Access Through Participation : Processes of Formation and Change in School Based Curriculum Development

Stephen Crump
Department of Social and Policy Studies in Education
University of Sydney

Practical aspects of change

This research report on a case study of curriculum development at the school level is very much concerned with the practical aspects of curriculum and change. If things are considered static or lifeless or solitary, then it is hard to imagine change ever occurring within them. Institutions such as schools, and the cultures of those institutions, clearly express relations that are marked by cause and effect. This relational development allows for continuous change and change signified through sudden surges. Such has been the case at (what we will call) Carpenter High School.

This research contends that knowledge (and changes in what counts as valid knowledge in schools) comes from seeking solutions to practical problems. This is marked by a change in the learner and teacher that provides scope for other types of changes. Social relations are complex, but rather than assessing social relations as unchangeable, this research probes the representations of the cultural groups at Carpenter High to reveal actual and potential change(s), or at least an understanding of the culture's problem-solving practices. It is the attempts to solve problems of participation and access in curriculum development that forms the basis of this research.

Gerald Grace has located the 'problem' of the urban school in its historic function of 'transmission' - essentially transmission of validated knowledge. In this process the teacher 'becomes preoccupied with questions of transmission, with new strategies (known as curriculum development) for the more effective transmission of "old" knowledge'.(Grace, 1979, p.95) If we accept this, the question becomes, does SBCD change what counts as knowledge, and the valid realisation of knowledge, or does it fail to challenge the existing social organisation of knowledge, and at best generate new pedagogic forms? This research report suggests a number of answers, but will wait for further empirical evidence before fully exposing its hunches publicly.

In attempting to frame the access/participation dilemma in change processes, an analogy can be drawn between the knowledge-base of schooling and that of public perception of the economy. Since the floating of the Australian dollar a few years ago it seems that everybody has become a money market expert, daily watching the price of the dollar, commenting on its rise and fall, as well as making concrete, practical decisions in direct consequence of the dollar's value. There appears to be a perception in communities that they are more aware of Australia's economic structures and their international connections. Now, ideology inhibits a full understanding of economic relations, just as it does for the relations of schooling but - despite media assertions to the contrary - many pupils (and their parents) at Carpenter High reflect in their practices an awareness of economic realities and the dysfunction between the relations of schooling and those of the workplace - they leave! They make a conscious choice accepting any employment opportunity that arises, effectively undermining to a large extent the school's attempts to improve its curricula through changing to a much broader variety (and therefore improve its retention rate!) as well as effectively locking pupils into jobs which are, in most cases, not commensurate with their individual talents.

I would argue that community perceptions of the economy are being matched by a wider and deeper awareness of schooling and that this will reduce the impact on the school of the above problem and allow for further change. Schools and the importance of a full education have again become an important feature in the agenda of state and federal politics and a constant item of media interest. As a result (in part), Carpenter High is increasing its pupil-nominated Year 10 to Year 11 retention from 74 in 1987 to 143 in 1988!

The payoff will only come if wider community perceptions turn into deeper knowledge of the teacher's job; of how parents can participate in their child's school; of the solutions teacher groups are formulating; of adolescent behaviour in schools; and

of inequalities in schooling and the (lack of?) potential for schools to address these inequalities. At schools like Carpenter High, SBCD is one feature where the transmission of 'old' knowledge might be being replaced by the realisation of 'new'. This is not to suggest that the problem/solution frameworks evidenced to date at Carpenter High are new, but they just might lead to a new understanding of why they can be solutions.

How change came about

In 1984, Carpenter High School embarked upon a process of widening the school curriculum based on the introduction of OAS and School Courses. In 1987 the senior program is firmly in place, while the junior initiative, operating for only its first year, is already a well accepted curriculum strategy.

