachers who taught across all stages in the school. She recounted her professional disappointment at being used as a 'casual' teacher to relieve teachers from their classes at the end-of-term joint planning sessions for stage teams:

The support staff, that is the TL [teacher librarian] and the ESL [English as a second language] teacher and myself, were used as the casual teachers. So the programs were stopped in that last week of school to cover the classes. Which sometimes has to happen but I think the library would especially benefit from being involved in a couple of

collaboration [sessions] even if it wasn't just like the whole day.

(Tracey)

Furthermore, Tracey reported that, in terms of coordinating her work to support classroom teachers, she did this in isolation. Her approach was to “work out what they’re doing in their Stage and try to tap in at that end and see what we’ve got and add to the unit. [I] research on my own to try and complement the unit.” Overall, collaboration among teachers occurred between those who taught the same grade, with these teachers typically located in adjoining classrooms.

Thus at Greengate there was a range of views about the level of teacher collaboration. For most teachers, the stage team was the structure that provided opportunities for collaboration and joint planning. Other teachers reported that collaboration on teaching and learning was not easy to orchestrate or participate in, especially if they were not involved in one of the externally funded projects.

Focus on student learning

Outwardly, the staff presented as a cohesive group who shared a common desire to improve not only the learning for students in their care but also their life chances:

“We all want to make a difference to the academic achievements” (Penny).

According to the survey data, all 17 respondents agreed that the teachers at Greengate exhibited a reasonably focused commitment to the quality of the curriculum and their teaching (mean 3.18, SD 0.39). Similarly, all respondents agreed that a focused vision for student learning was shared by most of the staff (mean 3.06, SD 0.47). Again, all respondents agreed that they had been successful in providing the kind of education that they wanted for their students (mean 3.24, SD 0.44). However, 31% of the respondent group disagreed that teachers focused on what and how well students are learning rather than how they were teaching (mean 2.53, SD 0.62). These results suggest it is possible for this respondent group that their expectations for what and how students are learning is likely to be influenced by

their beliefs about students' abilities as opposed to designing curriculum that extends students beyond their current achievements.

Further, 71% of respondents agreed that their success or failure in teaching students was due to factors beyond their control (mean 2.80, SD 0.85). Respondents were equally divided in their opinion about the level of responsibility teachers take when students do not meet expected outcomes (mean 2.47, SD 0.62). Seventy-six percent of respondents reported that in their view the majority of teachers set high standards for themselves (mean 3.71, SD 0.59), with 94 % of respondents indicating that nearly all teachers in the school felt responsible for all students' learning (mean 3.56, SD 0.79). Fifty-three percent of respondents reported that in their opinion most teachers in the school had high expectations for student achievement (mean 3.43, SD 0.71). However, 11 % of respondents indicated that they were unsure about their colleagues' expectations for student achievement. Overall these survey results indicate that these teachers identified a sense of professional accountability for the quality of their teaching and student learning.

Professional relationships

In relation to teachers' professional relationships, less than half of the of respondents (41%) surveyed agreed that nearly all teachers at Greengate Primary School really cared about each other (mean 3.22, SD 0.77). Again, only 24% of teachers surveyed agreed that nearly all teachers shared a sense of professional trust (mean 3.19, SD 0.61), and similarly 35% agreed nearly all teachers willingly discuss feelings, worries and frustrations (mean 3.15, SD 0.79). In terms of valuing in-school expertise, 30% of respondents indicated that nearly all teachers respected others who take a lead in school improvement (mean 3.00, SD 0.82). Higher levels in relation to respect for colleagues (53%) were reported by the respondent group, where nearly all teachers respected expert teachers (mean 3.29, SD 0.47). In contrast, only 29% of the respondent group reported that nearly all teachers felt respected by others (mean 3.43, SD 0.71). These results show that as reported by the teachers surveyed at Greengate there was overall variability in the way they interacted professionally in terms of respect for and trust in their colleagues. These

differences are explored in more detail below in reporting an analysis of the interview data.

Analysis of data revealed that professional relationships at Greengate Primary were strongly aligned to the demographics of the teaching staff. As stated previously, almost one quarter of teachers had less than three years teaching experience. There was a view expressed by some more experienced teachers that the early-career teachers needed “help with their teaching.” One experienced teacher welcomed the opportunity to share her teaching expertise with newly appointed teachers, identifying an unexpected reciprocal benefit for her teaching:

Last year with a lot of the younger teachers that came in, I was helping them a lot even though they were on Year 5 and Year 6 and I was on Year 2. I think I was helping them a lot with ideas. I think you can learn a lot of things from people who have just come out from university because they've got fresh ideas and enthusiasm. (Raelene)

The demographic divide between early-career and experienced teachers was also manifested in power relations, cited by interviewees as being most prevalent in staff meetings. Who speaks out and who maintains a silence was most often determined by years of teaching experience at Greengate. Experienced teachers, with deeper knowledge of the school's history and background to earlier decisions, took the lead in staff discussions. Newly appointed teachers commented that they were happy to sit back and let the experienced teachers have a voice. This stance was also recognised by an experienced teacher. “I know there are a lot of teachers who would like more communication to arise. That will come with their own confidence to be able to speak out. Because I know at this stage, a lot of them are sort of relying on the more experienced teachers to actually voice these opinions” (Marilyn). Marilyn's view that confidence equated with years of teaching was representative of other more experienced teachers who were somewhat dismissive of the expertise of newly appointed teachers. These views reflect a possible lack of empathy for the

contribution early-career teachers felt they could make to whole-school decision making.

Early-career teachers also suggested that their lack of teaching experience had a direct influence on their confidence to make a public contribution to whole-school discussion and decision making. The five early-career teachers interviewed agreed that they were reluctant to express a view or comment publicly, partly through inexperience but also in relation to a school culture characterised and shaped by experience and time served at the school. As one teacher declared “because I’m so young as well I feel I have no right to approach anyone else” (Jamie). Jamie and Shelly both referred to their hesitation and frustration to speak up in whole-school professional development sessions. Shelly linked her hesitation to a feeling that more experienced teachers would not respect any innovative ideas she might put forward because “if sometimes one of the newest teachers says something it could get brushed aside and that happens a bit I think.” Jamie also suggested he had received a negative reaction from speaking up at staff forums when he and his early-career teacher colleagues suggested new ideas.

This view is supported by comments from some of the experienced teachers interviewed for the present study. For example, Deanna described experienced teachers as having the maturity and confidence to put ideas forward. As an experienced teacher, she described her colleagues as being able to articulate their point of view and manage complex relationships among the diversity of personalities and professional viewpoints:

Many of them are very good at putting their personal views forward, expressing their reaction without it getting out of hand and people jumping up and down and having a hissy fit. People are pretty good at managing their relationships with each other. (Deanna)

On the surface, as Linda observed, “you see collaboration and collegiality happening at this school,” with most interviewees identifying a culture of open communication,

a sense that teachers felt comfortable with colleagues and that teachers at Greengate were “a nice bunch” (Penny). In other words, there was an outward appearance of collaboration, collegiality and common agreement with the school’s goals. But, under the surface, the formation of professional community appeared stifled by inequity based on the distribution of power associated with position or length of service at the school. Shelly described this sense of community in the following way:

That brings up a funny point because when you’re in collaboration, ... it’s often telling. And it’s the teachers that have been here the longest. They almost do have a right over other people. So in a way that’s not collaboration because that’s, you say it is and you’re sitting in maybe a forum or that kind of thing.

This has led to one teacher making “a conscious decision at the beginning of the year” that he would “rather be on a ‘hi bye’ level, friendly with everyone” (Jamie) than get entangled in staffroom debates. For the teachers at Greengate Primary School, friendliness among the staff, and how “everyone’s really nice you know on the surface and in the staff room everyone talks to everyone and gets along” (Alice), defined the culture. Thus, remaining on friendly terms was regarded as an implicit cultural rule at Greengate and acted to suppress some teachers from speaking out or bringing underlying tensions to the surface. These findings provide evidence of what Grossman et al (2000) called ‘pseudocommunity’ operating at Greengate.

TALL TREES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Everyone cares. There are things we’ll never be able to change for these children so we just give them as much positive, I suppose, love in a way. We teach them how to lose themselves in books and write, we give them the tools. (Margaret)

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Contextual overview

Tall Trees Primary School is a government school located in an expanding satellite suburb in regional New South Wales. Site visits were conducted at the school over four successive days in September 2007. At that time the student population

comprised 9% Aboriginal students with only 1-2% of students having language backgrounds other than English. The majority of students were Anglo-Australian (90%). A small number of students with physical disabilities had been integrated into mainstream classes. While the student population was stable, minor fluctuations throughout the year were attributed to family mobility due to, for example, seasonal employment opportunities, or students living with grandparents for varying periods of time after a family separation.

Overall, the students were described as coming from moderately low socio-economic status families. Quite a number of the children come from difficult backgrounds. I think quite a lot of people on this staff have stayed here feeling that they can make a difference. Some of these kids just don't have a lot of consistency in their lives. (Liz)

As a result, the school had a history of attracting significant external funding to conduct initiatives, such as funding from the Priority Schools Program¹⁶, designed to address students' social and welfare disadvantage.

In 2007, when the data were gathered, enrolment at Tall Trees Primary School was slightly over 400 students¹⁷. The school had a teaching staff of just over 20 full-time teachers. The senior executive included a non-teaching Principal and three teaching Assistant Principals. Each Assistant Principal supervised a stage or cross-stage team of teachers. The majority of teachers had more than 10 years' teaching experience, having taught at Tall Trees for a significant period of their teaching career (most more than seven years). The Principal summed up the culture of the staff thus:

We've got a very broad range of teaching experience from teachers who have been here a long time to first year out teachers. And that showed that yes there was a need specifically for some teachers to be re-energised. Other

¹⁶ The Priority Schools Program (PSP) describes those programs and activities that support schools serving high concentrations of low socio-economic status (SES) communities

¹⁷ Exact student and staff numbers, while known, are not reported precisely to preserve the anonymity of the school.

teachers took leadership from the point of view of, yes I can see value in this and they then accepted it all.

Staff turnover is low, averaging one or two new appointments to the school each year. As with many schools in New South Wales, staff departures are often replaced with early-career teachers. At least two early-career teachers appointed to Tall Trees in the year prior to the study had specialist training in teaching students with intellectual and/or physical learning difficulties.

Tall Trees has a positive and welcoming climate for staff and students. The school appears to have a workplace culture that is cohesive, mutually supportive and collaborative, in the face of a significant minority of students presenting daily with behavioural issues. Teachers and students enjoy a physical setting of spacious, well maintained, modestly equipped classrooms, school buildings and playground facilities.

The majority of staff uses the common room in their teaching breaks. Strong collaboration among the staff on student behaviour and welfare issues was observed during the site visit. Problems with students appeared to be addressed quickly by a cohesive executive, providing leadership and welfare support as they work alongside classroom teachers. The welfare ethos of the school has a strong sense of social justice and understanding for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This sense of strong welfare support was articulated by Liz, who stated:

It's not the easiest school in the world. You could probably transfer to a lot of places where your teaching life would be a lot easier but I don't know whether you would get the same feeling of success with feeling like, as if, at the end of the day you've made children's lives a little bit better. (Liz)

Despite the seemingly high levels of care and concern for student disadvantage, teachers also indicated a sense of frustration that student results were consistently below state average. It was seen as inevitable that the organisation of professional

development and the content for teacher learning would need to change if student results were to improve.

Professional development

Over the previous two years (2005–2006), professional development had been closely aligned to meet statewide performance targets for student literacy and numeracy achievement. These targets were set by the region, according to NSW DET policy, informed specifically by BST results for Years 3 and 5 students. Tall Trees students' results in the BST were consistently below the State average.

Interviewees recounted that their experiences of professional development prior to 2007 had occurred as: (1) offsite expert-led workshops, selected to meet individual teachers' professional learning needs; (2) in-school staff and stage team meetings; and (3) informal sharing of ideas, programs, resources, teaching strategies and student behaviour management strategies. At the beginning of 2007, staff meetings were restructured to become the main arena for teachers' professional learning. This change could be aligned with all survey respondents confirming that they had participated in collaborative professional learning during the last three years, with the majority reporting that they spent more than four hours per month on professional learning activities.

Focus of professional development

Staff meetings were described by all interviewees as having an integral role in the introduction and continuing development of teachers' deeper understanding of Quality Teaching. These meetings were described by interviewees as the prime opportunity to enable all teachers to access the introductory materials (including the discussion paper and DVDs): "Quality Teaching was one way of saying let's stop and look at our practice as well as looking at what the children were doing" (Principal).

In terms of professional development to support the implementation of Quality Teaching the survey data revealed that all seven respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had gained practical understanding of Quality Teaching through

their professional learning experiences (mean 3.14, SD 0.38), that Quality Teaching had been favourably received (mean 3.00, SD 0.00), although 29% of respondents agreed that they had not gained a deep understanding of the model through professional development activities (mean 2.86; SD 0.69). Again 100% agreed that professional learning had focused on the three dimensions of the model (mean 3.00; SD 0.00). Furthermore, 71% of respondents agreed that Quality Teaching had been used in professional development sessions as a self-reflective tool (mean 2.68; SD 0.55). All respondents at Tall Trees concurred that professional learning for Quality Teaching focused on classroom practice (mean 3.00; SD 0.00) and to a lesser extent on assessment practice (mean 2.71; SD 0.49).

While there appeared to be support to implement Quality Teaching, it was suggested that some teachers were determined to subtly sabotage the initiative. While on the surface there had been discussion and resolution in a recent staff meeting, after the meeting one teacher reported that:

Sometimes they don't like changes. To improve the student learning there is so much resistance. There is still resistance. Definitely resistance. And as I said to you the other day we can make a decision in there and everybody will agree to it. And they're given the opportunity to have their say and then we'll come out of that meeting and you can hear them. There will be a couple, 'oh I didn't want this' and it's just like this white-anting, and it makes it very difficult. (Meg)

It was acknowledged by both the Principal and another staff member that the school's earlier attempt to implement Quality Teaching had a mediocre start. The supporting resources that included a discussion paper, DVD with snapshots of classroom practice, and teacher guides for coding classroom and assessment practice, were not universally well received. To some extent this was because these resource materials "were not modelled to us" (Sally) resulting in reported cynicism that was suggested as impeding teachers' willingness to consider using Quality Teaching to guide the design of teaching and assessment practices.

A turning point occurred when two executive members volunteered to have their classroom practice video-recorded and critiqued by fellow teachers at staff meetings. The Principal identified that when these teachers “themselves were used as the guinea pigs for sample lessons” to be replayed and critiqued at staff meetings, this activity was a transition point in winning staff support for Quality Teaching. Teachers were in agreement that viewing the Tall Trees teachers’ practice contextualised the model for them far more than using the DVD and print resource materials. They reasoned that their colleagues’ lesson demonstrations more closely reflected for them the context for applying Quality Teaching at Tall Trees. It was their students, in their school, thus representing to them more authentic practice. They criticised the classroom practice on the DVDs as being an artificial context and not a ‘real’ classroom. They openly preferred to see how teachers in their own school were implementing the Model as opposed to:

Something that has been put out from [NSWDET] ... I’ve never had a class like that, it never works like that. But when they can see it in practice with an actual classroom teacher putting on a lesson possibly in the room next to them, video-taped by one of their peers, they can then see yes that did work, that’s what it [Quality Teaching] really means.
(Principal)

Professional development was restructured to provide opportunities to share classroom practice. Teaching activities were critiqued, using the elements of classroom practice in Quality Teaching. Deprivatising classroom practice in this way represented a breakthrough in teachers’ understanding of the theory underpinning Quality Teaching.

The willingness of the two Assistant Principals to expose their practice also represented a turning point in developing a shared understanding as a foundation for teachers’ joint work to develop K–6 writing rubrics. A descriptive analysis of survey items linked to consistency of professional learning with school goals indicated that the majority of respondents agreed that curriculum, teaching and

learning materials were coordinated across year levels (mean 2.86, SD 0.38), that there was a cooperative effort among the teachers (mean 3.00, SD 0.69), and that professional learning was focused on school targets (mean 2.87, SD 0.38).

While teachers were increasingly satisfied with their efforts to jointly construct the rubrics in staff meetings, equity of access to professional learning to meet individual learning needs was raised as a concern by one teacher. The issue was not about resources, but more about the organisation and follow-through for externally delivered professional development:

Professional development days ... It's kind of they go there, grab it and not necessarily take it on board either, and they don't bring it back to the school. I think we need, as an executive, I would like to see everybody that goes to a professional development course to have a specific staff meeting and this is what we speak about. (Meg)

Not all teachers who expressed a desire to access off-site, expert-led, professional development had the opportunity to attend such events. Conversely, some teachers who had accessed external professional development either had not been given, or had not taken, the opportunity to share their learning more formally with other staff. Opportunities to demonstrate how this professional learning and content had impacted on their practice, and to evaluate the extent to which they had strengthened classroom teachers' capacity to lead from within, had not been a priority in the school's professional development plan. It was suggested that this situation resulted from a lack of follow-through by the Principal.

Collective responsibility

That it's not just your responsibility it's all the class teachers, all the class teachers that the students have had throughout their schooling, and it's all the class teachers that the students are going to have in their future. (Martin)

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Analysis of the survey data revealed that all respondents agreed that they felt successful in providing the kind of education they wanted for their students (mean

3.00; SD 0.00). The respondents were divided in opinion about the level of responsibility teachers take when students do not meet the expected outcomes (57%) (mean 2.57, SD 0.53) with 71% agreeing that their success or failure in teaching students was primarily due to factors beyond their control (mean 2.57, SD 0.79). Nevertheless, the majority of respondents supported a common view that the school sets high standards for student achievement (mean 3.71, SD 0.76), with more than 85% of teachers reporting that about half to nearly all teachers in the school would feel responsible that all students learn (mean 3.64, SD 0.48). In addition, more than half of the interviewees (71%) reported that they set high standards for themselves (mean 3.57, SD 0.79). From these results it appears that while the teachers had positive expectations about the potential for student achievement, these expectations were qualified with concerns about their efficacy to address the challenges that students bring to the school from their outside environments.

Analysis of the interview data suggested that there was not an agreed or shared description of what collective responsibility encompassed at the school. Three distinct themes emerged in the way interviewees reported collective responsibility: (1) collective responsibility as a duty of care; (2) collective responsibility as teacher collaboration focused on student learning; and (3) collective responsibility for a continuum of learning. These themes will each be briefly explored below.

Duty of care

[The teachers are] just extremely professional with what they do and they really, really care for the kids, there's not one person on this staff who isn't genuinely interested in each of the children, in their welfare and their learning. (Liz)

* * * *

From the survey data, all respondents reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that they felt successful in providing the kind of education that they wanted for their students (mean 3.00, SD 0.00). All respondents also agreed that the school had a focused and shared vision for student learning (mean 2.86, SD 0.69). A number of teachers talked about the need to jointly work together to achieve a “greater good” for the students in their care. Collective responsibility, framed in terms of a “duty of

care”, stems from these teachers’ concerns about the likelihood of social disadvantage impacting adversely on students’ life opportunities. Duty of care in this context is related to teachers’ efficacy beliefs that they are able to make a difference to students’ lives.

A number of students at Tall Trees were identified by Sally as having “huge social problems” (Sally). One teacher felt the school had a responsibility to provide a safe and caring environment although, at times, she was concerned that there was too much emphasis on social welfare stating: “I think sometimes we spend too much [time].” However, she justified this emphasis because “some of these children are severely damaged and require a different approach” (Margaret).

Several interviewees talked about collective responsibility as a duty of care equating to moral purpose, not as a substitute for the quality of teaching, but as a context or prerequisite for student learning. Teachers perceived that collective responsibility was linked inextricably to teachers’ duty of care because, for example:

Everyone in the school is responsible for all of the children doing the right thing at school. Responsible for making sure that they’re safe at school, responsible that they’re learning the way they should be. (Liz)

This conceptualisation of collective responsibility as a duty of care was also aligned to teacher motivation to extend the students’ academic performance through high expectations and a consistent approach across stages of learning: “We want them to achieve high. . . . We want to try and push it up a peg or two. And you sort of do it without the kids really knowing that you’re trying to push their abilities even higher” (Elise). It was acknowledged that this equates to both an individual and collective responsibility, but that it could not be achieved without teachers actively engaging in the whole-school professional development program on the writing rubrics.

Teacher collaboration focused on student learning

It was all of us trying to come together to make it better for all of our students, not just our class but the whole school. (Pam)

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According to some Tall Trees teachers interviewed, collective responsibility for student learning developed through joint planning and sharing teaching resources, literacy practices and information about students. In this context, collaboration signifies a link between professional community and the development of collective responsibility. For example, Sally discussed the benefits of teacher collaboration as “shared goals and working towards those shared goals and the goals are then adapted together so that everyone has ownership of those goals.” Initially this was not an easy process for many teachers at Tall Trees. In the interviews, several teachers talked about facing such difficulties as not having the skills to confidently teach grammar and that the students came to school without a rich background in reading or language. As a whole staff, a lack of shared understanding led to “at first, I think there was a little bit of resentment or, ‘oh what’s this new thing?’” (Margaret).

Teacher collaboration, focused on student learning, was a fundamental characteristic of the whole-school professional development program, structured to embed Quality Teaching across K–6. As previously stated, the Principal acknowledged that there was initial resistance and scepticism to a whole-school approach for developing literacy rubrics, most likely due to teachers’ lack of knowledge or confidence to teach grammar. However, this attitude changed: “we decided as a group ‘yes we’re going to develop this on a K to 6 basis, we’re not going to be stage-based in any way, we’ll develop a rubric that all students can use.’ It may not be as applicable to a Kindergarten child as it is to a Year 6, but it is a K to 6 rubric” (Principal).

Responsibility for a continuum of learning

We’re all responsible and we need to follow some order so that we’re teaching them [the students] a continuing pedagogy so that we know where we start, where we’re ending. (Margaret)

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Many of the interviewees perceived collective responsibility for student learning as a continuum of learning where all teachers across all stages took responsibility for the development and implementation of high-quality teaching practices. The development of collective responsibility at Tall Trees arose from a shared desire for consistency in the quality of students' learning experience from Kindergarten to Year 6. In other words the development of collective responsibility was reported as being directly linked to the professional development involving the whole staff. Whole-school collaboration was a catalyst for the development of collective responsibility, initiated by the practical task of developing the rubrics across the learning continuum for K–6 for a range of text types. Interviewees emphasised that the rubrics were works in progress, continually being developed and refined as teachers worked together in staff meetings to use them alongside student work samples. Margaret described how the rubrics were constructed:

The rubric is a blueprint of how we teach a particular writing structure whether it be an exposition or a narrative. We have all the content for a sentence structure from simple marks on a page to a well constructed complex sentence, right through to spelling whether it be simple spelling or advanced spelling. It covers use of verbs. We broke down the structure of each text type. Then we went through and we're expecting this particular one to have lots of adjectives; we expect a procedure to be able to flow in a logical manor. So we score from zero to a four and occasionally a five, but we feel we need to bring [the rubric] to mark their own writing. Okay 'I haven't got a verb in my sentence', or 'I haven't got this, I haven't got a full stop followed by a capital letter.' They know that now. And we are seeing a huge improvement. So that's the sort of explicit key to teaching. (Margaret)

The positive aspect of the intervention was not so much the development of each rubric but, rather, the collaboration, discussion, debate and struggle teachers experienced as they engaged more trustingly with colleagues. Using the rubrics with

students also provided immediate feedback about how they could improve sentence structure, or how well they had progressed in writing more complex sentences.

The development of collective responsibility was described in terms of providing a road map for a continuum of learning based on teachers' obligation to ground students in the early years with the knowledge and skills to meet the learning challenges in the later years of primary school. This is reflected in Pam's comment below:

I think it's about a whole staff being, not just responsible for their class and at the end of the year it's like 'ok I'm not bothered with them anymore.' We've got to teach them now so that the years ahead can build on our learning, will build on their learning. So if we've got the rubrics that we do we know where we're going across the school and we're not isolated anymore, we're not just stage one and stage two, we're K to 6. It works easier [when] we know where we're going across the school; know where they need to be in Year 4 even though I'm a Year 1 teacher.

Martin had a similar view to Pam, describing teachers' collective responsibility to design curriculum that built on the foundations laid by teachers in the previous year: "They're in Kindergarten and it's all the teachers that are going to have those children in their future learning experiences taking responsibility for that stage in students' achievement growth."

However, one teacher presented a different view of collective responsibility. In Sonia's view, the class teacher had prime responsibility for ensuring teaching programs are adhered to, for knowing individual students' learning needs and levels of achievement "to get the best out of each student" in terms of a continuum of learning from Kindergarten to Year 6. She commented that: "I think that as far as the classroom goes it is an individual responsibility. But I also find [a need for] that shared responsibility to know exactly where your stage is going" (Sonia).

Despite this, success in working towards raising students' achievement on the BST was consistently reported as everyone's responsibility at Tall Trees. In a recent whole-school staff meeting teachers critiqued a range of student work samples generated from Year 3 students' participation in a statewide test against the exposition rubric. In the following comment, Jessica related the tone of teachers' discussion and the sense of success and pride they expressed at the students' improvement, to an observable outcome of teachers' collective responsibility:

And it was the whole staff K to 6 and it was a Year 3 boy and we were talking about it, how he paragraphed and how he was using correct grammar. You know we were all very chuffed and I had a big smile. I said, 'oh I had [student] in Year 1 and 2' and Mrs X said 'well I had him in Year 3,' and Mrs Y, this was the best, and she said 'well I had him in Kindergarten.' And I went fantastic there you are. You've got four years of that child here in this school, and all these teachers putting their hand up and you could see that everything on the rubric was over four years of learning. And you know that whole continuum and everybody was putting their hands up to own that success, and I thought that was a really valuable moment in the meeting.

These three aspects of collective responsibility: duty of care; collaboration; and continuum of learning; articulated by teachers at Tall Trees were borne out in their beliefs that they had a moral responsibility to all the students in the school. In addition these aspects of collective responsibility were reflected in the way their work was structured collaboratively to develop the rubrics.

Teachers' perceptions of collective responsibility also provided insight into its complexity. The development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning at Tall Trees was attributed in part to the structural interdependence created through their joint construction of the rubrics. Teachers had deepened their knowledge of Quality Teaching through, at times, heated debate and dialogue

around such elements as ‘problematic knowledge’¹⁸. The associated organisational routines that provided teachers with structured time to develop the rubrics was overwhelmingly reported by interviewees as critical in raising student results and building their sense of collective efficacy to make a difference to their students’ learning.

In summary, teachers accepted the vulnerability of having their ideas, knowledge of grammar and teaching strategies openly critiqued. Teachers’ collective focus on student work exposed weaknesses in how students were prepared in their early years to meet the expected performance standards as they progressed through successive Stages. The development of teachers’ collective responsibility was therefore a response to their very public pedagogical challenges around poor BST results.

ARAN HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL

Working together to support students and each other; making sure that the learning is happening but by assisting each other. (Wendy)

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Contextual overview

Aran Heights High School is a comprehensive government school located on the rural urban fringe of Sydney in NSW. It is a modern school built to accommodate a growing population arising from urban expansion during the 1980s.

In 2007 the teaching staff comprised 70 permanent teachers¹⁹ and a school executive of 13 members, including three senior executive - a Principal and two Deputy Principals. There were ten teachers in their first three years of teaching across a range of faculties. The role of one member of the executive was extended to include mentoring the twelve early-career teachers recently appointed to the school. Over the previous four years there were two significant periods of staff movement

¹⁸ Problematic knowledge referred to in this quote is related to one element in the dimension of Intellectual Quality in the Quality Teaching model.

¹⁹ A permanent teacher in NSW is one who is granted permanent status on appointment to the Department of Education and Training. Teachers have transfer rights to move between schools as vacancies arise.

(in 2002-2003 and 2006-2007). During these periods, vacancies were filled by less experienced teachers and the majority of the executive promoted from within the school.

The school enrolment in 2007 was upwards of 900 students. Recent initiatives at the school included a support unit for 30 students with mild, moderate and severe intellectual and physical disabilities and an accelerated cohort in each year group. These initiatives reflected the school's focus on meeting the full range of student learning needs. The student community was predominantly Anglo-Australian. A multicultural program was implemented to broaden students' understanding of cultural diversity not represented in the local community.

Recent growth in student numbers was attributed to the school's strong local reputation for meeting the academic and welfare needs of its student population. The school had not always enjoyed such a reputation. As one teacher disclosed:

I hated the early days in this school. I think it was a very poor school in many ways. It has improved dramatically in a number of areas. I've always loved the students at this school even when we had a bit of a rough reputation. I think they always had an honesty and integrity that's lacking somewhere else. ... There's something about these kids that's good. (Danny)

School targets for improvement were focused on raising student value-added results in external standardised tests. In 2007 these targets included improving students' expected growth in literacy and numeracy in Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8). Cross-faculty teams worked on initiatives to include a focus on literacy across the curriculum. Further targets were directed at student achievement in the School Certificate (SC) and Higher School Certificate (HSC) (Stages 5 and 6 respectively)²⁰. Achievement

²⁰ The School Certificate and Higher School Certificate are external standardised examinations that provide certification of student achievement at the end of Years 10 and 12 respectively. Students' results are reported using standardised bands of achievement, Band 6 representing the highest achievement on a scale 1 to 6.

targets were set at 50 percent of all students in each HSC course achieving Band 5 or higher. A feature of the improvement targets was that standardised test results were used diagnostically to identify areas of individual student learning needs.

Professional development

The central focus for professional development for teachers at Aran Heights was support for their implementation of Quality Teaching. As a key strategy for improving student achievement, this focus was reflected in the school's ambitious whole-school targets for student achievement. As a member of the executive stated: "I talk about Quality Teaching in everything we do. And we talk about the importance of the Intellectual Quality . . . hopefully staff here have a strong sense of what we're after and be able to communicate that with each other" (Malcolm). This whole-school focus for professional development was also documented in the school's management plan.

The survey data from Aran Heights revealed all 12 respondents felt that they had gained a practical understanding of Quality Teaching through their professional learning experiences (mean 3.33; SD 0.65), that Quality Teaching had been received favourably by the teachers (mean 3.50; SD 0.52), that professional learning in which they had engaged over the previous three years had improved their practice (mean 3.08; SD 0.29), and felt successful in providing the kind of education that aligned with their educational philosophy (3.10, SD 0.63). The majority of respondents (81%) also agreed or strongly agreed that most teachers shared their beliefs about pedagogy (mean 2.73; SD 0.65). Furthermore, all the respondents agreed that the professional learning focus for Quality Teaching was on classroom practice (mean 3.25; SD 0.45) and 41% considered professional learning was focused on assessment practice (mean 2.42; SD 0.52). However, fewer respondents (58%) said that they had not gained a deep understanding of the model through professional development activities (mean 2.83; SD 0.83). Nonetheless, 92% of respondents suggested that they used the Quality Teaching model as a tool for self-reflection (mean 3.08, SD 0.52). Conclusions about the reach or depth of Quality Teaching are limited because of the small sample group representing only 12 % of the staff at Aran Heights. It is

also possible that the small self selecting group responding to the survey were those teachers who had a commitment to using Quality Teaching in their practice.

As previously stated, teachers were expected to apply the Quality Teaching model as a focus for designing teaching, learning and assessment strategies aimed at raising student achievement. Access to professional development focused on Quality Teaching was mainly determined by voluntary participation in a “learning community” or by being a member of either the Teaching and Learning or the English faculties. In these faculties the two head teachers, provided leadership in the implementation of Quality Teaching. They expected their staff would use it in programming, classroom practice and assessment and student work was shared and critiqued using the elements in the model.

Focus of professional development

The Principal described the prime strategy for professional development at Aran Heights High School as “cross-faculty, cross-KLA learning communities”. The learning communities were established in 2003. They brought together teachers who, on a voluntary basis, worked on individual or group projects aimed at improving the quality of the learning environment, particularly student engagement, and the intellectual quality and significance of students’ learning experiences. Participation in a learning community provided access to release time for these projects. In the majority of the learning communities, teachers were using Quality Teaching as a planning and reflective tool for improving classroom practice and assessment tasks.

The learning communities were an integral part of the school’s planning for improved student learning. Targeted external funding facilitated the development of processes for collaborative programming of integrated units of work for Year 7 across two subject clusters – Maths, Physical Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) and Science (MPS) and English, Geography and History (Humanities). These learning communities had expanded over time. In the previous four years more than two-thirds of the staff had been or were currently members of one of the communities.

The Principal attributed a number of benefits to teacher participation in the learning communities. This included: raising the level of professional dialogue about different and innovative approaches to engage students; producing a wider understanding of and respect for others' subject expertise; pooling teaching expertise across subject approaches to teaching; breaking down the barriers between faculties; and gaining wider understanding across the staff of the teaching and learning strategies needed to meet students' needs. The following comment summarises how these benefits were realised:

There's a lot more cross-faculty or cross-KLA interaction which basically I don't think would happen without them [learning communities]. We have pockets in the school with probably a wider understanding of the student needs as a response to that. ... I find it pretty hard to measure the impact it has on student learning because it's just one part of the whole school's process. Like, we've adjusted curriculum, integrated curriculum, that's where we've changed our junior curriculum; they've all had their impact. So it's really just another straw in the broom. Trying to isolate it as a single factor outside of the cross-KLA interaction would be pretty hard to do I would've thought.

(Principal)

This comment emphasises that a number of strategies were operating in concert to bring teachers together through a focus on student learning. All members of the senior executive and almost all teachers interviewed attributed the building of trust between staff and the breaking down of traditional balkanisation of faculties to the level of collaboration generated through participation in the learning communities. Interviewees consistently emphasised that their focus on student learning was linked to increased student achievement, measured largely by students' performance in external examinations. One teacher, however, was more conservative suggesting that improved student results should not be directly or solely attributed to the work of the learning communities, but rather these communities should be considered as contributing more widely to improved student achievement:

An improvement in student learning, through, well, our data here that we're getting through our ELLA, SNAP, School Certificate and HSC. The HSC results from last year, we got eighteen Band sixes which made it the best results we got in the school ever and placed us in the top few [schools] in the region. I think it's a culmination of a number of initiatives and strategies. And the staff is a happy staff, people get on, people are willing to help each other out, yeah. I think a lot of that has to do, you know, my theory is you've got a happy staff then you've got a productive staff. Students are going to be happy as well. (Malcolm)

The level of perceived student success attributed to teacher collaboration was reported by teachers at Aran Heights as one catalyst for developing collective responsibility for student learning. This is discussed in further detail in the next section.

