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A critical analysis of devolution and the corporate reform of teachers' work

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF DEVOLUTION AND THE CORPORATE REFORM OF TEACHERS' WORK

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ABSTRACT

The corporate transformation of bureaucratic public education in Western Australia commenced in the late 1980s. The reforms announced in the *Better Schools Report* (1987) aimed to devolve responsibility to schools for the purpose of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public education. Designed to be responsive, adaptable, flexible and accountable, the administrative style accompanying the reforms is described as *corporate managerialism*.

Devolution has impacted heavily on schools and teachers' work. Evidence presented in this thesis suggests that the corporate values and practices that dominate the organisation and management of schools create personal and professional conflict for many classroom teachers. Devolution and corporate managerialism have not only marginalised and in many cases alienated teachers, but failed to improve student learning. In short, the reforms aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness have in fact created additional dilemmas and tensions for classroom teachers.

Using teachers' stories this qualitative study examines the perceptions of Level Two secondary classroom teachers about the impact of corporate reforms on their work. It highlights a number of crises that exist for teachers and which threaten their sense of professional autonomy and job satisfaction.

Based on the findings the study makes a number of recommendations for creating a critical, collaborative learning environment for classroom teachers.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signature

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Problem

Currently, New Right economic rationalism dominates organisational policy in public education, not only in Australia, but in most western countries. Such thinking is reflected in the corporate reforms of the public sector in Britain, the United States, Canada and New Zealand where devolution of responsibility and accountability to the local level are defining features.

In the case of Western Australia, the introduction of the *Better Schools Report* (1987) produced significant reforms of the public education system. The devolution of decision making to schools and the subsequent corporatisation of the education system represented a significant structural and cultural reorientation of teachers' work. While the effect on teachers has been far reaching there appears to be a lack of compelling evidence to suggest the reforms have improved student learning.

The corporate model of devolution and newly-defined corporate values have redefined the micropolitical environment within which teachers work. Goodson (1988) summarises these reforms in the following manner:

> As part of the general reversal of 1960's patterns, the change in the patterns of political and administrative control over teachers have been enormous in the 1980's. In terms of power and visibility in many ways this represents 'a return to the shadows' for teachers in the face of new

> curriculum guidelines (in Britain an all-encompassing National Curriculum), teachers' assessment and accountability, a barrage of new policy edicts and new patterns of school governance and administration. (p. 5)

In respect to the consequences of these reforms, critics (Smyth, 1993; Goodson, 1992) argue that schools have been colonised by a corporate culture which has radically redefined the lifeworld of teachers. Teachers have been cajoled and ultimately coerced into a new and alien way of thinking about their work.

The problem at the heart of this study is the disempowering consequences of these changes for teachers. Devolution has redefined aspects of teachers' work and threatened teachers' professional self-concept. It has spawned widespread demands on teachers' time and redefined much of the cultural and organisational environment in which they work. It has seen the introduction of a raft of management practices such as goal setting, performance management, curriculum frameworks, audits, outcome statements and state-wide testing. Hattam (1995) argues that current reforms in public education are seriously undermining the democratic nature of teachers' work:

> The litany of reforms 'being done' to teachers and schools clearly indicates that the democratic nature of teachers' work is being dramatically changed in relation to teachers' authentic voice. As well, a commitment to promote the 'public good', and a praxis orientation to the reform of teachers' work, is being seriously undermined. Contemporary reforms in education are clearly not improving the democratic nature of teachers' work. (p. 4)

Research into the impact of devolution in public education in countries such as Britain, the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia highlights a

growing concern over the affects the policy is having on teachers' work and schools (Rizvi, 1994; Robertson, 1994).

A central argument in this thesis is that corporate reforms, especially devolution have failed even by their own criteria to solve the current educational, social and economic crises facing Australian society. In 1994, after seven years of devolved public education in Western Australia, Dr Norm Hoffman, the Chairperson of the Ministerial Independent Assessment Group on Devolution concluded "On the face of it , the period began and ended with the same problems and solutions - further devolution - has itself become problematical" (Ministerial Independent Assessment Group on Devolution 1994, p. 6). Even Brian Caldwell, a strong advocate of corporate, self-managing schools concedes that devolution has not produced better results for students. Caldwell (cited in Townsend, 1997, p. 1) admits "there is no evidence (anywhere in the world) of a link between school self-management and improved student outcomes."

This case study sets out to explore the impact of devolution on teachers' work and to make some judgements about whether these reforms actually enhance teaching and learning. It examines corporate public education from the perspective of six, Level Two classroom teachers in one Western Australian state secondary school. The study assembles the stories these teachers tell about their work with a view to understanding the issues and values which dominate their work. Drawing on Shacklock (1995) this case study uses the methodology of teachers' *work story accounts*. Shacklock (1995), describes the

nature of work story accounts as:

> a practitioner construal of the pervasive qualities of teaching work through the presentation of "images , myths, [sic] metaphors that are morally resonant" with the values teachers uphold, or aspire to, in their work. As such, work stories are rich in detail about what it is like to be engaged in the work of teaching: the tasks, the demands, the interactions, the complexity and the 'feel' of teacher's work. (p. 2)

The teachers' stories gathered in this study provide some important insights into how devolution has impacted on teachers' lives, and more generally, the long-term implications for public education itself.

Research Questions

The study aimed to discover what one group of Level Two secondary school teachers had to say about the impact of devolution and corporate managerialism on their work. *Teacher story* accounts were used to document the indigenous voice of teachers and in doing so, answer the following questions:

- What do teachers perceive to be the assumptions underpinning corporate managerialism?

- How do these reforms impact on the workload of classroom teachers?

- What do teachers think about the effectiveness of devolved management?
- What are the features of the decision making processes in the devolved school system?

- How much say do classroom teachers have?

- What sort of relationship exists between managers and non-managers?

- Is devolution and corporate managerialism compatible with good teaching and learning?

- What are the alternatives?

Significance of the Study

This study supports the view expressed by Smyth (1994, 1996) that corporate managerialism has *colonised* education and redefined the values and structures of schools. Within the Western Australian public education system, and consistent with the scientific management paradigm, there is an overwhelming emphasis on accountability, and reporting of results in quantifiable terms. Teachers' *work stories* are infrequently cited in the literature devoted to the reform of public school systems (Goodson, 1992, p. 234) and there are few, if any opportunities for practising classroom teachers to document their views on devolution and corporatism. In a discussion of educational reform in the United States, Pelletier (1991, p. 1) claims that "Teachers are the missing voices in the reform movement. Their expertise and practical knowledge of the craft is the connection needed to create lasting reform".

By asking a group of highly experienced classroom teachers to tell their stories about the changing nature of their work, this inquiry presents a rarely-documented perspective of corporate education by considering the voices and stories of Level Two classroom teachers in one Perth high school.

With the introduction of the *Better Schools' Report* (1987) Western Australian public schools adopted rigorous performance appraisal strategies and Management of Information Systems (MIS) to assemble data for demonstrating performance profiles and formulating policy. The data gathered throughout all levels of the education system is documented and widely publicised, producing a proliferation of quantitative, scientific reports of innumerable variety. Unfortunately, there is a distinct lack of qualitative reporting on the impact of educational reform on teachers, children and schools. In effect, teachers have been silenced in the current debate about educational reform. Goodson (cited in Goodson & Walker, 1991, p. 143) claims that "data on teachers' lives simply do not fit in with existing research paradigms". Pilot studies carried out in this study indicated a widely held belief that, for a variety of reasons, classroom teachers have little influence on the management of their schools.

Teachers are having to *carve a new place* in corporate schools and defend their values against the imposition of such corporate values and practices as competition, accountability, flexibility and performance management. In a discussion of the reform of public education and its impact on the lives of teachers, Measor and Sikes (cited in Goodson, 1992, p. 4) observe "teachers do work in a context which threatens their working   autonomy   and   their conditions of employment and the choice over the   ways   they   teach children". In this case study teachers were encouraged to *tell their stories*. In doing so, they talked about issues such as diminishing teacher autonomy, deteriorating conditions of work and less professional choice. These are important matters which are often overlooked in much of the school

effectiveness literature.

Thesis Structure

Chapter One of the thesis elaborates the conceptual framework adopted in this study. The first part of the chapter examines the philosophy of economic rationalism and how it has come to dominate public policy and educational reform in Western Countries. By developing an insight into how bureaucratic systems of public education have been transformed by variations of the reform process described as *devolution*, the chapter argues that this initiative has transformed the working lives of classroom teachers. Designed to locate the specific context of this study, the chapter describes how devolution and corporate managerialism have characterised educational reform in Western Australia since 1987. In conclusion, the chapter describes how qualitative, case study research can provide an alternative means of understanding the implications of free market values on teachers' work.

Chapter Two elaborates the research methodology of the study. It begins with a brief discussion of two recognised and opposing research paradigms - quantitative and qualitative research. The purpose is to expose the assumptions behind each approach and explain why this study adopts the qualitative research methodology of case study. In particular, the chapter argues that teacher story research is an appropriate methodology for finding answers to the research questions asked. The chapter details the interview process conducted with Level Two classroom teachers to gain what is described as *teachers'* (work) *stories*. The final part of the chapter concludes with a detailed description

of how an inductive, emergent analysis of data was made to develop the findings of the study.

The findings of the study are presented in Chapter Three. Assembled around the themes of *legitimacy, values, teacher workload, accountability* and *teacher morale*, the findings challenge many of the claims made in the official discourse about the supposed benefit of devolution. Teachers' stories in this study suggest that many aspects of devolution and corporate managerialism are in fact inappropriate and damaging to the work they do.

Conclusions drawn from the research findings are presented in Chapter Four. Organised around the themes of *legitimacy, values, teacher workload, accountability* and *teacher morale*, the conclusions capture teachers' criticisms of the corporate reform of their work. In response to those criticisms, and drawing on Smyth (1995), the study concludes with a set of guidelines for creating schools that are critical, collaborative learning communities.

Definition of Terms

Better Schools Report   *Better Schools in Western Australia. A Programme for Improvement.* Report outlining educational reform in W.A. (1987).

Corporate managerialism   The administrative style which accompanies the corporate model of devolution. Yeatman (in

Marginson, 1993, p. 57) describes the purpose of corporate managerialism as *"the replacement of public policy objectives couched in terms of social goods by public policy objectives couched in terms of economic goods', in order to foster a competitive economy"*.

Corporate schools   Schools characterised by the organisational and cultural structures of large, private enterprise. These characteristics include production values like efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility, and concerns for the image of the organisation, marketing and competitiveness.

Devolution   The process where decision-making and responsibility for providing education services are decentralised to the school level.

EDWA   Education Department of Western Australia.

Level Two teachers   Teachers who by the length of their teaching experience have advanced beyond the Level One classification. Level Two teachers in Western Australia (1998) have a classification of either 21TT, 22TT or 23TT and include Advanced Skills

Teachers.

School level	At the school level within the public education system. The other two levels are central office and regional level.
Secondary school	Post-primary school, essentially catering for students in years eight to twelve.
SSTU	State School Teachers Union (of Western Australia)
Teacher stories	Storied accounts of teaching as a methodological device for the exploration of teaching as work.

CHAPTER TWO

Devolution and Corporate Managerialism

Economic Rationalism and Education

Economic rationalism is the free market, neo-classical economic theory which has shaped public policy reform in North America, Europe and Australasia since the 1980s. It has a preoccupation with economic policy and economic objectives, supports liberal market public policy, and emphasises managerial efficiency (Marginson, 1993, p. 56). Bureaucracies worldwide, including education systems have experienced structural and ideological transformations consistent with the principles of the economic rationalist agenda. This has seen formerly bureaucratic systems of public education adopting corporate structures and free market values.

This section of the chapter looks at the paradigm which underpins devolution and it is argued that devolved public schools are products of the free market, economic rationalist values of The New Right. It describes how New Right values like competition, flexibility, efficiency and effectiveness have replaced social democratic values in public education and created a system of education structured on the corporate model. It is against this background of reform that the study is set.