Carpenter High School is very much a western suburbs school, centred within an area marked by high unemployment and the struggles of a new community. It was established in 1967 and over the last three years has had enrolments of over 1200. Currently it has a staff of over eighty teachers who are mostly young, with thirty in their first three years of teaching. There is no doubt that most of the teachers are enthusiastic and prepared to involve themselves in any initiative which they see as directed towards improving the quality of life in their classrooms. Many see the strength of the school as based on this young staff who are not afraid of change. Contrary to accepted opinion on school turnover and inexperienced staff disadvantaging a school, one of these teachers in the third year of teaching argued :

> I think the turnover of staff is fantastic! Because young blood in a school as large as ours is not only vital, but it replenishes older, staler ideas that remain in the corners of the school. So the more new teachers we get the better! (...) People that have stayed in the school for eight years have rigid ideas, don't want to change.

Significant curriculum developments also became possible when respected key personnel in the school recognised the need for change and were prepared to be actively involved in the processes required. However, many other factors facilitated the changes that occurred :

> In 1984 the change in senior executive led naturally to a review of curriculum structures;

> Concerns were expressed as to the pattern of results being

achieved by students. An increasing proportion were getting
an aggregate mark in the lower percentile bands;

There was a dissatisfaction with the response of many
students in senior classes and a feeling that the
traditional courses were not meeting their diverse needs;

Staff had experience with OAS courses having successfully
introduced a limited number before 1984;

The 1984 Year 10 group, those initially involved, were a
responsive group of students with whom most teachers had
established good relationships;

In 1986 similar concerns arose over the junior school and
plans were implemented to introduce a new elective line for
Years 9 and 10 consisting of school courses. Teachers wrote
the curriculum for sixteen courses, nine of which ran
classes during 1987. Over twenty courses have been offered
to Year 9 students for 1988.

In the years prior to 1984 there had been an increasing number of
students who had been staying on to Years 11 and 12. These
students had come into Year 11 with varying needs and interests.
Some wished to follow the traditional pattern of preparing to
matriculate to university. Other students looked to broaden
their knowledge and experience with a sound general program,
which might increase their prospects of employment. Still others
needed courses which would lead them into specific careers and
courses at TAFE colleges.

It became increasingly obvious that it was difficult to meet
these diverse needs by offering just the one, traditional, HSC
program. As a result, Carpenter High School initially offered
two programs and a wide range of courses in an attempt to meet
these varying needs and also to attract students who might
otherwise have left after Year 10. This was expanded to three
programs for the 1988 senior course selection - the third program
consisting of a non-HSC course.

The change was promoted as a modification of existing traditional
patterns of organisation and course structures which, rather than
threatening existing Board courses, might well reduce some of the
negative influence in those classes. The idea of introducing
courses or programs not approved for inclusion in HSC results was
rejected, firstly as the Board requirements for OAS courses
imposed a discipline on the development of in-school courses, and
secondly as it provided these courses with a degree of
credibility through their appearance on the HSC - if studied in
Year 12.

Program 1 - The Matriculation HSC Course

This is the traditional course designed for students who wish to
matriculate to universities and colleges of advanced education.
Students do 12 Units of subjects in Years 11 and 12, of which at
least 10 Units must be Board subjects. The remaining 2 may be
Board subjects or Approved subjects.

Program 2 - The Non-Matriculation HSC Course

This is a course designed for those who do not wish to
matriculate. An HSC is awarded on completion of Year 12,
provided a student completes a minimum of 5 Units of Board
subjects in each of Years 11 and 12. Any Approved subjects that
bring the total to 12 Units may be selected. As for Program 1, 2
Units of English are compulsory. The school also offers a number
of packages of subjects, each with a school-sourced certificate.

Program 3 - The Non-HSC Course

This program does not lead to a HSC. It is designed for students
who are returning to school to await employment and who would
select a larger number of OAS.

It was assumed that for the initiative to succeed, the nature and
advantages of any changes would need to be clearly evident to all
concerned. Communication with staff involved :

> frequent   discussions   between   the   principal   and   those
> directing the initiative;
>
> regular reporting to executive meeting;
>
> staff meeting presentations involving printing material and
> presentations in the typical 'butcher paper' inservice mode.