Collective responsibility

It's hard to actually pinpoint because it [collective responsibility] is just what happens here. It just happens so you think, oh gee, what is it? (Wendy)

* * * *

Interviewees at the school reported that the organisation of cross-faculty learning communities was fertile ground for the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning. Teachers spoke about having a unique set of conditions influencing the way they interacted across faculties, supporting, trusting and respecting each other. These attributes reflect a sociological dimension of collective responsibility. Typical comments included: "it's a special place to be, we've done something very special here to move from a very ordinary school to a very good one"; (Trent) "a school that can do anything"; (Stuart) and "this school operates differently – it's innovative, it just happens" (Dean).

Teachers articulated their perceptions of what collective responsibility looked like in their school in different ways, although the term itself was not commonly used. One

teacher talked about collective responsibility as the way teachers worked together with high levels of collaboration. This was not withstanding the reflective comment that professional interrelationships between teachers were complex, due to their individually different experiences and philosophies:

Every teacher is coming from their own experiences, many of which are quite traditional – their own personal beliefs ... so I think it's harder to come up with a collective ethos and that sort of thing. But in terms of, as a school, are we driven to something higher? Then yeah I think we are. I'm not 100 per cent [sure] but ... I'd be prepared to make that generalisation without trying to put an exact percentage on it. As to what that actually means I think there's so many different things. It's a very complex equation I think. (Danny)

Focus on student learning

While interviewees articulated that it was difficult for them to pinpoint what collective responsibility looked like at the school, it was clear that a collective focus on student learning mattered. As Jane mused:

I don't know that people agreeing to things means that necessarily we have a collective ethos but I know that with dealing with people all the time whether it's about discipline or curriculum, ultimately, the aim is the kids and to sort of have a supportive environment so that people do support each other. That outcomes be maximised I suppose, no matter whether the kids are the high performing or the leader of the pack and other kids at the bottom and that's why a lot of the programs that we run, people have learned to support.

Another teacher talked about collective responsibility in terms of teachers having a collective focus on improving student results as an outcome of teacher collaboration. His view is elaborated in the way teachers took planned risks to improve their teaching:

We all seem to be pulling in the same direction ... we're not scared to try stuff that's new and, you know, and we take greater pride in doing very, very well so I like it. And we do get good results, we have some outstanding teachers, we have a lot of teachers who are really going places. (Trent)

Further, having common goals and shared values for student learning was articulated as a collective ethos that bound some staff together:

I think the thing that binds us together is that concept that ultimately kids are people and, again, I think it's that open-ended thing. And that we need to think of these people who have their own dreams, desires, potentials and ... I think that's probably a common ground I find – the people who I'm closest to as teachers within the school. (Danny)

Comments such as these reflect the interdependence between the psychological and sociological dimensions of collective responsibility as it develops from the common beliefs and attitudes teachers share as they work together in bonds of reciprocal trust. Thus while in one way, collective responsibility can be threatened by the politics of individualism, in another, it is strengthened by close collaboration on school goals to improve student achievement.

Commitment to shared goals

According to the Principal, collective responsibility manifested itself in the Aran Heights' school culture as "staff cooperation" and, to some extent, pressure for consistency of school-wide goals to raise student achievement. He stated:

When I say the whole school, like for example ... the Maths faculty understand the needs of the English faculty, the needs of the Design and Technology ... do you know what I'm saying? There is that greater understanding of how each system operates and how they need to operate. And I think that's self-evident, pretty much, in our Executive

meetings where very rarely do you get two head teachers voting on a whole school [issue] from a faculty perspective. General vote is based on a whole school perspective. Even, you know, 99 times out of 100.

One Head Teacher felt “the pressure to make sure we get the best results all the time.” The notion of a shared sense of commitment for the quality of teaching at Aran Heights, and the consensus for the school-wide expectations for teacher performance were further reflected in a comment by another teacher about the lack of tolerance for under-performing teachers:

I think that we're very hard on teachers who underperform here, much more so than every other school ... I know in other schools that I've been at – one here and one in Sydney – that, “oh well, that's them and we'll put it down to experience”. But here they will finish them up if they're not prepared to sort of, you know, to meet the minimum standards. So I think that makes a difference too, that teachers are inspired to work for a variety of different reasons – that might be one of them. (Trent)

Consistency of standards for teacher quality again featured in interviews that probed the type of collective ethos teachers held at Aran Heights. Members of the school senior executive and a number of teachers all reported an undercurrent that underperformance was not acceptable. This included those teachers who were not prepared to work hard or put in the extra effort to meet the students' individual learning needs.

I make it clear to any new staff member [in my faculty] that I have that the one thing that we will do is work very hard. Laziness won't get you anywhere. You seem to get more people saying, “Oh that's fine, I'm not afraid of hard work”, and that becomes your prevailing ethos. (Neale)

These views reflect a culture of professional growth and respect for teaching expertise and effort. There were also implicit expectations that teachers would put

in the effort required to meet high expectations for student performance as a moral responsibility.

Moral purpose

One head teacher put the welfare of the students at the top of the agenda for the pedagogical leadership of their faculty. His reflection below highlights both the trust and efficacy dimensions of teachers' collective responsibility for students at Aran Heights:

The welfare of all the kids at this school is really important and I think that that's shared ... they've got that loyalty and that trust, ... like it's a really nice place to be. And yeah, I think my guys have definitely got that. I think there's a real sort of niceness about it. And it's not that "in by 9 out by 3" sort of joint. We work very, very hard at Aran Heights and that's part of it. (Trent)

Teachers at Aran Heights expressed a genuine care and concern for their students' welfare and academic progress. In many cases this was qualified by concern that, while it may be the majority of teachers who held these common values, there was a minority who were not pulling their weight, as highlighted by the two views below:

Well here it seems to me that a lot of teachers put in a lot of effort and do care but because I deal with children with learning difficulties, I see teachers who just don't care about those kids, don't acknowledge that they exist, that they have other needs, that they're not your everyday, you know, run of the mill kids, that they have special needs and whatever – and don't care to do anything about it. (Margaret)

I think it's just the whole feel of the school creates it. There's not that, 'I'm going to isolate myself in the staffroom and ignore what's going on outside the staffroom' ... I think there's a lot of people who I mean they're all very responsible for the academic but I think the people who are

more into looking at the social side of the kids and that, they put a lot of their energy into that side. (Stuart)

Thus, an ethic of working hard to support student learning at Aran Heights was held by teachers who took on collective responsibility for student learning. As a shared value, this sets them apart from a reported minority of teachers who were resistant to the challenges of tackling changes to their pedagogy in line with the Quality Teaching model. There was a degree of intolerance for this resistance and a sense that these teachers would be moved on if they did not support the school's stated and shared focus on achieving student learning improvements.

JOSSEY HIGH SCHOOL

We have to focus on the positives in the school and work with that and I think that's what's done really well here. (Marjorie)

* * * *

Contextual overview

Jossey High School is located in a low socio-economic suburban and light industrial precinct in South-Western Sydney, NSW. The school accommodation is modelled on traditional architecture with a double-storey classroom block leading off the main quadrangle, in the style of school sites built in NSW around 1960.

At Jossey High, data were collected over a period of six days of site visits in July, 2007. The student enrolment of over 550 at that time reflected a slight increase over the previous four years. The Principal attributed this trend to increasing Year 7 enrolments over the period, offset by the exit of some senior students to Tertiary and Further Education (TAFE) or employment without completing their final year certification.

A significant minority of students at this school have challenging behaviours requiring consistent, systematic and structured responses from the staff. In addition to mainstream teachers, a key support unit for students with mild, moderate and severe intellectual and physical disabilities supports students' diverse learning needs.

The student community is multi-cultural, drawing from the richness of ethnic communities from Arabic/Lebanese, Vietnamese, Greek and Pacific Islander (Fijian, Maori, Samoan and Tongan) language backgrounds. This group represents 70% of the student population. An ethnic mix was also reflected in the teaching staff.

Students presenting with challenging behaviours, disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and multicultural backgrounds required specific responses in order to address the school's target of improving students' learning outcomes. One experienced head teacher summed up the challenges facing teachers and the imperative for them to work together, in this way:

This is one of the hardest schools I have taught at and the teachers have to work together. If they don't work together then ... things just won't happen. It is a really difficult school. And it's basically a difficult school because the kids come to us with ... well, after the top group, the rest of the cohort have very, very poor numeracy, literacy and even social skills and we need to work together. So any help that teachers can get, they are really appreciative of. (Grant)

To begin to address these challenges, the school had identified the need for teachers to work together to improve students' poor academic results, lack of social skills and low teacher expectations. These challenges provided impetus for organisational reform, which started with a focus on the Year 7 classes in 2003. The staff identified areas of concern aligned with a paucity of pedagogical rigour that included: a lack of structured opportunities for teachers to exchange information about student disengagement and challenging behaviour; a need for greater consistency in the quality of pedagogy; and a desire by teachers to have greater control over the way the curriculum was taught. Access to significant external funding provided the initial catalyst for change with resources to restructure teachers' work through forming Year 7 teams.

A snapshot of teams

The structure for organisational reform at the time of the study was to organise teachers of Years 7 and 8 (Stage 4) into cross-curriculum teaching teams. Each team comprised four to five teachers, largely from English, Maths, Science and Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) faculties, who all taught the same Year 7 or Year 8 class. A fundamental principle for establishing teams was to promote consistency in the quality of teaching and high expectations within the teaching teams. The Learning, Attendance and Welfare (LAW) framework²¹ was developed as the foundation for the focus of the teams, for both teachers and students. When I asked Louise, who was one of the chief architects of LAW, how critical the focus was on learning in LAW she explained:

Well that's why I chose LAW because learning had to come first. And I've always believed that if you actively engage kids in learning, attendance will improve and your welfare needs will fall away, because the kids are enjoying what they're doing. They want to be there, they feel valued, their esteem improves because they're doing well. They're being recognised for that achievement and it's just a really positive cycle. (Louise)

Membership of teams grew from 15 teachers in 2003 to 28 teachers in 2007 making up seven cross-curriculum Year 7 and Year 8 class teams. Each team for the Year 7 and Year 8 classes had a leader and each year group had a year team coordinator who was a member of the senior executive. Team leaders met in timetabled periods once every ten-day teaching cycle. Teachers were selected to participate in teams according to the subject they taught.

²¹ Learning, Attendance and Welfare (LAW) was established in 2003 as the school's vision and shared commitment to improving the learning environment for all students. LAW was the framework that underpinned the work of the Year 7 teams. LAW placed learning first, followed by attendance and then a focus on welfare. The introduction of this framework represented a reversal in focus for designing and implementing challenging curriculum that addressed the quality of teaching for student learning as a priority.

A feature of the team structure at Jossey was that each of the teams capitalised on the expertise, enthusiasm and commitment of teachers who were willing to critique and share their teaching expertise. The survey results suggest that internal expertise was a driver for the professional development and structural changes that embedded the elements of the Quality Teaching model in classroom practice. Half the respondents agreed that most teachers respected others who take the lead in school improvement efforts (mean 3.27, SD 0.87). Further, 63% of respondents agreed that most teachers respect those colleagues who are expert in their craft (mean 3.26, SD 0.85), with 65% of respondents stating that in their view nearly all teachers felt respected by other teachers at the school (mean 3.57, SD 0.73).

Mentoring through team leadership, support from in-school information communication technologies (ICT) and numeracy experts, and modelling Quality Teaching were all perceived by respondents to be collaborative forms of professional development focused on student learning. Sixty percent of respondents reported that they had received useful feedback on their performance in the last year between three and five times. Eighty-seven percent stated that they had received useful curriculum suggestions from their immediate colleagues. Eighty-two percent replied that they had received useful teaching strategies from their colleagues more than three times. Further 80% of respondents reported that in the last year they had met with their colleagues to discuss specific teaching strategies, and 87% indicated that in the last year they had received useful suggestions for assessment materials from their colleagues.

Evaluation of teachers' satisfaction with the implementation of the school-wide learning platform for LAW and team intervention strategies occurred internally as part of the school's monitoring of the impact of teaching practice on student learning. I examined a range of school publications which documented results from teacher surveys evaluating the restructuring of teachers' work to create Year 7 and 8 teams²². The reports had been circulated to teachers as feedback on the school's

²² Examples of evaluation reports collected during site visits include:
Team Evaluation Survey Analysis (September, 2003)

ongoing reform initiatives. The establishment of a Stage 5 team represented the most recent reform initiative and was informed by the teacher feedback gathered through in-school evaluations.

The Stage 5 team²³ was established in 2007, with 10 members, including at least one teacher from each of the eight faculties. One of the Deputy Principals, was the team leader. In 2007 the number of teachers volunteering to be on teams exceeded the number that could be accommodated within timetabling constraints.

All students can achieve success

In 2007, the school's aspirational targets for improving student achievement were focused on realising the expectation that all students would be actively engaged in learning. These aspirations therefore reflected the ongoing development of the nexus between positive student welfare outcomes and academic growth in literacy, numeracy and ICT outcomes.

In addition, there was an expectation, communicated strongly by the executive, that school targets were to be addressed through the quality of the learning environment. Adopting LAW made it possible for teachers to implement a systematic approach to an agreed set of specific learning habits that involved students in: being well prepared and organised; taking initiative and responsibility for their learning; working cooperatively in group situations; working independently; and reflecting on and evaluating their learning.

Professional development

The school's vision for high expectations provided an opportunity for professional development to support the implementation of the Quality Teaching model. In 2005

Jossey High School Priority Action Schools Program Evaluation (2005)
Team Evaluation Survey Analysis (November, 2006)
Jossey High School Priority Action Schools Program Evaluation (2006)
Analysis of professional learning support for ICT survey (July, 2007)

²³ The organisation of the team structure at Jossey was based on multiple Year 7 and Year 8 teams in Stage 4, i.e. one team per class in each Year, and a single Stage 5 team of teachers. Stage 5 refers to students in Years 9 and 10.

three successive whole-school development days on assessment were dedicated to deepening teachers' practical understanding of the model. This professional development input was recognised as the foundation for a whole-school focus on improving the quality and relevance of assessment tasks and raising teacher expectations for what the students could achieve.

However, the shift to implementing the principles of Quality Teaching represented significant professional risk for teachers at Jossey. In particular, risk-taking was grounded in the strategies to implement new assessment practices based on Quality Teaching. The majority of survey respondents (81%) agreed or strongly agreed that their Quality Teaching professional learning had predominantly been provided by members of the school staff (mean 3.09, SD 0.69). Eighty-five percent of respondents highlighted that their collaborative professional learning experiences in the last three years had focused on Quality Teaching. Of the 45 respondents at Jossey, 92% felt that the Quality Teaching model had been favourably received by staff (mean 3.03, SD 0.59), however, 71% of respondents suggested they had not gained a deep understanding of the model through professional development activities (mean 2.92, SD 0.67). Eighty-one percent of respondents agreed that they used Quality Teaching as a tool for self-reflection (mean 2.93, SD 0.45). It was also equally agreed by 83% of respondents that the strength of the application of Quality Teaching, was related to a focus on professional learning for classroom practice (mean 3.03, SD 0.55) and assessment practice (mean 2.94, SD 0.52). Furthermore, 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the professional learning that they had participated in over the last three years had improved their teaching practice (mean 3.25, SD 0.67).

The Principal stated that focusing on pedagogy signalled to the staff that the quality of teaching was to be considered the prime classroom management strategy. The executive made it explicit that responsibility for student learning was in the hands of the classroom teacher. It was no longer accepted as legitimate to blame students if the cause of their disengagement was poor teaching. This view was highlighted by a newly appointment member of the senior executive soon after the intervention to establish teams was introduced. Her early observations were of a culture of blame,

commenting that the transition to implementing Quality Teaching needed to turn this prevailing attitude around:

So in 2004 when I first got here and we started doing the results analysis it was always the kids' fault, 'that's the cohort, what do you expect.' But now I think that they're slowly getting over this. But it's a very hard excuse to give up. (Sandra)

While there was evidence in the survey and interview data that Quality Teaching Model favourably received, shifting from an entrenched culture of blaming students for poor achievement remained a challenge for a small group of teachers who had resisted the new whole-school focus on Quality Teaching.

The formation of teams and re-organisation of professional development were identified as catalysts in changing teachers' attitudes and expectations for student achievement. The change process was nurtured by taking slow steps to introduce first the Year 7 teams followed by teams for Year 8 and then Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10). At each step the strategy was evaluated through annual teacher surveys with evaluation findings published and acted upon to refine the strategy for each Stage team group.

Focus of professional development

Teachers felt that teams provided them the opportunity to meet and engage in professional dialogue and enhanced their professional development. Team meetings were perceived as providing a supportive environment allowing teachers to discuss various educational issues and to share ideas and teaching strategies. (Jossey Priority Schools Program Evaluation 2006, p.9)

* * * *

Most teachers interviewed reported that teams had a positive impact on teacher efficacy and student engagement. One teacher's recount of teachers' attitudinal transition illustrates how exposing teacher vulnerability provided a catalyst for developing a commitment to improve the learning environment for shared students.

[In the first year addressing] student behaviour, student achievement and professional development – it was just a lot of work and [you got] nothing out of it you know. And a lot of people don't like putting in a lot of work and not getting anything out of it. The second year some people ... who had been on the teams [the previous year] wanted to avoid it like the plague. They didn't want to have anything to do with it. So it got around that teams were horrible. The second year we sort of knew what we wanted. We had a little bit more structure and a little bit more of a goal and where we were going and what we wanted to do and how we were going to achieve it. So the second year it was better. The third year has been much better because, you know, we're old-hands at it. We don't have to revisit the start again. (Jan)

The intervention to restructure teachers' work around teams appeared sustainable. By 2007 teams had become an integral part of the school culture for teaching and learning. Teachers' prior resistance had been transformed into support. One teacher proudly commented that:

I had fifteen members of staff come up to me after and saying, 'look I want to be a part of this, how do I do it?' So I think there's a really strong underlying factor of people here who really want to develop themselves professionally but also really care about the teaching and learning and the student outcomes and the students at school. (Brian)

This transition was reported as a school-wide transformation from a systematic focus on welfare to a systematic review through collaborative critique of the quality of the pedagogy:

In most faculty areas, learning habits (embedded in LAW) have become a key component of assessment tasks. Teams systematically reviewed existing assessment tasks using Quality Teaching protocols. The aim of this process was to

create authentic assessment tasks that would challenge students, encouraging them to think critically. (Jossey High School Priority Action Schools Program Evaluation 2006, p.17)

A decision was taken to adopt a collaborative approach to support the implementation of the Quality Teaching model as both a planning tool and a standards framework for teams and faculties. In the view of a Stage 5 team leader, teams appeared to survive and thrive at Jossey:

I think it's because it's a non-threatening environment with the team and they're supportive. It's not [that] we're there to criticise, we're there to help. So I think it's because that feeling is that we're working together and not against each other. (Brian)

Another teacher summed up the evolution of team learning as a shift in teacher focus from a concern about overcoming the student welfare issues to concentration on consistency and improvement in the quality of teaching:

The focus has changed to ... being more about pedagogical issues like teaching, quality teaching. And we can improve as teachers now. So the focus has moved from the welfare side of learning habits to the academic side. Now we can only do that if we improve as teachers. And we can only do that by revisiting new resources, books and articles and things. And that's something we can do in a team. (Katrina)

Thus the resources to support professional development, that is, time to meet to plan, share, critique and review student work, were described by interviewees as critical to their professional growth and development of strong professional relationships among team members.

Collective responsibility

To me collective responsibility is everyone taking [responsibility for] student outcomes. We all as a group take responsibility for student outcomes. So it's not an individual responsibility, it's actually a whole-school responsibility for improving student outcomes. So that responsibility is not laid on, for example, by the Principal or Head Teacher, it's laid on every member of staff. (Brian)

* * * *

At Jossey, the majority of interviewees attributed the development of collective responsibility for student learning to teacher collaboration and the strong professional bonds that developed between team members. As a whole-school strategy, teams provided the organisational structure that cultivated relationships focused on student and teacher learning. Collective responsibility to improve student outcomes was stated explicitly as a goal for stage team collaboration in the school's improvement plan.²⁴ Realigning teachers' work to focus their teaching on students they shared rather than the subject they taught also broke down traditional faculty isolation. Teachers reported that the resulting positive changes in teacher-to-teacher trust and teacher-to-teacher relationships represented a transition point in the development of collective responsibility. This focus brought renewed professionalism to teachers who previously had despaired at the disruption to learning caused by students' challenging behaviours.

Teacher collaboration focused on student learning

One theme identified in discussion on collective responsibility at Jossey High was teacher collaboration. In the Stage teams, teachers actively, collaboratively and systematically applied the agreed LAW approach to seek answers to their teaching dilemmas. Many of the teachers interviewed for the study reported that professional collaboration was a benefit of reconceptualising their work practices. From one team leader's perspective there was "collaboration now across the whole school. I believe now there's more a culture of teachers looking at not just students as coming to the individual faculties or subject areas but looking at them as a whole person across all

²⁴ Professional development strategy: "Implement Stage 5 teaching and learning project through a team with representation from all faculties to ensure collective responsibility for improved student learning outcomes through professional learning support." (extract from the Jossey High School Management Plan 2007–2009 p.10)

their schooling” (Brian). Brian also attributed this cross-faculty responsibility to the organisational structure of cross-faculty teams and the transfer of knowledge about pedagogy and individual students’ needs from faculties into teams, and teams into faculties as a continuous exchange of information. This flow of information about students between teams and faculties was also highlighted as a benefit of teams by Stage 5 team members. For example, Lena, one of the special needs teachers, recounted that as a result of sharing and critiquing a task in a team meeting, she had changed her view about her students’ ability to tackle more challenging tasks. This, in turn, had increased her expectations of what these students could do. This information was taken back to her faculty and more challenging assessment tasks were designed.

Similarly, Loretta, a member of the English faculty who was not on a stage team, described the culture of collaboration in her faculty thus: “Teachers plan together, ensure that everything builds together so that there is consistency in learning for all students and where teachers reflect and support each other with resources.” Another specialist teacher attached to the English faculty agreed that teachers in the faculty “certainly support [each other]. I see everyone supporting each other and helping each other to do their jobs and being emotionally supportive of each other” (Elaine). Further, a member of the Stage 5 team reported that in the Maths faculty, prior to the whole school push to develop units of work based on the Quality Teaching model, teachers worked on their own:

Now since we have starting creating units of work, teachers are working together and helping each other and supporting each other. Yeah, it’s a big change in Maths. And of course that helps students if teachers are working together ... in front of the kids. (Stage 5 team member)

However, it was reported that collaboration was not happening universally in all faculties. Teachers who were not core members of a Stage team reported that they felt they were missing out or had been excluded from the opportunity to interact with colleagues at a professional development level. For instance, Brian identified

one faculty where teachers operated purely on an individual basis within their faculty, where there was little or limited sharing of resources and classroom practice. Interestingly, because of the limited number of teachers in each team, this faculty had limited or no previous participation in the Stage teams.

Five such staff members in this situation expressed frustration about this and were unsure of what really happened in team meetings. They felt left to organise their own professional development and expressed a sense of professional isolation when they had not been part of the team structure. Comments such as “there was this thing we were left out” (Rod) because of the way students were grouped in cohorts in their subject and “what happens in teams is a bit of a mystery to me and it’s frustrating to me because I think I need to be on a team” (Elaine) reflected these perceptions of exclusion. Robyn added that “I’ve always noticed that working on my own just makes everything harder.” Specialist support teachers also felt that it was different for them: “We feel a little bit like a round peg in a square hole sometimes – that we’re sort of fighting to fit in with the rest of the school” (Jill). This was particularly the case for implementing the expected school-wide standards for assessment practice with their special needs students.

In contrast, teachers who were members of a Year team reported feeling safe to take risks to “implement new ideas. They’re not scared to do that” (Katrina). They were more prepared to try new teaching methods in a shared collegial atmosphere. Jan commented that with “more collegial support, we’ve been able to refine our teaching and classroom management strategies.” She felt they were now more able to engage in critical professional dialogue about their teaching, to share student work and to have high expectations for students, no matter what their socio-economic disadvantage. Grant also described this collaborative culture at Jossey as contributing to a strong collective ethic for students’ learning and to developing reciprocity among colleagues:

Teachers [were] meeting together and planning units of work that intertwine with each other. And collective responsibility, well, everybody understands it’s everybody’s

[responsibility]. If they let the team down then that will impact further down the line. (Grant)

Therefore at Jossey, the effort to improve collaboration in and across teams was an enabling condition for the development of collective responsibility. But the limitations of teams also inhibited the development of collective responsibility for teachers who did not directly experience the benefits of being on a team.

Information sharing

The [students'] behaviours are difficult. Sometimes we do band together as a staff out of pure necessity and we're very happy to support everyone else ... maybe because of that reason. (Lena)

* * * *

Another theme reported in the teacher interviews was the notion that collective responsibility was embedded in the way teachers shared information about students and, in particular, about students who exhibited unacceptable or out of character behaviour. In general, the tone of these comments was more about concern for improving student learning than making life easier for teachers in terms of classroom management. For example, several teachers reported that from their perspective, being in a Stage team was an effective strategy for developing a collective approach to consistency for teacher quality and positive behaviour management. They attributed increased student achievement to these strategies. Jan related one example of how teachers exhibited collective responsibility:

We looked to anybody in any of the teams who has come up with a process of dealing with specific children ... which works for them. And if it works for them then maybe we could implement that sort of process or that sort of behaviour modification within other classes so that the kid is treated the same way and can have the same positive outcomes within all the classes. So I guess it's an example of what I assume would be collective responsibility for a child.

Grant also observed that there was, in his view, a direct link between the organisation of teachers' work in teams, leading to consistency in classroom

management and pedagogy, and marginal improvement in student achievement on statewide standardised tests:

And once the students know that the teachers are talking to each other and going from the same point of view, perspective, and using the same approaches then their learning starts to improve – well we hope it does. And that's been seen, actually our ELLA results and our SNAP results²⁵ have improved slightly over in Year 7 and 8.

Thus at Jossey High, teachers' needs for learning and professional growth had been supported through the team structure. They cited the way professional development had been reorganised and the emergence of new relationships fostering communications between teachers as conditions leading to the development of collective responsibility for student learning. The benefits of the reforms had outweighed, in their minds, their early scepticism and fear. In addition, they had observed improvement in student behaviour and academic results.

CONCLUSION

Clearly the four schools in my study had different representations of how teachers perceived collective responsibility, including what it looked like in their school and how it had developed. Analysis of the data connected teachers' perspectives about collective responsibility with aspects of strong professional community that included teacher collaboration focused on student learning, deprivatising practice and teachers' commitment to shared goals. Aspects of trust connected with teachers' professional relationships and accountability in terms of duty of care and moral purpose were also evident in how teachers in the schools in the study described

²⁵ English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) and Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP) are standardised assessments developed by NSWDET. ELLA is a curriculum-based assessment, testing students' knowledge and skills in particular aspects of literacy for students in Years 7 and 8. SNAP is a curriculum-based assessment, testing students' knowledge and skills in particular aspects of numeracy for students in Years 7 and 8. These assessments were replaced with the National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

collective responsibility. In addition, in two schools, Tall Trees Primary and Jossey High Schools, interviewees related how their whole school focus on providing students with a continuum of learning was associated with developing collective responsibility.

Overall, the development of collective responsibility in each school was reported as developing over time. The strength of collective responsibility was found to be reliant on the particular mix of school-based factors, evidenced by the organisational structures that supported and facilitated teachers' professional interactions when focused on improving student achievement. Where there was less evidence of the presence of professional community, trust and accountability, for example at one of the four schools, collective responsibility appeared as only being emergent. Collective responsibility was at this phase more likely to be equated with the duty of care teachers had for their students' welfare and well being more so than the quality of teaching.

Collective responsibility and conflict

Another conclusion that can be drawn is that teachers' confidence to put forward dissenting views was influenced by their perceived power or powerlessness among their colleagues, which teachers related to their experience and status in the school. For example, some teachers at Greengate were more likely to avoid conflict in order to get along and not draw attention to feelings of inadequacy. This situation is consistent with Achinstein's (2002) work that demonstrates teachers avoid conflict, seeking harmony rather than public debate, and where bonded social ties promote homogeneity within community. In contrast, the school's ethos for collective responsibility at Tall Trees was observed in the way teachers worked together to negotiate conflict and take responsibility for the effects of their teaching on student learning. Teachers who were change agents were valued for their expertise. Multiple perspectives about teaching and learning were accepted as enriching their community (Grossman et al, 2000). Furthermore, teachers expected the effort they made in teaching to be matched by their colleagues' efforts and there were high expectations of each other. The organisation of professional development engaged

teachers in open debate about the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching practices and the way they shared ideas for improvement.

In addition, while teachers at both Greengate and Tall Trees espoused shared goals to raise students' literacy achievement, how collective responsibility played out differed considerably. This difference resided in how these schools approached meeting student achievement targets in literacy. At Tall Trees the teachers had developed a culture of systematic improvement, which provided a platform for the development of teachers' collective responsibility for all students' learning from Kindergarten to Year 6. There was no evidence of such a coherent, systematic approach to student learning at Greengate. On the contrary, teacher collaboration was restricted to professional relationships between grade partners and, to a lesser extent, through participation in externally funded projects. In this case, the professional development agenda was determined by the Principal and there was limited collaboration beyond the grade level.

In relation to collective responsibility at Aran Heights and Jossey High schools, the organisational reform of teachers' work ameliorated subject balkanisation through the implementation of, and sustained support for, teaching teams. The team structure at Jossey and the learning communities at Aran Heights had a positive impact on teacher collaboration across subject specialisations and faculties. Teachers developed new respect for the challenges their colleagues faced in different subjects, while recognising that consistency of pedagogical approaches was an effective way of developing curriculum and assessment tasks.

In both high schools the outcomes arising from teachers' collective responsibility were strikingly similar. Teachers reported high levels of control over decision making and a sense of empowerment to make decisions that directly impacted on the learning environments of their students. They felt supported to take risks when introducing innovative teaching ideas. Teachers also reported reduced isolation and vulnerability in the day-to-day challenges they faced in complex educational environments. In addition, teachers at these schools reported that a strong sense of

collective responsibility had resulted from increased expectations for student achievement, leading to improved learning environments in the schools and more positive relationships between students and teachers. Teachers cited student data that linked their school's organisational reforms to improved student learning.

Reforming professional development

The organisation of professional development played a critical role in enabling or limiting the development of teachers' collective responsibility at the four schools. The different approaches to restructuring teachers' work in each school influenced the way and degree to which teachers could take on innovative practices and raise their expectations about students' ability to learn. In particular, teacher collaboration was identified in the interview data as being essential for the development of collective responsibility. At Tall Trees, Aran Heights and Jossey, to varying degrees, teachers were participants in structured collaboration that required them to reflect on taken-for-granted norms and to engage in, at times, painful examination of their teaching practices. In the case of Tall Trees, the imperative to change current practices was external to the school but translated into a motivational force to improve existing practices.

Where there was major restructuring of teachers' work practices, such as the learning communities at Aran Heights and the Stage teams at Jossey, responsibility for student learning had shifted from concern about student welfare and discipline to shared expectations and consistent teaching strategies aimed at raising student achievement. Teachers in these secondary schools stated that benefits were derived from collaboration. Such benefits were described as providing the energy to sustain collective efforts to continue their intellectual development of the curriculum and associated classroom and assessment practices.

In summary, the four schools all undertook different approaches to reforming professional development to better meet the learning needs of their students. In doing so there is evidence in my study that reforming professional development is a fundamental dimension for the development of collective responsibility. Included in

this dimension are elements such as teacher efficacy about whether they feel their efforts are making a difference to students' learning, an imperative to restructure teachers' work to promote collaboration on the quality of their teaching with an explicit focus on student learning and how teachers developed relational trust. In addition, it is clear that the degree to which shared high expectations for both colleagues' work and student achievement operate in concert impacts on the degree to which teachers' collective responsibility develops.

In a sense these elements when working together unite teachers in a school towards a common goal or collective struggle. In the next chapter the nature of the collective struggle of each of the four schools to raise student achievement is explored for its role in developing teachers' collective responsibility.

CHAPTER 6

COLLECTIVE STRUGGLE: THERE'S A SENSE WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores how teachers in different schools unite against adversity with a common view to improve all students' achievement and the extent to which this represents a collective struggle. I use the term collective struggle to discriminate between efforts teachers typically make as they carry out the routines of teaching and a deeper level of effort that develops when teachers enact collective decisions about improving what and how students learn. Given the contextual backgrounds of the four schools the teachers associated the challenges they faced, at times, with high levels of adversity. Engaging in collective struggle for whole school improvement provides a focus to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions and practices about student learning. Collective struggle, in these schools, is also associated with an imperative to change current practices because of an internally or externally identified need driving improvement.

As previously mentioned, the schools in my study were selected on the premise that teachers had a history of engaging in school-based professional learning focused on improving students' learning outcomes. In each school, to varying degrees, it was expected that teachers' engagement in professional development would involve them in cycles of critical analysis of teaching practice that had the potential to improve student achievement. Raised expectations for improving student learning became a potential catalyst to move on from taken-for-granted practices to embrace new ideas about teaching and strategies for professional learning. The development of collective responsibility was connected with actions undertaken in the struggle to reform teachers' professional learning, engage in collaborative processes associated with building professional community, and to restructure teachers' work practices in new professional relationships requiring higher levels of trust and accountability.

In this chapter I present an analysis of what teachers say about their collaborations particularly in relation to the formation of professional community as they engage in collective struggle to improve student outcomes. To capture teachers' reactions to school-wide collective struggle to improve student achievement, interview data were coded, using features of strong professional community which include teachers engaging in reflective dialogue with colleagues about their work, deprivatising practices by sharing expert knowledge, observing classroom practices, questioning taken-for-granted norms in systematic ways, and collaborating in the shared work of teaching and learning (Bolam et al, 2005; Kruse et al, 1995). Not all features were present, or present to the same degree, in each case study school.

Further, in terms of building collaborative relationships, I report on how teachers came to know each other's strengths and weaknesses, formed friendships and relied on each other for support in difficult times. In terms of accountability, the presence of internal and external imperatives to avoid formal sanctions for perceived failure to achieve student performance targets is highlighted as teachers struggled to attain the improved results they wanted for their students.