Modern economic theory appears to have its genesis in the era of the Industrial

Revolution when the organisation of production and labour underwent a metamorphosis. Jennings (1985) describes how the conditions for economic rationalism were created:

> In the two hundred years 1660-1860 the means of production
> were violently and fundamentally altered - altered by the
> accumulation of capital, the freedom of trade, the inventions of
> machines, the philosophy of materialism, the discoveries of
> science (Jennings and Madge, 1985: xxxviii). ... the peasants
> were destroyed and the land capitalised - the power of money -
> capital - substituted for the power of the Crown and the religion.
> (xxxvii)

The new labour-intensive, large-scale forms of production which emerged from this era of capitalism seem to have remained largely intact until mid-way through the twentieth century and the dawn of the technological era. Emerging alongside early industrial development were bodies of economic science concerned with coordination, organisation and control in productive organisations, and these too remain intact. One such body of theory to emerge was free market liberalism, an ideology which shares the fundamental principles of economic rationalism. Marginson (1993) describes the advent of market theory in public policy:

> Its roots [free market liberalism] lie in the seventeenth-century
> Liberalism of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke; and Adam Smith's
> eighteenth-century notion of the 'invisible hand' of the market, and
> the need for limits on the role of government. (p. 58)

The New Right have been inspired this century by the writings of free market

liberals like Hayek and Friedman who express strong opposition to the welfare state. Kenway (1994) describes how New Right thinking has achieved worldwide influence on public policy.

> Opponents of the Keynesian welfare state often classified as the New Right became particularly influential in the US, the UK and Australia in the late 1970s and 80s. The New Right was/is a strong opponent of government regulations over any markets (money, international, labour) and over production and consumption. (p. 10)

The fundamental assumption of New Right ideology is that social and economic activity will achieve optimal welfare and satisfaction if left to the control of individuals pursuing self-interests in the market (Thomas, cited in Beare and Lowe Boyd, 1993, p. 40). Advocates (Buchanan, cited in Marginson, 1993, p. 61) of public choice theory call for the minimisation of government intervention and the adoption of free market, liberal principles in public policy. As such, private ownership and minimal government intervention are ideals sought by the New Right.

The New Right claims a commitment to the application of competition, efficiency, flexibility and private ownership, and to maintaining organisational structures which facilitate their success. With a strong emphasis on productivity and consumption, market philosophy de-contextualises events and issues, and makes assessments based on economic criteria (Marginson 1993). There is a technical-rational focus on production, rather than a process-oriented approach, and accountability and management are key organisational features. Re-defined by the economic criteria of the free market are concepts like choice,

freedom and opportunity, as is the new legitimacy of rationalist production values and strategies (Rizvi, 1994).

The principal claim by advocates of free market theory is that with minimal government intervention, market forces will organise the allocation of productive resources more efficiently and thus achieve "better productivity" (Pusey, 1992, p. 18). Free market theory and economic rationalism promote market forces, and market-style organisations as being the most effective, efficient systems of controlling and allocating economic resources (Kenway, 1994). Senator Peter Walsh (cited in Marginson. 1993, p. 56) defines economic rationalism as a commitment to market forces and "the belief that market forces will generally produce better outcomes, or more efficient allocation of resources, than government intervention". It is the ascendancy of these market values in the public policy debate which has led the transformation of public organisations.

The economic rationalist paradigm is of particular significance to this study because its values and principles directly impact on current reforms in public education. These reforms are reflected in the new organisational arrangements encapsulated in the discourse of corporate managerialism (Cavenagh, 1994; Rizvi, 1994). In the late nineties increasingly strong evidence of these new values could be found in Western Australian public schools.

Current advocates of free market principles have been given the broad classification of the New Right and it is their ideology which is synonymous with devolution (Bowe and Ball, 1993, p. 37). Indeed, Angus (cited in Smyth, 1993.

p. 18) discusses diversity amongst locally managed schools in Britain as "'New Right versions' of school management".

During times of economic crisis there is often considerable debate about the contribution education makes to the wealth of a nation, and the relationship between levels of education and levels of economic wealth (Smyth, 1994; Thomas, cited in Beare and Lowe Boyd, 1993). A widespread belief expressed by the New Right is that education is in part to blame for the post-modern economic crises. According to Bowe and Ball (1992) the New Right is especially critical of public education:

> There is, in New Right thinking, a strong belief that a state run educational system produces a systemic dependency (schools dependent upon 'the system'), complacency (an unresponsiveness to the demands of society), bureaucracy (initiatives for change hampered by 'red tape'), and 'protectionism'(educational quality judged by the 'professionals', whose central concerns may not be in national or the consumers' interests). (p. 39)

The New Right believe the only way to fix these problems is to allow schools to become more autonomous and entrepreneurial, and thus "more responsive to local community needs, eliminating inefficient work practices and raising the efficiency of schools" (Smyth, 1994, p. 7). Caldwell (1993, p. 169) sees the need for education reform to address the issues of "effectiveness, equity, excellence, efficiency, accountability and adaptability. So, what solutions do the New Right offer for the problems they perceive in public education, and how do they work?

The New Right-inspired reforms which began in the 1980s represent a new

settlement in the relationship between the state and society. Seddon (cited in Politics Policy Making and the State: EPA 5126 Guide. 1994, p. 45) describes the concept of settlement as "a new balance of social focus which emerges when former relationships break down". What transpired in the 1970s represented the breakdown of the post-war Keynesian settlement and the emergence of a corporate settlement. The subsequent corporatisation of education systems has, amongst other things, seen the introduction of devolved management systems and an emerging *market culture* in schools.

From an organisational perspective this transformation has seen centralised, bureaucratic systems of education become increasingly decentralised, with schools having to accept responsibility for many of the services previously provided by central authorities. This, and other decentralising processes in education is described by Graham (1994, p. 57) as "devolution".

Devolution has not only seen centralised, bureaucratic systems come to reflect the corporate image, it is synonymous with what amounts to a cultural revolution in schools (Yeatman, 1990). The social democratic values of equity and social justice have been eclipsed by those of the free market, namely accountability, efficiency and effectiveness (Rizvi, 1994; Yeatman, 1990). A new settlement, characterised by economic imperatives has been established in education. It is the debate surrounding the corporate reform of public education, particularly in relation to the impact of corporate reforms on classroom teachers that forms the parameters of this study.

Devolution and Self-Managing Schools

This section reviews aspects of the structure and management of devolved schools. It argues that characteristics such as decentralisation, delegation, deregulation and competition reflect the strong influence of New Right, market values in public schools. In the pilot study these characteristics were often referred to as significant causes of changes to teachers' work.

Built around market practices, the aim of devolution is to achieve greater effectiveness in schools (Chapman, 1993, p. 201). It has spawned a variety of models of decentralised systems of education and created diversity among schools based on levels of school autonomy. Market advocates like Caldwell and Spinks, Chubb and Moe, and Beare call for the total privatisation of public education. This proposition would see public schools taking full responsibility for matters like finance, employment of staff, curriculum and student enrolment, while still remaining accountable to central authorities.

Throughout the Western World devolved, or self-managing schools are variously referred to as *School-based management* (United States), *Local management of schools* (Britain) and *Tomorrow's schools* (New Zealand). Within Australia this restructuring has attracted titles such as *Local school management* (South Australia), *Focus on schools* (Queensland), *Schools of the future* (Victoria) and *Better schools* (Western Australia). Degrees of school autonomy vary greatly within and between these decentralised systems. Hill and Bonan (1993, p.7) conclude that "no organisation is altogether centralised or decentralised". Some schools, like grant maintained schools in Britain enjoy

full autonomy while others remain under local-authority control (Marginson, 1993).

Self managing schools then, are best seen as organisations whose orientations place them on a continuum of degrees of independence in the market. Characteristics found to be common among devolved systems of education in the United States, and which are also evident in Western Australia include:

> Site-based management programs, in which essential
> education decisions, including budgeting, personnel selection,
> and curriculum devolve to the school site. Decisions are made
> jointly by teachers and site administrators;
>
> 'Choice', a system which enables parents to select their children's
> schools from among a range of educational
> alternatives; and,
>
> Teacher professionalisation, a broad category that generally
> encompasses expanded professional roles for teachers
> including providing opportunities for experienced
> practitioners to function as mentors to their novice
> colleagues, develop curriculum, provide staff development,
> participate in peer assistance and review program (Koppich
> and Guthrie, 1993, p.58).

The trend toward parent choice strongly suggests that competition is a significant aspect of the culture of self-managing schools. It is the added burden of unfamiliar, unresourced duties, in the market environment which has radically altered the nature of teachers' work (Ball, 1993). What follows is a brief review of two major principles informing devolution - deregulation and delegation.

As noted earlier, the argument for the deregulation and privatisation of public education is largely consistent with public choice theory and New Right ideology. Motivating the deregulation argument in part, are statistics which

demonstrate that private school students achieve better academic results than their public school counterparts. It is claimed that the shift toward deregulating and privatising public education is a reaction to public demand, a demand described by Beare et al., (1989) as one where:

> parents seek to exercise choice over schooling, demand some voice
> in their local schools and support local authorities over central
> authorities. The more educated the population becomes, the more
> sophisticated are the demands and the stronger run the trends
> towards localisation and privatisation. (p.243)

In the case of Britain, the deregulation of the labour market in public schools was achieved under provisions of the 1988 Education Reform Act. The deregulation of employment and the subsequent use of employment contracts enabled British schools to hire and fire staff as labour demands changed. Chubb and Moe (cited in Marginson, 1993, p. 216) call for schools to be "legally autonomous and to determine their own industrial relations". In a discussion of self-managing schools and deregulation in Britain, Demaine (1993, p. 45) claims that the key assumption behind this move is that "fearful of their jobs, teachers in undersubscribed schools will improve their 'performance', and hence the market position of their school". Deregulated employment systems in Britain have resulted in the replacement of traditional employment practices based upon merit, seniority, qualification and experience with a system of human resource management conducted at the local level.

One of the key attributes of devolution has been the delegation of financial

management from a central authority to schools. In the pursuit of efficiency and cost effectiveness the economic rationalist belief is that expenditure of resources is best managed at the local level. Thomas (1993) describes how principles of economic rationalism have prompted the devolution of financial responsibility to schools in Britain for staffing, premises and services. Similar financial reform has been experienced in the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. In some instances this reform is described as global budgeting. Quinlan (cited in Crowther and Caldwell, 1992, p. 29) describes global budgeting as a process whereby "schools take responsibility for expenditure on employment of relief staff, all utilities, freight and cartage, postage, stores, maintenance, textbooks, security and special needs programs". As systems of public education in Australian continue to decentralise and further responsibility is devolved to schools, a trend towards full global budgeting is clearly evident.

The New Right and the free market principles they apply to educational governance have not gone unchallenged. Critics attack the narrow focus of the newly-defined economic imperatives which characterise New Right thinking. It is not only the restructuring of schools and teachers' work that is under attack but, even more fundamentally, the dialogue by which these reforms are promoted. While this is a large and growing body of literature, I want to briefly allude to two major criticisms of free market policies as they relate to devolution.

Firstly, a body of criticism is aimed specifically at the positivist, scientific approach to determining and evaluating school effectiveness. Chapman (1993)

dismisses as inappropriate and invalid, the use of positivist techniques for the measurement of school effectiveness. She argues:

> The so-called scientific approach to understanding school effectiveness, particularly that emanating from the positivistic paradigm and relying heavily upon the quantitative mode of elaboration, is replete with methodological and conceptual problems of various kinds . . . These difficulties are so fundamental that there is much to commend the suggestion that the empiricist basis of that paradigm calls into question much of the inquiry based upon it. (p. 201)

Such criticism of the foundations of devolution also call into question the legitimacy and appropriateness of organisational meta-values promoted by the New Right. These contested values include efficiency, coordination, accountability, responsibility, goals and evaluation.

Secondly, the application of the New Right principles of competition and choice has challenged the social democratic belief that public education promotes equity and seeks to address social inequalities. Critics claim competition and choice do not lead to more effective and equitable schools (Smyth, 1994) but are in fact counterproductive to the educational purpose schools serve. Walford (1993) claims:

> The British government has no interest in equity in educational provision. It is using the competitive market version of self managing schools to return to a more inegalitarian past where children are schooled in ways deemed 'appropriate' to their social class and ethnic group. (p. 240)

Walford (1993), a particularly strong critic of devolution in Britain, has expressed pessimism for the future of devolved schools. Walford (1993, p. 241), claims

that "[devolution] create[s] a hierarchy of unequally funded schools which will help perpetuate class, gender and ethnic divisions." Funding and equity are major issues facing public education in Australia in the late 1990's as the Federal and State governments legislate for increased self-management and autonomy for public schools.