Communication with parents took the form of :

> explanation and progress reports in the monthly newsletter;
>
> reports to the P & C;
>
> an information night arranged for students and parents.

Communication with students had to clearly explain changes and
involved :

presentations to the whole year;

full period class visits by the principal and careers adviser acting as a team;

morning tea discussions with groups of Year 10 students with the principal and one member of the curriculum steering committee;

the information night for parents and students;

the publication of a detailed prospectus for senior students;

a questionnaire for Year 10 students to complete, showing their initial selection and their career aspirations;

individual counselling.

This has basically been the pattern for the last few years, though perhaps best implemented in the initial year and - with renewed energy - in 1987. One of the processes of change that has clearly emerged is this combination of clear communication presented through the participation of as many of the individuals and groups affected.

On the regional and national level, changes in government youth and education policies provided timely support for the changes being made at the local school level. When Carpenter High was targeted by the PEP program (mainly due to its low retention rate for girls) the funds provided allowed the school not only to gain relief time (when the school was able to obtain casuals!) for the teachers involved in curriculum initiatives, but it also helped establish some of the OAS courses. PEP also provided a further impetus for change by justifying and legitimising a considerable effort made in 1984 to extend student choice of subject by cooperating with a neighbouring school. Discussions between the schools led to the conclusion that the complexities involved in any linking of timetables and of moving students between the schools, placed severe limitations on the extent of the cooperation. However, the schools continued with discussions as they wished to trial some form of cooperation. The final arrangement was to run classes before school at Carpenter, and after school at the cluster school. This did lead to a small number of cluster school students studying First Aid and Preventative Health Care at Carpenter, and a number of Carpenter students taking Media Studies at the cluster school. The concept was an excellent one and the willingness of the schools to work together encouraging, but the practical problems proved daunting. Some that could be mentioned include :

the distance between the schools and the lack of transport

proved difficult - Teachers found themselves helping to provide transport;

a system depending on teachers volunteering to work outside normal school hours makes planning difficult;

even the simple idea of allowing teachers who come in early to leave before the normal finishing time seemed to have problems for the Department;

an inquiry to the Department whether it was possible to vary hours for students to compensate them for early starts also seemed to cause concern.

PEP also provided a rationale and Departmental support for cooperation in broadening pupil subject choice through undertaking courses for their HSC at a College of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) - a structure recommended in the Swan/McKinnon report, **The Future Directions of Secondary Education in NSW.** For the first time for many years, students from Carpenter are not involved with TAFE OAS courses in 1987. This is a disappointing situation that resulted from a series of circumstances but one the school would like to see changed as soon as practicable, although initial student selections for 1988 surprisingly indicate little support - only one senior course will run. The school's own OAS courses have received strong support from students, however, as has the idea that it is worthwhile for some students to work for an HSC that does not involve matriculation.

Despite these setbacks, the school is effectively doubling its intended entry to Year 11 for 1988 to 143 students! To put that in perspective, the number returning to Year 11 in 1982 was 63.

Research on change and the need for theory

This study is being undertaken in the context of thirteen years teaching experience as an assistant and as a head teacher, at the workplace of the researcher, and as a teacher-researcher. The use of the term 'researcher' is highly qualified, in that I see myself as both researcher and subject, and further by the intention of the research to include the 'subjects' (other teachers and pupils and parents) as 'researchers' as well. However, despite the reliance on 'common sense' levels of theorising derived from this methodology - in fact **because** of this reliance - I argue that there is a vital need for an explicit reference to a higher level of theorising. To this end, I have adopted (and hope to adapt) a theory that is itself

developing, and one that I would argue is the most suited to understanding descriptions of practical issues and change processes. This study can then provide practical empirical evidence for teachers and schools engaged in changing their curriculum, whilst not shying away from speaking to them, and to a wider academic audience, in more precise and in more formal terms. There is a strong need for research for teachers, but this is not mutually exclusive of a need for research about teachers based on their practices, problems and solutions. This study is committed to the realisation of better relations of schooling at the research site as well as to a better understanding of these relations outside the school.