Day-to-day survival at Greengate Primary School

You're here for the children and you're here to create a learning environment for the children and at least it's comfortable and welcoming ... we have a lot of refugee children here who are traumatised. (Anna)

* * * *

At Greengate Primary School, the nature of collective struggle was teachers' concern with surviving the day-to-day challenges of teaching students with little or no English literacy. In a group interview, four early-career teachers, expressed concern about their lack of knowledge of teaching strategies to support students who have English as a Second Language (ESL). In this school many of the newly arrived students are not literate in their first language. Shelly expressed concern about her own efficacy in teaching in terms of a concern that her students' learning was not compromised by her inexperience in assessing whether the students were actually learning or just being well behaved. Further, a member of the learning support team reported that

some teachers' lack of experience and skills to teach these new students was a concern: "With the new arrivals, the teachers who are not trained in that area (ESL)²⁶ find it very difficult to work on the curriculum that they're supposed to teach. . . [within a] curriculum [that is] so over-crowded" (Shana). The early-career teachers stated that they looked to the experienced teachers for assistance with strategies to support students who had little or no English.

Similar concerns were expressed by the experienced teachers interviewed about what they saw as their struggle to teach well and to provide a safe and secure learning environment for students from difficult backgrounds and low socio-economic or dysfunctional families. In this way, teachers' concern for the impact of socio-economic and cultural disadvantage on students' ability to learn is what glues them together and provides incentive for them to work harder, rather than lose hope:

*I think everyone's really trying hard to make a difference ...
We've got a difficult cohort of children who, many of whom
speak almost no English. So I think sometimes we just
despair a little that we're going to be able to make a big
difference to them but we try to maintain confidence and
the fact that children do learn and we just have to keep
lifting our game, it's not just we can make it happen.
(Deanna)*

This reflection shows that making changes to teaching practices in terms of raising expectations takes time and effort. It also shows teachers' sense of individual struggle to meet the school's expectations for improvement in student achievement.

Nevertheless, at Greengate Primary there did not appear to be a collective focus on working together to draw from the expertise within the school. Teachers did not share strategies that had previously worked in addressing the new arrivals' learning difficulties, nor did they seek out related professional development. Although there

²⁶ Students who have English as a Second Language (ESL) are identified as a specific category of students in NSW schools.

was a referral process in place for teachers who needed assistance, teachers' efforts to seek in-school support were met with a reported level of resistance and a lack of cooperation from the learning difficulties support team, despite their role in the school to provide such support. From one support teacher's point of view the process was:

If the teachers have to refer a child to the learning support team, it needs to be discussed in the Stage meetings first and the teachers need to tell, give their ideas on how this child might work ... like I had this child, similar type of child in my class last year and if this [strategy] worked, if you want to try this then they can work together and try everyone's ideas and just get on with whatever they are comfortable with. (Shana)

However, this process for referrals and sharing ideas or strategies at Stage meetings was not confirmed by any others as either being effective or common practice. One teacher reflected that she had followed the referral process, but was met with the following reaction at a staff meeting:

They [the learning support team] got upset with the whole staff for putting in too many referrals. One [member] got up and said 'what strategies have you tried?' And I was just honest and said 'well I don't know how to deal with this. No one's ever showed me and you know I'm asking you for help.' And that was not good enough in the staff meeting. (Alice)

There appeared to be a lack of collective struggle in terms of formal strategies used to address the issues confronting so many of the teachers. However, the majority of teachers interviewed at Greengate did express their sense of shared struggle in terms of their concern for students' welfare given students' language difficulties.

The power of reflective dialogue

Analysis of interview data from Greengate Primary School and Tall Trees Primary schools revealed that the extent, impact and power of reflective dialogue, in the context of those schools' collective struggle to raise student achievement, were important in the development of collective responsibility. The organisational structures that created opportunities for teachers to engage in reflective dialogue differed markedly in the two primary schools. At Greengate Primary School, opportunities for teachers to discuss the nature of teaching and learning, and ways to improve the effectiveness of their pedagogy, in order to meet the challenges of their students' learning needs, were determined through informal grade team partnerships. Who talked to whom was played out most strongly in the structural organisation of teachers' work in Stage teams, where pairs of grade partners taught in classrooms adjacent to each other.

Deliberate decisions were made by the Principal to form grade partnerships between teachers who were at similar stages in their teaching career – placing experienced teachers together and early-career teachers as partners on the same grade. It was considered that, “the main guts of professional learning happens at the Stage level between supervisors and class teachers, about teachers working together, being on class next to each other” (Principal). With so many new teachers appointed in 2006 the Principal saw the partnering of teachers as a potential threat to teacher confidence. This was addressed by specifying who worked alongside whom as grade partners. There was a prevailing sense of security expressed by interviewees who worked closely with a colleague on the same grade. In the interviews, the teachers did not report these relationships as facilitating or limiting their interactions with teachers on the grade below or above.

Analysis of the interview data reveals that focused and structured professional development, where teachers discussed student work and planned across stages for a continuum of learning, was not a common practice at Greengate as explained below. Reflection focused on student learning occurred mainly through informal dialogue with teachers. This approach was most commonly cited by interviewees as

the primary structure for focusing on student learning, shown in the following quotes:

It's based mostly on dialogue and talking within the staff room where somebody might be talking about a particular issue where, just because you're sitting there, you just talk about it as well and get involved. (Marilyn)

If you do walk into the staffroom, you often do hear people talking about teaching and learning. They're not just talking about what they did on the weekend. They are talking about ideas and problems they might be having. Or solutions they'd end up having or great things that happened, a great lesson that they had. And I think that's very healthy. (Raelene)

Most classroom teachers interviewed commented that they valued opportunities to discuss student learning across grades. Most often, teachers reported that they engaged in reflective dialogue in informal needs-based ways. Breaks from classroom teaching taken in the staffroom or outside classrooms were cited as valuable times for reflection and fostering positive relationships among staff.

Overall, it was informal dialogue that was reported as an important and valued source of collegial support for teachers at Greengate. The staff common room was reported as a location facilitating professional interaction about student welfare issues, feedback on curriculum decisions, discussion about students' work, sharing useful resources, and obtaining opinions about teaching units. The staffroom culture appeared friendly and amicable and was considered a safe place by most teachers for such informal exchanges. Another teacher summed up the place of informal dialogue in this way: "We do talk a lot, you know, about our kids and about our lessons, I think there's a lot of professional dialogue that does happen in the school in the staff room" (Marilyn). While there was a sense of collegiality engendered by friendly dialogue in the staff room at Greengate, there was not a sense that teachers

had a collective responsibility to address the literacy concerns raised in the interviews.

The challenge of deprivatising practice

Teachers at Greengate Primary indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to observe others' classroom practice but this had not been possible because of time constraints. There were no structural programs in place to support teachers to participate in peer classroom observations. Interviewees commented that informal observation was commonplace between grade partners as they rolled back the dividing doors to team teach, or were in and out of each other's classrooms as part of the normal day's routine.

Penny, one of the teachers in her second year of teaching, confirmed that she had not visited colleagues' classrooms, despite informal invitations by more experienced teachers "to come down and see what I'm doing." Penny reported that while she had not "actually seen any other teachers teach a lesson . . . we do talk about how we do it and give each other advice on what sort of strategies work." While she had gained confidence to try some ideas brought back from a grammar workshop to her own classroom she had not discussed the impact with other colleagues. Sharing results, observing lessons, and giving feedback on teaching were not mainstream activities for professional learning at Greengate.

Limitations to peer observation

I feel like our school is collaborative in areas where it's physically possible. (Shelly)

* * * *

The organisational divide between experienced and newly appointed teachers and the physical layout of the school were considered by a number of interviewees as limiting opportunities for peer observation. For example, several teachers reported that the reliance on physical proximity to facilitate collaboration had restricted the level of interaction between teachers in different buildings and on different grades. Geographical proximity and isolation were perceived, respectively, as an enabler and a barrier to the development of professional community at Greengate Primary

School. Overall, these barriers translated into sanctioned permission to focus on “my students in my grade” (Shelly). In this sense teachers’ participation in the challenges of improving practice were viewed as personal rather than collective and limited their opportunities to understand where their efforts fitted into the continuum for students’ learning that was a focus at Tall Trees.

Collective struggle: A whole school focus on literacy achievement at Tall Trees

Whole school participation at Tall Trees in reflective dialogue arose in response to a history of failed strategies to improve students’ literacy achievement. As a result dialogue beyond informal teacher talk in the staffroom and reflective of their struggle to improve teaching practice, was present in more systematic and focused ways at Tall Trees than at Greengate Primary. There was also a more explicit discussion and critique for using Quality Teaching in pedagogical practices at Tall Trees than at Greengate. In fact, any necessity for designing a continuum of learning across the stages was not identified as a priority for professional development at Greengate.

Teachers at Tall Trees Primary School reported their sense of collective struggle in the context of the school’s history of low student performance in literacy in the BST. Low performance was reported as occurring in spite of the teachers’ perception that they were trying very hard to raise student achievement: “The staff were working very, very hard and yet they were seemingly not getting the results that they would have expected” (Principal, Tall Trees). Consistent failure of students to perform above the State average meant Tall Trees came under the scrutiny of the regional support team. The imperative for change followed a meeting of the school executive with a regional consultancy team in late 2006. One teacher suggested the regional officers had torn “strips off the executive” and they were “denigrated” for the school’s “abysmal” BST results (Sally). This incident triggered a collective struggle by the teachers at Tall Trees to raise BST literacy results. As a result, explicit teaching of grammar became the school’s relentless focus for teacher professional development over the following twelve months.

The collective struggle to raise literacy standards

The collective struggle experienced by teachers at Tall Trees to raise standards in literacy was not achieved without a sense of pain. For example, at first a number of teachers reported their initial experiences in developing the rubrics involving difficult conversations as teachers felt insecure about their knowledge of grammar. One teacher described the conflict arising from the assertive style in which some of the staff meetings were led, resulting in a few teachers being afraid to contest some of the interpretations of the element of the Quality Teaching model. However, as teacher participation in the professional learning deepened their understanding, relational trust built among teachers and they felt their expertise was shared and valued. As Sally so frankly stated, “we’re going to get our writing results up if it kills us. And we started to work together and we all talked about writing every lesson and every day. That’s how we got our collective responsibility and our target.” Consequently, teachers’ collective responsibility appeared to be strengthened through their engagement in structured professional development that focused explicitly on building their expertise and confidence.

Staff meetings with an explicit focus on schoolwide initiatives to raise students’ literacy achievement provided structured, organised and purposeful opportunities to share personal expertise and opinions. There was a sense among the teachers that the initiative to develop and implement the literacy rubrics would be professionally challenging, but potentially rewarding. This is reflected in the following comment: “That started the collective struggle I feel. Everybody wanted to do a good job, everybody talked about BST” (Sally). They recognised there were high stakes associated with their imperative to change the way literacy was taught across a continuum from Kindergarten to Year 6.

From collective struggle to collective responsibility

As previously outlined, the teachers from Tall Trees were stirred by external pressure to lift the school’s performance in the BST for Years 3 and 5 as measured by these assessments. The ‘dressing down’ the executive received from the regional officers acted as a harsh realisation that what they had been doing was not working in terms

of raising students' literacy achievement in Years 3 and 5. Interestingly, only one assistant principal made reference to the regional officers' visit. She described the impact on her professionally as feeling "upset and traumatised ... we all felt very uncomfortable and threatened" (Sally). The fact that there was no reference made by other members of the executive who were also present at the meeting, this suggests that it had become an "undiscussable" incident. The Principal made cursory reference to the visit from regional representatives, toning down his version of its impact on the staff. He reported that "we have a real concern about our continuing BST results being slightly below State average and seeing that, in spite of what everyone was doing, not getting a lot of achievement." Sally further reflected that this incident tested what they could do collaboratively as a whole staff.

Consequently, the major avenue for structured reflective dialogue became the weekly staff meeting, where the bulk of the work was done in developing literacy rubrics. This discussion involved teachers critiquing their current practice described as:

All those difficult conversations, for example the difficult conversation about problematic knowledge was a positive because it got people talking and it got people talking about their concerns for the framework, and it forced people to confront the issues they had in relation to Quality Teaching.
(Sally)

As a collective focus, teachers from Kindergarten to Year 6 openly interrogated the features of grammar that they were not explicitly teaching; such as, sentence structure, the use of nouns and verbs, developing complex adverbial clauses and the literacy requirements embedded in teaching text types. They used Quality Teaching as a framework to embed the grammatical features of the text types in classroom and assessment practice. This meant adjusting their teaching to explicitly focus on the three dimensions of Quality Teaching, Intellectual Quality, Quality learning Environment and Significance, in designing student activities to provide academic

challenge, while ensuring relevance to students' interests and real-world contexts (see Appendix A).

Challenges and threats for deprivatising practice

As previously outlined in Chapter 5, at Tall Trees the focus for the weekly staff meetings was to deprivatise practice through trialling the rubrics with their classes.

This involved classroom observations of team members implementing the rubrics with their students, and the sharing of critical feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the rubrics at whole-school staff meetings. The survey data confirmed support for an emerging culture of deprivatised practice at Tall Trees. Fifty-seven percent of respondents reported that their teaching had been observed two or more times in the last year and that they had observed colleagues' lessons two or more times. In terms of discussing teaching strategies or receiving curriculum and assessment suggestions from peers, all respondents agreed that this had happened more than three or more times in the last year. In addition, 85 % of respondents recorded that they had received feedback on their performance more than three times in the last 12 months.

Regular after-school staff meetings were scheduled to work through the Quality Teaching support materials. They used Quality Teaching to construct feedback on teaching activities designed to implement the rubrics. The Quality Teaching model also underpinned the professional development sessions led by the assistant principals to develop the rubrics from "the bottom up" (Sally). Initially, the purpose was for teachers to deepen their knowledge of Quality Teaching and to build teachers' confidence in applying the dimensions to their own programming, lessons and assessment procedures. Further collaboration resulted in teachers' newly acquired knowledge and their implementation of Quality Teaching being channelled into developing a K–6 rubric for a range of text types. The Principal described the process as involving all teachers in high levels of collaboration, discussion, experimentation and reflection:

[The rubric] was developed as a whole staff at a staff meeting and then it went back to the classroom and for one term they intensively worked on that one particular text type in association with other texts as well, but knowing that at the beginning of the term you would be pre-testing using this type of text, at the end of the term you're going to get another type of post-test using the same text. And in between you stressed all aspects of that rubric in the teaching and learning process within the classroom so that students were very familiar with what was expected.

Not surprisingly, not all teachers were supportive and 'on board' in the initial meetings. For instance, Margaret described some discussions as "heated" and Sally described another's reaction as "a little bit nose out of joint" because their understanding of grammar had been challenged. However, a number of teachers reported that because the rubrics were jointly developed and teachers had the opportunity to debate and discuss the contents of the rubrics there was an increasing sense of ownership and success arising from their systematic implementation. As the process of developing the rubric had moved further along, one teacher identified a transition point in the staff's willingness to collaborate. She described the staff meetings as "very precious time, and we worked out what were the elements of writing that we were successful at, what we weren't successful at, and we shared that with the staff. ... You know it was a very rich and deep discussion about grammar" (Jessica). The interaction, debate and discussion, rather than dividing the teachers, gave them a sense of shared purpose, learning and success.

Thus, Tall Trees teachers' collective struggle played out as they developed, trialled and refined the rubrics. At the weekly after-school staff meetings, teachers were required to openly critique student work samples and to make public their judgements about student performance, rated against the writing rubrics. The professional dialogue was "very rich and deep" (Jessica); practices that were

essential because of the teachers' realisations that they lacked deep knowledge of functional grammar. The descriptions below illustrate the nature and depth of the struggle teachers embarked on to develop and trial the rubrics:

We sat down and went through every BST piece of writing we could get our hands on. [We] looked at what was expected, read other children's writing, worked out our aim. ... Then that went back to whole school staff meetings. With professional support we talked about it. We looked at where we were going wrong. We broke it down so everyone could see. And it's not only just the Year 5 teachers' problem ... So we have to start at Kindergarten, we have to work together. Everyone has ownership of it. It's not just the teachers from that class. So we really worked from that angle. And people were collaborative. They were willing to get in and have a go and share. And we would do some writing with the children, bring it in, share it. (Margaret)

They were long meetings and they were hard meetings. It was difficult to stand at the front with the grammar book in one hand and talk about the difference between certain types of nouns and so on. But you know it was a discussion that we had to have and it's borne a lot of fruit. (Jessica)

Teachers talked about the staff meetings as being time-consuming, difficult and hard work. Experienced and newly-appointed teachers alike were exposed to challenges about their depth of understanding of grammar and how to implement pedagogy that would support the rubrics being effectively used in the classroom.

The following examples reflect how teachers were challenged to openly reveal their level of understanding and ability to incorporate grammar in their literacy teaching.

So it was a huge threat to them to have to sit and say why they had given someone a two for conjunctions or something like that. They had to understand what

conjunctions were and how they identify them and all those sorts of things. That was a very personally threatening thing. (Sally)

It was hard work, it was hard to go back to basics. We have young teachers who have gone through school and haven't been taught grammar and here we're trying to teach the basic rules of grammar. (Meg)

We have arguments and it's not plain sailing. We all have our own point of view. (Margaret)

The pressure executive members were placed under by the regional team visit generated a ground swell among staff as they rallied to improve the school's performance in literacy. This highlights a transition point where the accountability for student performance shifted from the executive to the whole school as teachers took collective responsibility to raise student achievement. Teachers at Tall Trees demonstrated their willingness to be accountable for their colleagues' as well as their students' learning by putting the quality of their teaching under public scrutiny.

The staff increasingly became unified in their efforts to improve their own depth of understanding of grammar. What started off as adversity generated opportunities for teachers to engage in structured and purposeful discussion that not only strengthened their grip on literacy teaching but also united them to collectively develop the Kindergarten–Year 6 literacy continuum. The reflection below sums up what was required to develop of a sense of collective responsibility arising from teachers' collective struggle:

It was initially really difficult in terms of that collaboration; it was hard to get the journey started ... We didn't have that shared understanding so we had to start from there, and it was a slow process. It's just that you have to have that collective understanding ... and if you don't have that you

can't really build effectively on that from the bottom up.
(Sally)

In the whole-school professional development sessions all teachers had a voice and a stake in the outcomes. Teachers reported that the hard work was paying off because the staff had ownership and a shared understanding of what high literacy standards looked like. The key to this change was that teachers' efforts were channelled into a collective as opposed to individual struggle as part of a whole-school community. One teacher contextualised her struggle to develop professional community at Tall Trees as "helping all the teachers getting together and working out issues with different children and working together as a group, not as individuals" (Elise). Evidence from the data revealed that teachers at Tall Trees had, through deprivatised practice, built a culture of respect, trust, and collaboration.

Collective struggle at Aran Heights High School

We all seem to be pulling in the same direction and . . . there's a lot of politics in schools as you'll know but it seems like, you know, the general rule is what's best for the kids. (Trent, Aran Heights High)

* * * *

The collective struggle faced by teachers at Aran Heights High arose from their focus on raising expectations for student achievement. Students' achievement gains and teachers' focus on improving the quality of their teaching were primarily referred to as shared goals for teachers participating in the school's professional learning communities. Neale explicitly made this point:

The message now is we want ... I think that it's that all kids can learn. And teachers make a difference I think is still very much a part of it but that each kid would want to work to the best of their ability. And that we're setting the bar much higher in terms of what you can achieve.

The three members of the executive all agreed that the school's agenda for improvement was to focus on the quality of teaching in classrooms. An in-school organisational decision was taken to establish a new Teaching and Learning faculty.

This new faculty brought together teachers who taught integrated curriculum in the humanities and in maths, science and PDHPE to students in the middle years. This decision was a direct response to the whole-school agenda to raise student achievement in the middle years, to reduce the number of teachers students had and to implement Quality Teaching in integrated units of work.

In addition, the school had processes in place for the systemic monitoring of student performance in the senior years. One teacher emphasised that the monitoring process was facilitated by collegial structures and support for teachers. All teachers of senior classes participated in at least one classroom observation conducted by one of the senior executive members. Constructive feedback was given at the end of each observation. Further, assessment tasks were routinely collected and critiqued against the Quality Teaching model, with a particular focus on high expectations, intellectual quality and relevance to students' lived experiences.

The focus on raising student achievement at Aran Heights had wide support from the teachers who were interviewed. Teachers reported that the agenda to "raise the bar" (Trent) for student achievement was linked to substantial resources and opportunities for professional development, as well as feeling valued, trusted and supported to take risks to establish new programs and innovative teaching practices. Tina supported the view that teachers should receive assistance from the executive to participate in the monitoring process as shared collaboration:

But I think because they're [the senior executive] working hard up there to make a difference. It's not like we're pushed and they're [the senior executive] not working on the same thing. And you feel like you're being supported and encouraged and, you know, it's not like you're just sort of being asked to do it without any help to do it. (Tina)

However, not surprisingly, not all teachers felt supported in this agenda. As Bronwyn explained "you get teachers who are really, really committed and want to do a good job because they really like kids and want them to succeed. And I think you get other

teachers who, they just turn up, it's a job. I think you've got a spectrum like that everywhere." Regardless of the range of attitudes it was clear from the number of references in the interview data that, whether teachers agreed or not with the philosophy, Aran Heights was a school community that demanded high expectations for student achievement, and faculties and teachers were held accountable to contribute positively to the school's collective struggle to raise student achievement.

How strong professional community was established in response to an identified collective struggle to improve student at Aran Heights is discussed in this section. At Aran Heights their learning community strategy was designed to provide a supportive and innovative environment for teachers to implement Quality Teaching. Along with the support for teacher participation in a learning community was an expectation that the resources and benefit they attracted would be transformed into change in teachers' practice. Brent described the process thus:

Generally what they did was they moved away from the stock-standard lessons and they started looking ... like we always say down in my faculty that we have to win the hearts and minds of the kids. So they started looking at Significance [a dimension of the Quality Model] as the pivotal thing to everything else.

Pressure and support

I think the pressure's there but I think the results are there too. I think we're expected to work hard. (Tina)

* * * *

Teachers at Aran Heights talked about not only the pressures and expectations to work hard to lift student results but also their need work together towards raising the self-esteem of students and the school's reputation in the local community. These pressures are linked to the reciprocal accountabilities to engage students in intellectually challenging learning activities, and responsibility to each other to do their best for all "by pulling in the same direction" (Trent). Similarly, Barry talked about "the pressure to get the best results all the time [from the students]." The

prevailing culture of responsibility was for teachers to take on a collective struggle to improve student achievement in learning. Neale suggested that “the distinguishing feature in this school is that the vast majority of staff are prepared to work hard if it benefits the kids. I believe that most staff here would generally put the kids first.”

Interviewees cited that, even though the prevailing culture at Aran Heights was an expectation that teachers worked hard, they felt there was support to improve their teaching.

Support was provided through access to school professional development funds to participate in learning communities, to attend off-site professional development activities, and to learn from each other, by sharing teacher expertise in productive ways to develop quality units of work. The senior executive team, consisting of the Principal and two deputy principals, reported that requests to access resources for professional development were most often met with support. The executive attributed the high levels of volunteering to undertake additional responsibilities or initiatives to a culture of trust, respect, support for, and valuing of what the participating teachers were undertaking: “The number of initiatives that we run here is quite large and they’re willing to take them on because they see that there’s going to be some sort of benefit to the students at the end of the day” (Malcolm). Teachers’ collective struggle at Aran Heights appears to contribute to the development of evolving collective responsibility where some but not all teachers embraced the challenges of improving practice.

The fragility of professional community

Barry recognised the danger of spreading resources thinly and the same faculty members were consistently volunteering or taken out of the school for professional development days. In his opinion, Barry expressed a need to rationalise participation in the learning communities and to get back to the core business of classroom teaching:

I think we need to maybe see the bigger picture of who’s involved, of how many projects we’ve become involved in, to

limit the doubling up of some staff members. And it's been very good for all staff involved. I just think maybe we need to be a bit tighter in it ... And it's always the good kids and the great teachers who are involved in this.

Those that did not embrace this shift identified themselves more as victims of such struggles. One had moved from the Humanities faculty “into HSIE against our will basically” (Darren) and felt that the professional bonds established by Neale’s strong collaborative and progressive leadership had been fractured. Danny who had become a member of the new Teaching and Learning faculty expressed a view that the changed dynamics had lost some of the momentum engendered in the previous faculty arrangement:

We became a staffroom that was a bit of a victim of restructuring. I think it killed off collaboration within our [HSIE] faculty area anyway. We had a staffroom that talked professionally quite a lot. It was a very rare environment, I think a great environment and restructuring occurred and we lost that and it's never been the same since. I think we've lost that sort of connection now. (Danny)

It was further suggested that the culture of the new faculty structure was not as enthusiastic, supportive or as open to new ideas as they had previously experienced. Building a whole school commitment to implement Quality Teaching as a pedagogical reform at Aran Heights High School surfaced “diversity, dissent and disagreement” (Achinstein, 2002, p.421) in the micropolitics of professional community. Not all teachers supported, nor saw the benefit of, the learning communities. One teacher talked about initial resistance she saw from colleagues to the idea of learning communities:

I think a lot of teachers become cynical with a number of programs that are designed which could be seen to equate to more work or, you know, more ... taking a focus away perhaps even from the classroom. (Moir)

In terms of professional community, these comments point to the fragility of interpersonal relationships that rely on day-to-day professional contact to maintain strong professional ties. These findings also highlight the barriers to developing sustained professional community in secondary schools reported in other studies. Teachers need to be inducted into faculties (Bryk et al, 1999) to have a sense of identity tied to the way a faculty functions. This affords its members professional rewards through close engagement with colleagues (Talbert & McLaughlin, 2002). Only then can change be sustained, where teachers learn from conflict and exchange of new ideas that may result from teachers changing staffrooms (Achinstein, 2002).

The restructure at Aran Heights was designed to bring together the cross-faculty teams teaching integrated programs for mathematics, PDHPE, science and for the humanities in Years 7 and 8, and the Stage 5 enrichment program. This would bring together teachers who had performed well on Stage 4 teams, who had a strong foundation in Quality Teaching through their participation in learning communities and who “already had a very strong collective responsibility together versus another faculty (HSIE) . . . still very good teachers there but very set in their ways and not open as much to innovation” (Malcolm). However, there was variability in the way teachers at Aran Heights valued change. For some teachers it was hard to accept change as people moved in and out of faculty structures and leadership shifted. Schools are dynamic places that recreate structures to be more responsive to teachers’ and students’ learning needs, but are also places subject to the fragility of professional relationships and the power and influence leadership plays in change processes.

Collective struggle at Jossey High School

We don’t want these kids to constantly be suspended, we want to engage them at school. So how can we be responsible as a group to make that happen? (Louise)

* * * *

An overwhelming sense of collective struggle to raise student achievement through reforming teaching was reported by the teachers interviewed at Jossey High School. Implementation of reform strategies was focused on teachers’ high expectations for

all students through raising the quality of instruction designed to motivate students and manage challenging behaviour. While data were collected at Jossey three years into a stage team reform strategy, the Principal, and a number of other teachers made frequent references to the continuing difficulties teachers faced daily to maintain a focus on teaching and learning ahead of welfare, discipline and classroom management issues.

Initially, a sense of collective struggle was heightened by the specific demographics of the 2003 Year 7 cohort, who were described as complex and challenging. The initial establishment of teams was promoted as a strategy to focus on learning as a way of addressing behaviour and student disengagement, and to develop consistent practices to deal with individual students' learning challenges. As documented by the Principal in the 2006 evaluation report on the strategy, some teachers in the early stages of the reform viewed stage teams and LAW as a panacea; the answer to the students' behavioural challenges in classrooms. Not surprisingly there was an early sense of failure and dejection that the anticipated improvements were not easily gained. At this time Jossey High School was identified as a "fractured school. The teachers felt very isolated and alone in their classrooms. There was a lot of, this is my empire and don't you take it, this is mine" (Louise). This snapshot of a school culture, where teachers were professionally isolated and struggling with student behaviour, presented two major challenges for introducing the pedagogical reforms.

To address this sense of adversity, the first challenge was to replace a culture of blaming students for their poor performance. The teachers sought to address this through close examination of the quality of teaching that would engage students more actively in learning. The second challenge was the task of structuring time within the timetable for professional development, in order for teachers to meet together to plan for and implement strategies collectively to address the specific learning, attendance and welfare needs of their students. At Jossey, teachers' collective struggle involved transitional change from blaming students to developing a culture of collective responsibility for the quality of their teaching.

Collective struggle: Long and slow

Student behaviour, student achievement and professional development – it was just a lot of work and nothing out of it. (Jan, Jossey High School)

* * * *

As with most struggles to achieve educational change grounded in the development of strong professional community, the progress of reform at Jossey High School was slow. As a result, teachers reported their impatience, frustration and doubt that their efforts to focus on learning before welfare, and their capacity to deliver improvement in student achievement would bring results. As expected there was not a smooth passage to embed these reform strategies in school culture. Initially, low teacher expectations and cultural norms that had blamed students for a history of failed prior achievement prevailed in the early stages of teams' activity, as discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Consequently, there was a degree of impatience that results were not achieved instantly. As teachers, in increasing numbers, were incorporated into the team structure, and as these structures were experimented with in different combinations, student results gradually improved. According to school evaluation reports, student data reflected steady improvement: "Most teachers felt that hard data about [student] achievement such as results in SNAP, ELLA and the School Certificate²⁷ which showed value adding by our school were important indicators of success. School data was seen as important such as less absenteeism (teachers and students), improved attendance rates, less truancy, fewer suspensions, fewer detentions, increased number of merit awards" (*Jossey High School Program Evaluation Report, 2006, p.8*). These positive outcomes were attributed to pressure and support for teachers' collective efforts to sustain a systematic approach to teaching and learning as well as to their emphasis on consistent enforcement of appropriate learning behaviours and student expectations.

²⁷ Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP), English Literacy and Language Assessment (ELLA) and the School Certificate are external standardised assessments for secondary students in NSW schools.

The struggle for radical change

The introduction of teaching teams encompassed radical changes in the ways teachers worked together across faculties. For one teacher in particular, it was a personal journey of individual struggle. As an experienced teacher, Marjorie questioned her own teaching capabilities in response to the changes she needed to make in her teaching practice, as well as how she related to her colleagues as the leader of a team. She reflected on her experience of being a Stage team member since the inception of teams. It had:

Made me more aware of the learning and where I should be going. It made me stop and think more about the quality of my lessons than what I'm actually doing. It's made me more aware of what they're doing as well and then collecting work samples and making me more aware of where I should be going with the students. I think this is still evolving though as well. I think this is the very new thing for the school and perhaps even for me as an individual. I feel that to me it was a bit confronting because I feel that's where I was lacking. I'm very strong in welfare and I'm very strong in students having a safe learning environment so I think that's my negative about me. So it's a new learning thing that I'm just on the road to.

As previously reported, initially not all teachers on the teams had volunteered. Some teachers were forced onto teams without really understanding either why they had to participate or the purpose of teams. Marjorie was emphatic about her initial perceptions of her colleagues' reaction to teams: "People were forced on teams as well which was discussed this morning [in the Stage 5 group interview], not forced but just told. And so I think there was a lot of negative vibe about the whole thing, and would it mean more work for a teacher?" Similar views were also expressed during the Stage 5 team interview. Interviewees did not shy away from openly criticising what they felt had been an undemocratic nomination processes in establishing the earlier Stage 4 team initiative. The initial negative attitudes and lack of acceptance of teams had changed, however, moving on from those early days.

While at least four Stage 5 team members present at the group interview had held negative views initially, they were now converts to the teams' structure, represented by the two following comments:

And I think when teams began here, people felt forced which has probably, I feel, it's not there anymore. People are valuing teams and want to be on them. (Stage 5 team member)

When you're forced to do things sometimes you resent them, so I guess by volunteering or being quite happy to participate, you don't get resentful and are quite willing to do the work. (Stage 5 team member)

At Jossey High School the benefits of close collaboration in the Stage 5 team transferred into the faculty. One team member supported this view, claiming that what bound the group together was "the fact that we all, in the long run, [are] going to benefit our faculty and our programs and make it easier for us to teach and get the outcomes that we need from the students. So it's win-win across the board" (Stage 5 team member).

A struggle heightened by initial dissention

As reported in Chapter 5, at Jossey, professional development to support the teams' structure was given a high priority. Establishing teams as a major professional development focus in the school was not an easy transition. One Stage 5 team member explained how, in her view, when teams were first introduced:

People felt threatened by it and I did too. And I was on a team at one stage where I did feel threatened and a couple of us on the team felt we perhaps were being criticised for maybe, whatever, lack of effort, lack of authenticity in our programs, I don't know. But I think that was more of a personal thing and maybe I've learnt, maybe that person's learnt. And since then things like that have not happened.

They've sort of become more of a supportive network.

(Marjorie)

The initial struggle in 2003 to get the teams established confirmed that structural changes, in isolation from a concerted, collaborative and supported focus on professional learning, cannot force people to interact in productive and effective ways. There were no false claims of unity as teachers freely expressed their dissent for what was involved in setting up and making teams work. For example, Jan recounted how the school's struggle to establish teams played out at Jossey High School. In the first year of teams, she recalled that teachers' commitment to this new organisational structure was seen not only as hard work, but as additional work and pressure, for not a lot of gain. One intrinsic benefit of participating on a Stage team was considered to be release time to attend team meetings. While teachers attending team meetings were expected to critically discuss pedagogy and explore new ways to strengthen the focus on engaging students in more challenging and relevant curriculum, these expectations were not always met by participants, nor understood by teachers who were not on teams. This is illustrated by Jan's frank recollection of what she considered to be the prevailing attitude of the staff to teams in the first year:

In the start people saw teams as a wank. It was like, "oh my God, this is another stupid thing to do and it's just wasting our time, oh my God this is paperwork", and that's what it was. Because the first year it was as though we had it and we didn't really know what was going on, it was just like a new idea and everybody was just like, "oh, I don't really want to do it", and it was sort of forced upon us. And we had to do a lot of work and a lot of people weren't happy about it and it was seen to be minimal gain. (Jan)

This attitude of fractured collective struggle was further demonstrated by the Principal and other teachers expressing their concerns that student behaviour remained a challenging issue for teachers and the vision of teams being a successful

pedagogical intervention was at risk of collapsing: “We’ve still got naughty kids. Teams are not a panacea for teaching challenging and difficult students” (Principal). Further, Pat described how some teachers viewed the introduction of teams as a criticism of their teaching when, in fact, Jossey High School was recognised as a very difficult place to teach. Loretta also talked about the team meetings getting “bogged down” in welfare. She talked about teams as being “a drain on energy . . . because the kids are still difficult, dealing with welfare issues, attitudes from home don’t respect education, [students] don’t respect themselves.” These negative views demonstrate that, in the context of a school with high levels of social disadvantage, harnessing a collective struggle to make slow and measured improvements is challenging.