Devolution and Teachers' Work

This section offers a review of what the literature has to say about the experiences faced by classroom teachers in devolved schools in a number of different countries. A study conducted in Western Australia by Robertson and Soucek (1991), *'Teachers' and administrators' perceptions and experiences of the devolution effort'*, indicated that teachers were increasingly concerned about issues such as competition, curriculum, culture, policy/role confusion and workload (Robertson, 1993, p. 128). It is around these issues that the following review of teachers' experiences is organised.

Two reform strategies which have been widely adopted by education systems have been *promotion by merit*, and *internal budgeting*. In practice it would appear that these two reforms establish conditions which cause teachers to be in conflict and competition with one another. Robertson and Soucek (1991, p. 129) revealed a heightened competitiveness for resources and recognition between individuals and departments within schools where "teachers talked of knowledge and secrecy, politicking, bargaining and the advancement of personal careers". In a New South Wales study Fairservice (1994, p. 18) concluded "the collegiality of teachers has been replaced by suspicion and

competition".

Opponents of the economic rationalist reforms make much of these criticisms, claiming that the cultural change in schools is counterproductive to pedagogical ideals. Furthermore, the introduction of employment contracts and accountability exercises for teachers would seem to further contribute to the increasing competition between teachers. In New Zealand, where devolution has been particularly harsh, there is enthusiasm for teachers to be employed on merit based contracts which are subject to performance appraisal. Codd (p. 157) makes the claim that "one of the consequences of devolution [in New Zealand] has been increased politicization at institutional and community levels."

Such employment conditions as contracts and appraisals do little for the confidence of teachers and further erodes the democratic potential of genuine devolution.

Curriculum

One of the powers traditionally retained at state or national level under devolution is control of the curriculum. While teachers are encouraged to feel empowered, and exercise control at the school level, they are faced with having to conform to the external control of the state or national curriculum. Many teachers are suspicious of curriculum changes such as vocational programs (Cavenagh, 1994) which have accompanied devolution. Despite this suspicion teachers have tended to professionally defend the quality and effectiveness of

current curricula. Meeting the demands of the external curriculum within the confines of school budgets has become an issue many schools are struggling with. Another curriculum issue facing teachers in New Zealand, England and Wales is the balance between pastoral care and subject content. (Martin, 1994, p. 55)

Cultural change

The new corporate settlement in education has already been described as a *cultural revolution*. The corporate values of efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility have reshaped a previous culture sometimes characterised by equality, equity and collegiality - a market culture has replaced the social democratic culture of the past. Preston (1994, p. 47) argues that conflict arising from this cultural shift in Australian schools has undermined teacher professionalism. Hargreaves (1994), Collier and Tregenza (1994), Sparkes and Bloomer (1993) and others discuss the conflict facing teachers as they adapt to the new, market culture in education. The appropriateness of markets in education is widely criticised in these discussions and there are warnings of the hazards and imperfections of market practice.

Significantly, the shift from an administrative hierarchy in schools to a corporate structure has affected the perceptions teachers have of schools as organisations (Dimmock, 1993). Bishop (1994, p. 9) discusses this change in managerial emphasis in terms of converting from "an administrative role to a managerial role". One consequence is a growing division between school managers and teachers. As Ball (1993) explains:

a clear division or 'gap' [is] developing between school managers, oriented primarily to matters of financial planning, income generation and marketing, and classroom practitioners, oriented primarily to the demands of the National Curriculum and national testing. (p. 71)

The division between school managers and practitioners is of particular interest to this study. The corporate structure, and market culture of schools have precipitated this, and other new professional, cultural and ethical crises for teachers.

Uncertainty

The new corporate language which accompanies devolution has not only redefined much of the culture of schools, it redefines school policy and teachers' roles within schools. A study by Hill and Bonan (1989-1991) of site- based managed schools conducted across five school districts in the United States concluded that "many school staffs take two or three years to define their respective roles" (Hill and Bonan, 1991, p. 70). This inquiry confirmed that the role expected of teachers in ever-changing corporate schools, and the changes to the language and culture of their work creates a sense of frustration among many teachers.

This confusion and uncertainty creates a credibility crisis for many teachers. Reform in New South Wales created what Cavenagh (1994, p. 43) describes as a *New Order* where "the reality of reform therefore, was built around a language of politics and bureaucracy which was automatically mismatched with its stated intention". Chapman (in Dimmock, 1993, p. 209) claims that the new

language in schools is "a clear example of simplistic rhetoric leading to gross conceptual confusion". Not only is there some inherent confusion in many new education policies, there is confusion arising from problems caused by personnel being "ill-suited and untrained to enact the role of business and marketing managers" (Smyth, 1994, p. 7). Such confusion and conflict creates professional and personal uncertainty for the teachers having to make sense of it all.

The withdrawal of central support for schools having to compete in a devolved market environment has resulted in heavy demands being placed on teachers. Having to implement poorly resourced reforms in the light of performance appraisals and accountability, teachers in self-managing schools face added responsibilities and an increased workload. The levels of industrial action being taken by Australian teachers in the last decade provides some indication of the extent to which teachers reject the lack of recognition of existing workloads.

There seems to be a shortage of evidence to indicate that better educational results are being achieved by devolution. What is emerging, however, is conflict between managers and teachers in schools as the gap between their values, expectations and responsibilities appears to widen. The managerialist values of entrepreneurialism, efficiency and accountability seem to impact negatively on teachers who are already disillusioned by the reforms. Bishop (1994, p. 12) suggests "schools [in Britain] are less happy places and many teachers have left the profession thoroughly disillusioned".

Reforming Western Australian Schools

The final part of the chapter concludes with a discussion of the reform of public education in Western Australia. This chronological account establishes the context in which this inquiry was undertaken and contributes to an audit trail for the evaluation of the study.

The recommendations of the 1973 *Karmel Report* delivered to Western Australia's public schools their earliest experiences of devolution. The notion of devolution as expressed in the *Karmel Report*, however, was not set in the economic rationalist terms of the 'eighties and 'nineties, rather:

> Devolution was seen as emphasising the importance of teachers and parents being able to "have a say" in the running of their school It was part of a larger "package" of social democratic values (Ministerial Independent Assessment Group on Devolution, 1994, p. 16).

Following the recommendations of the *Review of the Portfolio* published at the end of 1986, a corporate restructuring of central and regional offices occurred in 1987 and 1988. The newly established Ministry of Education functioned under the leadership of a Chief Executive Officer with four Directors of Operations, a Director of Curriculum, a Director of Personnel and a Director of Corporate Services. The responsibilities of the Corporate Executive were oriented towards forward planning and quality control.

In 1987 the Ministry of Education released the *Better Schools Report* which detailed the process for completing the devolution of responsibility to schools.

The purpose of the reforms was to create a style of educational administration which demonstrated:

- responsiveness and adaptability to the needs of the community and to government priorities;

- flexibility in the use of resources to meet these goals; and

- accountability to the government and the community for the standard of service and funding (Ministry of Education, 1986 p. 5).

It was clearly articulated by the Ministry of Education that this form of administration would require schools which were self-managing and publicly accountable through a system of performance management. Some of the first evidence reaching schools of the hastening of devolution toward the school level was the creation of education districts "headed by superintendents responsible for professional support and the supervision of school performance" (Ministerial Independent Assessment Group on Devolution, 1993, p. 7). District superintendents were accountable to a Director of Operations for their responsibilities to schools in their district. This formally established the organisational conditions and the priorities and values at central and district level within a corporate culture. For many teachers the purpose of these reforms was not so much about efficiency and excellence in education, but cost-cutting of public education in Western Australia. This is borne out by the widespread industrial unrest which accompanied the introduction of devolution.

It was proposed in the *Better Schools* (1987) document that a timeline be established for the implementation of reforms which would see schools "become the focus for the administration and delivery of education " (Ministry of Education, 1986, p. 7). The new self-management role for schools was to be achieved by the phasing in of a number of Ministry initiatives to schools by 1992. The initiatives included:

- providing a SCHOOL GRANT to each school, so it has grater discretion over resource acquisition and use;

- staffing schools according to a SCHOOL STAFFING ENTITLEMENT to allow schools greater flexibility in staffing;

- devolving to schools significant responsibilities in the areas of SCHOOL STAFF MANAGEMENT;

- devolving to schools much of the responsibility for SELECTION OF TEACHERS so that staff at the school are compatible with its goals;

- devolving responsibility for SCHOOL PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATION to schools;

- instituting a requirement that schools undertake a SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN each year;

- encouraging the formation of SCHOOL-BASED DECISION-MAKING GROUPS to provide for community participation in the management of schools; and

- improving all schools' ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT CAPACITY, by increasing staff levels and the use of information technology in schools (Ministry of Education, 1986, p. 7).

With the exception of the responsibility for selection of teachers, the remaining initiatives were adopted by public schools in Western Australia over the four years to 1990. Driven by economic rationalist ideology and free market principles, what has followed to 1998 is the continued corporatisation of public education beyond the changes outlined in 1987. This case study asks Level Two teachers to describe their views about working in schools that are a product of these changes.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

Introduction

Ontology refers to the world view one has and which, in turn, shapes ones understandings of, and inquiry into the phenomena of that world. From a particular ontological view an observer will seek understandings of, or sets of answers to phenomena in terms consistent with that ontology. A dichotomy which is widely accepted, but nonetheless debated, describes this pursuit of understanding and explanation of phenomena as one which is either "truth-seeking or perspective-seeking" (Lagenbach, Vaughn & Aagaard, 1994). As such, a researcher's ontological view can predispose their research to the study of particular phenomena, the collection of certain types of data and to a range of appropriate methodologies.

Truth-seeking research frequently attracts the label of quantitative research. It generates theories and traditionally employs methodologies found in positivist, scientific modes of thought and inquiry. The conduct of quantitative research is usually characterised by experimental and quasi-experimental methodologies which provide statistical, numeric data. Quantitative methodologies seek to discover the cause-effect relationship between variables which, in the experimental tradition, are isolated and then investigated in a decontextualised setting.

In contrast, *perspective-seeking*, or qualitative research is a naturalistic, subjective form of inquiry which seeks to explain phenomena in their natural setting (Lagenbach, Vaughn & Aagaard, 1994, p. 11). To develop context-sensitive understandings of phenomena, qualitative researchers are predisposed to research likely to be recognised within anthropology, ethnography, psychology and sociology. Methodologies typically used in these traditions are designed to collect records of speech and action. This fundamental principle predisposes qualitative research towards the use of observation and interview as the means by which data is collected. It is on the basis of these generally accepted *rules of research* that teachers' stories and accounts were considered a valid methodology for conducting this inquiry into the nature of teachers' work.

Teacher Story Research

Teacher story research is a relatively innovative method of educational research. In the context of this study, teachers' stories are considered as narratives told by teachers for the exploration and reconstruction of teaching as work. Goodson's (1992) discussion of approaches and methodologies for investigating teachers' lives describes how teachers' stories provide accounts of teaching which are replete with language that reflects the values, prejudices and perceptions teachers have of the work they do. Carter (1993, p. 5) defends teacher story as a means of investigation claiming that "these stories capture, more than scores or mathematical formulae ever can, the richness and indeterminacy of our experiences as teachers and the complexity of our

understandings of what teaching is. Shacklock's (1995, p. 2) description of teachers' work story affirms claims that teacher story research has a necessary role in developing better understandings about education, and in the reform process because "work stories are rich in detail about what it is like to be engaged in the work of teaching: the tasks, the demands, the interactions, the complexity and 'the feel' of teachers' work"

Drawing on the work of Carter (1993), Goodson (1992), Shacklock (1995) and others this study recognises *teacher story* as a legitimate method of gaining a valid, alternative perspective of the impact of devolution on teachers' work. As a means of projecting teachers' voice, Shacklock (1995) describes how the purpose of teacher story research is to challenge the managerialist domination of teachers and teachers' work through the inclusion of teachers' voice in the reform debate:

> Work-story research is about editing teachers back into accounts produced from research into teaching by creating a 'space' in the discourse where teachers' voices have legitimacy and can be heard, in their complexity, in educational research. (p. 2)

Teacher story is used in this study in an attempt to re-insert the voice of teachers into the reform debate.