The study therefore uses as its theoretical orientation a materialist epistemology - materialist pragmatism (MP) which derives from a research program conducted by Walker, Evers and Walker (1982, 1983, 1984, 1985). MP has five main aspects : it is holist (coherentist), physicalist, monist, historical, and pragmatist.(Walker, 1985, pp.55-57)

As a cultural study, the research attempts to analyse the social groupings at Carpenter High as a developing whole that changes through time. MP is a theory of development which provides explanations for the evolving growth of knowledge in relation to social practices and acknowledges the dialectical relations within these. It also requires that the subjects develop their own theories about their work - as they work - to solve the practical problems they face. This has been clearly evidenced in the previous section detailing the history of curriculum change at Carpenter High School.

To add to this knowledge of the cultural whole, MP postulates that it is necessary to encompass a broad range of relations such as gender, age, ethnicity, bureaucratic and occupational dimension; and it allows consideration of how teachers might collude in their own domination, subjecting themselves to the same forces as pupils experience - the solutions they find and the changes they make might not end up altering much at all. Yet the research analysis of teacher and student practices at Carpenter High highlights how processes of curriculum formation and change do hold positive problem-solving capacity. The one combined feature leaping out of the data from pupil and teacher interviews is that the courses written in the school provide a level of enjoyment, satisfaction and practical significance not found anywhere else in the curriculum. The spin-off from this is a vastly improved level of cooperation in learning between teacher and pupil/teacher and class - this in a school strongly characterised by the us/them syndrome and the constant power struggles that entails. This rewriting of the house rules of the classroom, of the expectations and understandings of both

teachers and pupils, is occurring across the whole spectrum of subject content and teacher age/experience. Some of those 'stale' teachers quoted earlier are starting to do some very innovative things. What's possibly of even greater significance is that new teaching styles and assessment strategies developed for school courses are permeating into the teaching of prescribed curriculum in the school. As one teacher explained :

> The way I teach that class (the school course) is affecting other classes. The seniors I'm still teaching sort of traditional because [of the HSC] (...) but with the juniors, teaching the ――― course has changed the way I teach Commerce and Geography. More along the lines of group work, of group work on problems; work on it, come back with an answer – definitely a problem-solving approach .. trying to break things down into logical steps and sequences .. into individual, solvable problems, rather than present them with the approach where you say 'OK, we're going to do Law' ... (now) I try to explain, step it out, give kids the aims, why it's worth doing, what they should be able to achieve when we've finished it.
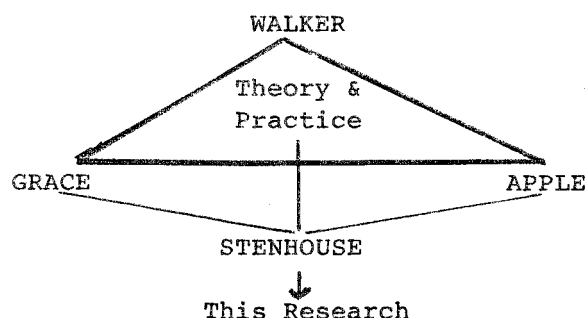
This development of pedagogy directly derives from confronting the issues involved in writing a course and negotiating its contents and direction with the pupils – that is, negotiating a solution to the problems of disinterest, perceived lack of relevance, and of just assessment.