Rewards for collective struggle

However, there was a sense that things had changed by 2007. It was noted there had been a transition to more positive support by the majority of staff. Pat attributed this trend to supportive leadership, respect by the senior school executive for the work and commitment teachers had made to teams, and teachers enjoying the professional experience gained through their team participation. Confidence that the focus on Quality Teaching was working had grown from collaborative efforts to “look at learning first and welfare comes at the end” (Louise). Interviewees reported that the consistency in structure of assessment tasks to incorporate the Quality Teaching model, had supported teachers to “look at consistency in assessment tasks” and systematically question whether they have “consistency in structure so the students aren’t going to be confused as they go from one class to another?” (Marjorie). This change showed how learning together through team meetings, sharing the collective struggle of addressing the learning needs of students on a class basis, and building consistency into teaching and behaviour management for students became a set of new and shared norms for the teams: “General attitudes to teams were positive because of a focus on pedagogy” (Pat). Jan attributed the transition to the fact that teachers had become “old hands at it.” There was a greater sense of reported confidence in their ability to work together to focus on consistency of high expectations and how this was translated into teaching and learning practices. The

focus for professional development in team meetings had shifted from behaviour management to the quality of assessment tasks, as strengthened by the implementation of the dimensions and elements of the Quality Teaching model. Teachers in the teams and faculties where team members shared their professional learning at faculty meetings were able to reconcile their efforts and the resources allocated to improving student learning, in particular teacher release to attend team meetings. For example, Brian talked about how the interchange of ideas and teachers' willingness to take responsibility for their colleagues' professional growth and development was working for the PDHPE faculty:

By having that collective responsibility, everyone's involved, everyone knows their role and it was difficult getting all members on that team to say, "well we're all a part of this and everyone needs to do it". And now on four different occasions we've got together and there's six people working in the same time to improve student outcomes, they're all on-task, all bringing it back together, look at it, re-evaluate it and make it happen. (Brian)

On a whole-school scale, Sandra described the development of professional community across teams and in faculties as focused on the shared goal of improving student learning and learning environments, and on teachers' commitment to each other's professional learning:

I see it more of a teamwork situation where we are all sort of working together for a common focus which is for the best outcomes of the students ... We're working towards a goal and that'd be the student outcomes and trying to achieve those student outcomes to the best of our ability so the students achieve within their best range of their ability. So I see it as a teamwork approach. (Sandra)

Professional community at Jossey High School was the foundation for both the Stage 4 teams and the Stage 5 teams. A culture of collaboration that developed through the teams had also infiltrated into the teachers' subject faculties with professional

learning in teams and faculties underpinned by Quality Teaching. The focus on assessment to strengthen students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills became a whole-school goal. One teacher who had been sceptical at first about the power of teams to change teaching practice without overloading and openly criticising teachers, had changed her opinion. She attributed the development of teachers' collective responsibility to teachers' struggle to implement teams to change teaching practices by taking responsibility for and being accountable for both students' and each other's professional learning.

The staff works together. We're equally responsible for the students and what goes on in the classroom as a faculty and then as a whole school as well perhaps. And I think it works from the top down. And I think that it's never ever going to be a 100 % solution. I think how I see it working here, I think it's a very supportive staff who are really responsible for each other here and each other's welfare. I think it's strong at the faculty level; we're really supportive of each other and take responsibility for the learning at the faculty level. And as I said I think it happens right through the school but without us being fully aware that it's going on. (Marjorie)

It is clear that the modifications made between 2003 and 2007 in the team structure had enabled the growth of layers of professional community that had arisen from the teachers' collective struggle to address the lack of engagement, challenging behaviour and poor achievement of students in Year 7. This had expanded to permeate the professional development agendas for faculties and staff as a whole. Teachers openly spoke about having collective responsibility for student learning and extending that responsibility to the learning of their colleagues.

CONCLUSION

Findings reported in this chapter point to the salience of collective struggle in influencing the extent to which collective responsibility develops within a school. Evidence drawn from this study suggests that, in the case study schools, the extent

to which collective responsibility developed was related to the depth of teachers' collective struggle to improve student outcomes. The socio-cultural contexts of each case study influenced how teachers perceived the nature of this struggle. In addition, how the formation and strength of professional community supported teachers' actions and motivation to work collaboratively to raise student achievement, varied in each school. The extent to which teachers were committed to a sense of collective struggle in the four schools was heavily influenced by the role of professional community and professional learning that contributed to extent to which teachers' collective responsibility developed in each school.

Comparisons between schools suggest the emergence of distinctive points along a continuum in the development of collective responsibility for the dimension of collective struggle. Towards one end of the continuum the formation of collective responsibility was emergent. Towards the other end of the continuum teachers' collective responsibility for student learning was embedded in the school's culture.

Along this continuum, norms of privacy, professional independence and autonomy tended to work against teachers' commitment to a collective struggle. By way of illustration, norms of consensus and teachers' perceived need to 'fit in' at Greengate Primary School were more valued than being seen as an initiator of public debate or critical reflection. Where collective struggle evolves, some teachers are willing to embrace change, while others see themselves as victims of change as exemplified by the faculty restructuring at Aran Heights High School. Further along the continuum for the development of collective responsibility, teachers' commitment to collective struggle is visible in their shared norms for deprivatising practice, interdependence and engagement in critical reflection. These norms challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about current teaching practices, which was the case at both Tall Trees Primary and Jossey High schools.

Forming professional community and taking planned risks to trial alternative practices generated varying levels of collegial support and collaboration for teachers at Tall Trees, Aran Heights and Jossey to address their respective collective struggles.

The presence of conflict at Tall Trees and its absence at Greengate highlighted differences in the way teachers struggled to bring about improvement in student achievement. This finding is consistent with Achinstein's (2002) study, in her work on professional community, which recognises productive conflict as an essential component to open up debate about personal views, and as a precursor to consensus-based collective decision making. At Greengate, debate was stifled or teachers opted out of raising contentious issues for fear of their opinions being dismissed because of their perceived inexperience. In contrast, at Tall Trees there was an imperative to speak up at whole-staff meetings to develop the literacy rubric and, while the debate was described as heated and painful at times, teachers sought to address their collective struggle in order to make a difference to their students' results.

The extent of the development of collective responsibility can be influenced by the nature of professional development present in a school. My study found that the challenge to acquire new knowledge and change teaching practices in literacy, that drove the professional development agenda for Tall Trees teachers, was not present at Greengate. Similarly, a whole-staff focus to improve student achievement through teacher learning lacked the systematic rigour at Greengate that was apparent at Tall Trees. Cultivating professional community at Tall Trees arose out of a critical incident. While this could have fractured the staff's morale, instead they rallied together to critically reflect on current practices and seek ways for collective improvement. For teachers at Tall Trees, the external pressure and accountability to improve student results translated into high-stakes commitment. Teachers waited anxiously, even fearfully, for the BST results as an indicator of their success or perceived failure.

In the two secondary schools, strong cultures of school-wide responsibility for student achievement were observed. This can be attributed to structured and focused professional development, shared dialogue about the consistency of the quality of teaching across subjects, and the reorganisation of faculties to address middle years pedagogy. To a lesser extent, fear of work overload, cynicism about the

potential outcomes for students, and teachers' concern that they were victims of the faculty restructuring were identified as barriers in the development of whole-school teachers' collective responsibility for student learning. Restructuring professional learning opportunities to foster the development of professional communities was found to be critical in the development of collective responsibility at these schools. This finding is consistent with Bryk and Schneider's (2002) work on trust which found that a critical factor for school reform was the formation of small, cohesive work groups and social networks. At Jossey High School, trust emerged from teachers' work in stage teams and, at Aran Heights, in the learning communities that came together for specific projects.

To address the collective struggles teachers faced I found that the structural elements, such as information sharing in the case of Jossey's teams and Aran Heights' learning communities, facilitated collaboration and focused attention on what needed improving. This finding also extended to how teachers worked together to identify and make changes to their teaching practice and share the outcomes of such changes. Further, the opportunity to move in and out of different configurations of work teams, as occurred at Jossey and Aran Heights, increased teachers' exposure to a greater number of colleagues from different faculties, who shared a common ethos about the nature of the struggle they were undertaking.

The findings reported in this chapter demonstrate that schools engage in collective struggle to improve student learning in different ways. The socio-cultural and micro-political contexts of the schools in my study were influential in shaping how teachers developed and responded to shared goals for change, and in whether responding to these goals represented a form of collective struggle transitioning into collective responsibility. Shared goals to improve students' achievement represent a stimulus for change. Such imperatives can unite teachers in a collective struggle to address the adversity of challenging student behaviour and perceived influence of socioeconomic disadvantage on students' learning. Therefore, these findings support collective struggle being included as a dimension for the development of collective responsibility.

CHAPTER 7

TEACHER-TO-TEACHER TRUST AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss teacher-to-teacher trust as a factor in the development of collective responsibility, drawing from all five discourses (see Figure 2.1). The formation of relational trust has been linked to enabling school structures that create collaborative environments where teachers work together in supportive relationships, and where open dialogue, risk taking, experimentation, feedback and reflection are encouraged and practised (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). The findings of my study support the presence of these structural links in schools with a high degree of relational trust between teachers.

As outlined in Chapter 4, correlation analysis performed on the survey data indicated that there was a statistically significant positive correlation between the mean variable of trust and mean variables for: consistency of the professional learning with school goals; teachers' commitment to improve their teaching and teachers' commitment to the school's goals. In addition, the correlation between the variables of trust and collective responsibility returned the highest statistical significance of all the main variables (see Table 4.10). These results suggest that teacher-to-teacher trust relates to the organisational culture in schools, in particular, how teachers' perceive the coherence between the school's professional development programs and the agreed goals for student learning. This in turn affects the extent to which teachers commit their efforts to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and the specific goals and values that are shared across the school community. These features lay the foundations for the formation of professional community (Bolam et al, 2005), leading to school effectiveness and improvement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), and improved student learning (Bryk et al, 1999). Such relationships require deeper

analysis to investigate how these links are related to the development of collective responsibility in the four schools in my study.

First, I report an analysis of the data from Tall Trees to consider how teacher learning is related to building trust and the impact this can have on exposing vulnerability to achieve the goals of instructional improvement and internal accountability. Then, I elaborate on the contribution of whole-school decision-making to the organisation of professional development and its effect on the growth, or lack of growth, of professional community. A key difference between Tall Trees and Greengate Primary Schools is discussed in relation to the limit of developing trust, efficacy and professional community, identified in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 as key characteristics of collective responsibility.

Second, the fragility of relational trust is discussed in terms of the potential for scepticism, fear and mistrust to influence the varying degrees of intra-faculty and interfaculty trust at Aran Heights and Jossey High Schools. I also report how cross-faculty approaches to professional development provided a foundation for the development of teacher-to-teacher trust and examine the underlying characteristics of professional community and trust.

Last, I make some conclusions about the extent to which teacher-to-teacher trust develops in terms of forming new relationships based on exposing vulnerability that comes from sharing teaching challenges, strengths and weaknesses. Contrasts between the case study schools are drawn to further identify the conditions that support or act as barriers for building trust and a sense of collective responsibility for student learning.

TEACHER-TO-TEACHER TRUST

The formation of teacher-to-teacher trust is located in the socio-psychological dimension of teachers' work. As detailed in Chapter 2, trust has been found to develop among teachers when they engage in collaborative dialogue and deep

reflection on their teaching practice (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Trust is two dimensional, forming among teachers who are willing to share their strengths and weaknesses as well as being trustworthy (Aubusson et al, 2009). Such trust relationships are complex. Increasing trust that deepens school capacity to engage in organisational change, according to Bryk and Schneider (2002), is necessary for the development of collective responsibility.

Building trust through teacher learning

Analysis of the data at Tall Trees illustrates how teacher learning was linked to instructional improvement and internal accountability. The aim was to ensure that all teachers were taking responsibility for designing learning experiences across the full range of grades. This is seen in the context of teacher learning, linked to student learning and was the driver for the collective focus at the weekly staff meetings on developing the writing rubrics. Margaret's description, below, illustrates how teachers developed confidence to apply new learning, with a sense that their collective efforts would make a difference:

We sat down and went through every BST piece of writing we could get our hands on. And [we] looked at what was expected, read other children's writing, worked out our aim. And then [we] looked at [what criteria] we need to have. Then that went back to staff meetings with whole-school staff with professional support. We talked about it. We looked at where we were going wrong. We broke it down so everyone could see it's not just the Year 5 teachers' only problem. We can't just teach all the writing [skills] in this particular time. It goes right back [to previous years.] So we have to start at Kindergarten, we have to work together. Everyone has ownership of it, it's not just the teachers from that class. So we really worked it from that angle and people were collaborative. They were willing to get in and have a go and share. And we would do some writing with the children, bring it in [and] share it.

Sonia also agreed that every teacher had input into the rubrics. Priority was given to providing time and professional development resources for teachers to engage in productive dialogue around areas of student weakness. The teachers asked themselves what they had to learn in order to meet the literacy needs of their students across the K–6 range, and how they could work together to share their expertise, strengths and weaknesses.

Analysis of the survey data for responses to the items in the trust scale indicated that all seven respondents agreed that the majority of teachers at Tall Trees Primary really cared about each other (mean 3.43, SD 0.79); shared professional trust (mean 3.57, SD 0.79); discussed feelings, worries and frustrations (mean 3.29, SD 0.95); and respected others who took a lead in school improvement (mean 3.17, SD 0.98). High levels of trust were also reported by the respondent group in relation to expert teachers being respected (mean 3.21, SD 0.91), and the majority of teachers felt respected by others (mean 3.14, SD 0.90). By contrast, 71% of respondents in this sample reported that they were not challenged to think differently about their teaching by other teachers in the school (mean 2.29, SD 0.49).

In light of the results reported above, it is possible that the respondents who elected to complete the survey were proactive about their own professional development and had taken a lead role themselves in supporting the professional development of others in the school. Or alternatively, the professional development that this group of respondents had engaged in did not extend to challenging each other. Overall there appeared to be acceptance of each other's strengths and weaknesses in teachers' ability to understand the underlying pedagogical content knowledge to teach a range of texts. Professional interdependence was created and nurtured, as the teachers realised the task of developing the rubrics would not succeed without everyone's effort and contribution. The rubrics became a concrete representation of the power of their collective efforts. Through cycles of trial and error, the teachers at Tall Trees had developed a set of professional standards for literacy that were widely shared and understood. More importantly, teachers had a commitment to each other to transfer these standards into new classroom practices. In essence, these

teachers had used the formation of professional community to genuinely support each other's learning and increase their capacity to deliver against the school's accountability targets to raise student achievement.

Internal accountability

When collaborative efforts are embedded at an organisational level and reflect the properties of professional community, teachers are more willing to make their practice open to critique. These types of collaborative practices can also increase trust, according to the discourses on relational trust, efficacy and accountability (Achinstein, 2002; Hoy, Gage & Tartar, 2006; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Such collaborative activities were embedded in the restructuring of school-based professional development for teachers at Tall Trees Primary School. This point is illustrated by Liz who described how the foundations of trust developed at Tall Trees. She stated that the opportunity to work together towards a common educational goal had brought a renewed eagerness "to share good ideas" where "nobody is put in a position where they feel their ideas aren't justified or aren't valued. It's a great atmosphere to work in." The professional learning gained through staff meetings was valued for its practical transferability into classroom practice.

Such sharing of ideas required high levels of trust because teachers were engaged in public problem solving that exposed gaps in their depth of knowledge about grammar and the gaps in students' learning. Whole-school collaboration to develop the literacy rubrics engaged all members of staff in critical reflection, not only on their classroom practice in relation to writing, but also in critically exposing their depth of understanding, or lack of understanding, of grammar. Margaret felt that trust and respect played a critical role in teachers' willingness to show their vulnerability as they worked through a series of regular staff meetings to develop and refine the rubrics:

It's [trust] played a big role and there are still people who are not comfortable and perhaps not trustful of other members coming in, they're just a little insecure ... It's a big ask to have someone come in and say, 'alright I want you to tell me what I'm doing wrong' especially when you've been

doing it a long time. So I wouldn't say it's one hundred percent trust here. I think some people are very guarded and again that could be just personalities and the way people present.

However, the level of trust described was by no means universal. There appeared to be a prevailing mistrust and resentment by one or two teachers. Teachers attributed this to fear that their personal knowledge of grammar was being questioned (Margaret) and “white-anting” to individual resistance, to remain silent rather than speak out when the opportunity arose in the whole school staff meetings (Meg). Nevertheless, several teachers reported that increased levels of trust among teachers had resulted from the professional interactions at the staff meetings. For example Margaret talked about teachers’ willingness to share and be more open about their teaching practice: “again not just responsible for what happens in your own room, to be responsible for a lot more.” Jade, a K–2 teacher, also indicated that she now had increased trust and respect for her primary colleagues because “we’ve gotten together more, we share knowledge and they were things we’ve never done before. It was just a bit of gossiping with staff before that. Now I feel closer to everybody in the school. We’re a real team.” Further, Pam attributed the development of trust among the whole staff to sharing their knowledge and ideas as they provided input into developing the rubrics. She credited her colleagues’ willingness to expose their vulnerability to the mutual trust that had developed through the process of sharing new ideas and practices with the whole staff:

You're getting in there and you're sharing your ideas and your progress, your success, your downfalls ... If you've had a positive they pat you on the back, if you've had a downfall they go 'oh well better luck next time'. And I think they're interconnected in the collectiveness. (Pam)

Hence, the process teachers engaged in at Tall Trees to develop and refine the rubrics, and to observe and openly critique the quality of Assistant Principals’ lessons, created a sense of tolerance for teachers’ capacity while increasing teachers’

confidence to meet grammar requirements in the syllabus. Teachers trusted in the process that, by working collaboratively, they could raise student achievement and thereby, collectively, address the regional office criticism levelled at their efficacy as a staff to affect change in their school's poor BST results.

Limits to trust, professional community and efficacy

This sense of professional community and trust that developed at Tall Trees was not present in the data from Greengate Primary School:

I think it depends on the relationship different teachers have with each other. I think there's school dynamics [that] change very quickly from year to year. (Deanna)

One key difference between the schools was that Tall Trees teachers had a shared focus around the development of the K–6 writing rubrics. There was no such collective work highlighted by the interviewees at Greengate, even though, as Jamie described, the relationships between teachers meant they formed “a tight knit group.” While there was still a sense of loyalty, especially among the early career teachers, an experienced teacher but newly appointed to the staff at Greengate did not feel this sense of inclusion: “I see teachers working very hard after school, discussing, working in the staffroom too, discussing their work and discussing what they did, what they're doing for children” (Gerard). When asked what aspects of the school culture supported collegiality, he replied that he was not qualified to make a judgement yet because he was new to the staff: “Whether I'm actually a part of it, it's still, it's still unclear, but I know in a way I can't be a part of it because I'm new and I'm unfamiliar and teachers don't know me.” The absence of an induction into the established routines for peer collaboration could signal a lack of strong community and trust. In this case the exclusion of Gerard, an experienced teacher, from planning and information sharing deprived the school of knowledge and resources he could contribute. Effectively, this reduced the opportunity for any new ideas that Gerard for example may have been able to contribute. Nevertheless, the Principal at Greengate described the level of trust among teachers as “quite good.” Analysis of the survey results confirms the Principal's perceptions.

Overwhelmingly, interviewees reported that the majority of teachers at Greengate Primary School really cared about each other (mean 3.2, SD 0.77), trusted each other (mean 3.11, SD 0.61), felt it was okay to discuss with other teachers their feelings, worries and frustrations (mean 3.15, SD 0.79), and respected their colleagues who took a lead in school improvement (mean 3.00, SD 0.79). High levels of trust are also reported by the respondent group (n=17) in relation to expert teachers being respected (mean 3.43, SD 0.71); and the majority of teachers feeling respected by others (mean 3.25, SD 0.65).

As mentioned in Chapter 6, the Principal deliberately paired grade partners, based on a match of their length of teaching experience. His justification was that “they are on equal peer footing between beginning teachers and beginning teachers.” The Principal asserted that teachers’ willingness to trust their colleagues was influenced by the power relations that generated a demographic divide between the significant number of young early-career teachers and other staff who were more experienced and older. He explained:

I think sometimes with a beginning teacher and an experienced teacher it's more like a differential power relationship. Sometimes some teachers feel a bit intimidated by that. But I think when the beginning teachers are working with each other they set up a lot of collegial networks. [Collegial networks] have just been set up informally, it wasn't my doing, on the basis of friendship groups. If those structures are happening you don't need to try and intervene and push too hard. But at the same time if they're not happening in the school and you feel someone is being isolated then that's where you might have to pair them up or mentor ... but do it in a discreet way [so that] they may not necessarily know what's happening.

This strategy reflected the Principal’s desire to protect the younger early-career teachers from having their practice exposed to the critique of more experienced teachers. However, to a certain extent his protective intentions limited the benefits

that come from risk-taking and vulnerability which are critical factors in the development of trust (Geist & Hoy, 2004).

Given the prevailing culture, it was not surprising that the early-career teachers at Greengate reported that their teaching experience had a direct influence on their confidence to make contributions to whole-school professional dialogue. Penny, in her second year of teaching, felt that she had gained the respect of her more experienced colleagues because she was willing to share recent learning from her university training. She was able to confide in her colleagues if she had a lesson that had not gone to plan. She commented: "It's OK. It happens to them as well even if they have had 20 years experience. So that makes me feel better."

Conversely, Jamie did not hold the same degree of confidence in his colleagues: "because I'm so young . . . I feel I have no right to approach anyone else." A number of teachers made reference to their hesitation and a degree of frustration to speak up in whole-school professional development meetings. Shelly attributed her hesitation to feeling a lack of trust from more experienced teachers for innovative ideas she might introduce because "if sometimes one of the newest teachers says something it could get brushed aside and that happens a bit I think." Jamie expressed a sense of hurt at the negative reaction he got from speaking up at staff forums. He recounted that, when he and his early-career teacher colleagues suggested new ideas, they felt they were quickly dismissed which "doesn't do much for your self esteem I guess when you're trying to impress the older people here."

A different picture of relational trust was painted by the more experienced teachers. These teachers reported that staff forums and meetings, focused on professional development, were underpinned by a culture of collaboration and open professional dialogue. They felt contributions from both experienced and newly appointed teachers were welcomed. Jamie again did not share this view. What he described was a rite of passage, where he felt teachers had to earn the trust and respect of colleagues before being experienced or confident enough to offer a point of view that he considered would be valued. Linda, however, suggested that the ideas and

new approaches to student learning by beginning teachers were respected, valued and based on reciprocal trust. Linda, Andrea and Raelene all acknowledged the positive impact of mentoring early-career teachers on their own professional practice, through the new ideas they had gained from lesson observations, where new teachers were prepared to take risks and trial innovative strategies:

I think you can learn a lot of things from kids who have just come out from university because they've got fresh ideas and enthusiasm and particularly I guess the targeted grads²⁸ because they're ideas people and they can, if you bounce ideas off each other then you can grow, both of you growing. (Raelene)

Further, in Deanna's view, maturity and experience gave some teachers a voice to publicly express their viewpoints. Silence from the significant number of early-career teachers was equated with consensus. Thus, Deanna considered:

There's a lot of maturity about putting our views forward. There's a lot of give and take and we try very hard, from what I can see, we try very hard to make sure that everybody gets a chance to put their view forward and everybody gets to listen too. And if people agree that that's a good way to go, well, we'll give that a go too. (Deanna)

A similar viewpoint was shared by Marilyn, another experienced teacher, who considered that there was informal but productive dialogue about both teacher and student learning among teachers at Greengate. However, as previously stated, most teachers interviewed reported that the focus for their responsibility was on the grade they were teaching that year, and the majority of collaborative planning occurred between grade partners.

Perceptions of low efficacy, lack of experience and knowledge of effective literacy and numeracy strategies appeared to limit the development of relational trust

²⁸ A targeted graduate is a newly appointed teacher who has been appointed on merit, based on university results and performance at a pre-appointment interview.

among both experienced and less experienced teachers. For example, one experienced teacher reported that, even when teachers participated in school-based professional development aligned to the literacy and numeracy targets, teacher talk and a sense of accountability were not sufficient to sustain change where it mattered most, that is, in their teaching practice:

I think it's something that we're conscious of when we're together talking about expectations of students. We're all reminded of what we're here to do but I think when we go back to our classrooms we ... just go back to the kind of teaching that we're most comfortable with and that we've used for a while. (Deanna)

Nevertheless, teachers at Greengate talked about being a close community. Their sense of cohesiveness, reported in the previous chapter, stemmed from their resolve to address the learning challenges presented by their student population. While there was a notional willingness to have a concerted whole-school effort on literacy and numeracy improvement, what was lacking was the opportunity to participate in sustained professional development, where their strengths and weaknesses were shared to better understand and design a way forward. Instead, teachers tended to retreat to their classrooms and repeat the practices that they had relied on in the past. Initiatives to introduce new practices, such as the extension activities integrating Quality Teaching developed the previous year, were reported by Alice as not being sustained. She suggested this symbolised that previous efforts were not valued or were subsumed by new agendas. This disappointment and mistrust typified what others reported as inconsistencies between the Principal's words and actions to sustain a focus on whole school improvement and disrupted opportunities for teachers across grade teams to develop a sense of knowing and trusting their colleagues as a group.

FORMATION OF RELATIONAL TRUST

A distinguishing feature of the secondary school communities at Aran Heights High and Jossey High schools was the emergence of trust within and between faculties. In-depth investigation of individual faculty cultures was outside the scope of the present study. However, consistent with prior studies (Achinstein, 2002; Hoy, Smith & Sweetland, 2002; Lee & Smith, 1996; Little, 1993; Louis et al, 1996; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001), the culture of faculty trust, the degree of collaboration, and the presence or absence of collegiality at Aran Heights and Jossey High schools appeared to be heavily mediated by the nature of the professional communities and the depth of professional growth in individual faculties, arising from teachers' participation in the interfaculty professional communities or teams.

Faculty and interfaculty trust

A lot of people here will take those risks and will step outside the normal guides as long as it is for the educational benefit of the kids. (Dean, Aran Heights)

* * * *

Faculty trust has been reported as a critical workplace factor for the development of collective responsibility in high schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hoy et al, 2002). Faculty trust among teachers in the English and Teaching and Learning faculties at Aran Heights was highlighted as being high. At Aran Heights, the English faculty and the head teacher's leadership of that faculty were identified, in the interviews, as generating high levels of faculty trust, cohesion and consistency in quality pedagogy. In the newly established Teaching and Learning faculty, formed as a result of internal school restructuring, the cohesiveness and trust that had developed in this new faculty because:

We all seem to be pulling in the same direction and there is ... a lot of politics in schools as you'll know but it seems like the general rule is what's best for the kids. And we're not scared to try stuff that's new and we take greater pride in doing very, very well. (Neale)

Analysis of the survey data for responses to the items in the trust scale indicated all interviewees agreed that, in their view, the majority of teachers at Aran Heights really cared about each other (mean 3.25, SD 0.75), shared professional trust (mean 3.60, SD 0.49), discussed feelings, worries and frustrations (mean 3.50, SD 0.52), and respected others who took a lead in school improvement (mean 3.08, SD 0.90). High levels of respect were also reported by the respondent group in relation to expert teachers being respected (mean 3.50, SD 0.67), and the majority of teachers felt respected by others (mean 3.75, SD 0.45). Interviews also provided evidence that trust was related to the way school-based professional development was organised through access to learning communities formed specifically to address individual and collective professional learning needs.

Whole-school shared vision and trust

The Principal of Aran Heights highlighted that teachers' work was guided by a shared understanding of the school's vision for stretching the academic achievement of students. This vision had a "whole-school perspective." That is, the organisation of teachers' professional development was formed around professional learning communities where teachers came together to undertake specific projects or tasks:

There's a lot more cross-faculty or cross KLA interaction which I basically don't think would happen with them [learning communities] ... we've adjusted the curriculum, integrated the curriculum that's where we've changed our junior curriculum. (Principal)

Suspending judgement, gaining insight into subject curriculum outside individual teachers' specialisations and sharing ideas focused on the quality of instruction were cited as further benefits to cross-faculty participation in learning communities. For example, drawing from her experience as a member of a cross-faculty learning community, Wendy talked about the growth of relational trust that developed because of the:

chance for us, inter-faculty, to be discussing our philosophies of education. And we actually found quite

often we were aligning or we were picking up ideas. You know, I was in with PE, I was in with TAS, I was in with all these other faculties that just through the nature of our subjects did things differently. But we could all pick up ideas from each other which was excellent. We found that to be one of the most valuable things.

One of the Deputy Principals, was a key strategist in setting up the structure, organisation and resource support for the learning communities. Previously, teachers rarely engaged in cross-faculty dialogue about teaching. But as Malcolm reflected, the learning communities had changed the way teachers interacted: “People have got as far as going into each other’s classes and critiquing and providing feedback to each other informally without wanting to approach us for funding or support in that regard. And I think that’s important that people can find each other and trust each other all in the name of their professional development.” The growth of trust can therefore be attributed to opportunities for teachers to form relationships with those from other faculties.

In addition, the energy and creativity that was generated from such interactions was a feature of the sustainability of the learning communities at Aran Heights. Over the last four years at Aran Heights the interfaculty learning communities had become a key component of organisational practice for professional development acknowledged in the following comment: “We’ve got the learning communities which is probably our number one organised professional development activity. There’s a lot more cross-faculty or cross-KLA interaction which basically I don’t think would have happened without them” (Principal).

One characteristic of trust at Aran Heights, reflected in the interview data, was an intolerance of teachers who displayed negligence, lacked effort in tackling the hard work of school improvement, or failed to commit to the school’s professional development priority to implement Quality Teaching. As Bryk and Schneider (2002) state, “such behaviour if allowed to persist, can be highly corrosive to relational

trust” (p.127). One teacher expressed a view that teachers displaying such traits would find themselves marginalised:

If someone dissents because it's hard work, that view will be taken on board as part of the process but it won't prevail because there's very, very few here – but there are some – who want the safe and easy path and don't want to change.
(Neale)

Trent similarly displayed no sympathy or tolerance for colleagues who were not prepared to work hard, or who demeaned students. In his view, such teachers had no future at Aran Heights, stating emphatically that “here, they will finish them up if they're not prepared to . . . meet the minimum standards.” He equated the school's high expectations for teacher performance with competence; that is, a teacher's ability to contribute effectively to the school's agreed targets for student achievement. These views are consistent with the literature on trust, being related to mutual expectations and obligations that are regularly validated by actions (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Halverson, 2006). At an organisational level, the interfaculty learning communities, as highlighted earlier, were a prime strategy for building teacher capacity to achieve the level of results desired for students at Aran Heights.

FRAGILITY OF RELATIONAL TRUST

Fear, scepticism and a lack of self-efficacy signify the fragility of relational trust when a new initiative or structural reform in the way teachers are required to work together is introduced. Unless enabling school structures that encourage teacher professionalism and provide opportunities for mutual cooperation and support are in place, it is unlikely that teachers would be willing to trust their colleagues. Research at Jossey High School revealed that teacher engagement in activities perceived as working towards the development of trust were initially viewed with scepticism. Other reactions included fear and professional vulnerability.

Fear or trust

Fear was the initial reaction to the introduction of cross-faculty teams at Jossey High School. Marjorie, among others, summed up teachers' initial feelings as fear of the unknown, fear of criticism, fear of lacking pedagogical and subject knowledge, fear of being judged by peers, and fear of increased work load:

I think there was a lot of fear and it was such an unknown, and people felt that they might be criticised. 'Were people going to be there, who had power, who had more knowledge of the teaching and learning situation?'
(Marjorie)

When teachers were interviewed about their experiences in cross-faculty Stage teams they identified the development of trust as one factor that turned their fear into productive relationships with positive outcomes. Over time, fear was replaced with confidence to try and share new strategies that promoted consistency in the quality of classroom instructional practices.

Two teachers who were initially fearful suggested that confidentiality and respect had developed within teams and had raised the level of quality and consistency in teaching practices:

It's pretty hard to leave yourself open for criticism and then the more they trusted what you're saying whatever's said in here stays in here. And I think that a lot of them did find that trust in the end. And I have some of my teachers still, the older ones come and ask me just to look at their tasks now in maths. (Mina)

And I think as a team people go there now and I think they feel more equal that they're not going to be judged, that there's equality amongst all of us. (Marjorie)

Thus, growth was seen arising from the emergent culture of trust. Interfaculty teams at Jossey created an environment for sharing and collaboration that most teachers

had never experienced outside of their faculty. The Stage 5 team leader, described the transformation from team learning into faculties as an accelerant for sharing cross-discipline knowledge and strategies. This resulted in team members feeling welcomed and confident to visit each others' faculties and classrooms to find out "what's working for you guys, how can I put it into my unit of work?" (Brian). Importantly, the interfaculty stage teams gave teachers from a range of faculties a common identity and a purpose to meet regularly.

The notion of team identity was recognised by staff at Jossey as an important catalyst for developing trust and cohesiveness. Team bonding began with a focus on learning that specifically addressed the students' individual learning needs within a class. Katrina identified two critical elements that supported the cohesiveness of her team. First, there was the growth of trust among team members through their regular team meetings; and second, "that bond, whatever you call it, between teachers here" that connected them through discussion outside their meeting times. One outcome from sharing a common purpose was seeing their students' behaviour and results improve. Teachers' sense of efficacy grew from the reciprocity of trust that developed in teams, as they shared collective beliefs about the difference they could make to student outcomes.

Unconditional support

We're there for each other no matter what, through thick, thin, from the floods from a week or so ago to a staff member who was verbally abused and felt physically threatened last week.
(Barry, Aran Heights High School)

* * * *

Collective resilience to persist when faced with repeated failure, and to provide collegial support to colleagues no matter what, was also a common feature reported in all four schools. The interviews revealed that in all four schools there appeared to be relatively close professional bonds and mutual support between teachers. Overall, there was little evidence of undercurrents of conflict, or attempts to suppress dissenting voices, with the exception of less experienced teachers at Greengate Primary suggesting they felt their ideas were not valued. One explanation

for this is that consensus and compliance were stronger features of Greengate's school culture than the other case study schools. In addition unlike the other schools, there was less reported evidence of teachers at Greengate being united behind an identified whole-school challenge being addressed structurally through organisational reform for teacher professional learning.