From a quantitative perspective, the use of teacher story raises concerns about validity and strength of data. Goodson (1991, p. 144) explains that the use of teacher story data has been overlooked in education reform because it has been viewed as "too 'personal', 'idiosyncratic' or 'soft." Goodson (1991, p. 144) refutes this argument, however, claiming that "data on teachers' lives simply do

not fit in with existing research paradigms. If this is the case then it is the paradigms that are at fault, not the value and quality of this kind of data".

It is the potential for teacher story to challenge the discourse of managerialism that substantially motivated this study. The rich description of teachers' experiences, perceptions and attitudes gathered in this study has enabled a qualitative critique of devolution to be assembled. This qualitative data reflects the indigenous voice of classroom teachers and tells a different story to the predominantly managerialist construction of teaching.

Critical Theory

The influence of Karl Marx (Carspecken and Apple, 1994) on the origins of critical theory may be apparent to some in Anderson's (cited in Lancy, 1993) portrayal of the critical researcher. Of the purpose of critical research Anderson makes the claim:

> [it is] concerned with unmasking dominant social constructions and the interests they represent, studying society with the goal of transforming it, and freeing individuals from sources of domination and repression. (p. 83)

Critical theory is by no means solely derived from Marxist theory. Robinson (1993, p. 228) identifies two major groupings of critical theorists based on how they explain conditions of *disadvantage, alienation and social conflict*. The two broad groupings are based on the early Marxist themes and the more recent Frankfurt school of thought encapsulated in the work of Jurgen Habermas. Robinson (1993, p. 229) identifies the difference between the theories of Marx

and Habermas as "the incorporation of the latter of non-materialistic explanations of social problems and in their theories of social change". In its' use of teacher story this study draws on some key assumptions contained in the work of Habermas. It is argued here that in the process of conducting research of a *Habermasian persuasion* (Robinson 1993, p. 229), this study recognises that "the key to society which serves universal rather than particular interests is the reclaiming of public life though rational debate, resulting in consensually derived forms of social coordination".

The main purpose of this study is to hear and project the indigenous voice of classroom teachers in the current reform debate with a view to creating a *consensual*, socially democratic driven public education system.

In describing what makes critical inquiry an emerging tradition within qualitative research, Carspecken and Apple (1994, p. 512) describe critical theorists as "usually politically minded people who wish, through their research, to aid struggles against inequality and domination". This view of critical research implies that its purpose is more than merely observing and describing social phenomena. In alerting us to the constructive role that critical inquiry has to play in the reform of public education, Robinson (1993, p. 231) argues that "critical research offers, in addition to critique, a constructive process of education and social action". After identifying a range of problems with the managerialist domination of teachers lives in Western Australian public schools, this study will conclude with a brief discussion of principles which may have the potential to make public schools better places for teachers and students.

Gathering Teachers' Stories

Pilot studies.

Pilot studies for this inquiry were conducted at two Perth high schools in 1995 and 1996. The aim of the pilot study was to clarify an understanding of the issues facing classroom teachers in devolved schools. The eighteen-month duration of the pilot study ensured that the conclusions drawn from the study had a high level of validity. This rationale follows from Sherman and Webb's (1988, p. 68) discussion of validity and reliability of participant observation in ethnographic studies where they explain that "to attain a high degree of validity, the observer must repeat observation through prolonged involvement in the culture studied " (1988, p. 68).

Preliminary inquires sought data from not only Level Two teachers but from an almost equal number of (mostly) Level One and Level Three teachers. The pilot study thus provided data from a cross section of classroom teachers and confirmed the reality of issues facing not only Level Two teachers, but potentially all classroom teachers in devolved schools. Topics found to be regularly cited in pilot study data included *resourcing, teacher recognition, workload, the managerialist imperative, school culture, change* and *morale.*

Pilot studies formally commenced in 1995 amidst statewide industrial unrest over proposed government legislation perceived, in part, to be anti-union and anti-employee. Teachers took strike action over government proposals which were seen as a further attack on public education and teachers' working

conditions. Critical issues for the State School Teachers Union (SSTU) during their campaign against the Government's proposals included Workplace Agreements, the threat of union deregistration, salary increases, increased workloads for members and funding for public schools.

The climate of industrial unrest saw teachers become increasingly analytical and critical of the management and reform of public education in Western Australia. It was coincidental and fortuitous that at the time of conducting the pilot studies there was much enthusiasm by teachers to reflect upon, and talk about their work.

Verbal responses were collected from approximately forty classroom teachers during the course of the pilot studies. Data was gathered from teachers on more than one occasion through informal discussion during the working day. That is, the bulk of data was collected by allowing teachers to tell their stories about professional and personal issues facing them. Other data relating to teachers' perceptions of the Government's managerialist reform of schools was available from the SSTU and from matters dealt with in my capacity as a union (SSTU) representative.

Data from the pilot studies was recorded in a number of ways. Teachers' stories, the bulk of the data, were recorded anecdotally, creating a mosaic of understandings of what teachers had to say about their work. The remainder of data was recorded as field notes, case records, minutes of meetings and SSTU publications. A continuous, inductive analysis was made of the data collected

from the pilot study, with care being taken to regard only that information which could be linked to devolution and the corporate reforms of teachers' work. The analyses of pilot data identified a number of frequently-cited issues and it was around these, and other issues raised in the review of literature that an interview guide (Appendix B) was assembled.

The population relevant to this inquiry is Level Two teachers working in public schools in Western Australia. As already explained, Level Two classroom teachers are collectively the most experienced teachers in Western Australian schools. Their professional culture and pedagogical values were seen to have the potential to be at greatest odds with the values and practices of corporate managerialism. It was for this reason that the study sought stories from Level Two teachers.

The study claims that career length made Level Two teachers an effective cohort from whom to gather research data. Firstly, and by virtue of the service requirement of their classification, Level Two's have experience of teaching in schools prior to the corporate reform of public education in the late 1980s. This length of experience offers Level Two's the opportunity to draw comparisons between market and non-market models of public education. Secondly, and based primarily on findings from pilot studies, there is a likelihood accepted by this study that, as mature and experienced teachers Level Two's are strongly inclined to reflect on the changes associated with the reform of their work.

The sample for this research was drawn from Level Two teachers working in

one Perth high school. Three essential criteria were used to determine the makeup of the interview sample. Firstly, participants were to represent a broad cross-section of faculty areas, including the four 'core subject' faculties. Secondly, there was to be a representation of both genders in the sample. Finally, the sample was not to contain those Level Two teachers in the school who were acting in Level Three positions or who did not have full time teaching duties.

Under the criteria established for inclusion in the interview sample, a Level Two teacher who was also the Key Teacher in the school was excluded. The Key Teacher was excluded on the basis of the diminished teaching load assigned to that position. Level Two teachers who were acting in Level Three positions were excluded from the sample for two reasons. Firstly, they were excluded on the grounds that, like the Key Teacher position, Level Three positions involve a diminished teaching load. Secondly, it was felt that experience and involvement in a management role would affect a potential subject's attitude, and therefore their response to the interview topics. A diverse representation of faculties in the sample was seen as a safeguard towards reaching research findings which were representative of Level Two teachers throughout the school, and which had the potential to be generalised across similarly-managed secondary schools. This criteria recognised the differences in the physical and possibly the micro-political environments of different faculties, and how that might influence a respondent's image of their work. In addition, and because of the perception that experiences may vary between male and female teachers, it was considered necessary to gain data which was representative of both genders.

The sample used in this inquiry consisted of one female teacher and five male teachers who, on average, had completed nearly twenty-one years of teaching. A high level of enthusiasm was demonstrated by each of the six teachers initially approached to participate in the study. Participants were given a Statement of Disclosure and Informed Consent (Appendix A) outlining the purpose of the study, the procedures they would experience, a guarantee of confidentiality and the potential benefits of the research. All subjects were assured they could withdraw from the study any time they wished.

Interviews

An interview guide (Appendix B) was available during interviews. The choice of interview topics and issues in this research was influenced by the review of literature undertaken for the study, pilot studies and, with the commencement of interviews, from ongoing analysis of data. The interview guide contained mainly open ended questions arranged around the twelve issues identified from the pilot study. These issues included *responsibility, workload, roles, curriculum, policy, competition, efficiency, coordination, accountability, goals, evaluation* and *culture.* The interview guide provided teachers with a general format to follow whilst telling their stories but its main purpose was to provided a safeguard for maintaining the momentum of discussions if any had faltered.

Questions contained in the interview guide were designed to provide participants with a maximum opportunity for flexibility and freedom. Ultimately, the format of all interviews were consistent with the sequence of topics listed in the interview guide. Once topics had been raised in interview however, the

order and content of questions was often influenced by spontaneity rather than a strict adherence to the interview guide.

The interview format used in this inquiry is described by Cohen and Manion (1980, p. 273) as the "unstructured interview". Tuckman (1988, p. 216) describes the type of questions used in the unstructured interview as being "open ended" and which invite an "unstructured response". In making these observation, Tuckman (1988, p. 216) also acknowledges that "it is the response that is open-ended and not the question." Another characteristic of the unstructured, open-ended interview is flexibility. Kerlinger (cited in Cohen and Manion, 1980, p. 273) explain that "although the research purposes govern the questions asked, their content, sequence and wording are entirely in the hands of the researcher". Respondents were encouraged to speak freely, and pursue issues which emerged from their response to the questions contained in the interview guide. During interviews, respondents were frequently given assurances that their story was appropriate and that there was genuine *researcher interest* in virtually anything they had to say about their experiences, perceptions and beliefs about their work.

The unstructured interview was adopted for use in the study because of the type of data required from the participants. Teachers' work stories are often about complex personal and emotive issues - issues which people can be reluctant to discuss. The use of indirect questions is intended to contribute towards minimising the likelihood that respondents would react with reluctance during the interview. In a discussion of interview methodology, Tuckman (cited

in Cohen and Manion, 1980, p. 127) suggests that "the indirect approach is more likely to produce frank and open responses".

In terms of achieving frank and open responses, the results of interviews demonstrated a high level of success. All interviewees showed enthusiasm for discussion and there was no issue which any of the respondents were reluctant to discuss. Noticeable throughout the interviews was the use by respondents of what this research recognises as *casual worksite language* - language frequently used by experienced teachers in social and informal discussions about their work. The evidence of enthusiasm and casual worksite language created the distinct impression that interview responses were indeed, frank and open.

The interview process followed in this inquiry is consistent with *life story* interview procedure outlined by Goodson (1992). Life story research is described by Goodson (1992) as a process where:

> 'Life story givers' provide data for the researcher often in loosely structured interviews. The researcher seeks to elicit the teacher's perceptions and stories but is generally passive rather than actively interrogative. (p. 243)

The conduct of interviews in this study shared life story characteristics of loosely structured interviews and researcher passivity.

Interviews were conducted over the final four week period of the 1996 school year. Lasting approximately one and a half hours, interviews were conducted in convenient, private and semi-private locations within the school. A hand-held

tape recorder was used to record interviews and notes were made of respondents' gestures, emotiveness and other non-verbal data. Interviews were preceded by a discussion designed to contextualise the study and to ensure respondents were comfortable about responding to the interview guide. Participants were told that the interview guide was to be used as a *general format for discussion* but that relevant matters of interest could be pursued as they arose in discussion.

The recordings of interviews were transcribed and stored on disk. Each participant was then given a transcript of their interview for the purpose of making any necessary alterations, before validating the content. Also at this time, for the benefit of the researcher, a number of respondents were asked to clarify comments contained in their record of interview. Once interview data was thus validated, the analysis phase of the study commenced.

Analysis of Teachers' Stories

The records of interviews produced one hundred and thirty pages of professionally transcribed data. In a manner wholly consistent with the qualitative paradigm, the principle objective of analysing this data was to find Level Two teachers' shared perceptions of their work. To achieve this objective an ongoing, inductive analysis was made of the interview data. The themes identified by the inductive analysis of data provided the framework for assembling and presenting the research findings.

In a comparison of the inductive method and the deductive method of data

analysis, Tuckman (1995) describes several attributes of the inductive approach which made its use favourable to the conduct of this study. Of the conduct of inductive analysis, Tuckman (1995) explains;

> Data are collected that relate to a focus of inquiry. Hypotheses are not generated a priori and thus the relevant variables or data collection are not predetermined. The data are not grouped according to predetermined categories. Rather, what becomes important to analyze emerges from the data itself, out of a process of inductive reasoning. (p. 126)

It was from such an inductive approach where meaning emerges from data, that the findings in this study were made.