The research techniques adopted for this research provide the best available for this research topic given the current state of research into schooling. These include participant observation, straight observation, direct inquiry through interviews (formal and informal) and discussions, group meetings, surveys, historical material, institutional documents and policies, and possibly paired observation and team teaching. These techniques involve the researcher in a more democratic research paradigm than has been typical. It requires the researcher to exhibit a more deferential attitude to the subjects, of which he in many ways is one. In this way the researcher and subjects change and respond through a relatively lengthy developmental process, involving the historically developing culture of the group. This methodology is thus a naturalistic, observational, descriptive, contextual, open-ended and longitudinal one, involving a variety of participation-based data gathering tools, which empower the researcher to combine both internal and external perspectives. It suggests that current educational research cannot guide teachers and has become alienated from the real questions – questions about what the teacher encounters, not about what a researcher thinks happens.
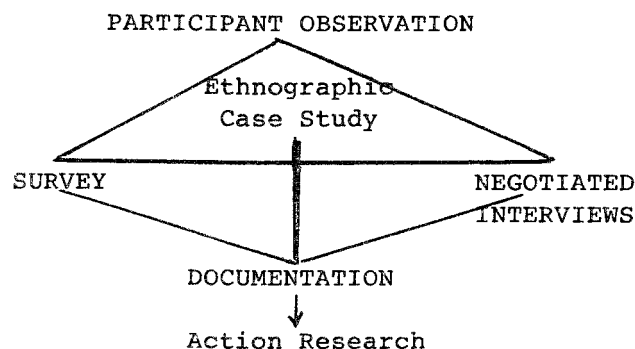
The technique adopted is therefore one that employs multiple strategies - multiple methods of investigation; multiple sets of data; and multiple theories/analyses. This provides for data triangulation in terms of time (cross-sectional and longitudinal), space (through a comparative study), and person (individual and group - pupil/teacher/parent). This provides flexibility as well as a check on the effects of the researcher's presence in any one situation. No single field strategy could reveal all the significant aspects of the practices observed and/ or participated in, nor can change be looked at from only one perspective.
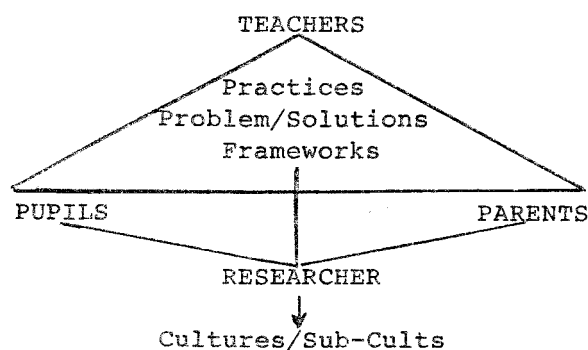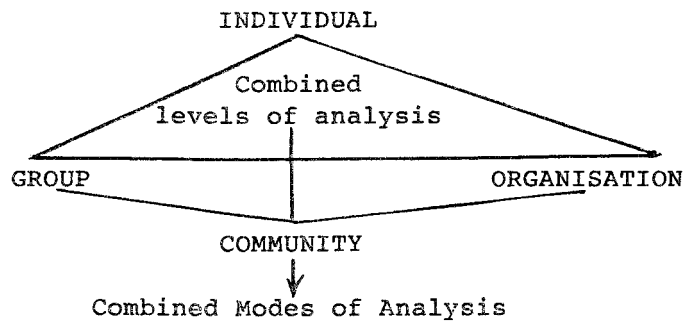
Method Pyramids

Theoretical

```
                    WALKER
                   Theory &
                   Practice
GRACE                                    APPLE
                  STENHOUSE
                      ↓
                 This Research
```

Methodological

```
           PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION
                Ethnographic
                Case Study
SURVEY                          NEGOTIATED
                                INTERVIEWS
              DOCUMENTATION
                    ↓
              Action Research
```

Investigation

```
                  TEACHERS
                  Practices
               Problem/Solutions
                  Frameworks
PUPILS                          PARENTS
                 RESEARCHER
                     ↓
             Cultures/Sub-Cults
```

Analytical

```
                        INDIVIDUAL

                         Combined
                     levels of analysis


   GROUP                                    ORGANISATION

                        COMMUNITY
                            ↓
                Combined Modes of Analysis
```