In one way, unconditional support could function to perpetuate mediocrity and tolerance of underperformance, or to justify the paucity of teaching in terms of students' challenging behaviours. This, however, was not the case at Aran Heights, Jossey and Tall Trees, where pedagogical challenges were addressed through whole-school professional learning. For example, Danny (Aran Heights) expressed close alignment to colleagues who shared his beliefs:

Ultimately kids are people and, again, I think it's that open-ended thing. And that we need to think of these people [students] who have their own dreams, desires, potentials and, again, they're the ones who can determine that and I think that's probably a common ground I find – the people [teachers] who I'm closest to as teachers within the school.

This philosophy was supported by Neale, who agreed that teachers at Aran Heights were willing to contribute their opinions, take on new challenges, embrace new styles of programming (i.e. integrated units for Years 7 and 8), and develop new courses. In essence, this was a shared belief that “educationally our kids would benefit, they would learn material more effectively, they would have a greater sense of connection and ultimately that leads to a more settled classroom which is the payoff for the teacher” (Neale).

The development of relational trust also appeared to have a social element of cohesion and support. This was highlighted by one teacher at Jossey High who talked about the cohesion in her faculty. She commented they were all very good friends. They gathered for social activities outside school, at each other's houses, or at “the pub every now and again to have a bit of a gossip and a bit of a venting session . . .

Just have a drink and that removes you from the school background. We actually have ‘fat days’ where we go out and we buy pizzas or hamburgers or Chinese food” (Jan).

Further, a number of other exceptional practices at Jossey that highlighted teachers’ unconditional support for each other are worth noting. Patricia, who was a recent appointment to the staff, expressed with amazement teachers’ acceptance of the practice of taking “additional” lessons to cover staff absences in preference to classes not having “quality” replacement teachers, due to the difficulty in attracting casual teachers in their school. It was also commonplace for teachers to extend support to colleagues in settling a difficult class or to make their presence visible in the corridor outside a disruptive class. I also observed that it was not unusual for a teacher to step in and take extra students into their class to reduce a heightened level of disruption.

Rod described these practices as a strong foundation amongst the teachers “who are willing to help no matter what.” By way of illustration, he recounted that he had offered to cover a double period for an absent colleague because there was no available casual. He talked about being approached by more than one colleague who, in turn, also offered to take the additional periods as a matter of course. Several teachers also talked about giving colleagues experiencing difficulty with a class, their unconditional support to intervene in a professional and respectful way as a way of dealing with students’ challenging behaviour. These practices, considered critical in the development of relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), are reported as unremarkable at Jossey. Such instances of trust appeared to be integrated into the collaborative culture of the school.

CONCLUSION

Teachers at Tall Trees, Aran Heights and Jossey all made a considerable effort to address radical organisational changes to traditional teaching practices and to their relationships with colleagues. Where there is a strong sense of collective struggle,

support for teachers brings together aspects of professional development, professional community and trust. Changes in teaching practices, and the way teachers worked together, demanded focused and substantial resources for teachers' professional development. The challenges associated with such changes produced, to varying degrees, growth in trust among the teachers. In these three schools, teachers were required to form new professional relationships, as they exposed their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses and supported each other professionally and socially in meeting the challenges they faced in changing their teaching practices. The small and focused professional learning communities broke down the barriers of traditional cultures in schools that promoted teacher autonomy. Instead, cultures of relational trust, based on confidentiality within the group, facilitated collaborative action around core problems of instructional practice.

In contrast, teachers at Greengate Primary School were expected to realign instructional activities during the school day to accommodate longer blocks of time for literacy and numeracy. In-school professional development was made available to support the initiative. As described, this support was fragmented, lacking coherence, and lacking opportunities for teachers to work systematically in across-stage collaborative relationships.

At all four schools the degree to which teachers were willing to give colleagues unconditional support had a direct impact on the development of collective responsibility. This included such aspects as the level of consistency in the agreed standards for teaching and the degree to which teacher learning was focused on a set of shared educational goals.

That the presence of the cultural norm of relational trust in the case study schools, positively impacts on the development of collective responsibility, was consistent with Bryk and Schneider's (2002) findings that this is a critical condition for schools undergoing change. Findings from my data also suggest it was no more difficult to develop relational trust in larger secondary schools with faculty structures than in primary schools with a smaller number of teachers. In other words, in my study, the

size of the school played a less critical role in the development of collective responsibility than the existence of opportunities to develop relationships. These relationships supported teachers to make the critical changes required to improve student learning.

There were numerous benefits of relational trust at the case study schools. Where I observed strong levels of trust, professional learning was a whole-school response: to an imperative to work collaboratively such as at Tall Trees; to expose current practices to critique from peers occurring at Jossey; and to embrace the risks associated with designing new integrated curriculum units undertaken by teachers at Aran Heights. At the two high schools, the whole-school focus on Quality Teaching and flexible organisation of learning communities and teams provided the opportunity for teachers, in small interfaculty groups, to better know their colleagues and gain a deeper appreciation of each other's subject knowledge.

At Jossey High in particular, commitment to a common instructional framework, in this case the Quality Teaching model, provided professional learning opportunities for teachers to jointly plan and share assessment tasks and information about student performance. Interviewees reported participation in teams symbolically demonstrated their core commitment to driving classroom management through learning. Teachers participating in teams reported that their students knew their teachers collaborated on what and how they were teaching. By contrast, where targets and expectations were not supported with professional learning, teachers at Greengate felt unsupported or under-prepared to deliver the changes that the Principal desired.

Furthermore, it appeared that the development of collective responsibility took time, as did the development of teachers' interpersonal and professional dispositions for experimenting with and taking risks in trialling innovative teaching practices. In the early stages or what might be termed an 'emergent phase' in the development of collective responsibility, innovation was discussed, but not realised. Teachers had autonomy to solve the problems of teaching and learning without a

structural framework to support their professional learning. As a result, teachers retained past practices or were slow to adopt new strategies where they were not fully supported with the professional development required to sustain change. For example, at Greengate Primary, previous initiatives, like the 2006 Quality Teaching project for new teachers, were quickly superseded by a suite of new priorities attached to external funding. Halverson (2006) refers to this phenomenon as “program bloat” (p.7) which hinders the capacity for collective change.

In the ‘evolving phase’ in the development of collective responsibility, new organisational structures brought teachers together in collaborative relationships that developed mutual obligation for consistency in the quality of instructional practice; decreased their satisfaction with taken-for-granted practices; and extended the range of colleagues with whom they normally associated. Such elements of relational trust were reported at Tall Trees Primary as reducing teachers’ feelings of vulnerability. Professional learning, through experimenting with new strategies, was seen as being less about risk taking, and more about unconditional support for improvement and mutual accountability. Consequently, internal accountability for students’ learning became shared, as demonstrated by the Tall Trees teachers’ approach to developing and implementing the literacy rubrics. The strategy had to involve the whole staff if the teachers were to reverse their record of sustained low achievement.

Teachers in the high schools studied, trusted that the professional development interventions would benefit the students and deliver improved results. Such efforts indicated that collective responsibility at Aran Heights and Jossey was an organisational property in these schools. While progress was slow and particularly painful for teachers at Jossey, at Aran Heights successive professional communities were formed and reformed, where new interfaculty working relationships contributed to a deeper professional understanding of colleagues’ strengths and weaknesses.

Over time, a later stage which could be described as an 'embedded phase' in the development of collective responsibility is realised. In this phase, teachers trust that the process of restructuring professional development to create teams achieves the shared goals for improving student learning they desired. This could be attributed to the teams at Jossey and professional communities at Aran Heights creating structures to fulfil mutual obligation to implement, critique and engage in feedback on agreed innovations in teaching and assessment practice. In addition, teachers at Jossey and Aran Heights reported high levels of trust and respect for school leadership.

In this chapter, the analysis of the data at the four case study schools has revealed important insights into the development of trust as a critical factor in the development of collective responsibility. This was evident in the depth of teachers' relational trust at Tall Trees, Aran Heights and Jossey focusing their efforts on improving students' outcomes by working together in a consistent and concerted manner. Such depth of trust and collaboration was not present with the same intensity at Greengate.

These results confirm that trust is not easily acquired and takes time to develop (Geist & Hoy, 2004). This was demonstrated in the introduction of teacher teams at Jossey. The intersection of socialisation, trust, collaboration and vulnerability to form shared norms contrasts sharply with the emotions of suspicion and the fear of having one's practice and knowledge openly critiqued and publicly questioned. Teacher-to-teacher trust therefore exists in a fragile state, initiated, developed and improved across school communities over time. However, although time and resources for teacher professional development were key elements in the development of teacher-to-teacher trust, these alone were not sufficient to develop an embedded sense of collective responsibility for student learning across a school community. The role of and support from school leaders are also essential elements for the development of collective responsibility and thus examined in the next chapter.

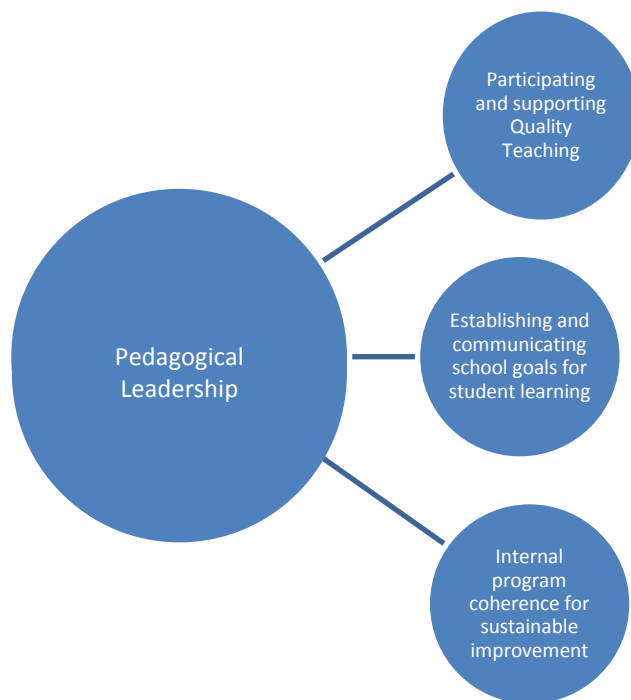
CHAPTER 8

PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter of data analysis, pedagogical leadership and its implications for the development of collective responsibility are discussed. I examine three aspects of leadership aimed at school improvement: how school leaders in the schools in my study participate in and support teacher learning for Quality Teaching; how they establish and communicate school goals and expectations for student learning; and how they structure professional development for program coherence to sustain school capacity to improve student learning (Robinson, 2007). To further understand how these three important aspects of pedagogical leadership are linked conceptually to the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning these relationships are examined in-depth below.

Figure 8.1: Aspects of pedagogical leadership linked to collective responsibility



(The aspects of pedagogical leadership cited above are attributed to Robinson, 2007)

In order to examine these three aspects of pedagogical leadership represented in Figure 8.1, I first take a comparative approach across the four schools to analyse the importance of pedagogical leadership in shaping and sustaining teachers' school-wide efforts to develop collective responsibility for students' learning. In particular, I examine school and teacher leaders' behaviours in influencing school-wide pedagogical changes in adopting Quality Teaching to support teaching practice. I also discuss the alignment between pedagogical leadership in teacher learning and teachers' self-reported capacity and confidence to implement Quality Teaching.

Next, I report how school leaders' expectations for achieving educational goals for teacher learning and student achievement were communicated in the four case study schools. I analyse, for each case, how leadership power was exercised and distributed in terms of the Principal's pedagogical leadership in whole-school decision making to set and achieve the school's educational goals for teaching and

learning. I suggest that leadership in the setting and enacting of school goals is a reciprocal process in the development of collective responsibility. In essence characteristics of pedagogical leadership identified in my study are relationally linked to the social networks, discursive resources and relationships that coexist within a school community as a form of double hermeneutic (Kemmis, 2006). In other words, the extent to which actors in a school can exert pedagogical leadership is shaped and influenced by the level of support and views of others.

The prevailing culture in a school influences the extent to which teachers are collectively willing to support leadership decisions, in the way they commit to the school's improvement agenda and match with actions to support the achievement of school goals for student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). I then provide an analysis of the reported capability of school leadership in the four schools to create program coherence focused on the schools' goals. Conclusions are drawn about the capacity of those in leadership positions to organise professional development aligned to the schools' educational goals.

Finally, I draw all these findings together to argue that, for collective responsibility to be embedded in the normative culture of a school, pedagogical leadership needs to model consultative and transparent decision-making practices in order to address the pressing challenges of teaching. I propose that the quality of pedagogical leadership directly influences the extent to which teachers' collective responsibility for student learning develops in a school.

PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY TEACHING

In this section, the aspect of pedagogical leadership is discussed. As previously outlined, at the time my study was undertaken, Government schools in NSW had been encouraged to adopt Quality Teaching as a systemic approach to improving student learning outcomes. The Quality Teaching Model was developed to assist teachers to better plan, coordinate and evaluate the quality of classroom and assessment practice. Resource materials to support the implementation of Quality

Teaching were developed to assist school leaders and teachers to explicitly focus on high standards of teaching and assessment practice.

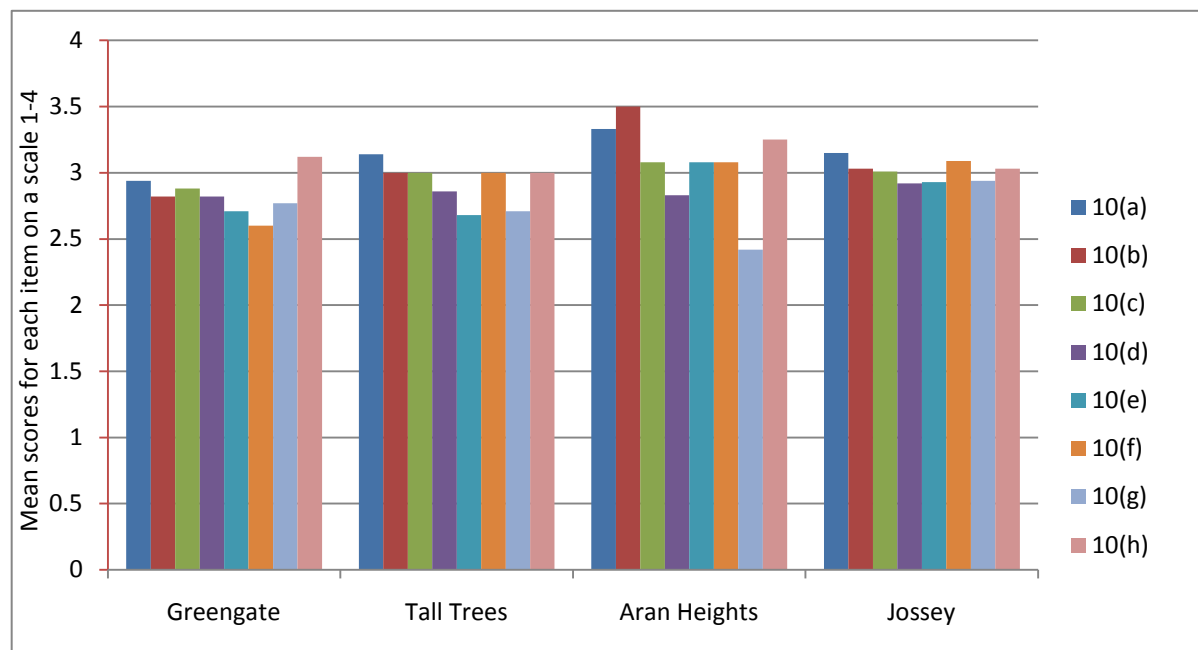
With regard to the survey results from my study related to this aspect of leadership, comparison of the mean variable for professional development to implement the Quality Teaching model were examined for each of the four schools in the study using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). This result produced a mean of 2.96 and a standard deviation of 0.41 with a standard error of 0.05 (see Appendix L). A test of homogeneity of variances using Levine's test on the data set indicated that the variances between the schools were not significantly different (0.913Sig). In other words, the schools were more similar than different in their responses to these items in the survey (Appendix C).

Further analysis of the interviews is thus required to tease out individual differences between schools in terms of the roles school leaders played in professional development to support the implementation of the Quality Teaching Model in their school.

COMPARISON OF PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP TO IMPLEMENT QUALITY TEACHING

In this section the approaches to the implementation of Quality Teaching selected by each case study school's leadership team are discussed. First the survey data for the whole sample across the four schools is graphed below in Figure 8.2. This graph provides a comparison for each school of teachers' responses to the eight survey items (10a-10h) on professional learning for Quality Teaching. This is followed by a discussion of the capacity of each school leadership team to effectively implement the Quality Teaching Model and sustain a professional learning focus on the achievement of whole-school improvement for student learning. As indicated by the mean scores on items in Question 10 of the survey represented in Figure 8.2, across the four schools and in the majority of items there appear to be a positive response by the teachers to their professional learning experiences for Quality Teaching.

Figure 8.2: Comparison of survey results on professional learning for Quality Teaching



Note: Individual survey items are identified in Appendix C

Leadership and Quality Teaching at Greengate Primary School

At Greengate Primary School, Quality Teaching was a focus for a small number of whole-school staff meetings led by the Principal in 2004. The senior school executive reported strong support for the implementation of Quality Teaching. Reflecting on one aspect of the implementation and its perceived impact on pedagogy, the Principal reported:

I can see a tremendous difference with teachers that are involved in it [Quality Teaching middle years project], with the professional development ... getting input from outside experts but also just internally by staff ... the networking, the sharing with other schools and the units of work that they write with the consultant. Those units of work are high quality pieces of material. How they are implemented in the classroom I'm not quite sure but I have strong convictions that they are being implemented and implemented well.

While teachers were exposed to introductory professional development focused on Quality Teaching, the focus did not appear to be sustained by explicit professional

development delivered at the after-school meetings, through planning classroom activities, or student assessment tasks.

Contrasting views about the depth and extent of focus on Quality Teaching in classroom and assessment practice indicate that teachers did not have a common commitment to or understanding of how the model could be applied in teaching. While publicly displaying enthusiasm for the model, Greengate's Principal described the school's approach to using Quality Teaching as being "through supervisors working with the classroom teachers." But the Principal's expectations appeared to be a challenge for the Assistant Principals as supervisors of grade teams. In a group interview with three Assistant Principals, it was suggested that the extent of the model's application in teachers' practice was limited. When asked what, as supervisors, they had observed in terms of Quality Teaching being embedded in classroom and assessment practice, the following comments were made:

I guess I know the programs that I look at, you do see bits of the Quality Teaching model coming through in their program. It's not explicit and it's not labelled. I see it implicitly improves people's program. It's something that they are aware of and trying to develop and modify their program according to it I suppose. (Linda)

I don't think it's explicit and the training that we did do in 2004, we've had a lot of staff turnover since then so I feel really quite out of touch with what their current knowledge is, or on, Quality Teaching. (Ruth)

These comments are not surprising, given that the Principal articulated that an intensive and purposeful focus on the model was not his preferred approach:

We don't want to sit down with the document and say 'you haven't got a sustainable conversation,' but it's where that dialogue takes place... We're not trying to say 'look every lesson's got to have everything in there' but certainly we

can use that (the Quality Teaching model) as a gauge.
(Principal)

In addition, Ruth was the only interviewee to make reference to any professional development linked to using Quality Teaching to guide the design of student activities. She referred to participation by a small number of teachers in an externally funded, early-career teacher mentoring project in 2006. Her comments on the extent to which early-career teachers' professional development had focused on Quality Teaching were:

They did have a lot of, not explicit professional learning on the framework, but they are aware of it and they were trying to put those elements into their lessons and their programs for accreditation. (Ruth)

However as Alice, who was one of the early career teachers, reported, the focus and outcomes of this professional learning had not been sustained:

We made the task cards relevant to the KLA ... We just spent our whole day that we got off class for that, just making these task cards. That was good, it was really good what we came up with, the resources that we made. But that's a prime example. Where are the task cards? We made enough for the whole school and they're nowhere to be seen. No one's using them even though I would like to.

The majority of teachers, when asked about their level of knowledge and confidence to implement the Quality Teaching Model, suggested they did not use it. For example, teachers commented: "I don't use it in programming" (Alice) and "the professional development in Quality Teaching has been so dry and uninteresting and ineffective that it's not something that I take and use as the framework for my programming and the way I develop my teaching" (Deanna).

In fact only one teacher at Greengate reported that she had an understanding of the model and how it could be applied in her teaching:

It really made sense to me because when I looked at what I'm doing it fits into it really well. I think I'm naturally a quality teacher anyway. . . . It's good to be challenged in that way and thinking why we're doing the things that we do and are including everybody. Including the kids that are at the bottom and the kids that are at the top and the kids who are from other cultures and so I'm very conscious of that all the time. (Raelene)

The interviews highlighted that the Greengate Principal's directives for raising literacy and numeracy standards did not extend to investing time and resources to ensure school-wide implementation. Rather than experiencing a culture that fostered collaboration and collective responsibility for students' learning across grades, teachers at Greengate reported experiencing a degree of isolation, even though the Stage partner structure was well established. For example, Shelly reported that "in our Stage we all will program for something different and we'll put our heads together and come up with an idea and generate it like that and one of us will go away and make that unit." Shelly's experience of trying to make changes to her teaching in isolation was typical of others who felt they knew what the school goals were but were not confident they had the expertise, knowledge or skills to change their instruction to make that difference.

From this interview evidence, and the lack of correlation in the survey data between the variables of collective responsibility and professional learning for Quality Teaching at Greengate, it seems that the approach to the implementation of this model selected by the school leadership was ineffective. This appears to have contributed to its lack of penetration into classroom practice at this school and therefore by association hindered the extent to which teachers' collective responsibility for student learning could develop.

Leadership and Quality Teaching at Tall Trees Primary School

Evidence of the development of collective responsibility at Tall Trees reflected a reciprocal process of pedagogical leadership and teacher commitment to work towards achieving the common goal to improve literacy. The whole-school focus on developing the K-6 literacy rubrics, and every teacher's compulsory engagement with Quality Teaching, distinguished the leadership approach at Tall Trees Primary School from Greengate's leadership efforts for a sustained focus on pedagogical reform.

The Tall Trees senior executive team, with a mandate from the Principal, had an unrelenting focus on Quality Teaching as the pedagogical intervention that helped turn their students' literacy results around. The Principal acknowledged that, before Quality Teaching and despite two years focus on visual literacy, student progress had not improved to the extent they would have expected. And even more deflating for the teachers, the Principal reported that, after their work on measurement (numeracy), "the improvement isn't there any longer. We need possibly to readdress those same things again." This comment confirms recognition of the ineffectiveness of previous strategies Tall Trees teachers employed to bring about improvement in student achievement prior to their implementation of the Quality Teaching model.

Thus, at Tall Trees, pedagogical change was aligned to the implementation of Quality Teaching. However, the Principal, while lending his strategic support, did not lead the change. Indeed, there was an absence of discussion in the interviews in relation to the Principal's pedagogical leadership to address the school's poor academic results. Instead, it was clear that the three Assistant Principals, Sally, Jessica and Meg, took primary responsibility for leading the school-wide approach to develop the literacy rubrics. Sally led the school-based team that won external funding to develop the rubrics. Jessica led the staff meetings, sharing her specialist knowledge of grammar and facilitating the collaborative effort to construct the rubrics. Meg and Sally volunteered to have their own lessons videoed, and then coded in staff meetings, as a resource for developing the teachers' knowledge of Quality Teaching.

Thus the active role of the executive in leading by example is illustrated in the comment below:

The executive took a leadership role and they themselves were used as the guinea pigs. (Principal, Tall Trees)

According to the Principal, this leadership approach was instrumental in winning teachers' support, though not overwhelmingly at first, as discussed previously, for two reasons. First, the initial introduction of Quality Teaching met with broad criticism because the teachers reported the system-produced materials did not closely replicate the teaching context at Tall Trees. The growing success of the Tall Trees strategy occurred when the system-produced support materials were substituted with authentic learning and school resources. Meg's lesson, which was video-taped and critiqued by the staff, was accepted as authentic practice because it involved Tall Trees' students. Jessica's facilitation of the staff meetings was based on local expertise and used authentic work samples that linked the theory of Quality Teaching to Tall Trees teachers' practice.

Second, teachers' experiences of past reforms were perceived as being imposed from either the system or the region. In the case of Quality Teaching, this pedagogical intervention had both top-down support, that involved the Assistant Principals taking risks, and bottom-up support from classroom teachers who trialled the rubrics with their classes and engaged in peer observations that were used for reporting back to the whole staff. At each stage in the development and trial of the rubrics, the executive team took a lead in modelling the processes with the whole staff. The Principal summed up the impact of Tall Trees' model of distributed leadership thus:

The leadership was an important aspect where particular executive members were able to put across a message much more subtly I'll say. [They] therefore got a lot more staff involvement. Where in the past there's been some input to staff that was questionable because, oh yeah this person's on their drum again. (Principal)

The difference from past professional development experiences was due to “the collegiality being less pushy. Subsequently the teachers . . . were able to collaborate and discuss and implement” (Principal).

A further issue for the leadership team at Tall Trees was that working as a whole staff exposed a level of vulnerability in the limits of teachers’ knowledge about grammar and having the leadership skills to manage the “painful conversations” (Sally). However, teachers reported a sense of trust in the process by having: “leadership that will guide them to take risks and have a go at something that maybe it won’t work, but they need to try it and then reassess” (Meg).

Consistent with successful leadership practices as described by Leithwood et al (2004), this initiative while guided by the Assistant Principals, empowered teachers to make significant decisions in developing one rubric after the next, week after week. Each teacher participated in the construction of the rubrics and then in decisions about how the rubrics would be implemented in their class. Sonia described her sense of empowerment through such an approach to decision making in the following extract:

The staff got together. They decided that what we needed was a whole school [approach]. Not when the children get to third class or when they’re in six class focus on the BST. The writing had to be developed from kindergarten so the children had to be introduced to a structure of some description and this was the rubric before they even reached primary [years]. And I think that was really important, that was really good. (Sonia)

The collaborative development of the rubrics was therefore guided by the leadership of the executive team with the support, though most often not direct input, of the Principal. This changed the way teachers participated in professional development. It appeared that teachers at Tall Trees had an increased willingness to accept

responsibility for the students' learning across the school, as opposed to only the students in their class in that year. The evidence reported in this section highlights a key link between pedagogical leadership and collective responsibility, that is, their capacity to bring together a program of professional development that empowers teachers to implement productive changes to teaching practice aimed at improving student learning. School leaders at Tall Trees provided a positive influence by leading by example, offering intellectual stimulation to develop across the whole school a deep knowledge and understanding of the literacy continuum K-6.

Leadership and Quality Teaching at Aran Heights High School

Similarly, the senior executive team at Aran Heights High School was committed to linking school-wide resources to improve teacher and student learning. In taking a pedagogical lead, the Principal was described by teachers as setting directions, developing peoples' capabilities and motivation to respond to pedagogical change, and refocusing and redesigning organisational structures aligned to achieving the school's goals for improvement. As one of the Deputy Principals, explained:

When you're in a learning community it's about linking it to improved outcomes which is one of the [school] targets and outside of that professional learning can be very broad. So it's not like we don't direct staff in professional communities [saying] 'that is what you must do.' It is still a free choice on what they wish to as long as they are meeting the school's management plan goals of improving student outcomes through their professional learning. (Malcolm)

The leadership team committed financial resources to realign professional development and extend teachers' professional interactions beyond their faculty. They worked in professional communities, formed to address specific interests and issues in teaching but with an explicit focus on Quality Teaching. This was confirmed in the survey data with all respondents indicating that Quality Teaching had been favourably received and was the professional learning focus for improving their classroom practice. In addition, there was consensus among the interviewees that

the senior executive made decisions that respected staff needs and interests in relation to resourcing professional development. In setting the school's priorities for improvement, resources were sourced from teacher professional learning funds and heavily supplemented from external funding grants for specific purposes. Access to such resources fostered opportunities to develop new relationships, mutual obligations and group identities:

To sit down and actually talk to other staff members is remarkably stimulating and a wonderful thing. We've done it a couple of times with the accelerated group and inter-faculty and it's really helped. The Quality Teaching days we did were, I would argue, the best staff development I have ever done. No-one talking to us, it was just sitting around a table and discussing, 'what do we do with this document? How can that affect us?' ... I think the best opportunity that we have here is just the fact that we can sit around and talk interfaculty and see what each other's thinking. ... if we manage our time maybe better within the school and use time that's already allocated to other things within the school for that then perhaps there's an opportunity. And that should be valued, just sitting around and talking.
(Danny)

As outlined in Chapter 5, the senior executive's approach to restructuring professional development at Aran Heights had broken down the traditional balkanisation of faculties and professional isolation that typifies most high schools. The professional learning communities and the newly restructured Teaching and Learning faculty focused on cooperative, collegial and professionally rewarding work environments that supported the school's vision for engaging students in challenging and relevant learning experiences. They therefore provided supportive work environments for the development of teachers' collective responsibility.

Leadership for Quality Teaching at Jossey High School

Most teachers interviewed at Jossey High attributed the Principal's success leading the school's improvement strategy to his pedagogical leadership and transparency of decision making. Teachers reported that the Principal's leadership style conveyed trust and respect for their expertise and a commitment to improving students' current and future educational options. Teachers' confidence in the school's leadership also extended to the three Deputy Principals' capacity to lead curriculum and pedagogical improvement. Interview data gathered from the executive leadership team highlighted their intimate knowledge of the depth of collaboration, professional learning and sharing within the teams. For example two Deputy Principals were each a coordinator of the Stage teams and, as such, were directly involved in the leadership support for Quality Teaching, ensuring that elements of the model were being embedded in all aspects of curriculum and assessment (see Figure 8.2).

Additionally, the Principal reported that a critical factor in the recent appointment of two new Deputy Principals was their capacity to lead professional development to implement Quality Teaching. Both Deputies reported the benefits of focusing professional learning on improving the quality of pedagogy as a strategy for effective classroom management. For example, Patricia cited how, in one professional development session, teachers' confidence was boosted by coding an assessment task. They were surprised how closely their scores matched the codes provided "by the experts" in the Quality Teaching resource materials. That, together with other focused activities on Quality Teaching, led Patricia to observe that the teachers leading Year 7 and 8 teaching teams were:

Connecting with the actual terminology of the Quality Teaching model that they have thought, 'oh yeah, I know that and I do that', you know. It's skills that they've got but they weren't labelled and now that they understand the model I think it's sort of they're feeling more relaxed about this new thing but it's not so new if that makes sense.
(Patricia)

Similarly, Brian's explicit focus on Quality Teaching in the Stage 5 team meetings had increased teachers' confidence to meet the challenge of revising and incorporating the elements of the Quality Teaching model into their programs, teaching units and assessment tasks. As a large Stage team, comprising more than twelve teachers, they had developed a set of consistent programming and assessment strategies that they shared with their faculty colleagues for implementation in all Stage 5 classes. One of the Stage 5 team members described the impact of Brian's leadership as follows:

I think it's non-threatening probably because of personalities that most of us here also get along as well and then the information – especially with the Quality Teaching stuff that's delivered at the staff meetings. If we don't understand it Brian's been able to bring it here and discuss it and break it down and explain it a bit more in depth, so that we don't feel threatened and we can discuss and do our units of work and things like that. (Stage 5 team member)

Thus Brian's management of the Stage 5 team meetings meant teachers had influence over the decisions about, and directions for, their professional development, teaching and learning. There was a concerted and sustained effort, marked by a common sense approach taken by the senior executive, to pace the reforms that targeted student disengagement, low retention and high absenteeism. There is clear evidence that these democratic approaches taken to improve teaching and students' learning model successful pedagogical leadership practices linked to the development of collective responsibility as described in Figure 8.1.

COMMUNICATING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

The second aspect of pedagogical leadership, communicating goals and expectations described in Figure 8.1, is explored in this section. Not surprisingly, the executive in each school varied in how they exercised or distributed power to formulate and communicate goals and expectations for student learning. Exercising control over decision making and a trajectory for empowering teachers are related to teacher

responsibility (Bolam et al, 2005; Lee & Smith, 1996; Leithwood et al, 2004). Setting clear directions to “develop shared understandings about the organization and its activities and goals can undergird a sense of purpose and vision” (Leithwood et al, 2004, p.23) together with building motivation to achieve compelling and achievable goals are considered key features of developing collective responsibility.

In each school in my study, the degree of consultation exhibited in goal setting, and how these goals are communicated, understood and accepted by the school community, highlight major differences in leadership approaches. This has implications for the extent to which collective responsibility develops in these schools. For example, leadership approaches at Jossey and Aran Heights High schools are focused on high expectations for educational goals for both teacher and student learning. There are similarities in the way goals are set using student achievement data but differences in how leaders influence teachers’ responsibility for students’ learning. There are also differences in the degree to which teachers are empowered to make significant decisions related to setting and implementing the schools’ educational goals. Similarly, the Principals of Greengate and Tall Trees Primary Schools both asserted an agenda for change directed at raising students’ results in the statewide, standardised Basic Skills Tests (BST) for students in Years 3 and 5. However, their approaches to achieve these educational goals differed markedly, as did the opportunities for teachers to develop collective responsibility.

Setting and communicating educational goals

I think it's pretty much down to the leadership. (Jamie, Greengate)

* * * *

The leadership approach to set school goals at Jossey High appeared to be based on open collaboration. As previously discussed, the goals for improving student outcomes were negotiated through the collaborative development of the school’s LAW (Learning, Attendance and Welfare) policy that articulated a consistent approach to teaching and learning, planning for quality assessment, and supporting students to take greater control of their learning. As the Principal explained, ‘LAW’ was developed as a deliberate collaborative and consistent response to the

challenging behaviour and learning dispositions of students in the school, many of whom came from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

Notwithstanding the collaborative approach, the Principal reported that the executive resisted an emerging groundswell from a small number of teachers to continue their punitive rather than pedagogical management of students' lack of effort, disrespect for teachers, non-compliance with school rules, and high level of suspensions:

When I say 'as collaborative as possible' we could've gone down the gurgler in 2003 and said, 'yep, let's shift, let's say we need a detective walking up and down the corridor booming out at everybody and intervening and saving teachers', but we didn't. (Principal, Jossey)

In this case the leadership put the school's educational goals to increase the achievement across the diversity of students' challenging behaviour ahead of a desire to protect pedagogical practices that fail students.