The inductive, emergent analysis of data used in this study resembles the process used in an English study (1990) of teachers' responses to government legislation directed towards them. Acker (cited in Cohen and Manion, 1980, p. 113) describes the orientation of her 1990 study as "a fairly open-ended search for themes of interest related to teachers' work". Acker's study drew on the support of Wolcott's well-recognised case study methodology (cited in Cohen and Manion, 1980, p. 113) where he once described his role of participant observer as "a process of waiting to be impressed by recurrent themes that reappear in various contexts".

It was through the inductive process, involving *searching* and *waiting*, that the analysis of data in this study was made. The detailed description which follows is designed to facilitate an understanding of the process of analysis used in this study, and to support and protect the integrity of the study.

<u>Stage one - Discovery.</u>

Initial readings of transcripts confirmed a high proportion of relevant material had resulted from the interviews with Level Two teachers. Not only was a high proportion of data relevant to the range of themes contained in the interview guide, the stories teachers told were consistent with findings revealed in the review of literature. An observation made during this early stage of analysis was that stories teachers told about corporate schools consisted largely of stories about *experiences*, *perceptions*, *feelings*, and *attitudes.*

The aim of stage one of the analysis was to retrieve from the raw data, all data relevant to the research questions. By developing a familiarity with the content of the stories teachers told about corporate schools, I carried out a process of *discovery*, a process Taylor and Bogdan (cited in Tuckman, 1995, p.132) claim is designed to "identify a large array of potentially important experiences, ideas, concepts, themes, etc., in the data".

Stage one of the analysis concluded with the compilation of a document containing 'chunks of raw data' perceived by the researcher to be potentially important, and relevant to the study. The data in this document was organised around twenty-four themes or coding categories and it was from an inductive analysis of this data that answers to the research questions emerged.

During the multiple readings of the raw data in each transcript, a record was made of each piece of data considered relevant to the primary research question. Recordings were made at the top right corner of pages in the form of

what Lincoln and Guba (cited in Maykut and Morehouse, p. 128) describe as "a unit of meaning" - a piece of data that "must be understandable without additional information, except for knowledge of the researcher's focus of inquiry".

Each record consisted firstly of a concept, an issue or theme, referred to in this study as a *provisional coding category*. The category name was accompanied by a word or phrase to indicate the experience, perception, feeling, or attitude teachers were expressing about the particular subject. The list of provisional coding categories, in order of their appearance in the raw data appear in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Provisional Categories of Data to Emerge from Raw Data

1. Devolution	9. Responsibility	17. Curriculum
2. Stress	10. Workload	18. Morale
3. Opinions (managerialism)	11. Roles	19. Professional development
4. Corporate schools	12. Change	20. Performance management
5. Corporatism	13. Control	21. Culture
6. Managerialism	14. Efficiency	22. Teacher recognition
7. Competition	15. Effectiveness	23. Teaching
8. Accountability	16. Values	24. Language

Provisional coding categories were determined by a process designed to provide replicability of categories, and internal consistency (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). Firstly and significantly, the data itself clearly revealed recurrent concepts and themes which were used as coding categories Reference was also made to themes, issues and topics raised in Chapter One

of this study, particularly that material discussing consequences for teachers arising from the corporate reform of schools. Secondly, the topics contained in the interview guide (Appendix B) and an element of interpretation and intuitiveness were used in the process of determining coding categories from the raw data. Raw data was thus categorised using the process involving what Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p.136) describe as "look/feel alike criteria". The analysis produced such unitised data as; *Managerialism - top down change; Curriculum - government control; Accountability - not necessary;* and *Teacher recognition - lacking.*

When repeated analyses of transcripts failed to reveal any new pieces of relevant data, a separate inventory was made of the units of meaning extracted from each transcript. The contents of these inventories are referred to in this study as *inventories of meanings.* Each unit of meaning was catalogued in such a way as to enable it to be found in its original context when further data analysis was carried out. On average, each interview produced nearly fifty pieces of raw data, thus providing approximately 300 units of meaning from which to develop a set of research findings.

The inventories of meanings revealed a number of features considered noteworthy at the time of analysis. Firstly, the sheer number of units of meaning to emerge from the raw data was considered a favourable outcome and a part-testimony to the reliability of the research instrument used in this research. Then, and with considerable benefit to the management of the data, it was revealed that the considerable number of references reduced to 24 provisional

coding categories. It was noted too, that each individual inventory contained several, multiple references but that no inventory contained reference to all twenty-four coding categories. For example, one respondent was judged to have referred to the subject of *corporatism* on eight occasions, relating stories about *managerialism, procedures, control of committees, culture, workload* and *financial responsibility.*

The compilation of chunks of raw data containing all *units of meaning* produced a 96-page document. The 'chunk of data' containing each *unit of meaning* was determined to be that amount of data which captured a piece of *full me·ning,* telling the story of a teacher's *experience, perception, feeling,* or *attitude* about corporate schools in its entirety. The contents of that document were assembled according to the provisional coding categories shown in Table 1. Using the *inventories of meaning* to locate them, chunks of data relevant to each provisional coding category were systematically retrieved from the original transcripts and assembled in the order shown in Table 1.

Stage two - Reduction of provisional data / creating a substantive order.

The aim of stage two was to identify fewer central themes from among the 24 provisional coding categories derived from the stories teachers told during interviews. The purpose of refining and reducing provisional data was to prepare a framework around which teachers' stories could be told. The framework for reordering provisional data was determined from a process described by Lincoln and Guba (cited in Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 134) as the constant comparative method of categorising data, a process where "the

researcher seeks to develop a set of categories that provide 'a "reasonable" reconstruction of the data' she or he has collected". The development of a new set of *reasonable categories* commenced with the reassembly of provisional data retrieved during stage one of the analysis.

Provisional data was reassembled according to an order which emerged from the repeated scrutiny and comparison of the *inventories of meanings*, the *provisional coding categories* and the *provisional data*. Provisional data was found to be directed towards three fundamental themes, or *stages* of devolution and corporate managerialism - the *origins of devolution and corporate managerialism*, the *conduct and culture of devolved schools*, and the *consequences of corporate reform*. These three themes were viewed simultaneously as being what teachers said about *the policies, the practices* and *the effects* of the reform agenda.

Approximately 70 percent of provisional data was found to be relevant to the *conduct and culture of devolved corporate schools*. This data richly described Level Two teachers' perceptions of, and experiences with the management of their work. This broad body of data devoted to the workings of corporate schools is developed into a set of three separate propositional statements during stage three of data analysis. These propositions specifically address the issues of *workload, managerialism* and *values*. The two themes, *policies* and *consequences* are represented by one propositional statement each. Provisional data was thus reordered and compiled according to how it was perceived to relate firstly to *the policies*, then *the practices* and finally, *the*

consequences of the corporate reform of teachers' work. A framework representing a continuum was, in effect, established by this order of themes.

Rather than establish what Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 140) describe as "substantive categories" of data, it is being claimed that what was established in stage two of this analysis is a *substantive order* of data (Table 2). Due to the inductive nature of the analysis however, data was continually being reconnected and so the substantive order of data shown in Table 2 was never static. A noticeable benefit of using a continuum for the refinement of data, rather than categories, was that all *items of meaning* were able to be included for further analysis and description.

At this stage of ongoing, inductive analysis, I was well-acquainted with the stories teachers had told about their work. The level of familiarity, and the development of a *thematic continuum* enabled the refinement and reassembly of data to occur at an accelerated rate. Stage two of data analysis concluded with a number of recognisable messages or images beginning to emerge about the policies, practices and consequences of corporate schools.

Stage three - Using key statements to reorder substantive data.

The purpose of the third stage of analysis was to define and articulate the images and messages emerging from the substantively ordered data. This stage began with the scrutiny of substantive data for data that was considered during the analysis as *key statements*. Key statements consisted of either whole, or part statements which were seen to capture the meanings and

sentiments of what teachers had said about their work. In relation to the origins and agenda of corporate managerialism for example, teachers' views were adequately represented by statements such as; *Policies are not for kids*, *EDWA is only interested in the results* and *Corporatism's got nothing to do with kids.* The scrutiny of substantive data produced a preliminary list of 25 pieces of data with the potential to represent one of the five core images being assembled about corporate schools.

TABLE 2

Substantive Order of Data

1. Devolution	9. Control	17. Workload
2. Corporate schools	10. Values	18. Pedagogy
3. Managerialism	11. Curriculum	19. Stress
4. Corporatism	12. Professional development	20. Efficiency
5. Competition	13. Performance management	21. Effectiveness
6. Accountability	14. Culture	22. Change
7. Responsibility	15. Teacher recognition	23. Teaching
8. Roles	16. Morale	24. Language

Key statements are likened in this study to what Lincoln and Guba (cited in Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 139) describe as "propositional statements", or "general statements of fact grounded in the data". Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 139) describes the role of propositional statements at this later stage of inductive analysis as providing a *rule for inclusion* of data. Each key statement was selected for its capacity to best represent the statements of fact grounded in each set of substantive data. In this analysis key statements are used to represent the propositions teachers are making about their work.

The first of the key statements was chosen to represent data relevant to what Level Two teachers had to say about the origins and intent of the corporate agenda. Titled, *Corporatism's got nothing to do with kids*, this proposition attracted data which corresponded to substantive data organised at the beginning, or policy phase of the data continuum. Representing teachers' views on corporate managerialism and the practices of corporate schools are the propositions, *Communication's from the top down, I was a teacher, now I'm a teacher some of the time* and *Your word is not your bond is it.* The final proposition, *I wouldn't tell anyone to do teaching at the moment* represents data expressing views on matters such as teacher recognition, morale and self esteem.

The use of key statements in this analysis closely resembles a strategy described by Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 25) as "making metaphors. " Their description of this strategy outlines the role of metaphors in inductive analysis, and it also points out the role of the researcher in the process. Miles and Huberman (1984) describe the use of metaphors as:

> a frequent and productive tactic for moving interpretively from the denotive to the connotive, much as a novelist or poet does. One steps back from the welter of observations and conversations in the field notes and says to oneself, " What's going on here? What's the image that describes this?" Using a metaphor moves you past sheer description of a phenomenon, up a notch to a slightly more inferential and personal level. Dozens of dispersed pages, or data in a display are subsumed into one generalizing descriptor. (p. 25)

It is acknowledged that the choice of key statements to represent the findings of this inquiry reflect my interpretation of data, not only at this stage but throughout the analysis.

Conclusion.

The findings in this inquiry were concluded using the constant comparative method of data analysis. Using look/feel alike criteria, raw data was analysed and relevant material, or items of meaning were assembled into what has been described as provisional data. Provisional data was reassembled into a substantive order of data, an order perceived to resemble the plan-implement-review sequence of a typical reform cycle. Five propositional statements, or roughly formed outcomes were inductively derived from the substantive data. The detailed findings of this inquiry are structured around these five propositions.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Analysis

Introduction

The presentation of findings in this chapter follows the order in which substantive data was assembled in Chapter two. As a result, teachers' perspectives on the policies and theoretical orientation of corporate reform are presented first. Following this are a set of three perspectives which tell of the impact corporate managerialism has on the management of schools, teachers' workload and the environment in which teachers now work. The final perspective presents teachers opinions on the consequences corporatism has on the profession of teaching. It is to be remembered that the content of each perspective is not claimed to be mutually exclusive, rather it reflects the use of a continuum in the treatment of data during analysis.

Generalising Qualitative Results

The use of teacher story in this study brings with it some recognised cautions regarding the generalisability of results. In a discussion of generalising beyond the case in teacher-story research, Carter (1993) acknowledges:

> The work on story makes the issue of generalizing especially problematic for at least two reasons. First, . . . stories, by their very nature, resist singular or paradigmatic interpretation, and second, . . . the relationship between story and reality is, at best, troublesome. (p. 10)

Following this acknowledgment of problems associated with work story research, Carter (1993, p. 10) issues the warning, "generalisations from story are, at best, precarious". It is this, and other cautions previously raised that limits the provision made in this study for the generalisation of its findings. Rather than attempt to determine the level of generalisability of its findings, one aim of this study has been to present readers with a detailed description of the research process so that readers themselves may decide upon the generalisability of findings beyond the study.