Time

```
                         1979-85

                          Year

   1986                                        1987

                          1988
                           ↓
              Historical Perspective
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Space

```
                        Classroom

                          School

   Staffroom              School Playgrounds

                      Interdependence
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Method Summary

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                       Time/Space

      Theory                             Method

   Analysis                        Investigator
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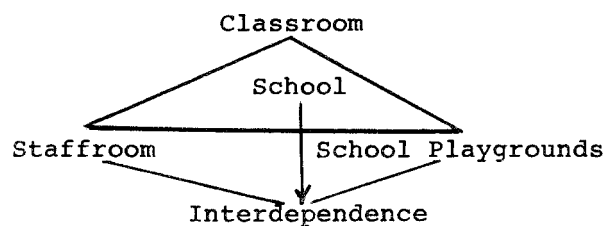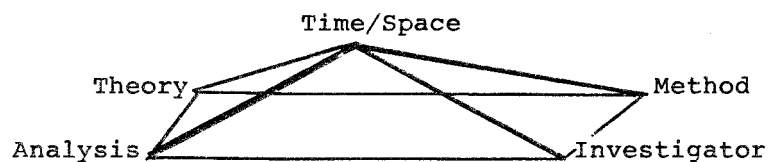
This research intends to introduce some survey research to
contribute to its already multiple strategy stance whilst
acknowledging, as Rist reports, statistical data can often lead
to mathematically correct but socially ludicrous conclusions (in
Barton & Walker, 1981, p. 164). The ethnography can act to
provide an important external validity check on the statistical

data and vice versa. Two surveys perform this function. Initially, the Specialist Support Team's 'Needs' survey carried out at Carpenter High during 1986 was used to direct options and the focus of the research. These were broad and open-ended, allowing for extensive redefinition throughout the research. Secondly, at various stages throughout, further surveys are being conducted aimed at revealing additional insight into subject-choice processes and how they influence the school's program of curriculum change - imitating Peter Wood's questionnaire for Lowfields secondary school. (Woods, 1979, pp.174-6) As for Woods, the subject-choice processes at Carpenter High act to crystallise practices in its development of curriculum structures as well as act as a fulcrum of each pupil's school career. The degree of correspondence between the ethnography and surveys, as well as the direction of selectivity introduced in each, is a major concern of the methodology and analysis, with the complementary potential of employing those supposed disparate research strategies providing data that is 'deep' as well as 'hard'.

This multiple approach is united through what is becoming known as a pragmatic, holistic model of curriculum development. (Walker, 1987, Chapter 1) Again, I would argue that for effective research on real situations in real schools, any approach requires grounding in a theoretical orientation that will make coherent what the research reveals. In this research such a stance comprises five steps :

1. determining what the relevant group(s) regards as its **problems**;

2. determining how they see their **options** for dealing with these problems;

3. analysing these accounts of problems and solutions to discover the degree of **internal coherence** between different problem/solution frameworks;

4. comparing problem/solution frameworks for **mutual coherence**;

5. determining the effectiveness of the problem/solution frameworks being used by various groups/individuals involved in the overall problem situation as options derived from or through **touchstone**.

Problems and solutions

Problem/solution frameworks closely resemble the concept of 'strategy' as developed by Woods. He defines strategies as ways

of achieving goals, as patterns of action linked to broad, general aims. The more complicated the goal, the more complex the strategies are likely to be. (1979, Chapter 1) Woods sees the reality of the teaching situation as overwhelming, so strategies are mainly concerned with overcoming or avoiding the practical problems that interfere with the achievements of the goals teachers set. This is often the case at Carpenter High. Sometimes, different goals are selected, which is in itself a strategy. Strategies are also marked by their implicitness as frequently employing some level of deception, as being linked to past, present and future, as situationally adjusted, individually motivated and culturally oriented. Research on strategies concentrates on individual input, postulating that individuals are constructors of their own actions.