In contrast, leadership at Greengate was directive with respect to setting the school's educational goals. The Principal's leadership style was described as "black and white" (Jamie). However, there was a perceived gap identified in the teacher interviews between the school's educational goals to raise students' literacy and numeracy results targeting Years 3 and 5 and how teachers were supported with the knowledge and skills to address these goals.

When the Principal arrived at Greengate, two years prior to the study, he made his expectations explicit in terms of improvements in literacy and numeracy: "We've got to lift the students' outcomes and I've been driving that with them [Assistant Principals] throughout the school. [It's] about children learning something new every day" (Greengate Principal). Most teachers interviewed at Greengate welcomed the new Principal's clear direction for the school's literacy and numeracy goals. Deanna, in the extract below, describes how the teachers processed the agenda for change:

We talked about it very openly and people were invited to give their views and I think in most cases, everyone felt that, everyone felt re-assured and happy that they were given good guidance. They were given clear ideas about when and how to do things and the structure of how to do those things. I think most people walked away from it saying, at last, we've sat down as a school team, we've got together and we've said, here is a skill that we have to teach the children how to read.

However, the clarity of focus and sharing of expertise established in early staff meetings was difficult to sustain due to the organisational climate at Greengate. According to the Principal, staff meetings now happened "every second week because . . . sometimes we schedule stage meetings but when things are thrust upon us from DET like anaphylaxis training and we haven't planned for it. . . . I'll try and work it so that people that go away for their courses come back and present and share that information."

While there was evidence from the interviews that there had been general discussion about decisions to restructure the school day to accommodate longer blocks of time to teach literacy and numeracy skills, there was an absence of commentary about how the expected changes in teaching practice were supported with focussed professional development. As Shelly recalled:

I've heard the Principal say, 'oh yeah, make sure that you do some basic skills practice.' That to me, that's not supporting, that's just, you know, telling us it's something we've got to do but when you don't know how to go about doing it, it's difficult.

At Greengate there was not an overall sense that the leadership had communicated clear goals that all teachers understood and were committed to implementing. Overall it appears that while the Principal was very clear on the school goals for improvement, not all teachers shared his clarity of vision.

In contrast, the majority of staff at Tall Trees Primary School expressed a sense of ownership of the school goals to raise students' literacy and numeracy results, not just in Years 3 and 5, but across the K-6 continuum. The school executive agreed that radical changes were needed in the way professional development was organised, and the way decisions were made to facilitate the development of a whole-school scope and sequence approach to writing and grammar.

Influence and decision making

I think we took some risks. (Louise, Jossey)

* * * *

There is strong evidence in the data that the development of collective responsibility is linked with a distributed style of leadership. In this case leaders retain responsibility for building a shared vision for student learning while exercising influence, in democratic ways, to give teachers a voice in decision making (Leithwood et al, 2004). For example, at Tall Trees the Principal acknowledged that the leadership of the Assistant Principals was instrumental in building the culture of trust and support required to make radical changes in literacy instruction and assessment, using the Quality Teaching model, and developing a sense of collective responsibility for ensuing results.

There was a noticeable impact on the levels of involvement of all Stages. Again it wasn't a specific thing that you would point out but the leadership provided by the executive enthused people and subsequently they were able to come on board. We didn't have any rejection really even from the beginning. It was the case as more and more [teachers] became involved [they] recognised that they could improve their own teaching and the outcomes for the students because of the Quality Teaching framework.

(Principal, Tall Trees)

He described the rationale for this approach as giving teachers the freedom to learn, experiment, critique and share practices as they developed and implemented the rubrics. Rather than an interventionist approach, which he reasoned would "dampen

people's spirits," teamwork provided greater opportunities for distributed leadership which capitalised on the range of strengths and knowledge of the Tall Trees teachers. This provided a rich context for teachers to learn from each other and share collegially with teachers across the K-6 range, considered by the Principal as critical in the development of collective responsibility. The Principal openly praised the executive for taking on the challenging roles of leading professional development sessions on the school's goals for: raising students' literacy achievements; facilitating the development of the rubrics; and opening their classroom practice to critique. Taking such a leadership approach placed colleagues at the centre of leadership practice, balancing the power of leading professional learning across the leadership team and the teachers, which represented a shift from "positional power to expert power" (Harris, 2009, p.11). As such, establishing these attributes of distributed leadership strengthened the conditions in the school to develop teachers' collective responsibility for student learning.

In contrast, at Greengate Primary it appeared that the Principal retained ownership of the decisions that impacted on the organisation of teachers' work which overall acted to limit the development of teachers' collective responsibility to achieve these goals. Alice, an early-career teacher, felt that she had no voice in influencing the school's wider educational goals because they were dominated by the Principal's focus on raising literacy and numeracy achievement. She was not clear on what was expected because: "I've never seen any school goals, any school target that we're aiming for besides the Principal with his basic skills results and just saying we just need to push literacy and numeracy."

On the one hand the Principal regarded the literacy/numeracy block strategy as providing teachers with permission and freedom to take risks because "a lot of teachers now feel that they can have a bit more freedom, they know roughly what the guidelines are about literacy and numeracy." For example, Raelene and Marilyn welcomed having the individual freedom to take risks and innovate.

What I really like about this school is that you're allowed to do it, meaning that there's not many restrictions on you

saying you have to program in this particular way on this particular proforma ... sure your program might be handed in Week 5 but that doesn't mean it has to be the whole term's program and it has to be set out in this particular way. And there's certain things that have to be in it obviously and have structure but with flexibility within the structure and I think that encourages risk taking. (Raelene)

I think it's the ability that it is free and that it's open to, you know, being able to have that professional judgement and to be able to make your own decisions and then still be able to bounce them off other people as well. (Marilyn)

On the other hand this attitude appeared to be largely held by more experienced teachers. Not surprisingly, less experienced teachers like Shelly and Alice did not share the same level of confidence as their experienced colleagues. They did not feel they had the skills required for effective literacy and numeracy teaching and, in fact, there were many grey areas for them in translating the Principal's expectations into practice.

Communicating high expectations

It's important to do better than we have been doing. (Trent, Aran Heights)

* * * *

As identified in Figure 8.1 communicating expectations is linked to the development of collective responsibility when there is a sense of respect and trust for the integrity for the school's leadership decisions in setting challenging goals for student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). High expectations for teachers' commitment to, and delivery of, the school's educational goals were a common feature of leadership approaches at Aran Heights and Jossey High schools. Consistently, teachers expressed a sense of respect and trust for the integrity of their leaders. In both schools, the majority of teachers interviewed reported a sense that their hard

work was acknowledged and respected by their Principals. Both schools' executive staff also reported being motivated to enact changes that promoted school quality, equity and social justice. From my research, I observed multiple approaches at Jossey to ensure that expectations and decisions made at an executive level were communicated to the whole school. These approaches included Head Teacher 'show and tell' agenda items at executive meetings, a weekly school bulletin featuring Higher Order Thinking (HOT) topics²⁹, published minutes from executive meetings, Head Teacher reports to faculty meetings, team leaders' meetings, team members' reports to faculties, and executive and team leaders' role statements. Despite the leadership's systematic and explicit expectations that school-wide decisions would be openly communicated, some teachers reported that, in particular, feedback from team meetings was not being shared more widely with teachers who were not currently in teams.

High expectations and pressure to perform

Evidence from interviews suggests that the Aran Heights' executive expected high levels of accountability from teachers to deliver improved student achievement. Malcolm, one of three members of the senior executive, cited three key strategies for school improvement: (1) goals for student achievement in the school management plan; (2) a pedagogical focus on learning communities; and (3) monitoring processes for school assessment linking teacher quality and student performance.

Aligned to these strategies was resource support for teacher professional development. Evidence-based decision making informed the allocation of resources to support teachers to achieve the school's educational goals. As mentioned in Chapter 5 analyses of students' BST, ELLA, SNAP, School Certificate and Higher School Certificate results were regularly communicated at staff meetings and used to set school targets. Most teachers interviewed supported the Principal's lead in using evidence of students' performance from standardised Statewide tests to set school

²⁹ Examples of teaching strategies incorporating higher-order thinking (HOT) skills to increase the challenge in the curriculum are shared by publishing on the school's intranet.

targets. However, some teachers did not share the Principal's enthusiasm for using student performance data: "You come to the staff development days and all the data goes up on the overheads so I don't know what that's designed to do for you. But most of that stuff's pretty rubbishy anyway, one year to the next it varies greatly" (Darren). Furthermore, there was a sense, while not overt, that student performance data was compared across subjects, putting pressure on lower performing faculties to lift results. The following two comments illustrate the school leader's expectations for achievement for all students and the pressure on faculties to perform:

The message now is we want... I think that it's that all kids can learn. And [that] teachers make a difference I think is still very much a part of it. But [also] that each kid would want to work to the best of their ability and that we're setting the bar much higher in terms of what you can achieve. (Neale)

[My subject area] hasn't really totally improved a real lot. But we've had flow-on effects, individual kids have really moved up. Where other faculties have gone ahead in leaps and bounds – why? I don't know. Is it because they've had more people involved in these learning communities and we haven't had as many? (Barry)

These head teachers' views reflected different approaches to aligning goals for student improvement, including high expectations of the organisation and quality of professional learning. Neale expected his faculty to hold high expectations for their students' achievement and exert academic press. On the other hand, in Barry's faculty, there did not appear to be the same commitment to teacher learning through participation in professional communities. While not a focus for the present study, differences in leadership approaches signal the need for investigation into how these practices can impact on teachers' accountability for students' results; teachers' expectations of students; and the organisation of professional learning.

In this section, how school leaders work with their teachers and community to set clear goals and directions for improvement and empower others in making significant decisions for whole-school improvement links to the extent to which collective responsibility for these goals to improve student learning develops. This link is exemplified by the differences in the directive leadership approach at Greengate and the degree to which teachers express their sense of empowerment at Jossey and Tall Trees.

PROGRAM COHERENCE AND SCHOOL CAPACITY

The third aspect of pedagogical leadership, developing internal program coherence for sustainable improvement represented in Figure 8.1, is explored in this section. The ability of school leaders to sustain program coherence to develop school capacity has been linked to teachers' collective responsibility for higher achievement gains for students (Newmann et al, 2000). In the present study, program coherence refers to a common set of expectations and strategies, owned and identified by the whole staff, supporting a common framework for improvement. School organisation and leadership that have the capacity to link resource allocation to specific pedagogical goals, like implementing Quality Teaching, were reported by Robinson (2007) as critical principles for program coherence. In this section I analyse teachers' perceptions about the degree of transparency in decision-making processes, and school support for innovative and challenging teaching strategies as indicators of the level of program coherence in the four case study schools.

Directive and democratic school leadership

Evidence from the case studies demonstrates that a range of leadership approaches is taken to build school capacity from the seemingly 'directive' approach at Greengate to the 'democratic' style of school leadership at Aran Heights and Jossey. In contrast, the distributed leadership approach to a single focus on developing the literacy rubrics frame the program coherence for teacher learning at Tall Trees. Furthermore, as reported earlier, while staff meetings are the main strategy for

professional development at both Tall Trees and Greengate, they varied in the level of teacher participation for whole-school improvement.

The Greengate Principal's description of the purpose of staff meetings illuminated his strategies aimed at capacity building for whole-school responsibility for literacy:

We have a professional development meeting every week and I think the staff still see that very much as highly structured that I'm running. I actually have a committee that determines that but sometimes I don't think sometimes it's out there. The first year or so or 2006 I pretty much did a lot of this. I needed to steer a bit of direction but this year it's been lovely that I've had people that went off to a grammar course and that have been coming back and feeding it back into the staff so they ran half the school development day and so forth. (Principal)

In terms of the coherence of Greengate's school improvement program, in a group interview the three Assistant Principals unanimously agreed that decisions about who went to external courses were "ad hoc" (Marilyn). Ruth reported that why some teachers were chosen by the Principal to go to the grammar course was not transparent, and that there was a lack of accountability when teachers returned from external courses to share the knowledge and ideas they had gained (Linda). On the other hand, the Principal provided his own rationale for the external professional development teachers accessed. He reported that "all teachers would be involved in some type of project, whether they saw it or not, and that in some cases they had to be steered into the projects." This approach translated into the school's involvement in numerous, but seemingly disconnected, externally funded projects like the various middle years and values initiatives cited in Chapter 5.

For example, as a participant in the grammar course, Alice was critical that the opportunity to share her learning at a staff meeting came more than two terms after attendance at the course. For other teachers, there was a quiet dissatisfaction with

the Principal's direct control of the professional learning agenda at Greengate, summed up intuitively by one experienced teacher:

You've got the person at the very top who is perceived as being a very nice person doing the best they can, transforming the landscape of the school but essentially not really knowing how to interact with the people further down the ladder. There's a perception that there's 'I talk to you guys, you guys talk to me but I don't talk to those guys very much.' So I think that, I think that feeling of, a lack of equality and not being made to feel as though you are a particularly valuable part [of the staff]. And rhetorical sentences occasionally at the end of term or thanking someone. I think that that interferes a lot with the sense of collegiality. (Deanna)

Andrea was also dissatisfied with the organisation of professional development in the school. Her dissatisfaction was more related to work overload issues and the pressure to meet the Principal's multiple agendas for school improvement. She indicated that, in her opinion, meeting the school's priorities was leading to information and work overload:

I think at times people just have so much on that sometimes you can't always take in everything which you're offered. And it can be quite daunting and overloading particularly for the newer teachers in the school which I think there's about 6 or 7 [teachers]. I think they sometimes suffer from sort of information overload like 'you can do this and you can do this and you can do that and teach perhaps you can teach writing this way.' (Andrea)

When probed about the rationale for why particular professional development strategies operated in the school, a typical response was provided by Shelly:

It's a little bit random in a way because ... the Principal just came up to you a few days before it was on and said 'you're

going to this thing' and I think he just picked anyone out of the hat. And it just happened to be me so and I think so, it's not, I think it could be organized a little bit better. A lot of people think the same thing. We're not really sure why people are chosen and it seems to me that it's not fair in a way because sometimes people feel a bit left out and they don't know why. So I don't know how you can have a system where that works fairly though. Maybe if there was a list and you work through your lists, because I know there are people who feel, like me, they haven't been chosen for something.

These concerns, expressed by interviewees, were related to the Principal not making clear the rationale for allocating external professional development opportunities. This, in turn, was perceived by most teachers interviewed as a lack of coherent professional learning in relation to the key school improvement goals for literacy and numeracy. They argued that the scarce school resources allocated to support a myriad of externally driven projects could not be sustainable over time and therefore were not seen as being directed into the school's main professional development focus for literacy and numeracy. Thus, the directive leadership approach at Greengate was not effective for sustaining program coherence over time. In contrast, at Aran Heights, coherence of the professional development strategy was critical in achieving alignment between the professional learning communities, the school's educational goals, and teachers' professional development needs. As Malcolm commented:

Our learning communities [have] been up and running for a number of years. We [the senior executive team] have a look at the needs of staff and what we're going to do. And then through the school management plan, those areas that we've identified are those areas we give a priority to in terms of funding and support of staff. So I guess like one at the moment is identifying those teachers who are new at teaching the HSC and they're being given extra assistance at

the moment in terms of implementing the HSC, their monitoring folders, those types of things. So it's also targeted. (Malcolm)

The executive's encouragement of teacher participation in learning communities was a key element in achieving the changes in teaching practice aimed at improving student results across Years 7 to 12. Participation in a learning community gave teachers agency in the direction and focus for their professional development. Within the trusted and collegial environment of the learning communities, teachers who were interviewed reported that they were encouraged to critique and share their practice, based on their understanding of the Quality Teaching model. When probed about whether the model had influenced teachers to reflect on and review their teaching, the following responses were provided:

It's [Quality Teaching] actually explicit in my programming. Right up the top, Significance, bang! Every unit I've got to draw out the significance – well, I don't have to – I choose to draw Significance from the students and all this has come from the formal Quality Teaching... Because if the students can see the significance of what they're doing then they're more likely to be able to focus on why they're doing it. (Wendy)

And for me, with teachers who maybe, some people around the place were a little bit more conservative. You know, it [Quality Teaching] gives me a set of words or tools to be able to describe what good practice looks like. Particularly, we have a lot of student teachers at this school and you can say, 'this is the dynamics that you're not doing well'. So it allows the sort of language to be used to frame what we do. (Trent)

In learning community meetings, time was allocated for teachers to talk honestly about pedagogical practices. This involved discussing what was working and what

needed strengthening, and exposing vulnerabilities where teachers lacked specific pedagogical or content knowledge. Application of these democratic principles allowed teachers to participate in decision making that increased their commitment to the school's goals for student improvement. As such, the operation of these principles in the learning communities was reported by interviewees as a key factor in conceptualising how the school's professional development program had internal coherence in addressing the school's challenging educational goals for student achievement.

Enthusiastic, passionate and determined leadership

In a similar way to Aran Heights, teachers at Jossey acknowledged that the school leadership's direction for school improvement had resulted in a sustained and coherent approach with teams becoming an integral part of the school culture. From the beginning, the introduction of teams, was met with unrelenting enthusiastic, passionate and determined leadership to make this strategy work; as reported earlier, to place learning first even in the face of adversely related welfare issues as described in Chapter 6. Evidence from the school's internal satisfaction survey data identified majority support to extend the teams structure from Year 7 in 2003 into Year 8 in 2004 (Stage 4) and into Years 9 and 10 (Stage 5) in 2007. Resources were aligned to sustain these programs by timetabling release for teachers on Years 7 and 8 and Stage 5 teams to meet once a fortnightly cycle, using external funding for low socio-economic status schools.

The school's history of substantial external funding was identified as a critical factor in sustaining the reform program since 2003. The reform demanded teachers take on new leadership roles as team leaders. They were required to lead new approaches to pedagogy by implementing the Quality Teaching model and building new relationships with teachers and students who were members of teams. Such changes to the organisation of teachers' work were acknowledged as involving risks, abandoning traditional teacher-centred strategies, and rejecting taken-for-granted beliefs about low expectations for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Not surprisingly, there was initial mistrust that people from different faculties could work together in new leadership relationships. There was also concern that the initiative would add to teachers' workloads and even be ineffective in addressing the students' challenging and disruptive behaviour dealt with by teachers day-to-day in their classrooms. The Principal reported the senior executives' resolve to refocus on learning, while at the same time conceding the fragility of the initiative in its early days:

We absolutely in the face of adversity stuck to the total commitment and focus that we're going to pursue learning and we're going to keep talking about it and we're going to be absolutely bloody-minded determined about that. And we were quite open with the whole staff about that and we addressed things openly. (Principal)

The senior executive acknowledged that leadership was a critical factor in sustaining the Year 7 team intervention. Building the capacity of classroom teachers to lead teams was viewed as an essential element of the democratic organisation that supported the introduction of teams:

When you've got that sort of dispersed leadership, it's people stepping up to those sort of responsible roles, they take on more responsibility so they know they're a part of the whole purpose. They know what they're working towards. (Louise)

Thus, the reform processes at Jossey had a dual-outcome focus: first, on the need for students to have consistency in the quality of teaching; and second, on the challenge of supporting teachers to change their classroom practice and therefore shift the emphasis from classroom management to students' learning. Therefore, collective responsibility is more likely to develop where leaders support an agreed set of interrelated and coherent strategies for teacher learning. Furthermore, the extent to which collective responsibility is embedded in the culture of a school is influenced by leadership that fosters a shared commitment through democratic processes to develop improvement programs focused on a set of common goals.

CONCLUSION

The findings reported in this chapter point to the presence of pedagogical leadership in a school as an important condition for the development of collective responsibility, when combined with the characteristics of democratic leadership (Figure 8.1). When a principal promotes and participates in teacher learning and development as a leading learner, the effect on student learning is significant (Robinson, 2007). School leaders are then more likely to be perceived by their staff as having pedagogical expertise to provide instructional advice and influence the quality of teaching in their school. Their advice is sought, respected and acted upon. These findings are also consistent with Moller's (2005) definition of democratic school leadership as "an act that enables others and allows them, in turn, to become enablers" (p.54). Conversely, directive, top-down leadership, based on 'telling', and espousing expectations that fail to be translated into practice, can impede the development of collective responsibility.

Pedagogical leadership at Jossey and Aran Heights was identified from the data as integral to teachers' willingness to engage in open communication and collaborative work practices which, in turn, expanded the responsibility for improving students' results within and across faculties. Common to the leadership practices in both schools were open communication; close examination and sharing of student data; and strategies across faculties that increased teacher responsibility for students beyond the classes they taught. Similarly, at Tall Trees collaborative planning sessions were led by the Assistant Principals. They engaged teachers in professional development that focused on students' literacy learning across the continuum from Kindergarten to Year 6, which encouraged teachers to take responsibility to improve all students' achievement. Teachers and executive staff had a voice and, as a group, took responsibility for the development and implementation of literacy rubrics.

Not surprisingly, the extent to which school leadership contributed to collective responsibility differed in each school. As previously discussed, Greengate's Principal, with his expectation for improving student achievement in basic skills for literacy and

numeracy, set the direction for school improvement. His expectation that teachers would follow his direction without substantial input into professional development proved simplistic. The Principal did not recognise, or was not aware of, the gap teachers reported between his expectations and their need for more direction, linked to professional development. On the one hand, some teachers viewed his leadership style as telling and directive. On the other hand, his leadership style was considered by some as *laissez-faire*. Evidence of professional development activities, that engaged teachers in genuine collaboration, with explicit strategies to address the literacy and numeracy targets, was not present in data collected from Greengate teachers.

Conversely, the gap between rhetoric and reality in relation to the Principal's goals for student improvement at Greengate Primary School inhibited teachers' capacity and confidence to engage in collaborative professional development. This meant that teachers did not take responsibility for students' achievement across the whole school, but only the class they were teaching. The Principal, in taking the lead to determine the school's educational goals, assumed they would be taken up by teachers without structuring planned and systematic professional development to support the changes in teaching practices. Rather, opportunities for professional development were reported as episodic and external to school, often as a result of spontaneous decisions by the Principal as to who, in his opinion, would benefit from such teacher learning. While teachers appeared to be supportive of the Principal's agenda for reform, the conditions that led to collective responsibility as an organisational property of a school were only just emerging, rather than being embedded, as more closely represented in the other case study schools.

By contrast, at Tall Trees the three Assistant Principals had support from the Principal and staff to lead the change. The Assistant Principals and teachers alike submitted their practice to critique from colleagues, exposing their vulnerability about the depth of their content knowledge and practice in grammar. A sense of reciprocal trust developed that signified a shift from the positional power of the Assistant Principals to expert power of the teachers as practitioners (Harris, 2009).

The Assistant Principals actively promoted and participated in professional learning that assisted teachers to provide more effective instruction to their students. This occurred by taking a whole-school, collaborative approach to tackle the seemingly difficult task of raising teachers' knowledge and understanding of grammar. Such an approach was a catalyst that contributed to the development of collective responsibility at the school because teachers reported having a sense of influence over decisions about the curriculum they were teaching and how that curriculum was delivered. Teachers' confidence to make the changes in classroom practice was reinforced by affirmative group dynamics through whole-staff participation and the collective efficacy seen as resulting in students' marked improvement in literacy. Overall student improvement was attributed to the agreed decisions at Tall Trees to restructure the organisation of professional development and the changes that followed in teaching practices.

A leader's willingness to devolve their decision-making power, to give teachers greater control over their teaching and the organisation of their work, was also recognised in the case studies as a condition contributing to the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning. Teachers were empowered when they were encouraged to take control over the results of their teaching and were able to make decisions about how resources were allocated towards such reforms. This finding is consistent with what Lee and Smith (1996) reported as "a downward shift of power" (p.107). Such empowerment at Tall Trees, Aran Heights and Jossey was visible in the level of commitment and ownership teachers displayed towards the initiatives for change. This led to higher levels of collective responsibility evolving in these schools.

Further, pedagogical leadership and support in nurturing learning communities at Aran Heights and Stage teams at Jossey provided an alternative to the view that teachers in secondary schools spend the majority of time working in isolation in their classrooms (Achinstein, 2002; Bryk & Schneider, 2002). At both schools, structured timetabled periods were allocated to support teachers to jointly plan, share, critique and develop consistent standards for practice, based on Quality Teaching. In each

school, high levels of reported respect and trust in the Principal and senior executive therefore became catalysts for the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning.

CHAPTER 9

TOWARDS A MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

INTRODUCTION

The research reported in this thesis set out to investigate, in four schools, the conditions that supported or hindered the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning. The selection of case studies was based on the proposition that in these schools there was a recent history of, or current engagement in, professional development activities designed to improve the consistency and quality of teaching to raise student achievement. As a result, collective responsibility was likely to be stronger than in schools without such a history.

My study suggests that the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning results from a complex set of site-based conditions. My study has shown that collective responsibility is positively correlated to professional learning, within the context of professional communities, to address particular challenges and problems of teaching and learning. As expected, there was variation in how each school community targeted resources and reformed the organisation of teachers' work and professional relationships to address identified teaching and learning issues, problems or dilemmas (Aubusson et al, 2009). The results suggest that organisational characteristics within a school, such as culture, shared values and opportunities for flexible group composition to engage in structured professional learning, are key determinants for the development of collective responsibility.

In my study, there were a number of conditions that enabled schools, to varying extents, to develop collective responsibility for student learning. In sum, a

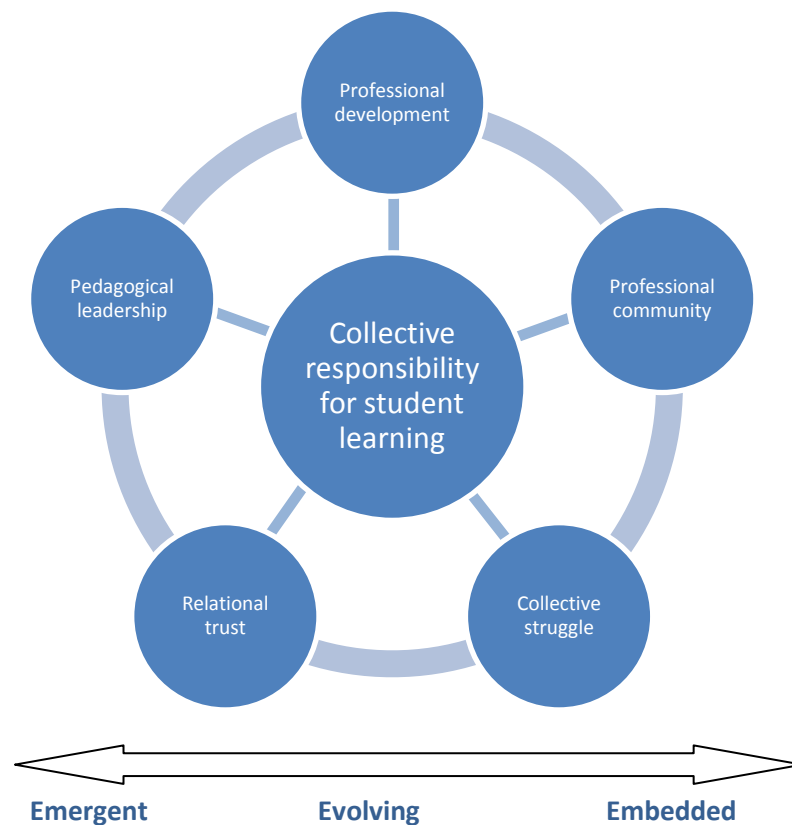
whole-school focus on professional development supported by a collaborative culture, relational trust, collective struggle, pedagogical and democratic leadership, flexibility and freedom to act on professional judgements were found to be linked to the extent to which collective responsibility was evident within the case study school communities.

Evidence presented in this thesis points to collective responsibility being strongly embedded in the culture of a school where school leaders (principals and assistant principals) actively participate in professional learning focused on the school's shared goals and vision for student and teacher learning. As a result of such leadership teachers reported being supported to engage in professional learning that aligned with high expectations for student achievement. They also appeared to develop a deeper understanding of and respect for each other's expertise. In this way deprivatising teachers' practice played a critical role in the extent to which collective responsibility developed. Furthermore, activities that involved using joint planning processes to map activities from shared goals for student learning in designing relevant and challenging curricula appeared to have contributed to the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning.

FIVE DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

In light of this, I argue that collective responsibility for student learning is a multi-faceted phenomenon comprising five dimensions. The five dimensions are professional development, collective struggle, professional community, relational trust and pedagogical leadership represented in Figure 9.1 below.

Figure 9.1: The relationships between the dimensions of collective responsibility



These dimensions underpin a complex interplay of relationships, resources and organisational structures within a school which impact on the development of collective responsibility. Furthermore, I therefore propose a model described in Table 9.1 that contributes to and extends the contemporary knowledge of collective responsibility reviewed in the literature in Chapter 2. Drawing from evidence in the case studies each dimension of collective responsibility has three schematic markers, 'emergent', 'evolving' and 'embedded.' These markers crystallise varying points along a continuum in the development of collective responsibility. Together the dimensions and schematic markers are conceptualised as a model for the development of collective responsibility and further elaborated in this final chapter.

Table 9.1 Proposed model for the development of collective responsibility

Dimensions					
	Professional development	Collective struggle	Professional community	Relational trust	Pedagogical leadership
Collective responsibility: Emergent phase	<p>Individual expertise is recognised but rarely shared</p> <p>Decisions about the organisation of professional development are regarded as the responsibility of the principal</p> <p>Teachers' autonomy for addressing problems in their teaching and learning is safeguarded by traditional organisational structures</p>	<p>Norms of privacy, professional independence and autonomy shield weak practices</p> <p>Gaps between results and practice are recognised as an individual responsibility</p> <p>Consensus on the school's espoused goals is contrived veiling the level of real commitment</p> <p>Underlying tensions and disagreements are suppressed by a culture of pseudocommunity</p>	<p>Reaction to change includes fear of work overload and doubts about individual efficacy</p> <p>Pseudocommunity results from avoiding dissent and disagreement in the interests of maintaining harmony</p> <p>Norms of social cohesion reinforce traditional work practices, teacher isolation and faculty balkanisation</p>	<p>Trust and vulnerability are not addressed as issues because an individual teacher's practice is not exposed to critique</p> <p>New relationships that require adjustment for mutual trust to develop, letting go of comfortable practices and accepting exposure to new ideas are not commonplace</p>	<p>The principal asserts the role and accepts prime responsibility for decision making related to the organisation of teacher professional learning</p> <p>Leaders provide pedagogical direction but do not relinquish their perceived responsibility to build a culture that empowers teachers to take responsibility for sustained whole-school improvement</p>
Examples from case study	<i>I've always noticed that working on my own just makes everything harder. (Robyn, Jossey)</i>	<i>Every teacher is coming from their own experiences, many which are quite traditional – their own personal beliefs. (Danny, Aran Heights)</i>	<i>There was a lot of fear and it was such an unknown, and people felt that they might be criticised. (Marjorie, Jossey)</i>	<i>There are still people who are not comfortable and perhaps not trusting of other [team] members coming in, they're just a little insecure. (Margaret, Tall Trees)</i>	<i>I think it's pretty much down to the leadership. (Jamie, Greengate)</i>

Table 9.1 Proposed model for the development of collective responsibility (continued)

Dimensions					
	Professional development	Collective struggle	Professional community	Relational trust	Pedagogical leadership
Collective responsibility: Evolving phase	<p>Professional development is aligned to explicitly address shared goals for student learning</p> <p>Key organisational cross-curricular, faculty or stage teams are formed to extend professional development opportunities</p>	<p>Some but not all are willing to embrace the challenge of producing better outcomes while others perceive they are victims of such goals</p> <p>Teachers who form small groups of co-learners actively seek solutions to the pedagogical challenges posed by their shared vision of high expectations for all students</p> <p>A critical mass holds their nerve and maintains an unrelenting focus on shared goals for all students</p>	<p>A language of shared norms and values reflects high expectations for teaching standards and student achievement</p> <p>Teachers commit to engage in critical reflection on current practices to seek ways for consistent and sustained improvement across all grades</p> <p>School goals and priorities support risk taking to trial alternative practices for student learning</p>	<p>New work relationships build deeper professional understanding of teachers' strengths and weaknesses</p> <p>Teachers display a mutual obligation to provide teaching and learning that will prepare students by giving them the knowledge and skills for the grade ahead</p> <p>New work relationships and structures may unleash personal insecurities and professional conflict as ideas are made public and practice is exposed to new forms of scrutiny</p>	<p>Leadership roles are shared including the setting of pedagogical directions, developing people, refocusing and redesigning structures that support collaborative decision making</p> <p>The principal is a leading learner. School and teacher leaders promote and participate in the type of professional learning that challenges low expectations for students and aligns theory and practice to achieve the school's goals for student learning</p>
Examples from case study schools	<p><i>Shared goals are then adapted together so that everyone has ownership of those goals. (Sally, Tall Trees)</i></p> <p><i>There's a lot more cross-faculty or cross-KLA interaction which basically I don't think would happen without them [learning communities]. (Principal, Aran Heights)</i></p>	<p><i>We absolutely in the face of adversity stuck to the total commitment and focus that we're going to pursue learning and we're going to keep talking about it and we're going to be absolutely bloody-minded determined about that. (Principal, Jossey)</i></p>	<p><i>People have [gone] into each other's classes and critiquing and providing feedback to each other . . . without wanting to approach us for funding or support. (Malcolm, Aran Heights)</i></p>	<p><i>It was all of us trying to come together to make it better for all of our students, not just our class but the whole school. (Pam, Tall Trees)</i></p>	<p><i>Leadership that will guide them to take risks and have a go at something that maybe it won't work, but they need to try it and then reassess. (Meg, Tall Trees)</i></p>

Table 9.1 Proposed model for the development of collective responsibility (continued)

Dimensions					
	Professional development	Collective struggle	Professional community	Trust	Pedagogical leadership
Collective responsibility: Embedded phase	<p>School resources are organised to support collaborative structures for professional learning, harnessing expertise from both within and outside the school</p> <p>The focus for school-based professional development is shared processes for deprivatising practice, strengthening interdependence and engaging in critical reflection that challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about teaching and schooling</p> <p>There is a common set of expectations and strategies, owned and identified by the whole staff, supporting a common framework for improvement such as the Quality Teaching model</p>	<p>Collective struggle is associated with an imperative to change current practices because of an agreed need driving whole-school improvement</p> <p>Engaging in collective struggle for whole-school improvement provides a focus to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions and practices about student learning.</p> <p>The opportunity to move in and out of different configurations of work teams, increases teachers' exposure to a greater number of colleagues from different faculties, who shared a common ethos about the nature of the struggle they were undertaking is common place</p>	<p>Flexible organisation within a school supports teacher groups to self-select, change and reform to address new student learning challenges</p> <p>Recognition that participation in collaborative professional development is inclusive and all teachers are expected to participate</p> <p>Social cohesion transforms into professional respect and support for cross group collaboration</p>	<p>A culture of trust and respect is at the core of building collective responsibility</p> <p>Vulnerability is reduced as relational trust builds through strong social and professional ties within the school community</p> <p>Relational trust is an organisational property of the school where opportunities for mutual obligation for the quality of teaching are fulfilled</p>	<p>The principal, as a leading learner, understands the challenges teachers face in making whole school pedagogical improvement</p> <p>School leaders are respected by their colleagues as "knowledgeable others." Teachers have the authority to make decisions about their work practices</p> <p>Decisions related to what matters for whole school pedagogy arise from consultation that shapes and reshapes challenges centred on learning benefits for teachers and students</p>
Examples from case study schools	<p><i>Teachers plan together, ensure that everything builds together so that there is consistency in learning for all students and where teachers reflect and support each other with resources.</i> (Loretta, Jossey)</p>	<p><i>We sat down and went through every BST piece of writing we could get our hands on and looked at what was expected. [We] read other children's writing.[We] worked out our aim. Then we went back to staff meetings with the whole staff. With professional support we talked about it. We looked at where we were going wrong.</i> (Margaret, Tall Trees)</p>	<p><i>Working together to support students and each other; making sure that the learning is happening but by assisting each other.</i> (Wendy, Aran Heights)</p>	<p><i>We all seem to be pulling in the same direction. And we're not scared to try stuff that's new . . . and we take greater pride in doing very, very well.</i> (Trent, Aran Heights)</p>	<p><i>When you've got that sort of dispersed leadership, stepping up to those sort of responsible roles, they take on more responsibility so they know they're a part of the whole purpose.</i> (Louise, Jossey)</p>

Description of the model

The model encompasses a continuum describing what collective responsibility looks like in a school setting at various points in its development. It highlights the complex interplay of challenges and relationships present in a community of professional educators with diverse expertise, beliefs and commitment to improving outcomes for students. Thus the proposed model depicts “an ideological spectrum” (Achinstein, 2002, p.445) which attempts to describe the beginning and mature points in the development of collective responsibility.