"Corporatism's got nothing to do with kids": *The inappropriateness of market reforms in education*

This perspective is assembled from comments and conclusions teachers made about the origins, the purpose and the agenda behind the introduction of corporate strategies for the management of public education. As suggested by the above comment, participants in this study believed that not only are the corporate changes inappropriate for education, the reforms have done little to improve children's learning. Teachers talked about the hidden political and ideological agenda, the economic imperatives and the unfamiliar values they saw being promoted and pursued by the reform process. They believed that the new corporate values neglected teachers' knowledge and experience, and are counterproductive to pedagogical ideals.

An ideological instrument.

When asked for their opinion on the origins of the corporate reform of education, teachers were quick to link the process to political ideology and

economic rationalism. Teachers generally, expressed the belief that the reform process had little to do with educational goals. While discussing their perception that educational reform was not being driven by educational values, one teacher made the assessment:

> To me the agenda, the sort of education agenda, is very political and it is run by politicians who are influenced by some of your high flying people in the community.

Regarding the origins and rationale of the Western Australian reforms, another teacher expressed a similar view:

> if I reflect back, I'd say it was basically political. To me it seems to have evolved from the Burke [WA Premier] era when the Labor Government was trying to change its image to one of the buddy of the entrepreneur and all this sort of thing.

The same teacher went on to describe the perception that the reform process was motivated by free market values. The teacher talked of an agenda which included the Government's intention to reduce spending on education by increasing the enrolment of students into non-government schools. The movement of students to the private sector would be achieved by making public schools less attractive while giving increased support to the private system. Of the State Government's reform agenda it was said:

> there's a downgrading of our education system. And I don't think it's a hidden political agenda, I think they've made that quite clear in the way that they're funding money towards the private system.

Assertions and opinions such as these prompted findings of a crisis of legitimacy existing within the school. This crisis was generated by a lack of teacher confidence in the broader philosophy of devolution.

Economic imperatives.

One teacher presented an interesting perception of how the consequences for the reduced funding of public education had been devolved through the education system. This had been achieved through the restructure of teachers' work and the introduction of a stringent system of accountability which made the provision of education the responsibility of teachers and schools. In relation to devolution, particularly the element of accountability, the remark was made:

> So they're really putting the pressure on the teachers . . . I suppose in one way it's good to be reflective on your teaching, but they're giving them [teachers] less resources and expecting more from them. And there's also, I think there's a social culture there as well that if something is going wrong in the system it's the teacher's fault.

One teacher who was intimately aware of British reforms was adamant that the corporate reform process was driven by the desire to recreate public education along the lines of private enterprise and, in turn, make public education subject to market forces. In a discussion of the origins of corporate reform in general, the teacher concluded rather pessimistically:

> I imagine the political powers that be are trying to introduce corporate management into the world of education, want to ensure that the same practices are there, are in place across the economic structure, whether it's in education or it's in health care, business, industry.

Unfamiliar values.

Not all respondents cast corporate managerialism in an entirely unfavourable light. Two teachers acknowledged that as a management practice, corporate managerialism had an appropriate and effective role to play in certain industries. However there was strong evidence in the data to suggest that all

teachers considered that corporatism was not appropriate for schools. In the words of one teacher:

> In your real world , . . . [in the] open market the commodities that you're talking about may be you know . . . cornflakes on the shelf, or something like that, and you've got to be good with facts and figures and all the rest of it. But our commodity is a living entity and they're not all the same. They don't all look the same, they are different. So, you know, using this approach of free market just doesn't work

This view was shared by another teacher who made a similar comparison to illustrate the inappropriateness of market values in schools:

> Your commodity is not a set of saucepans, your commodity is kids, kids' minds. And I don't think corporate styles have got any place in schools.

Finally, when talking about decision making at the local level, another teacher expressed the view:

> Policies are not for the kids. Policies are for the benefit of accountability and accountability is not for the kids.

Inadequately resourced change.

Not only were respondents unconvinced of the educational value of the reforms, the shift from pedagogical to corporate values had been difficult. One difficulty to be described was the adoption of unfamiliar work processes which teachers associated with private enterprise. This is evident in the following remarks:

> to me it would appear, you know, we're expected in education to adopt the same, I suppose, management responsibility system as in the world of business, commerce, retail, and it's a new experience for most teachers.

and,

> Well, I guess I'm a teacher, I'm not a marketing man. I have trouble
> within the classroom teaching, let alone marketing what I teach to the
> outside body.

In response to a question about the corporatisation of public schools another

teacher spoke of an incompatibility with the philosophical and practical

application of market values in the classroom. It was said:

> I mean, you know, my classroom doesn't have any corporate structure in
> it. You know, I mean, I'm not a businessman. I'm not a business person,
> I've had no experience. Maybe I've got a slight experience of business
> but I'm not commercially orientated.

A further insight into the difficulties the reform process has presented for

teachers was provided in a comment about the issue of new and unresourced

responsibility. Talking about system-wide restructuring which eliminated

curriculum support facilities for teachers, and changed the curriculum itself, one

teacher explained how EDWA had abandoned their responsibility for the

implementation of reform:

> Once upon a time it was the Education Department. Because they
> provided schools with backup things like resources, in-service, which
> were meaningful to the classroom teacher, to the classes concerned.
> Now all that sort of thing has disappeared, so nowadays the teacher is
> left to his own devices and he has to come up with the goodies without
> having any sense of knowing whether he's doing it correctly, because he
> hasn't got any materials, hasn't got adequate books or adequate
> resources. So to take all these new changes into practice they got the
> old, threw it all out the door, replaced it with nothing.

When asked about the provision of training and in-servicing for classroom

teachers having to comply with the reforms, teachers described circumstances

of being *kept in the dark.* As it was put by one teacher:

> It [reform] was introduced . . . by providing conferences, seminars, PD, if you like, for the management first, . . . but from my experience it tends to be that by the time it comes down to the teachers there's less and less PD available on that, because most of the money is invested in management.

No pedagogical legitimacy.

With a shared belief that educational reform was all about ideology and cost cutting and nothing to do with education, many teachers expressed feelings of mistrust and cynicism about the reform process. Data shows that the reforms had little legitimacy among teachers, and that teachers had little confidence in the reforms or the way they were implemented. On the issue of legitimacy it was said:

> The people who are setting the agenda for what's being taught in the classroom are so removed from the classroom and haven't got their finger on the pulse. You know, it's either someone who's been 20 years out of the classroom, so he doesn't really know what's going on in the classroom, or it's someone who's spent one year in the classroom and then has been in Administration for ever after. Or someone who's never been in a school in their life, telling us what to do . . . people at the top should be people that have experienced what it's like in a classroom in Western Australia so that they then have some sort of rapport with the teachers. That's where the cynicism comes from.

and in a similar, disapproving way another teacher stated:

> They [EDWA management] might have the corporate skills and again, you know, there's nothing wrong with corporate skills, the budget to get rid of the waste, . . . to streamline things, but people who have no idea about the educational system have no real place in running it in a corporate form.

And finally, from a third teacher who was discussing the formulation and

implementation of the reform process:

> I don't think they [EDWA] can spell clear expectations for themselves. I'm sure they don't know what they're doing. They're chasing their tails and we're the workers.

In response to a question about the level of professional development for the introduction of new technology into the school another teacher reiterated the perception that teachers were not offered adequate training. Of professional development of teachers it was said:

> There isn't, there isn't any. That's why I'm going into the primary schools to teach the teachers to teach the kids. I'm doing that on my own time. I do that after school and on a Professional Development day when most people went out and did what they wanted to do. I volunteered to take the staff to come here so I can serve the staff of another school.

After a lengthy discussion of the changes to schools over the last decade, another teacher emphatically declared:

> Nothing I did at university, not one thing, quote this, . . . nothing I did at university could prepare me for this, nothing.

Conclusion.

The respondents in this study rejected the principles and values which they perceive to have underpinned educational reform in Western Australia since the late 1980s. Teachers were convinced that an emphasis on economic rationalist values such as cost effectiveness, competition, flexibility, decentralisation and deregulation is inappropriate in public education. There was a strong perception among teachers that new policy is heavily influenced

by politics and industry and that it brings no improvement to the quality of students' education. Within schools the workload associated with the continuous implementation of reform during the last decade has been poorly resourced and teachers question the impact of the *corporate workload* on their core duties. In short, the reform agenda was found to lack legitimacy.

"Communication's From the Top Down": *The Problem with Managerialism*

This is the first of the three, consecutive propositions to reflect on operational dimensions within the corporate school itself. This proposition presents the images respondents have of the management practices and management culture of the corporate school. It represents the view that the management of teachers and their work is a top-down, control-oriented process and that school based decision making is dominated by EDWA policies through the principal.

Teachers described a school culture where a focus on kids and teaching is being eclipsed by managerialist values in relation to teachers attracting promotional recognition. Both the pilot study and case study established that teachers believed a commitment to the classroom attracted little recognition under such circumstances, particularly following the abolition of the role played by subject superintendents.

Teachers described how corporate values and top-down management strategies have resulted in a shift in values at the school level. Respondents acknowledged that the devolution of responsibility to the school level had caused a situation where the value of teaching and learning was eclipsed by

achievements associated with the management process within the school.

A view was presented that teachers' time, and their responsibilities were of secondary importance to the management priorities of the school. Teachers were convinced that they were in no position to gain recognition in the corporate school unless they turned their attention beyond the classroom. One teacher spoke of the widely accepted belief, however, that such involvement by teachers resulted in a negative impact on student learning. This condition in schools prompted a recognition by the study of a phenomenon described as *outward facing*, a situation which encourages classroom teachers to neglect their core duties.

Other than having a general feeling of suspicion and disbelief about EDWA's claims of better educational outcomes, teachers also felt they had little control or influence over the ongoing changes to their work. Focussing on the managerialist practices at system and local level, this proposition describes an environment where Level Two teachers have few choices and little influence in the decision-making process. The lack of opportunity for teachers to exercise choice and professional judgement was seen to arise from external controls over matters such as finance, staffing, curriculum, assessment and change. This proposition embraces teachers' comments on issues which includes *organisational control, decision-making, communication* and *values.*

System and district level control.

Teachers in this case study demonstrated detailed understandings of EDWA's

corporate structure and of the post-1987 period of reform in general. An aspect of the reform process to be widely acknowledged was the influence wielded by political and business interests. Speaking about EDWA's strategic plans, one teacher made the comment:

> I think they're a little bit politically driven, and there is, you know, people who do have a lot of political clout saying what our system should or shouldn't have in it.

On the topic of policy making in public education, another teacher noted the role played by business:

> Well with the corporatisation, no longer are you getting educators, you're getting high profile businessmen and policies run by business. The policy of the school is affected by the Principal, because she's got, or he's got, his say. But overall, . . . they take [policy] from the District and the District takes it from Silver City (EDWA).

Interviewees described the style of management in public education in Western Australia as top-down and prescriptive. Part of the image respondents had of the managerialist process was well represented by one teacher who expressed this general view of the way communication occurs system wide:

> I think with decentralisation I think communication has lapsed and I think for me anyway communication needs to be in both directions to be effective, not always permeating from the top down.

It was widely accepted that many of the reforms to teachers' work were devised to strengthen the control EDWA has over teachers and schools. The unmistakable feeling gained from teachers was that this form of control has nothing to do with pedagogical values or teacher professionalism. This perception of the reforms is captured by one teacher in a discussion which

focused on the degree of flexibility and empowerment teachers have in the corporate school:

> Flexibility of what? There's no flexibility in what we teach. No, I don't think we're given any flexibility and I think our self-esteem has been stripped from us and [we're] told, you know, if you don't get this outcome you're a loser and if you do get this outcome it wasn't because of anything that you did it was because the curriculum was great.

Principal's control of school decision-making

Of the data which confirmed this second proposition, teachers spoke mostly of the control the principal exercised over the school decision-making process and the work of teachers. In their school, teachers described a form of administrative control which effectively silenced any alternatives to what was acknowledged by several respondents as predetermined goals, processes and outcomes. Supplementing the rigid and strictly enforced control mechanisms of EDWA, the degree of control at the local level caused teachers to express feelings of professional and personal frustration.

Committees.