Both approaches see strategies and problem/solution frameworks as theories, but the latter expands on what the theories are, thus presenting a fuller picture. Whereas Wood's strategies depict teachers unable to cope with increasingly rapid change in an obdurate and oppressive structure, problem/solution analysis does not report these 'strategies' as **ad hoc** coping ones almost by definition, but allows for a more optimistic appraisal of teacher (and parent/pupil) solutions to problems, and therefore a very different picture of their cultures, **if** this happens to be the case.

A problem/solution analysis at the local, cultural level may also interlock with higher levels of analysis - at regional or national levels. In fact, **what is striking about the problem/ solution frameworks evident at Carpenter High is not their 'sterility' generated by parochialism, but their fecundity** derived from coming to grips with wide issues of employment, leisure, self-concept and power(lessness). This was not the case in previous research I conducted at 'Westmount' High, though there are other similarities in many of the points that follow. What is clear, therefore, is that every individual/group/ institution has a set of views/procedure/responses which identify problems for it, and contain resources for the solving of those problems, which may or may not overlap the responses in a similar context.

At Carpenter High School, there are many problems/solution frameworks operating at any given time. They are not all likely to match though they may overlap. As a consequence, the problem/ solution analysis looks at relations between divergent frameworks, viewing such divergence as a competition. This competition between programs - ways of life - represents a competition between cultures and relations between cultures can be likened to relations between theories, between competing theories about what the problem and/or solution is. The analysis

of this research, therefore, seeks to analyse culture(s) in the framework of a set of practices programmed by problem solving procedures.

The cultural group at Carpenter High projects itself as a large group with internal relationships. There appear to be individual as well as collectively defined goals over approaches to curriculum formation and change. A social sketch of the cultural patterns reveals in part that there is a high degree of integration and central, correlating elements. On the issues targeted in this research the cultural group of teachers does act as a body. Most people do conform to the general social practices of the group and thus exhibit a sense of belonging. Divisions are evident, but for the focus of the research these are only minor : there was initially a split across subject areas; there is a women's grouping; but no alignment between age and problem/solution frameworks - that is, no divergent discrete and recognisable sub-culture.

However, there are contrasting and conflicting problem/solution frameworks in the practices related to various specific elements of the culture. The cult of individualism is strong throughout the culture and leads inevitably to dissonant frameworks. There are differences related to the member's level in the hierarchy though the boundaries are not those that would define a sub-culture of administrators.

Attributes of the individual subject departments falls into categories depicted in stereotypes, but not to the extent that they became strong subject sub-cultures with an actual or potential influence on the elements of the culture under scrutiny. In fact, during the processes of discussing curricular reforms, what surprises many members of the group as a whole is the extent to which they find supportive and complementary opinions and strategies coming from staff in subject areas with whom they had had little previous contact. Thus concurrence in problem/solution frameworks acts to both establish and reinforce unity and cohesion in the culture.

This point needs to be stressed. Despite the various dimensions of differentiation there is a strong and binding concurrence to group norms which (eventually in some cases) forges a homogeneity of views attributable to the culture. That is, there develops a **commonality in individual analyses of problem/solution frameworks**. Where divergence remains, it is likely that the individual will suppress her or his analysis for the common good, as well as to avoid the risk of disrupting the bonding of the group and the individual's own sense of belonging.

Teacher cultures, therefore, act to allow some problem/solution frameworks from within the group, while disallowing others. Those that contravene structural requirements and organisational features in a way that seriously undermines them are often blocked. In this way, the culture is sustained. Yet, for the culture of teachers at Carpenter High, this **stability does not render it resistant to change.** Structural requirements and organisational features are constantly under scrutiny, in relation to their effectiveness in delivering the type of curriculum reform the school aims for.