The continuum described in Table 9.1, suggests that the ‘emergent’ phase of collective responsibility occurs where individual teachers work in isolation, preserve their autonomy at the expense of forming community or where individual contributions to the group learning are not aligned to the school’s agreed goals. This phase is consistent with the suppression of underlying tensions and disagreements typical of pseudocommunity (Grossman et al, 2000). That is, individuals agree to enact the school’s goals without either understanding a common purpose or having a sense of efficacy to work with others to achieve these goals. It can also be the case where information is tightly controlled or even withheld from certain groups or individuals. School communities displaying such practices are potentially limiting the development of collective responsibility. For collective responsibility to further develop new relationships require adjustment to allow mutual trust to develop, letting go of comfortable practices and accepting exposure to new ideas.

As relational trust and teacher empowerment advance, schoolwide collective responsibility resembles the ‘evolving’ phase shown in the model in Table 9.1. Professional development is aligned to explicitly address the school’s agreed goals for student learning. Individual learning gives way to group learning where the contribution of individual teachers is recognised and valued. New work relationships are formed to address teachers’ professional learning needs, which are supported with school resources. Teachers take collective ownership of the school’s goals and priorities and seek to address them by trialling alternative practices for student learning. At this point new work relationships and structures may unleash personal insecurities and professional conflict as ideas are made public and practice is exposed to new forms of scrutiny.

As collective responsibility becomes stronger, depicted by the 'embedded' phase of the continuum in Table 9.1, relational trust between teachers as well as between teachers and school leaders reduces the fears experienced in the early stages. This growth in professional interdependence is manifested in greater teacher confidence because "we're not scared to try new stuff . . . and we take greater pride in doing very, very well" (Trent, Aran Heights). Gaps between teaching and student learning are addressed as a collective responsibility by the whole school. The focus for school-based professional development is also a shared process involving deprivatising practice, strengthening interdependence and engaging in critical reflection which challenges taken-for-granted assumptions about teaching and schooling.

Application of the model

In reality, in different schools, some dimensions may be more prevalent than others in influencing the extent to which collective responsibility develops in the one school. In other words not all dimensions may develop at the one time or at the same rate and depth. Attempting to place a school wholly at one point on the continuum fails to acknowledge that, within a school, sub-cultures change over time and at different rates in response to internal and external pressures and changes impacting on them. To take this approach would also understate the complexity of the similarities and differences between the social and professional dynamics within school communities (Achinstein, 2002). Furthermore, at any point in time the extent to which a school encapsulates the range of conditions contributing to the development of collective responsibility in each dimension is likely to be determined by a complex set of social transformations operating within the culture of that school as they continually undergo change in curriculum, teaching staff, leadership teams and approaches to improving outcomes for students (Dinham, 2008; Kemmis, 2006).

In fact, the prevailing conception of schools is that they are highly dynamic and fluid organisations constantly reacting to internal and external pressure for change (Sharratt & Fullan, 2009). Internal changes in the dynamics of school leadership and the demographic balance between experienced and early-career teachers, for example, might place a school and members of that school at different points to others along the continuum in any one of the five dimensions. External pressures mandated by systems to implement new curriculum,

pedagogy and assessment practices or participate in nationally funded programs for improvement may disrupt the taken-for-granted norms and therefore a school's capacity to develop collective responsibility.

At any one time different groups of teachers, faculties or teams within a school may display characteristics at multiple points along the continuum. For example, the teachers interviewed at Jossey reported that many of the conditions for developing collective responsibility were embedded in their school culture. Such conditions featured how teachers shared a sense of collective struggle. Their struggle centred on students' disengagement and how realignment of school resources could support professional development to effectively implement Years 7 and 8 teams. However, as Robyn, who was not a member of a Stage team reported "I've always noticed that working on my own just makes everything harder." This is in contrast to Loretta's experience at the same school where she highlighted a sense of joint planning and consistency in the quality of teaching being embedded in the practices of her colleagues.

One advantage of conceptualising collective responsibility as a continuum is the capacity to reflect the dynamic and changing nature of schools, faculties and Stage teams. When schools implement new ideas or reforms that challenge taken-for-granted norms it is likely that mainstream and prevailing beliefs and expectations will also be challenged. Towards the emergent end of the continuum of collective responsibility teachers in my study cited fear of change, work overload and uncertainty about their skills to implement new and innovative teaching practices. These concerns are illustrated by Marjorie's fear of the unknown as teams were introduced at Jossey and Margaret's sense that her colleagues at Tall Trees initially resented public scrutiny of the effectiveness of their literacy instruction. The safety teachers felt in faculty teams at Jossey and Aran Heights was purposely disrupted as they were expected to form cross-faculty teams to critically review their current teaching and assessment practices with teachers with whom they had limited previous professional interaction. It is how a school community responds to such challenges that influence the level and pace of change towards the development of collective responsibility.

TRANSITIONAL POINTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

In this section I describe transformational points along the continuum in the development of collective responsibility as represented by the model in Figure 9.1. As the conditions described in each dimension of collective responsibility change and/or develop over time, the collective capacity in a school to move from one point to the next along the continuum is influenced by the unique mix of these conditions. Just as it is possible for a school community to move forward from one phase to the next in the development of collective responsibility, it is also possible for teachers' collective responsibility to diminish. This could be due to the changing dynamics and social relationships between, for example, change in school leaders and teachers, or among teachers, as systemic reform is initiated, supported or resisted.

DIMENSION 1: REFORMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Typifying the emergent phase of the continuum, the development of collective responsibility is hindered by the desire to maintain and protect the status quo. The dominance of externally provided and expert-led professional development that is seen as the responsibility of the system and/or a principal to resource can result in teachers lacking ownership of the school's goals. This finding is supported in research on the organisation of such professional experiences as articulated by Aubusson et al (2009):

When teachers attend one-off workshops or a professional development day, attempts to implement changes in the classroom can occur, but it is more common for these experiences to reinforce existing practice and maintain the status quo. (p.46)

Such a scenario was borne out in how the Principal of Jossey described the organisation of professional development prior to introducing the cross-faculty teams structure. "Some years ago there was responsibility taken to varying extents within faculties for the learning that happened with students in those faculties. And there was virtually no sharing between faculties except at formal school development days and even then it wasn't really sharing between faculties" (Principal, Jossey).

Transformational professional learning, as a catalyst for the development of evolving collective responsibility, requires fractured and disconnected professional learning in a school to be reformed. This usually involves refocusing resources to select, define and concentrate deeply on specific issues of instructional practice. Such practices include assessment for learning, instructional improvement that meets the needs of the individual students and ensuring consistency in the quality of teaching from classroom to classroom to improve learning for all students. The breaking down of teacher autonomy through teachers' engagement in the shared work of teaching, as Sharratt and Fullan (2009) suggest, can lead to all students experiencing "alignment of the taught, learned, and assessed curriculum which provides them with predictability, confidence, and fairness" (p.55). From the evidence in the case study schools, the disruption to teachers' pedagogical comfort zones are likely to be met initially with fear of being blamed for poor results, frustration at the rate of progress, silence and resistance to change (Dinham, 2008). For collective responsibility to develop in a school, structures for and the organisation of professional development need to take on new forms of teacher collaboration "to ensure that the barricades do not go up around them in futile and counter-productive attempts" (Dinham, 2008, p.91) that act to undermine efforts to change.

As demonstrated in my study, there were several examples of professional development being reformed in this way. At Tall Trees, professional development to implement Quality Teaching was initiated as whole-school involvement in weekly staff meetings focused on the school's goal to develop a set of writing rubrics, to trial the rubrics and publicly share the results. In other examples, at Jossey and Aran Heights transitional phases in the development of collective responsibility were also marked by introducing and resourcing interfaculty professional learning to implement Quality Teaching. In these three schools a commitment to implement the Quality Teaching model provided the impetus and framework for pedagogical change and thus positively influencing the development of collective responsibility.

Such impetus for pedagogical change led to corresponding changes in beliefs about their self-efficacy to enact teaching practices that reflected high expectations and challenging pedagogy (Griffiths et al, 2006). This is reflected in the Principal at Tall Trees attributing

teachers' collaborative approach to deepening their understanding and implementation of Quality Teaching as "an underlying factor of achieving outcomes for students. So in a sense, developing that rubric brought the staff together in terms of how they took responsibility for all the students K-6." Transitional points for collective responsibility to become embedded organisational features in the case study schools were marked by teachers' degree of engagement with the dimensions of the Quality Teaching model.

DIMENSION 2: ENGAGING IN COLLECTIVE STRUGGLE

In my model collective responsibility is unlikely to become embedded in the culture of a school without whole-school support for and engagement in a collective struggle to improve an aspect of student learning. This proposition is linked to the reform of professional development by bringing together teachers to collaborate on a pedagogical problem, issue or dilemma that is identified as impeding teachers' and their students' learning.

The model highlights the transition from fragmented and loosely coupled structures to a focus on a common issue, an imperative to change and commitment to shared goals. This requires teachers to recognise, value and harness internal expertise. Such actions were found in the case studies to complement, expand and deepen colleagues' repertoire to address pressing pedagogical problems. Similarly, Kemmis (2006) in his proposed framework for describing professional practice theorised that "purposive action to address needs or problems in pursuit of characteristic goals and ends" (p.7) is situated within the social community of a school. Reflexivity and transformation are likely to arise from open communication in which practitioners mutually explore issues related to themes or a common concern. Over time, as Kemmis (2006) argues, professional practices are socially transformed.

Such transformation to take purposive action to address a whole-school pedagogical problem is illustrated in what the Tall Trees Principal described as the shift from negative factions in the staff to "everyone contributing as a whole staff. And once we decided as a group, 'yes we're going to develop this on a K-6 basis, we're not going to be stage-based in any way'." The transition point, according to the Principal, manifested as a whole staff

commitment to the development of the writing rubrics “that gave us a framework to move from one point to the next.” He elaborated by making an explicit connection between the professional learning teachers gained and the impact on students’ learning. “We found the children moved with us and the collaboration between all members of staff was absolutely fantastic and they all got on board.” However, as Bolam et al (2005) found “getting on board” is not sufficient to develop a strong sense of collective responsibility. If there is no imperative to change or engage in collective struggle to improve student outcomes, having a “desire to do the best for all students but not a shared belief about how to achieve this” (Bolam et al, 2005, p.79) can limit the extent to which collective responsibility can evolve.

It would appear that surfacing conflict and building respectful relationships between teachers can be transformational in the development of collective responsibility. In theory surfacing conflict about teaching requires a willingness to make one’s teaching practice open to critique. This may involve gradual letting go of power roles and suspending judgement when planned pedagogical reforms are trialled as teachers’ make their practice vulnerable to planned risks and critique (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Sharratt & Fullan, 2009). For example, teachers at Jossey who formed cross-faculty teams to address the pressing challenges of teaching Years 7 and 8 students reported success in turning students’ disengagement and teachers’ perceived lack of efficacy into a collaborative and sustained focus on learning, attendance and welfare. This was achieved by putting the quality of teaching first. Thus, when teachers share events, ideas and critical incidents as a way of making sense of teaching problems, their capacity as a staff to surface conflict and channel their energy into a collective struggle also contributes to their capacity to develop collective responsibility.

Further, initial and blatant conflict can be productive where teachers are able to work through the issues to focus on a common goal and take shared responsibility for student outcomes. This was the case at Tall Trees where, rather than hindering the development of collective responsibility, the way teachers worked through difficult conversations, applied their professional learning in classroom activities and became increasingly willing to share student work represented transformational change to embed collective responsibility at the school level. In contrast, schools where teachers seek to avoid conflict or where teachers are

compliant or silenced can hinder the transition from emergent to evolving collective responsibility through collective struggle.

These findings are consistent with the research by Achinstein (2002) on the micropolitics of collaboration. She proposed that processes of 'group-think' within the one community can simultaneously unite and restrain collaboration on important issues of instruction and schooling. While collaboration among teachers and engagement in processes of inquiry and reflective dialogue contribute to transformation within a school, it is the focus of the collaboration or inquiry that distinguishes collective struggle. In schools where there is no identified challenge or problem that unites staff, it appears that collective responsibility is less likely to be embedded. On the other hand, where there is strong recognition that specific change is needed and that the change will require concerted effort and commitment from all staff, collective responsibility is more likely to develop.

DIMENSION 3: FORMING PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

The formation of professional community is identified from the research in my study as another dimension of collective responsibility as represented in Figure 9.1. As previously described, characteristics of professional community discussed in Chapter 2 that are theoretically related to the development of collective responsibility include: the growth of professional interdependence (Jackson, 2006); the development and sharing of technical expertise through inquiry (Gamoran et al, 2005); shared reflection on teaching practice (Kruse et al, 1995); negotiating conflict (Achinstein, 2002, Grossman et al, 2000); and democratic decision making (Louis & Marks, 1998). The extent to which schools in my study developed these practices could be related to how they transitioned from one point to the next in the formation of a mature professional community (Grossman et al, 2000). At the emergent point on the continuum, an absence of the characteristics associated with the formation of professional community was found to limit opportunities for systematic action at all grade levels in the case study schools. Teachers were unable to work together, to discuss and demonstrate to each other quality practices aimed at improving student learning (Sharratt & Fullan, 2009).

My study has shown that teachers' willingness to share critical reflections and participate in focused professional dialogue can have a direct impact on their capacity to design and implement improvements in teaching. On the one hand a culture of consensus and compliance inhibits the development of an environment of critical collaboration and struggle to address school reform agendas. Individual autonomy is prevalent in those communities where teachers experience isolation, inequitable opportunities for professional development, lowered expectations for student achievement and lack of satisfaction with their work (Talbert & McLaughlin, 2002). On the other hand, the formation of professional community is strengthened when teachers can establish a clear purpose that becomes widely shared and when they can act collectively to give priority to improvement in instruction (Bolam et al, 2005). Flexible organisation within a school similar to that observed at Jossey, where groups could self-select, change and reform to address student learning challenges through inquiry, has the capacity to develop collective responsibility grounded in a philosophy of learning for all, whatever effort and resources this takes.

Findings from my research suggest that collective responsibility is less likely to develop in a culture of pseudocommunity. This can come from avoiding dissent or conflict and the desire to maintain the status quo in the interests of preserving harmony as outlined in the previous dimension of collective responsibility. This is consistent with Grossman et al's (2000) findings that when teachers play community "the maintenance of pseudocommunity pivots on the suppression of conflict" (p.17). Where collective responsibility is embedded in the professional community of a school, teachers are able to move in and out of flexible professional learning arrangements across subject faculties and Stage teams. This was seen most powerfully in the case study schools when teachers aimed for ambitious instruction based on high expectations, intellectual challenge and mutual respect for shared expertise (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Compelling evidence in the literature points to the critical importance of professional community in the development of collective responsibility (for example Bolam et al, 2005; Lee & Smith, 1996; Louise et al, 1996). However, there could be a danger of accepting too easily that where schools use the language of community it can be assumed that community exists or even is developing. For example, while teacher professional learning groups were

referred to locally at Aran Heights as 'learning communities,' each team operated differently, with varying purposes and durations. They were often no more than loosely coupled groups of teachers meeting for short periods on self-selected projects. In contrast the 'teaching teams' at Jossey were purposely structured, met in regular timetabled periods and were accountable to one of the Deputy Principals as well as their faculties to whom they provided regular updates. As Aubusson et al (2009) conclude, the formation of cohesive professional communities is difficult because of the complex dynamics that operate in a school at any time. The interplay of social and professional factors can impede or facilitate the sharing and scrutiny of practice-oriented knowledge that has the capacity to foster teachers' collective responsibility for universal student achievement in a school.

In addition, overwhelmingly, the research on professional community has emphasised that professional community is fragile (Grossman et al, 2000), poorly understood because it is "an ambiguous notion of various guises" (Aubusson et al, 2009 p.57) and, as Little (1999) cautions, does not always result in teacher professional learning that leads to enhanced outcomes for students. While noting such caveats it is important not to understate the critical role the development of collective responsibility plays in effective professional learning communities (Bolam et al, 2005). Furthermore, central to the formation of professional community is sharing a common purpose for teachers' work that aligns professional development with conversations about the issues and ideas that reform teaching practices to achieve school goals (Aubusson et al, 2009; Grossman et al, 2000).

In my study, where teachers met as teams with the specific purpose of critiquing pedagogy, curriculum and assessment, a mutual commitment developed. Team members engaged in critical reflection on current practices in order to seek collectively improvement in teaching and student learning. Outcomes reported from these teams included a sense of social cohesion arising from cross-faculty collaboration and transfer of ideas and strategies. Collective responsibility was stronger where team structures were associated with flexible and voluntary participation and supported by organisational resources that became embedded in the culture of a school.

Caution however is required not to overstate the importance of professional community as the sole factor influencing the development of collective responsibility. For example, there was evidence at Jossey consistent with Little's (2003) empirical work that found "the formation of tightly bounded professional communities with their specialized language and stock of familiar stories might result in highly isolated and insular groups - in effect replacing the isolated classroom teacher with the isolated teacher group and balkanized workplace" (p.939). This suggests that for collective responsibility to be embedded in the organisational culture of a school the learning and trust that develops within the micropolitical communities such as those occurring at Aran Heights and Jossey, needs to be shared with and extended to the wider school community.

DIMENSION 4: BUILDING RELATIONAL TRUST

The fourth dimension in my model is relational trust. Inextricably linked to the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning in my study is the constraining factor of fear and vulnerability teachers described when faced with the challenge of pedagogical reform. This finding is consistent with Bryk and Schneider's (2002) study on relational trust in Chicago and in Van Maele and Van Houtte's (2009) research on Flemish schools. Sharing the innermost actions of one's teaching practice with a colleague involved exposing and making vulnerable one's practice to critique. Teaching is often associated with privatised practice, where teachers have a safe and legitimised haven which they can use as an excuse for too little time or opportunity to share the essence of their craft. In my study I found that work relationships that build deep professional understanding of teachers' strengths and weaknesses through mutual obligation to others were required for collective responsibility to develop. Researchers have found that an interdependency of trust is developed as colleagues expose their practice through open door practices and extend discernment to others to become more coherent and consistent with the school's goals for improving student learning (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009).

Without the formation of relational trust it is unlikely that collective responsibility will become embedded in the culture of a school. Maintaining the status quo through consensus constrains the development of strong social and professional ties as demonstrated in the

case study of Greengate Primary. Opportunities for teachers to openly and systematically share and critique their instructional practices using a quality framework were not reported as common practice at the time of the study. Conversely, systematic and structural opportunities to focus on the quality of practice with others at Tall Trees and in teaching teams at Jossey reflected critical opportunities for teachers to build relational trust. At Tall Trees, relational trust strengthened as teachers focused on the consistency and quality of literacy teaching. This laid the ground work for students in the early years to gain literacy skills that prepared them for more challenging literacy in later years. At Jossey, relational trust developed as teachers took responsibility across year levels to embed consistent standards of teaching and assessing. Their collaboration and commitment to each other to maintain high expectations and standards for all students reflected a culture of strong relational trust within these teams. What teachers acknowledged in both schools was that failure to effectively teach curriculum requirements in one grade resulted in a greater challenge for teachers' work in successive grades (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

As shown in my model, transition from the emergent phase is typified by teacher collegiality in the form of 'getting on with everyone' to building stronger teacher-to-teacher relationships of trust and reciprocity in the evolving phase. In a sense this transition is reliant on the mutual efforts of colleagues. According to Van Maele and Van Houtte (2009) such a transition requires the development of relational trust as an organisational property of a school. However, the development of relational trust does not only extend to sharing deep professional understandings about requirements for student learning in the embedded phase. It also includes a deep sense that teachers' hard work will be matched by their colleagues' competence to deliver these outcomes for all students in a school. These characteristics of relational trust, when embedded in the school culture, become generalised norms of reciprocity linked to the development of collective responsibility (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

DIMENSION 5: TAKING PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP

Finally the dimension of pedagogical leadership is discussed as the fifth dimension of my model. Findings from my study support the proposition that for collective responsibility to

be embedded in a school, a complex and dynamic set of actions for pedagogical leadership is required. Evidence from the case studies identified a number of leadership actions as critical for the development of collective responsibility. These include: pedagogical leadership that supports collaborative reform where teachers as a whole staff take responsibility to improve the quality of teaching (Jossey); leadership that places a high priority on meeting teachers' needs and interests (Aran Heights); transparent decision making and open communication of those decisions on pedagogical issues that matter for teachers' and students' learning (Jossey); leadership for organisational change and provision of the resources that break down balkanisation in schools (Jossey and Aran Heights); enthusiastic, passionate and determined leadership that persists with organisational reform focused on learning (Tall Trees); and leadership that empowers others to accept and take responsibility for their part in whole school change (Tall Trees).

These observations are consistent with Dinham's (2008) reported findings from An Exceptional Schools Outcomes Project.³⁰ This study found that principals in schools that achieved outstanding educational outcomes placed a high value on teacher professional learning focused on the quality of teaching and student learning. In another study, Robinson (2007) found that school leaders who both supported and participated in professional learning with their teachers had a significant and positive impact. Thus, pedagogical leadership in the schools in my study was exemplified by school and teacher leaders who openly communicated their commitment to and responsibility for their part in the whole-school implementation of the Quality Teaching model. This in turn provided the imperative for schools to engage in collective struggle to improve students' academic outcomes.

In my model, towards the emergent end of the continuum for the development of collective responsibility, pedagogical leadership provides direction for achieving the school's goals for student learning. Some interviewees in my study regarded this style of leadership as championing the responsibility for the challenges teachers faced in raising students' literacy

³⁰ AESOP, An Exceptional Schooling Outcomes Project was undertaken by a consortium of researchers from the University of New England, the University of Western Sydney and the NSW Department of Education and Training. The project identified and explored the factors leading to exceptional outcomes in junior secondary public education in NSW. (Dinham, 2008)

and numeracy achievement. However, this leadership style fell short of empowering teachers to make the sometimes radical changes in teaching practice required to achieve such pedagogical reform.

The nature of leadership in each of the case study schools provided a marker for where schools were in terms of the development of collective responsibility. At Greengate the positional power to lead pedagogical decision making was assumed by the Principal. This type of directive leadership (Dinham, 2008), while valued by the majority of interviewees, represented a culture of dependency (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) with the principal perceived as having the final say on whole school decisions especially about professional development and organisation for improving literacy and numeracy teaching. This in turn played out as a lack of acceptance of responsibility as teachers struggled with their own sense of efficacy in implementing the type of pedagogical changes the principal espoused. In contrast, the organisational capacity of pedagogical leadership at Tall Trees was typified by the Assistant Principals leading and participating with the teachers in professional learning and teaching tools. The teachers responded with commitment to enact the new learning in their classroom literacy practice.

Where relational trust was strong, pedagogical leadership was found to foster school cultures that supported teachers' active participation in decision making. Teachers also shared ideas about what mattered for teaching to address the challenge of improving student outcomes. As Bolam et al (2005) state "the dimension of mutual trust, respect and support is, perhaps, in a class itself" (p.70). However, they caution "the evidence indicates that, like other aspects of professional culture, leaders cannot simply make these happen" (p.70). In other words, trust in the pedagogical leadership in a school cannot be assigned. There must be those who earn such trust as well as those who are willing to enact support for pedagogical decisions. Building pedagogical leadership influences the transition between the emergent and evolving points on the continuum of my model in developing collective responsibility. In this transition, developing a culture of relational trust and respect is at the core of the effective functioning of a school. In effective schools, pedagogical leadership sets clear directions, develops people's leadership capacity and refocuses and redesigns structures that supported collaborative decision making (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009).

Strong pedagogical leadership in turn was found by Goddard et al (2000) to influence teachers' sense of collective efficacy.

Thus, collective responsibility is more likely to be embedded in the school culture where there is evidence that teachers are empowered to influence decisions about their work practices and demonstrate shared commitment to follow through on the school's agreed reform initiatives. Teachers trust in the leadership is based on their demonstrated capacity and prior history of good intentions to make open and transparent decisions. In practice not all decision making entails intense collaboration. However, when there is a culture of discretionary authority, built on a predisposition of trust, decisions that pose major pedagogical risks for teachers are more likely to be embraced and trialled (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). That is, decisions that impact at a whole school level are more likely to be accepted and acted upon when there is a previous experience of relational trust between school leaders and staff. In effect, decisions are grounded in a collective commitment to embrace the changes required to implement quality teaching practices. For example, in my study teachers at Jossey stepped up to take on team leadership roles. This was an outcome of their participation in teams and represented the professional growth teachers had experienced as they reported feeling empowered to set the direction for their team's professional learning. Similarly, leadership at Aran Heights directed resources to support teachers to challenge current practices and form 'learning communities' to specifically address identified problems. The sense of empowerment and trust in the leadership at both these secondary schools indicated the extent to which collective responsibility was embedded in the culture of these schools.

LIMITATIONS OF THE MODEL

This proposed model for the development of collective responsibility provides some useful insights into a complex phenomenon, since collective responsibility is an area of school organisational capacity that has previously been under researched. However, there are some limitations of the model and these are acknowledged and reported in this section.

The identification of five dimensions influencing the development of collective responsibility is not intended to be a definitive set of conditions or actions that operate in a linear fashion. In labelling each dimension as a discrete entity influencing the development of collective responsibility it is acknowledged that the boundaries of each dimension are somewhat arbitrary. To some extent one dimension cannot develop in isolation from the other dimensions. For example, as demonstrated, relational trust is a key component of effective pedagogical leadership. Similarly, the literature on professional community points to the important role of professional development and how that professional development is organised within a school community to address an identified collective struggle to improve student learning. The proposed model attempts to capture this dynamic interaction of multiple conditions impacting on the development of collective responsibility in the four schools studied. While it is possible to isolate individual factors in the analysis of the data, the complex way in which they interact in each case means that care should be taken not to generalise these conditions to other sites and contexts.

While four case study schools have been used to deduct theory from practice to identify the conditions that support or hinder the development of collective responsibility, findings should not be generalised to other populations where the structure and organisation of schooling is inherently different, for example in parts of the non-government education sector. Nonetheless, the five dimensional model drawn from my research does offer a theoretical base to explore further the phenomenon in other sites and educational contexts. While the five dimensions were found to be critical factors impacting on the development of collective responsibility, further exploration could investigate the proposition that while necessary these conditions alone may not be sufficient. Further research is required to establish if other critical factors are at play in different educational settings.

The small number of case studies in my sample is also a limitation. Further investigation using the model in a broader range of schools may surface a wider set of factors influencing the development of collective responsibility. Other factors such as access to external funding, support from academic partners, the halo effect of a new principal, the composition of the leadership team or the imperative to introduce a new program with significant short term funding could be potential variables for investigation.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The proposed model reported in my study provides a conceptual framework for further research on the development of collective responsibility. As previously stated, there was a positive correlation between collective responsibility and teacher-to-teacher trust, teachers' perceptions about the consistency of professional development with the school's goals, their commitment to improve teaching, and to the development of shared goals for the school. Given the nature of the literature reviewed for my study in Chapter 2 these results were anticipated. For instance, Bryk and Schneider (2002) found that professional community provided a context for relational trust that reduced teachers' sense of vulnerability as they shared school-wide goals for instructional improvement. Similarly, Bolam et al (2005) found in their study that "a high level of shared values and vision, collective responsibility for pupil learning and reflective professional enquiry" (p.89) produced a deep understanding of what and how they could achieve sustained improvement.

As highlighted above, the correlation between trust and collective responsibility in my study was significant. Trust between teachers, principal leadership, students and parents are growing areas of research interest in terms of trust as a core resource for school improvement where a high level of trust is a resource that supports leaders to initiate and implement change (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Louis, 2007; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009). Similarly, trust had been found to be a critical element in school cultures focused on educational improvement (Ennis & McCauley, 2002; Van Houtte, 2005; Van Houtte, 2006). Furthermore, the dimension of trust in my model describes the nature of relationships between teachers, and teachers and school leaders. In contrast, the other four dimensions describe in various ways how teachers engage in professional development and form community focused on the school's goals for improvement. Follow-up studies could further investigate the relationship between trust and the other four dimensions in facilitating the development of collective responsibility. In addition, the role and relative importance of other elements of trust in the development of collective responsibility could be explored further by expanding the theoretical frame of the model to include teacher-to-leader trust as identified in Bryk and Schneider's (2002) scale. Finally, the findings that emerged in my study

related to the demographics and experience of teaching staff could be investigated in other sites as possible factors for the development of collective responsibility.

A further implication for future research drawn from the methodology used in my study could be to replicate the survey instrument with an additional scale for pedagogical leadership. Analysis of the interview data identified this as a critical dimension in the development of collective responsibility. The need for such studies was cited as an outcome of the AESOP study (Dinham 2007).

Given the small and select number of case studies used in my research additional case studies would assist in drawing more generalised conclusions from the data. Further studies could also illuminate the theoretical construct of collective responsibility to study the impact in greater depth on student learning outcomes as suggested by Lee and Smith's (1996) research.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate in four schools what collective responsibility looks like and the conditions that supported or hindered the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning. My interest in this study arose from a small but important body of literature which pointed to the importance of collective responsibility in contributing to increased student outcomes. There was also a lack of in depth studies about how collective responsibility developed as an organisational property of a school and potential resource for school improvement.

The investigation of collective responsibility for student learning was situated in the context of the NSW Government education sector's agenda to implement Quality Teaching as a framework for improving the quality and consistency of pedagogy across whole schools. My research builds on a small number of previous studies on collective responsibility that linked this phenomenon to teacher professional development, the formation of professional community, relational trust, teacher self and collective efficacy and accountability for student achievement. The findings from my study have significance for models of workplace

learning focused on whole-school improvement and for designing collaborative professional development.

In summary, the study provided rich description of what collective responsibility looks like in various phases of development in four schools. The evidence highlights the contextual nature of how teachers' collective responsibility for student learning develops and the extent to which interrelated factors act to support or hinder its development. In addition, evidence from the four case study schools surfaced five related conditions, professional development, collective struggle, professional community, relational trust and pedagogical leadership, which contributed to the development of teachers' collective responsibility for student learning. These organisational conditions, when present in a school community, were found to strengthen the development of collective responsibility. Similarly, it could be concluded that an absence of such conditions might inhibit the development of collective responsibility.

Where there was evidence of collective responsibility, teachers had formed strong professional bonds by participating in collaborative work in interdisciplinary teams, engaged in whole school professional development focused on improving the quality of instruction and designed teaching that met the targeted learning needs of all students. In the development of collective responsibility, trust and shared problem solving around a collective struggle to improve the learning outcomes for all students were found to have critical roles. Refocusing and reforming teachers' work and professional learning involved them reflecting on and rethinking practice in collaboration with others. These activities frequently occurred with teachers from other faculties or Stages, which provided more powerful benefits for teachers who participated.

Further, professional development was a key factor influencing the development of collective responsibility in the case study schools. Professional learning was integral to the weekly teaching cycle as it was timetabled to accommodate purposely formed teaching teams as well as whole-school professional development sessions focused on the school's agreed goals for student learning. These kinds of professional learning, when enacted across the whole school, cultivated high levels of self and collective efficacy. Teachers talked about

the effort they were making to be innovative in their teaching and involve themselves in new learning that was worthwhile in terms of student gains. In such environments, teachers had a positive sense of reciprocity, trusting that their colleagues would match their efforts as they explored new pedagogical practices and took planned risks.

This study contributes new understandings about what it means to develop collective responsibility in Australian schools. A new conceptual model is proposed as a theoretical framework for understanding and evaluating the development of collective responsibility in a school. Underlying the five dimensions in the model is recognition of the complexity surrounding the phenomenon of collective responsibility in school culture through the phases from emergent to evolving and embedded. The model also provides some guidance in constructing positive environments for whole school, large-scale improvements in student achievement, such as how teacher learning is best when it is collaboratively focused on what students need to know, understand and do across the full range of learning stages. In this way the findings of my study add to current knowledge about the links between teacher learning and improved student learning outcomes. The model can also be used as a basis for further investigation of the phenomenon of collective responsibility in other contexts.

In my study, where the schools incorporated each of the five conditions, rewards such as raised teacher trust in each other and in school leaders, collaborative efforts for sustained improvement, enhanced capacity for subsequent actions and increased student learning gains resulted. These benefits encapsulate the essence of what teachers' collective responsibility can mean for school improvement. Finally, the proposed model has important implications for further research on teachers' collective responsibility. As a theory it needs to be tested in the context of whole-school and large-scale reform such as currently is taking place in Australian schools engaged in National Partnerships to improve student achievement, community relationships and equity outcomes.