Respondents were consistent in their views about the performance of the committee system in the school. They spoke of the ineffectiveness of committees to make decisions independent of the principal's influence, and that committee membership was merely an avenue for gaining recognition in the corporate system. A view expressed about the independence and integrity of the committee system highlighted the control mechanisms perceived to operate

within the school:

> You can't have a true committee if the person in charge is an underling for the Administrative Section, and that's what goes on in all schools.

Another teacher offered the following view of administrative control of committees at the school level:

> These committees and things that they've got, the agenda is already written and they already know where they [administration] want to go before you get there . . . I don't mind that [school based decision making groups] idea, it sounds great, that you know teachers are working towards common goals, that's fantastic, but when you get into reality, some of these committees are not committees, they are driven by the Admin, who have already made up their mind what's going on and what will happen and I really think that they [pay] a bit of lip service to quieten the majority, that the decisions have already been made in a lot of situations.

Supporting this view of administrative control was another teacher who remarked:

> I've been here for 7 years . . . all policy has been accounted for by whoever's in charge of the school and there is discussion about it, but the discussion has no relevance . . . You know, it's going to be done this way and that's it . . . the discussion and the eventual outcome are two different things.

Expressing a similar view was another teacher who was asked whether an openness existed across the committee system and the decision-making process in the school. The conclusion drawn by that teacher indicated there wasn't:

> I'd have to be cynical here and say no, it doesn't. But again it could range from school to school, where, you know, if the teachers are involved in the setting of the school goals etcetera of course there would be a, I suppose, a more positive atmosphere. But I tend to think that at

times it's not, and it's driven by Administration who set down the law of what needs to be done.

Staff meetings.

When asked about the role of whole-of-staff meetings in the school's decision-making process, one teacher explained that a high level of administrative control applied to that forum:

> Because they're so structured you don't have general business. It's just, it's all structured, formal information that admin want to get over, running general school events and the way that they think things should be run, they get guest speakers in who they think you would like, and that sort of thing.

Another teacher spoke of his experience in attending Heads of Department meetings where, again, there was evidence of the principal's domination of the agenda:

> If you went to a meeting, for example, Heads of Department all went to a meeting, the Principal would have [the principals'] say and that would be it. You didn't have time to discuss, you didn't have time to talk, there was no leeway for general discussion, it was what [the principals] wanted to get over, end of story, end of meeting ... and I know when I went to staff meetings if [the principal] didn't want to hear what [the principal] wanted to hear [the principal] would cut you down ruthlessly, and no qualms about it. I got to the stage where I felt ,'Well what am I doing here'?

The issue of control arose frequently in discussions with teachers on matters other than school based decision-making. In the fourth proposition there is a strong undercurrent of control in the images teachers present of the accountability process which operates in corporate schools.

Managerialist imperatives - Little recognition or regard for teaching.

The study found that teachers shared a strong feeling that they themselves, and the work they do in the classroom are undervalued in the corporate school. Teachers believe that the culture of management and administrative priorities has spread unchecked across the school to the extent that teachers, and their core duties go virtually unrecognised by management. Teachers described how the performance of administrative and other non-core duties is the only way for a classroom teacher to gain professional recognition. In the words of one teacher:

> the policy of advancement in schools nowadays is what you do for the administration, rather than what you do for the kids.

When asked how clearly defined a classroom teacher's duties are one teacher drew attention to the lack of a duty statement for teachers. That teacher went on to describe a perception that the principal exercised an authority over teachers' time. Examples of this control over teachers use of their time included mandatory attendance at meetings during recess and lunchtimes, and during DOTT [duties other than teaching] time. Another example included whole of school events:

> If the Principal suddenly decides that this is what I have to do in my DOTT time them I'm basically expected to do it. For example, they called a fundraising event . . . over a certain number of periods of the day and you happen to have all DOTT periods. Now technically it's your DOTT time, but practically what happens? You're down there supervising students through your DOTT time. That's the sort of thing I mean. What your duties are sometimes tend to fall right in the lap of what the Principal says.

Another teacher described how teachers' DOTT time was being appropriated for non-teaching duties:

> Nowadays DOTT time is no longer your time, it will now be used as doing other duties than teaching. That means, if the school want to, or the community or the corporation wants to instil something in the school, well then you are pulled out of your DOTT time and you are indoctrinated with what is required of you.

In a discussion of the way administrative duties are devolved at the school level, one teacher described how the Advanced Skills Teacher position had been *appropriated* by the principal. Rather than being recognition for professional and teaching competence, the teacher described a perception that the position was being manipulated for management purposes in corporate schools:

> I think that philosophy has changed to interpretation of the principals. If you want to be an Advanced Skills Teacher, you go on this committee, this has got to be done, that's got to be done, You don't have a choice, you do it.

Part of the role shift for classroom teachers in the corporate school was summed up by one teacher who concluded:

> We all have to be in the administration system.

The incorporation of administrative and other non-teaching duties into the workload of classroom teachers is one of the images respondents presented of the cultural change their work has undergone. Teachers' workload is an issue examined more closely in the following proposition.

Promoting self-interest.

Teachers described how the dominant management culture in schools impacted on the attention teachers gave to students and teaching. Although pilot study and interview data showed that teachers believe classroom and student neglect arise from teacher involvement in extra-curricular activity, there is no acknowledgment of this issue in the official discourse on devolution. When talking about competition between teachers for promotional recognition, one teacher described how this meant "doing more for the system and the school". That teacher described how, in their experience of this practice, students are disadvantaged:

> What I have found in most departments, in doing that, one aspect of one class or one group or one form or whatever . . . everything else suffers down the line. I really do believe that teachers do it for, One, their benefit first, then the school's, because they have to show they're responsible to the school, they have to portray the school as an outgoing thing with fantastic things occurring in it. Then the kids, I find, are usually on the last level. You know, whereas it should be the kids first.

Another teacher spoke of the issue of pursuing extra-curricular duty in relation to Level Three teaching administrators:

> if you've got someone who comes in and through merit promotion gets a Level three job, that person is trying to move up the ladder, so they're not really worried about the education of the kids, they're looking at well to get from Level three to Level four what qualities do I need? Oh, more in management. So they're looking at how they can delegate things and how they can get more management experience.

Asked whether they felt teachers were becoming obsessed with self promotion, one teacher concluded:

> I think to some extent to get anywhere in this system you do.

Conclusion.

The image respondents presented of school management was closely aligned with the concept of unilateral dominance of all areas of decision making by EDWA and the principal. This image is conveyed in the conclusion drawn by one teacher:

> we don't have enough PD days where we can sit and discuss even local problems in the school, we don't have time for general business, it's always what management want, what management perceive to be the right and wrong things, it doesn't get back to the staff to see if what they want is right or wrong. So communication here, as far as I'm concerned, is always on a knife edge and it's always from the top down. And when you do take a problem up there it usually gets 'Go and sort it out' rather than 'I will help you sort it out'.

The management practices of delegation, and offering little recognition of teachers' duties has impacted negatively on teachers. There was evidence in the data that teachers felt professionally threatened by these trends and, consequently, self-image and morale among teachers was affected.

"I was a Teacher, Now I'm a Teacher Some of the Time": Increased Workloads

This perspective, the second of three being presented of the corporate school itself, focuses on the additional workload corporate reform means for classroom teachers. Whilst other perspectives presented in this chapter raise the issue of workload, this perspective captures respondents' views and attitudes towards the validity and consequences of reform-related workload across the board.

Teachers described how non-teaching duties associated with issues like administration, accountability, performance management, documentation and

change in general, demand an increasing amount of teachers' time. Part of the image teachers have of the issue of workload is that less time is available for students and teaching. Another consequence arising from the demands being placed on teachers' time, where teachers are less able to engage in social and informal discussion, is more stress.

The corporate workload.

Teachers described how the corporate reform of their work has resulted in them having to face new, additional duties which have little, if anything, to do with student learning. This workload was described by one teacher as being largely related to the *paper war*, a term used widely by teachers in reference to matters as diverse as documentation requirements, attendance at management meetings, performance management and accountability. The term *corporate workload* is used in these findings to refer to the additional, non-teaching duties for teachers associated with the reform of public education.

Teachers, generally, expressed the belief that the growth of the corporate workload coincided with devolution. Teachers perceived that this growth was proportional to the rate at which the management of public education increasingly reflected corporate attributes. Speaking broadly of change to the workload of classroom teacher over the decade of change, one teacher commented:

> Well I don't think it's actually increased in terms of how I prepare my lessons or give my lessons - I think the administrative work has overkill.

The few references made by respondents to an additional workload associated with classroom teaching were in relation to curriculum and resource development. Teachers' views of the corporate workload associated with the reform of their work were encapsulated in the following remark:

> I'm pretty sure when I started you know, there wasn't as many forms I [had] to fill in as I have to now, or spend time being accountable to a Head of Department and . . . the Administration.

One teacher spoke of the burgeoning paper workload related to the way in which policy is articulated at system and local level. Of the current practice, it was said:

> I think there's, you know, there's so much paper work. You've got to read it and digest [it]. If you don't keep on top of it it's just lost in the basket. I had an 'in' and 'out' basket and a 'too hard' basket. Now I'm finding one has a 'read' basket ' . . . all the little bits of information that you've got to read is enormous.

For teachers, the trend of additional paperwork accompanying corporate change extended beyond the processes of management. In relation to changes to classroom teaching and in dealing with students, and with feigned sarcasm, another teacher made the comment:

> Oh, I have to have all the documentation . . . and a lot of time would get wasted on covering ourselves.

Teachers spoke of the administrative aspects of their work with strong disdain. The study found that teachers viewed this work as intrusive and largely irrelevant to their core duties. Responding to a question about the cause of the corporate workload, one teacher acknowledged the widespread nature of the phenomenon:

It's bureaucracy in itself, I mean, you ask any policeman or any nurse or anybody anywhere, they don't, nurses don't get time to care about patients, police don't get time to pick anybody up because they're too busy bloody filling out paperwork. I'm not quite sure where that paperwork goes, that big paper city (LAUGHTER).

Teachers rarely elaborated on pedagogical practices or issues but, in the frequent references to educational change in general, curriculum change was discussed. The new, outcomes-based Curriculum Frameworks (EDWA, 1997) being adopted during the course of the study presented teachers with further additional work. In the words of one teacher:

What was once an enjoyable area of work has now become very hard because it's all been regimented to achieving outcomes that have very little relevance to anybody. They're good on paper, but to attain that is almost impossible when you cover so many broad fields within the outcomes. I've had to work a lot harder. The overall marking again has probably tripled.

The irrelevance to teachers of the *corporate workload* discussed in this section was reiterated by a teacher who mused over the reasons for its existence:

Well I think the people that want it are those Silver City [EDWA] people that aren't teaching.

Further reference to administrative workload was made by a teacher while discussing the administrative role demanded of form teachers. In relation to matters like student attendance it was said:

you know, I think that someone else needs to do some of the work we're doing there. Sure it can be delegated and we can help out, but you know I think our main thing is to do the teaching. Let someone else worry about why someone hasn't got out of bed etcetera. Those sort of things.

When challenged to compare the work of teaching prior to 1987 with teachers'

work in the late 1990's, one teacher provided an interesting image. Summing up the impact of the corporate workload, that teacher concluded:

I was a teacher, I'm now a teacher some of the time.

The same issue of administrative burdens for teachers arose in a discussion of the corporate reform of the public sector in Britain in the late 1980s. Having elaborated extensively on the implementation of the Thatcherite reform of public education in particular, one teacher presented a critical assessment of what appeared as a subsidiary role played by the corporatisation agenda. At a time of tumultuous industrial unrest in Britain, one of the roles of corporate reform was described in terms of its control function:

> Well, the Conservative Government wanted to reduce public unrest, or school unrest, and one way of doing it was to introduce corporate management in schools . . . it increased your workload, it gave you a lot more things to have to consider, and most teachers became exhausted.

Less time for kids.

Discussions about workload associated with the corporate reform of teachers' work ultimately led respondents to offer their perceptions of the effects of corporatism on themselves and their role as teachers. One clear indication from teachers was that the additional workload for classroom teachers was contributing to circumstances in devolved schools where, in the words of one teacher "there is less time for kids". Reference to this consequence was made by another teacher in the context of the changing nature of school culture in general:

there's no time necessarily for abused children or pastoral care, all those sorts of things because you're too busy taken up with paperwork.