Members of the culture are reluctant to criticise or praise which further maintains cohesion amongst diversity. This leaves each member largely accountable only to him/herself which provides a sense of security. A 'live and let live' philosophy leaves individuals to work out their strategies with each class. **However, such a cult of individualism also isolates teachers** and their problems so that their practices involve self-socialisation and intuition, the theories implicit in these practices remaining unstated. This can breed a sense of insecurity. Discipline and control is one area where this has significant import for the quality of school life and pupils and teachers. For example, group processes involved in curriculum formation and change, and altered dynamics for classroom management stemming from the different nature of learning through school-based courses, have led to more shared, and possibly more democratic, processes.

Despite the concerns with communication expressed in the ethnographic data, the insulation of the subject department does not operate as a constraint on the problem-solving processes of the cultural group as a whole. The extent of cross-subject linkage similarly cannot be used to indicate that this level of disunity undermines its strength, realised or potential. Individualism again operates to allow members of a subject area to exercise their desire to teach a 'Z' elective or OAS school-based course outside their subject area without jeopardising the unity of the department of their membership.

Confirming studies by Mardle and Walker (in Woods, 1979, pp.99-100), **the teacher's culture at Carpenter displays high levels of commitment in the face of mounting pressures.** As the ethnography data presents it, this clash produces personal crises and stress, but this is basically approached as a challenge. In contrast to Woods' studies then, this culture is less negative and approaches problems as able to be solved, or at least solutions are seen as worth seeking. As in Mardle and Walker's research, personal qualities demonstrating application, motivation, maturity, dependability and responsibility are highly valued, more so than creativity, spontaneity or originality. The undervaluing of the latter qualities would act to reinforce

group practices and polarise individuals towards majority problem/solution frameworks.

One area of concern in this analysis is the extent to which such perceptions of themselves and their work might be misinformed. Woods also notes the possibility of informants presenting themselves as they want others to see them.(1979, pp.23-24) This impression management could represent a problem/solution framework in itself. However, the long term nature of the research at Carpenter acts to modify the effectiveness this strategy might otherwise have. Many aspects of teaching do involve playing a part, but this does not negate the authenticity (thus worth) of those practices. In fact, the credibility of the programs lies in their immediacy and their pragmatism. Misinformed perceptions of themselves and their work could well stem from **the ambiguous position teacher cultures occupy**. This is a large and controversial area, well beyond the scope of the present discussion!

Teacher problem solving processes indicate the tensions generated from being caught between expectations. These forms of interaction need to be considered historically, in the context of daily life in schools, if their complex relationships are to be charted accurately. This requires an analysis of actual cultural content.

The research has not yet fully developed an analysis of the other (pupil/parent) cultures at Carpenter. This will become one of the main tasks over the next stage of the research, which began with the distribution of the questionnaire on subject choices to Year 10 students and their parents in August, and includes reporting to the P&C on the responses to that survey for further response and a degree of analysis through a working party of parents who have volunteered to participate in filling out an understanding of the statistics. The hope is that analysis of all three perspectives might indicate that unlike Woods' **Divided School**, Carpenter High has three disparate groups but one vision of the future.

Lasting change?

In arguing for reforms that either ameliorate present conditions or create a momentum for more lasting alternatives, Michael Apple points out that while schools are ideal places to focus upon, much more research is needed on the resistances of teachers and pupils. Otherwise, 'we shall merely recapitulate the experiences

of student rejection of curriculum'. (1981, pp.154-5)

Grace sums up the direction of this research when he reminds us that

> Teachers ... have provided easy targets for critical attack without sufficient effort having been made to locate them, historically, within their work situation or within the wider contradictions of society or to appreciate their attempts to deal with these contradictions.(1978, p.5)

He concludes that we need to know more about

> ... how contemporary teachers experience their work situation; what constructs they hold of knowledge, ability and educational process; what professional perspectives or ideologies inform their practice; how they accept, resist or negotiate the prevailing order of the school; of their consciousness of autonomy and constraint; of how they view the activity of teaching in an urban working class school.(1978, p.105)

This research aims to step out in this direction, in tandem with a school, its staff, its pupils and its parents.

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