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Appendix A: dimensions and elements of the NSW model of pedagogy: Quality Teaching Mode

INTELLECTUAL QUALITY

Deep knowledge	<i>To what extent is the knowledge being addressed focused on a small number of key concepts and the relationships between and among those concepts?</i>
Deep understanding	<i>To what extent do students demonstrate a profound and meaningful understanding of central ideas and the relationship between and among those central concepts?</i>
Problematic Knowledge	<i>To what extent student encouraged to address multiple perspectives and/or solutions? To what extent are students able to recognise knowledge as constructed and therefore open to question?</i>
Higher order thinking	<i>To what extent are students regularly engaged in thinking that requires them to organise, reorganise, apply, analyse, synthesise and evaluate knowledge and information?</i>
Metalanguage	<i>To what extent do lessons explicitly name and analyse knowledge as specialist language? To what extent do lessons provide frequent commentary on language use and the various contexts of differing language use?</i>
Substantive communication	<i>To what extent are students regularly engaged in sustained conversations (in oral, written or artistic forms) about the ideas and concepts they are encountering?</i>

QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Explicit quality criteria	<i>To what extent are students provided with explicit criteria for the quality of work they produce? To what extent are those criteria a regular reference point for the development and assessment of student work?</i>
Engagement	<i>To what extent are most students, most of the time, seriously engaged in the lesson? To what extent do students display sustained interest and attention?</i>
High expectations	<i>To what extent are high expectations of all students communicated? To what extent is conceptual risk taking encouraged and rewarded?</i>
Social support	<i>To what extent is there strong positive support for learning and mutual respect among teachers and students and others assisting students' learning? To what extent is the classroom free of negative personal comment or put-downs?</i>
Student self-regulation	<i>To what extent do students demonstrate autonomy and initiative so that minimal attention to the disciplining and regulation of student behaviour is required?</i>
Student direction	<i>To what extent do students exercise some direction over the selection of activities related to their learning and the means and manner by which these activities will be done?</i>

SIGNIFICANCE

Background knowledge	<i>To what extent do lessons regularly and explicitly build from students' background knowledge, in terms of prior school knowledge, as well as other aspects of their personal lives?</i>
Cultural knowledge	<i>To what extent do lessons regularly incorporate cultural knowledge of diverse social groupings?</i>
Knowledge integration	<i>To what extent do lessons regularly demonstrate links between and within subjects and key learning areas?</i>
Inclusivity	<i>To what extent do lessons include and publicly value the participation of all students across the social and cultural backgrounds represented in the classroom?</i>
Connectedness	<i>To what extent do lesson activities rely on the application of school knowledge in real-life contexts or problems? To what extent do lesson activities provide opportunities for students to share their work with audiences beyond the classroom or school?</i>

Appendix B: Correspondence arranging consent

Professor Jenny Gore

Director, Centre for Professional Learning in Education

School of Education
Faculty of Education and Arts
University Drive, Callaghan
NSW 2308 Australia
Phone: +61 2 4921 6709
Fax: +61 2 4921 6020
Email: jenny.gore@newcastle.edu.au

**Information for Principals: *Collective responsibility for student learning*
(Version 2: 11/1/07)**

Researchers: Professor Jenny Gore, A/Professor James Ladwig, Frances Plummer

Principal
School
Address

28 October 2010

Dear

During 2007 Frances Plummer is conducting research into school-based professional learning. The research is one component of the work Frances is undertaking for a Doctorate of Philosophy in Education at the University of Newcastle jointly supervised by me and Associate Professor James Ladwig. The research is designed to further understand how teachers' participation in professional development around *Quality teaching* contributes to collective responsibility for student achievement. Collective responsibility is reported in the literature as a desirable outcome of teachers' professional development. Less clear in previous research is the explicit nature of collective responsibility and the conditions that enable or inhibit its development in teachers' workplaces

Your school is invited to participate in this study. All teachers in your school would be invited to respond to a survey which takes approximately fifteen minutes to complete. Up to ten teachers and members of the senior school executive interested in providing more information about their experiences with professional development focused on *Quality teaching* would be invited to participate in the interviews. Where teacher consent is given and during the visits to your school Frances will make field observations that provide her with insights into the culture and context of the way professional development is organised and teachers engage in professional interactions. Where teachers give consent, Frances will also make notes from artefacts such as programs, school policies and procedures developed in relation to professional development practices at your school.

Frances would provide the survey and reply-paid envelopes for return of the survey. Frances plans to make two visits to your school in Term [n] in 2007. On the first visit she would be in the school for a period of up to one week, negotiated with you, to conduct the interviews with teachers and senior executive. One group interview with each professional learning team and one interview with each of the teachers in the team/s would be planned. The interviews would be around 30 minutes in duration. A copy of the interview schedule is attached. She would seek informed consent to tape record interviews with members of the professional learning team, consenting teachers and school executive. The audio tapes

will provide an accurate record of the conversations for the sole purposes of analysis. The tapes will be securely stored in my office (Hunter Building room HA89) for the duration of the study.

Frances would make a second visit to the school to discuss with the participating teachers any preliminary findings and gain their comments and feedback. The timing of this second visit will be negotiated with you and the individual teachers. The school will be provided with a report of the processes and the findings of the research. The findings will contribute to the school's understanding of the impact of previous professional development strategies and planning for future directions for teacher professional learning. In accordance with research ethics no school or individual teacher will be identified in any report of the research.

The study has approval from the NSW Department of Education and Training and the University of Newcastle Human Research Ethics Committee. Frances would be pleased to discuss any aspect of this study with you. She can be contacted during business hours on telephone 9244 5686. Alternatively, you might like to contact me on 49216709.

Frances will make telephone contact with you in the next two weeks to discuss your school's possible involvement. I appreciate the time you and your staff may take to consider this invitation and your assistance with this request.

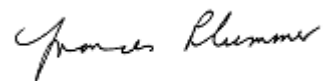
Yours sincerely



Professor Jenny Gore
Project Supervisor



Associate Professor James Ladwig
Project Co-Supervisor



Frances Plummer
Student Researcher

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval no. H-309-1006 and the NSW Department of Education and Training (SERAP:2006098).

*Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in **this** research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellor, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan, NSW 2308, Telephone (02) 4921 6333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.*

Professor Jenny Gore

Director, Centre for Professional Learning in Education

School of Education
Faculty of Education and Arts
University Drive, Callaghan
NSW 2308 Australia
Phone: +61 2 4921 6709
Fax: +61 2 4921 6020
Email: jenny.gore@newcastle.edu.au

Collective responsibility for student achievement

Principal Consent to Take Part in the Study (Version 2: 11/1/07)

I, _____, agree to allow the teachers in my school to take part in the *Collective responsibility for student learning research study* conducted by Frances Plummer and supervised by Professor Jenny Gore. I give my consent freely. I understand that the project will be conducted as described in the *Information Sheet*, a copy of which I have retained. I understand I can withdraw my school from the project at any time without providing a reason. I understand that participation by any teacher at my school is voluntary and with informed consent.

I consent to allow teachers at my school to:

- attend a briefing on the purpose and conduct of the research study
- complete a survey
- participate in individual and group interviews, field observations and submit documentation that may be used in the study.

School: _____

Principal's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval no. H-H-309-1006 and the NSW Department of Education and Training (SERAP:2006098)

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan, NSW 2308, Telephone (02) 4921 6333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.

Professor Jenny Gore

Director, Centre for Professional Learning in Education

School of Education
Faculty of Education and Arts
University Drive, Callaghan
NSW 2308 Australia
Phone: +61 2 4921 6709
Fax: +61 2 4921 6020
Email: jenny.gore@newcastle.edu.au

Information statement for the research project: *Collective responsibility for student achievement*

Researchers: Professor Jenny Gore, A/Professor James Ladwig, Frances Plummer

(Version 2: 11/1/07)

As a teacher or member of the senior executive at Merrylands East Public School you are invited to take part in the research project above which is being conducted by Frances Plummer from the School of Education at the University of Newcastle. Frances Plummer is conducting the research as part of her Doctorate of Philosophy under the joint supervision of Professor Jenny Gore and Associate Professor James Ladwig.

Why is the research being done?

The purpose of the project is to identify the conditions in schools that enable or inhibit the development of collective responsibility for student learning among teachers in NSW public schools. The research is designed to further understand how teachers' participation in professional development around *Quality teaching* contributes to teachers sharing responsibility for student achievement. There are no documented previous studies of the types of professional development and school conditions that support or inhibit the development of teachers' joint responsibility for student achievement in NSW public schools.

Who can participate in the research?

All teachers and senior school executive are invited to complete a short survey (taking approximately 15 minutes to complete). Teachers who have engaged in a school-based professional learning team focused on implementing the *Quality teaching* model of pedagogy are also invited to participate in a 30-minute semi-structured interview and/or semi-structured group interview with colleagues from their school learning team.

What choice do you have?

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who give their informed consent will be included in the project. Whether or not you decide to participate, your decision will not disadvantage you in any way. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason. It is not possible to withdraw a completed anonymous survey once it has been submitted.

What would you be asked to do?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a short survey, taking approximately 15 minutes to complete, and participate in one interview and/or one group interview taking up to 30 minutes each. Consent will be sought to audio-record the interviews.

You will be able to review the recording and transcripts to edit or erase any part of your contribution. If you choose to complete the survey you are not obliged to participate in an interview. Where teacher consent is given and during the visits to your school Frances will be making notes from field observations that provide her with insights into the culture and context of the way professional development is organised and how teachers engage in professional interactions. Where teachers give consent to provide documents, Frances will also make notes from artefacts such as school-based programs, school policies and procedures developed in relation to professional development practices at your school.

How will your privacy be protected?

Participant responses to the survey will be anonymous. The researchers will maintain confidentiality of the personal information provided in the individual, group interviews, field records and artefact analyses. Participants in the group interviews will be asked to maintain the confidentiality of the group discussions and not disclose specifics to outside parties. Responses will be de-identified for analysis. Materials developed through participant responses will be kept in a secure filing cabinet. Any reporting of the study will not identify individual teachers or schools. In accordance with the University of Newcastle research policy, as this research is part of a Doctorate of Philosophy thesis the original recordings need to be retained until the thesis is accepted, after which original recordings will be destroyed.

How will the information collected be used?

The information will be analysed and reported in a thesis to be submitted for Ms Plummer's Doctorate of Philosophy. Data analyses and findings may be published in future journals and papers presented at conferences. Individual participants or schools will not be identified in any reports arising from the study.

What do you need to do to participate?

Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you have questions, please contact the researcher.

If you would like to participate in the study, please complete and return the attached anonymous survey to the sealed box located in the staff room. This will be taken as your informed consent to participate in the survey part of the study.

Teachers who have been a member of a professional learning team and who have participated in professional development activities to implement *Quality teaching* are invited to also participate in an individual and group interview.

If you would like to participate in these interviews please complete the consent form attached to this information sheet and return it to me by dd/mm/yr in the envelope provided. Frances will then contact you to arrange a time convenient to you for the interview.

Feedback on the outcomes of the research will be in the form of a case study report. This will be provided to the school's Principal and, on request, to teachers who participated in the study. Frances will be available to discuss the outcomes of the research.

Further information

If you would like any further information about the research study please feel free to contact Professor Jenny Gore, telephone 4921 6709, or by email jenny.gore@newcastle.edu.au or Frances Plummer on telephone 9244 5686 or by email frances.plummer@studentmail.newcastle.edu.au.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

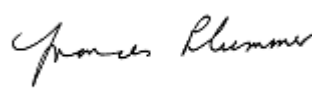
Yours sincerely



Professor Jenny Gore
Project Supervisor



Associate Professor James Ladwig
Project Co-Supervisor



Frances Plummer
Student Researcher

Acknowledgement

Some items included in the survey have been derived from standard instruments developed by Louis, Marks & Kruse (1996), Systematic Investigation of Pedagogy and Achievement in NSW Public Schools (SIPA) survey (2006), Lee & Smith (1996), Bryk & Schneider (2002). The contribution of these researchers is acknowledged.

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval no. H- H-309-1006 and the NSW Department of Education and Training (SERAP:)

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan, NSW 2308, Telephone (02) 4921 6333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.

Professor Jenny Gore

Director, Centre for Professional Learning in Education

School of Education
Faculty of Education and Arts
University Drive, Callaghan
NSW 2308 Australia
Phone: +61 2 4921 6709
Fax: +61 2 4921 6020
Email: jenny.gore@newcastle.edu.au

Collective responsibility for student achievement research study

Researchers: Professor Jenny Gore, A/Professor James Ladwig, Frances Plummer

Consent to Take Part in Study

(Version 2: 11/1/07)

Consent Statement

I agree to participate in the *Collective responsibility for student achievement research study* and give my consent freely.

I understand that the project will be conducted as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have retained.

I understand I can withdraw from the project at any time and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

I understand that my professional interactions with colleagues may be observed and recorded for the study in field notes.

I agree that documents I voluntarily submit may be used for the study.

I consent to:

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| <input type="radio"/> participate in a group interview | Yes | No |
| <input type="radio"/> participate in an individual interview | Yes | No |
| <input type="radio"/> the interviews being audio taped | Yes | No |
| <input type="radio"/> participate in the field observations | Yes | No |

I understand that my personal information will remain confidential to the researchers.

I have had the opportunity to have questions answered to my satisfaction.

Print Name:

Signature:

Date:

Contact telephone no: School:
Mobile (optional):

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval no. H- 309-1006 and the NSW Department of Education and Training (SERAP:2006098)

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan, NSW 2308, Telephone (02) 4921 6333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.

Appendix C: Survey

Collective responsibility research study Survey

Research Team: Professor Jenny Gore, Associate Professor James Ladwig, Frances Plummer

Dear Teacher:

The following survey asks for your best estimates of the frequency of selected activities and for your candid opinions on aspects of professional development, *Quality teaching* and teacher responsibility. We recognise that in some situations, certain responses may be considered more "socially desirable" than others, but we hope that you will not let this influence your answers. There are no questions dealing with private or personal matters that would put any teacher at risk. We anticipate that the survey will take 15 minutes to complete.

Completion of this survey is entirely voluntary. The information is anonymous. Published reports of the research will not refer to the actual names of any schools or specific individuals participating in the study. Whether or not you participate, your decision will not disadvantage you in any way and will not affect your relationship with the school. Your participation is voluntary and you may decline to answer any question.

Many thanks for your cooperation.

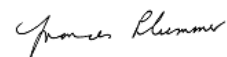
Regards,



Professor Jennifer Gore
The University of Newcastle
Project Supervisor
(02) 4921 6709



Associate Professor James Ladwig
The University of Newcastle
Research Student
(02) 4921



Frances Plummer
The University of Newcastle
Research Student
(02) 9244 5686

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number: H-309-1006), and the NSW DET (SERAP Number:2006098).

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, telephone 02 49216333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.

About you

Q1. Your sex / gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Q2. Are you a member of this school's teaching staff on a **(mark only one)**:

- ☐ permanent full-time basis?
- ☐ permanent part-time basis?
- ☐ casual basis?

Q3. Prior to this year, how many years of experience have you had as a teacher **in this school**?

- ☐ less than one year
- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 years
- ☐ 4-6 years
- ☐ 7-9 years
- ☐ 10-12 years
- ☐ 13-15 years
- ☐ 16-18 years
- ☐ more than 18 years

Q4. Prior to this year, how many years of experience have you had as a teacher?

- ☐ less than one year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-6 years
- ☐ 7-9 years
- ☐ 10-12 years
- ☐ 13-15 years
- ☐ 16-18 years
- ☐ 19-21 years
- ☐ 22-24 years
- ☐ more than 24 years

Q5. In the last year, how often have you visited another teacher's classroom to observe and discuss his or her teaching (exclude observations of student teachers or those for formal evaluations)?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ 1 time
- ☐ 2 times
- ☐ 3 times
- ☐ 4 times
- ☐ 5 times
- ☐ 6 times
- ☐ 7 times
- ☐ 8 times
- ☐ more than 8 times

Q6. In the last year, how often has a colleague come to your classroom to observe your lesson (exclude visits by student teachers or those for formal evaluations)?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ 1 time
- ☐ 2 times
- ☐ 3 times
- ☐ 4 times
- ☐ 5 times
- ☐ 6 times
- ☐ 7 times
- ☐ 8 times
- ☐ more than 8 times

Q7. In the last year, how often have you **(mark only one in each row)**:

	Never	Once	Twice	3-4 times	5-9 times	10 or more times	Not applicable to me
a) received useful feedback on your performance from your supervisors, executive or peers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) received useful suggestions for curriculum materials from your immediate colleagues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) received useful suggestions for teaching practice or learning activities from your colleagues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) met with colleagues to discuss specific teaching strategies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) received useful suggestions for assessment materials from your colleagues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Professional Learning

Q8. On average, how many hours have you spent each month this year on professional learning activities?

- ☐ 0-1 hours per month
- ☐ 2-3 hours per month
- ☐ 4-5 hours per month
- ☐ 6-8 hours per month
- ☐ 9-10 hours per month
- ☐ 11-12 hours per month
- ☐ 13-14 hours per month
- ☐ more than 14 hours per month

Q9. Have you participated in any collaborative professional learning experiences in the last three years that were specifically focussed on the NSW model of pedagogy, *Quality teaching*?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q10. How well do the following statements describe the *Quality teaching* professional learning in which you have participated?

For each of the statements below, please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement by selecting the appropriate response.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I have gained a practical understanding of <i>Quality teaching</i> through my professional learning experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. <i>Quality teaching</i> professional learning has been received favourably by teachers at my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. My <i>Quality teaching</i> professional learning has focused on the three dimensions of the model.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I have not gained a deep understanding of the <i>Quality teaching</i> model through professional learning. (reverse)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. My <i>Quality teaching</i> professional learning has focused on the use of the model as a tool for self-reflection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. <i>Quality teaching</i> professional learning in my school has predominantly been provided by members of my school's staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. My <i>Quality teaching</i> professional learning has focused on the use of the model in relation to assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. My <i>Quality teaching</i> professional learning has focused on the use of the model for classroom/teaching practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q11. The following questions ask you to rate the effectiveness of your professional learning experience and the level of consistency between professional learning at your school and your school culture.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. The professional learning in which I have participated during the last three years has improved my teaching practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The professional learning in which I have participated during the last three years has influenced the way I plan assessment tasks for my students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Professional learning is supported by other initiatives to improve the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Professional learning programs at my school do not complement my teaching. (reverse)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Curriculum, teaching, and learning materials are co-ordinated across Year levels.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Professional learning is sustained and consistently focused at my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Most school-based teacher professional learning helps to advance a co-ordinated focus on school targets and purposes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. There is very little co-ordination of curriculum, teaching, and learning materials across KLA's at my school. (reverse)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Teachers, Teaching and Goals of Schooling

Q12. Please mark the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about the central goal of our school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The goals and priorities of our school are clear to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. In this school the teachers and executive are in close agreement on school discipline.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. There is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff at this school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. I make a conscious effort to coordinate the content of my lessons with other teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. At this school teachers focus on what and how well students are learning rather than how they are teaching. (reverse)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. At this school teachers exhibit a reasonably focused commitment to quality curriculum and teaching.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. A focused school vision for student learning is shared by most staff in the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q13. Please mark the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I feel that I have been successful in providing the kind of education that I would like to provide for students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Many of the students I teach are not capable of learning the material I am supposed to teach them. (reverse)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Teachers at this school challenge me to think differently about my teaching.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. The attitudes and habits my students bring to my class greatly reduce their chances for academic success. (reverse)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. My success or failure in teaching students is due primarily to factors beyond my control rather than to my own efforts and ability. (reverse)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. When students in this school do not meet expected learning outcomes, teachers take most of the responsibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q14. From your perspective, how many teachers in this school:

	Unsure	None	Some	About Half	Nearly All
a. Feel responsible when students in this school fail?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Feel responsible to help each other do their best?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Help maintain discipline in the entire school, not just their classroom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Take responsibility for improving the school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Seldom evaluate the teaching activities described in their teaching programs? (reverse)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Feel responsible for helping students develop self-control?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Set high standards for themselves?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Feel responsible that all students learn?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Have high expectations of their students' achievement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Really care about each other?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Trust each other?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Feel that it's okay in this school to discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with other teachers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Respect other teachers who take the lead in school improvement efforts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Respect those colleagues who are expert at their craft?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Feel respected by other teachers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for completing this survey.

Appendix D

Individual interview protocol

The following interview questions represent the draft schedule for use in the *Collective responsibility research study*. The individual interview protocol consists of four questions, each with possible sub-questions or prompts. A copy of these questions will be made available to consenting participants prior to the interviews.

Questions for individual interviews

- a. Is there a sense amongst the teachers at your school that they are able to make a difference to the academic achievements of students?
 - *How do you know?*
 - *If yes, how has it developed? When did it occur? Why did it occur?*
 - *What did you do to make it happen (if anything)?*
- b. How would you describe levels of collaboration/collegiality amongst teachers at your school?
 - *What does this look like (mutual trust, respect, commitment)?*
 - *How has it developed?*
 - *What did you do to make it happen (if anything)?*
- c. How do teachers work together at your school to support each other's ongoing professional learning?
 - *How do you know?*
 - *What has caused this to happen (or not)?*
 - *What did you do to make it happen (if anything)?*
- d. How do teachers work together at your school to improve the learning for all students?
 - *What does this look like?*
 - *How has it happened?*
 - *What did you do to make it happen (if anything)?*

Appendix E

Group interview protocol

The following interview questions represent the draft schedule for use in the *Collective responsibility research study*. The group interview protocol consists of four questions, each with possible sub-questions or prompts. A copy of these questions will be made available to consenting participants prior to the interviews.

Questions for group interviews

- a) Does teacher collaboration occur at your school?
- b) If yes, describe how teacher collaboration happens? What results from this collaboration have you experienced?
 - *for your professional learning?*
 - *for student learning?*
 - *for respect/trust among teachers at your school?*If no, what do you think gets in the way of teacher collaboration?
- c) What sort of professional satisfaction have you gained from engaging in collaborative professional development with teachers at your school?
 - *Highlights?*
 - *Low points?*
 - *Transition points?*
- d) Is there a collective ethos in your school? If yes, How has the school's collective ethos developed? If, no what things have hindered its development?
 - a. *What things have contributed to its development? How do you know this?*
 - b. *What things have threatened its development? How do you know this?*
 - c. *Identify transition points that signified this development – what were you doing then?*
 - d. *What impact do you think this development of collective ethos has had on school culture and student learning?*

Appendix F

School executive interview protocol

The following interview questions represent the draft schedule for use in the *Collective responsibility research study*. The school executive interview protocol consists of three questions, each with possible sub-questions or prompts. A copy of these questions will be made available to consenting participants prior to the interviews.

Questions for school executive interviews

- a) Can you tell me how teacher professional development to implement *Quality teaching* has been organised at your school?
 - *What impact has this had on teaching in this school? How do you know this?*
 - *What impact has this had on the way teachers work together? How do you know this?*

- b) What results have you observed from teachers' engagement in this professional development?
 - *teacher collaboration?*
 - *collective efficacy?*
 - *commitment to supporting each other's learning?*
 - *responsibility to school-wide improvement*
 - *trust and respect?*

- c) How has the school's collective ethos developed?
 - *What things have contributed to its development? How do you know this?*
 - *What things have threatened its development? How do you know this?*
 - *Identify transition points that signified its development – what was your role then?*

Appendix G**Documents collected from each school**

School	School improvement plans	Annual school reports	In-school evaluation reports
Greengate Primary	√	√	
Tall Trees Primary	√	√	
Aran Heights High	√	√	
Jossey High	√	√	√

Appendix H: Descriptive Statistics for Greengate Primary School
N=17

Item	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Gained understanding of QT	2.94	.20	.83
QT favourably received	2.82	.10	.39
QT PL focused on 3 dimensions	2.88	.15	.60
Not gained deep understanding of QT (reversed)	2.82	.18	.73
QT PL tool for self-reflection	2.71	.17	.69
QT PL provided by staff members	2.60	.15	.62
QT PL focused on assessment practice	2.77	.16	.66
QT PL focused on classroom/teaching practice	3.12	.12	.49
PL has improved practice	3.12	.15	.60
PL influenced planning for assessment	2.94	.19	.66
PL supported by other initiatives	3.00	.12	.50
PL does not complement teaching (reversed)	3.00	.15	.61
Curriculum, teaching , learning coord across years	2.71	.14	.59
PL is sustained	2.65	.17	.70
PL advances focus on school targets	2.94	.10	.43
Little coord of curriculum, teaching & learning (reversed)	2.53	.17	.72
Colleagues share my beliefs	3.07	.13	.53
Goals and priorities are clear	2.71	.14	.59
Teachers and exec in agreement on discipline	2.65	.12	.50
Cooperative effort among staff	3.00	.17	.71
Effort to coord content of lessons with other teachers	3.18	.10	.39
Focus on students learning	2.53	.15	.62
Commitment to quality curriculum and teaching	3.18	.10	.39
School vision for student learning shared	3.06	.11	.47
Individual efficacy	3.24	.11	.44
Student not capable of learning (reverse)	2.47	.19	.80
Teachers challenge me to think differently	2.65	.15	.61
Students attitudes, habits reduce success (reverse)	2.80	.19	.77
Efficacy due to factors beyond control (reverse)	2.80	.21	.85
Teachers take responsibility for students not learning	2.47	.15	.62
Teachers feel responsible when student fail	2.37	.19	.79
Teachers feel responsible to help each other	3.38	.19	.78
Help maintain school discipline	3.24	.22	.90
Teachers feel responsible for improving whole school	3.12	.19	.78
Seldom evaluate programs (reversed)	2.99	.26	1.06
Teachers feel responsible for helping student control	3.68	.17	.68
Set high standards for themselves	3.71	.14	.59
Feel responsible that student learn	3.56	.19	.79
Have high expectations for students	3.43	.17	.71
Care about each other	3.22	.19	.77
Trust each other	3.19	.15	.61
OK to discuss feeling and frustrations	3.15	.19	.79
Respect teachers who take a lead in school improvement	3.00	.20	.82
Respect colleagues who are expert	2.99	.19	.79
Feel respected by other teachers	3.43	.17	.71

Appendix I Descriptive Statistics for Tall Trees Primary School
N=7

Item	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic
Gained understanding of QT	3.14	.14	.38
QT favourably received	3.00	.00	.00
QT PL focused on 3 dimensions	3.00	.00	.00
Not gained deep understanding of QT (reversed)	2.86	.26	.69
QT PL tool for self-reflection	2.68	.20	.55
QT PL provided by staff members	3.00	.00	.00
QT PL focused on assessment practice	2.71	.18	.49
QT PL focused on classroom/teaching practice	3.00	.00	.00
PL has improved practice	3.14	.14	.38
PL influenced planning for assessment	3.14	.14	.38
PL supported by other initiatives	3.29	.18	.49
PL does not complement teaching (reversed)	3.00	.00	.00
Curriculum, teaching , learning coord across years	2.86	.14	.38
PL is sustained	2.43	.20	.53
PL advances focus on school targets	2.86	.14	.38
Little coord of curriculum, teaching & learning (reversed)	2.86	.14	.38
Colleagues share my beliefs	3.00	.00	.00
Goals and priorities are clear	2.86	.14	.38
Teachers and exec in agreement on discipline	2.71	.18	.49
Cooperative effort among staff	3.00	.22	.58
Effort to coord content of lessons with other teachers	3.14	.14	.38
Focus on students learning	2.43	.20	.53
Commitment to quality curriculum and teaching	3.14	.14	.38
School vision for student learning shared	2.86	.26	.69
Individual efficacy	3.00	.00	.00
Student not capable of learning (reverse)	3.14	.14	.38
Teachers challenge me to think differently	2.29	.18	.49
Students attitudes, habits reduce success (reverse)	2.43	.30	.79
Efficacy due to factors beyond control (reverse)	2.57	.30	.79
Teachers take responsibility for students not learning	2.57	.20	.53
Teachers feel responsible when student fail	4.00	.00	.00
Teachers feel responsible to help each other	2.79	.34	.91
Help maintain school discipline	3.57	.30	.79
Teachers feel responsible for improving whole school	3.71	.29	.76
Seldom evaluate programs (reversed)	1.50	.29	.50
Teachers feel responsible for helping student control	1.86	.34	.90
Set high standards for themselves	3.71	.29	.76
Feel responsible that student learn	3.64	.18	.48
Have high expectations for students	3.57	.2	.79
Care about each other	3.43	.30	.79
Trust each other	3.57	.30	.79
OK to discuss feeling and frustrations	3.29	.36	.95
Respect teachers who take a lead in school improvement	3.17	.40	.98
Respect colleagues who are expert	3.21	.34	.91
Feel respected by other teachers	3.14	.34	.90

Appendix J Descriptive Statistics for Aran Heights High School
N=12

Item	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Gained understanding of QT	3.33	.19	.65
QT favourably received	3.50	.15	.52
QT PL focused on 3 dimensions	3.08	.15	.52
Not gained deep understanding of QT (reversed)	2.83	.24	.83
QT PL tool for self-reflection	3.08	.15	.52
QT PL provided by staff members	3.08	.15	.52
QT PL focused on assessment practice	2.42	.15	.52
QT PL focused on classroom/teaching practice	3.25	.13	.45
PL has improved practice	3.08	.08	.29
PL influenced planning for assessment	2.83	.17	.58
PL supported by other initiatives	3.17	.17	.58
PL does not complement teaching (reversed)	3.08	.15	.52
Curriculum, teaching , learning coord across years	2.73	.19	.65
PL is sustained	3.08	.15	.52
PL advances focus on school targets	3.08	.15	.52
Little coord of curriculum, teaching & learning (reversed)	2.77	.27	.93
Colleagues share my beliefs	2.73	.19	.65
Goals and priorities are clear	3.08	.15	.52
Teachers and exec in agreement on discipline	3.08	.15	.52
Cooperative effort among staff	3.17	.17	.58
Effort to coord content of lessons with other teachers	2.92	.20	.67
Focus on students learning	2.50	.18	.63
Commitment to quality curriculum and teaching	3.08	.15	.52
School vision for student learning shared	3.08	.15	.52
Individual efficacy	3.10	.18	.63
Student not capable of learning (reverse)	2.63	.27	.93
Teachers challenge me to think differently	2.54	.21	.72
Students attitudes, habits reduce success (reverse)	2.30	.26	.91
Efficacy due to factors beyond control (reverse)	2.55	.24	.83
Teachers take responsibility for students not learning	2.81	.18	.61
Teachers feel responsible when student fail	2.00	.00	.00
Teachers feel responsible to help each other	2.77	.22	.76
Help maintain school discipline	3.50	.19	.67
Teachers feel responsible for improving whole school	3.25	.25	.87
Seldom evaluate programs (reversed)	2.00	.23	.78
Teachers feel responsible for helping student control	2.35	.22	.77
Set high standards for themselves	3.21	.21	.72
Feel responsible that student learn	3.17	.21	.72
Have high expectations for students	3.56	.14	.50
Care about each other	3.25	.22	.75
Trust each other	3.60	.14	.49
OK to discuss feeling and frustrations	3.50	.15	.52
Respect teachers who take a lead in school improvement	3.18	.10	.86
Respect colleagues who are expert	3.08	.26	.90
Feel respected by other teachers	3.50	.20	.67

Appendix K Descriptive Statistics for Jossey High School
N=48

Item	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Gained understanding of QT	3.15	.10	.64
QT favourably received	3.03	.09	.59
QT PL focused on 3 dimensions	3.01	.09	.60
Not gained deep understanding of QT (reversed)	2.92	.10	.67
QT PL tool for self-reflection	2.93	.06	.45
QT PL provided by staff members	3.09	.10	.69
QT PL focused on assessment practice	2.94	.08	.52
QT PL focused on classroom/teaching practice	3.03	.08	.55
PL has improved practice	3.25	.10	.67
PL influenced planning for assessment	3.22	.08	.56
PL supported by other initiatives	3.22	.08	.55
PL does not complement teaching (reversed)	2.96	.10	.67
Curriculum, teaching , learning coord across years	2.89	.07	.49
PL is sustained	3.08	.09	.61
PL advances focus on school targets	3.09	.09	.62
Little coord of curriculum, teaching & learning (reversed)	3.02	.11	.74
Colleagues share my beliefs	2.83	.08	.57
Goals and priorities are clear	3.08	.10	.70
Teachers and exec in agreement on discipline	2.63	.14	.94
Cooperative effort among staff	3.33	.10	.67
Effort to coord content of lessons with other teachers	2.92	.10	.69
Focus on students learning	2.46	.10	.71
Commitment to quality curriculum and teaching	3.14	.07	.51
School vision for student learning shared	3.00	.09	.59
Individual efficacy	3.00	.08	.54
Student not capable of learning (reverse)	2.44	.12	.81
Teachers challenge me to think differently	2.54	.11	.73
Students attitudes, habits reduce success (reverse)	1.93	.13	.88
Efficacy due to factors beyond control (reverse)	2.78	.14	.95
Teachers take responsibility for students not learning	2.42	.10	.70
Teachers feel responsible when student fail	2.98	.04	.25
Teachers feel responsible to help each other	2.52	.12	.81
Help maintain school discipline	3.16	.12	.86
Teachers feel responsible for improving whole school	2.83	.14	.98
Seldom evaluate programs (reversed)	1.55	.06	.44
Teachers feel responsible for helping student control	2.44	.12	.80
Set high standards for themselves	3.12	.12	.82
Feel responsible that student learn	3.16	.12	.85
Have high expectations for students	3.18	.12	.85
Care about each other	2.90	.12	.83
Trust each other	3.18	.15	1.03
OK to discuss feeling and frustrations	3.37	.11	.76
Respect teachers who take a lead in school improvement	3.27	.13	.87
Respect colleagues who are expert	3.26	.12	.85
Feel respected by other teachers	3.57	.11	.73

Appendix L**Summary of analysis of school variance (ANOVA)**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
PL for QT	.243	4	.061	.343	.848	0.03
PL impact	1.386	4	.346	1.600	.183	0.03
PD consistency	2.062	4	.516	1.945	.111	0.04
Commitment	.939	4	.235	.985	.421	0.00071
Goals	.430	4	.107	.359	.837	0.03
Collective responsibility	3.682	4	.921	2.223	.074	0.06
Trust	.995	4	.249	.724	.578	0.01