Teachers also referred to the amount of time and flexibility that they devoted to their core duties. An image of teachers having few opportunities for professional choice and flexibility was conveyed by one teacher who said:

> All the little bits of information that you've got to read is enormous . . . you get bogged down with so much.

Another teacher who was reflecting on the opportunity teachers have to improve or even maintain the quality of service to students' echoed similar thoughts:

> You get so bogged down in performance management, your professional development - where am I going to go, what am I going to do? We're all sort of scratching at things.

In terms of the circumstances which now exist in the corporate school as a result of the magnitude of change, a third teacher declared quite emphatically:

> Oh, it's cut and dried that there is no time for improving a student's quality of where they're going because I'm too busy surviving myself.

Teachers spoke of a range of things in addition to workload which contributed to the perception of there being *less time for kids*. The perceived shift from pedagogical to managerialist values was seen as a further contribution to this situation. When asked whether an environment for students which is caring and mutually respectful and *things like that* was a measurable thing that the Department (EDWA) sought to find out about, one teacher ruefully concluded:

> I don't think it would be on their agenda to be quite honest.

The issue of stress was discussed frequently, and in relation to many aspects of corporate reform during the conduct of this study. Here, in relation to workload, an image is presented of classroom teachers facing professional and personal conflict. Other than a neglect of student interests, respondents indicated that the workload was an additional source of stress for classroom teachers.

The study found that not only has teachers' workload increased, but the lack of importance attributed to it by management leaves classroom teachers feeling vulnerable. An impression of the role played by the corporate workload was indicated by the shift from process-oriented values to results-oriented values in the corporate school. When asked how the paperwork overload was treated it was said:

> I don't come to school with kids' thoughts in mind, I come to school to find out how much trouble I'm going to be in for not filling out what report, and how accountable am I and who's going to sue me or, you know, like the stress levels are just, have reached new heights.

Further comment was made about how the same workload occupies teachers' time to the extent that they have no time for informal professional discussion, "You know when you sort of chew the fat". Corporate schools were thus described as stressful environments for classroom teachers:

> You're too busy doing other things . . . you know there is no pressure release. That to me is stressful because you don't have the time or the chance to talk to people. There's no staff association, there's very little time, if any time together, it's always 'This is what we've got to cover', it's all planned, it's all set to deadlines and there's no leeway.

In a discussion of the efficiencies being achieved by classroom teachers, one teacher presented an image of the difficult professional circumstances under

which teachers worked. It was said:

> I think a lot of pressure is put on teachers to do more than teach.

Conclusion.

This study has made a number of findings in relation to the irrelevant and poorly resourced additional workload facing teachers in corporate schools. The findings are consistent with claims made in respect to teacher workload by critics of devolution and corporate managerialism (Shacklock,1995). One teacher gave the following account of their management of the corporate workload:

> There's more words and more jargon, and I just get the hang of one word and it doesn't matter, it's gone. In fact, I decided a couple of years ago that I wouldn't get the hang of any more jargon because, you know, that way I didn't have to get seriously overloaded . . . I mean the second you get the hang of it it's gone.

Another teacher spoke of the importance of administrators in the corporate school in gaining the commitment of teachers for change:

> It really depends on who's at the top and it comes down to the skills of the administrators. You know, because, as I said, the delegation of tasks if it's done in a proper way and given teachers' ownership, people will develop it and enjoy doing it, where if it's not, it's thrust upon them, you know, you'll get unhappy teachers, and unhappy teachers tend to not put as much effort into it.

"Your Word Is Not Your Bond": _Increasing Insecurity and Stress_

The third perspective, devoted to functional aspects of the corporate school, is structured around the recently introduced processes, and culture of accountability and performance management. The study found that, other than

additional and unfamiliar work, these reforms have presented classroom teachers with an increasingly threatening environment in which to work. Data indicated that teachers are feeling vulnerable to a results-oriented appraisal which relies on expansive documentation, non-teaching interests and self-promotion rather than excellence in pedagogical strategies and classroom performance. Amidst circumstances including wide ranging change and the lack of a duty statement, teachers described a working environment that was uncertain and professionally unreasonable.

A professionally threatening system.

Teachers spoke of the process and culture of accountability and performance management in the corporate school as the most threatening aspects of the reform agenda. There was a widely held perception by Level Two teachers that despite their previously confirmed excellent teaching record the new reforms made teachers feel inadequate. There was a strong element of cynicism and mistrust in teachers' attitudes towards the appraisal system. These feelings are evident in comments made in relation to the changing culture of the workplace and the process of accountability:

> I think the idea of accountability is fine in concept . . . I quite go along with it, that we are all accountable for what we do, but one wonders what the actual agenda is behind it.

Another perception of the accountability process demonstrated the association teachers made between it and the process of corporate reform and cost cutting:

> With less money they've (EDWA) got to try and make sure that there's some sort of system that can go around that they are accountable for

> And the way to do that is to have many such, I suppose, forms or regulations, or hurdles I suppose you could call it, that everyone has to abide by or perform. So they're making people accountable. You do this task, you will do this, this and this. And they're delegating it out. So what it comes down to is that less resources in the classroom... the teacher will have to show that they're doing a better job each year as well.

Another threatening aspect of the new accountability for classroom teachers was highlighted in a discussion of teachers' duties. The concern for *professional safety* lay in the absence of a quantification of teachers' work:

> I've never been given a job description. I mean I've been given a list of things that I'd be expected to do, but it's never specific to me as a classroom teacher or as a form tutor . . . my concern is that individual teachers are individuals and the input that you can put into your job will be dependent upon your skills, your expertise, your knowledge whatever and your energy and to some extent how much free time you can devote to it.

In relation to how the lack of a duty statement for classroom teachers creates professional insecurity, another teacher described their experience with accountability:

> Well, as I said, I haven't seen the script that I've been accountable to. I've just been told and I didn't know it was being done 'till half way through the year.

The threatening nature of accountability was confirmed by one teacher when asked whether accountability was an even-handed, cooperative, collegiate sort of process:

> No, because if you don't do it the way that person [management] wants it done, it's not cooperative. It's either do it this way or . . .

A further insight into the classroom teachers perception of the appraisal process was offered in the following comment:

> I know that my work's looked at. I don't know as far as their work, how they're accountable. It's sort of one way. People look at how I'm accountable in the classroom, but I never see how the Administration are held accountable.

The changes precipitated by the appraisal culture to teachers' professional environment has caused teachers to question elements of their work ethic. The administrative demands placed upon classroom teachers has caused them to re-evaluate past practices for which little real recognition is given. On the topics of school and system values, and teacher recognition, one description highlighted the expectations being faced by teachers in corporate schools:

> You have to go to a meeting at night time, you have meetings after school, we have meetings in our lunch hour . . . It's not recognised. You go to parent nights, you go to parent meetings, you go to presentation nights, you go to things like school river cruises, balls, drama things. You're expected to go to all these things over and above your own time, and [management are] saying 'But that's part of your job'.

Vulnerability and stress.

Accountability has already been described in these findings as a one-way process where true negotiation of teachers' core duties had not occurred. Teachers described experiences which illustrate the appraisal-oriented nature of the reforms.

> We're accountable, we're told that we're accountable, but no-one offers the details, really, we only get the end result, 'You've done it wrong'.

This, almost disciplinary perception of accountability, was shared by other

teachers, one of whom commented:

> When you've done your job badly that's when you get sure that you weren't quite accountable.

The negative purposes to which accountability is applied was confirmed by another teacher who summarised their experiences with the process. Of the accountability process, and of the school culture it was said:

> you certainly know when you've done it wrong, but you never ever know when you've done it right.

When asked how teachers are affected by the process and culture of the appraisal system teachers described conditions which were quite unpleasant. One teacher remarked:

> Oh I think it makes them [teachers] feel very stressed, very vulnerable . . . I just think there is so much negative reinforcement for the teacher.

Not pedagogically driven.

Respondents were convinced that the appraisal of classroom teachers excludes the recognition of excellence in classroom practice. Teachers spoke with disappointment of a system which failed to recognise their core duties. In the words of one teacher:

> Since I've been trying for promotion no-one's ever come in and seen my classroom . . . I really think for promotion we need to have people look at people teaching and see that, you know, that good curriculum delivery is there.

The perception that good classroom practice goes unrecognised in the corporate school was confirmed in the response given by another teacher

Having experience in the classroom and being very good at teaching means nothing in the promotional position at the moment.

And from a third teacher who simply laughed in response to a question asking whether their experience as a teacher provided a good resume for them these days:

My Head of Department has never been into my classroom, sat down and observed a lesson and given me any feedback.

Teachers spoke of how the documentation of the professional duties they carry out had assumed a level of importance much greater than the actual conduct of those duties. The managerialist, results-oriented nature of local and system-level appraisal was made evident in the description one teacher gave of the evidence managers sought of a teachers' efficiency:

Well you have to spend so much time making your paperwork look fabulous, because that's what it comes down to.

In response to the same issue another teacher replied:

Well the most obvious things are your pieces of paper that have to appear either in the office or on the Deputy's desk or on the Head of Department's. If you want to be seen to be efficient, you get seen to be handing the marks and grades in on time.

A sense of betrayal of good classroom practice was expressed by other teachers in their perceptions of what was required to demonstrate their efficiency. When asked what skills were required by classroom teachers one teacher replied:

How to whip up the statistics or how to do graphs and how to prove that, you know, this year's Year 10s did marginally better than last year's. Well big deal . . . It doesn't mean that we are better or worse teachers.

The prominence of a *culture of documentation* in the corporate school was emphasised in comments made by another teacher in their recollections of a particular set of events:

Oh, I have to have all the documentation. I, you know, tested this kid, I got the test results, I gave the test results back to the kid, I have to waste a lot of time on documentation, you know, . . . and when he doesn't turn up I have to document and waste all my time on that and then sit here and wait for him.

The low trust in teacher performance, and disinterest shown by management in circumstances accounting for student results was highlighted in data gained during the study. This evidence was contained in a description of the accountability experience one Level Two teacher endured as a consequence of students' Tertiary Entrance Exam (TEE) results being deemed unsatisfactory. The classroom teacher was made to feel vulnerable and inadequate, and their self-esteem and morale was clearly diminished as a result of the experience. As explained by the teacher, events were precipitated by managements' reaction to statistical evidence:

The kids' results were down from what the mathematical formula said that they would have achieved, and you know, I was held accountable for that and I had to jump through the hoops and say why those kids didn't achieve particular results which a mathematical formula said that they should achieve.

Despite extensive explanations of circumstances which prevailed, and typically prevail over such outcomes, the teacher felt threatened and mistrusted. At no

stage had anyone come to that teachers' classes and witnessed procedures or the learning process. The teacher went on to explain the chain of events:

> the processes were all there. I don't know, it's as though they kept questioning whether it was or not. It was a very uneasy situation for us, but you know I mean to say it was taken to the School Council . . . I was asked about 15 times and I gave the same account every time, and it got to the stage where I individually went through each student . . . but as far as administration goes, they weren't happy with that for quite a long time.

When asked what sort of impact that experience had on them at the time, the teacher described several, counterproductive effects:

> I was there in the school that had marks below the average, that was well known through the school, and I felt very uneasy about that. I really questioned my teaching there for a while. You know, you've got to reflect on it, but I know what the kids did in the classroom and I've got a good understanding of what happened and why it happened . . . [It was] as if virtually to say, you know, you can't be trusted. I guess there is some of that, yeah. I mean you've got to have every bit of documentation to be able to present . . . Your word is not your bond is it? That's basically what it comes down to.

Conclusion.

There was an overwhelming feeling amongst teachers that the focus in corporate schools has shifted away from classroom teaching and been replaced by managerial imperatives and subsequently, teacher control. This trend was described in a conclusion drawn by one teacher:

> You know, teachers are going to be professionally managed by fulfilling certain tasks that have got no relationship, I guess to what their duties are, their teaching duties, so the corporate body is satisfied that they are doing a good job, and if you're not doing the job that they require then, you know, you're shifted out.

"I Wouldn't Tell Anyone To Do Teaching At the Moment": *Poor Morale and Stress*

This proposition was concluded from the analysis of data related to respondents' perceptions of teacher recognition, and the morale and self-esteem of Level Two teachers in the corporate school. The study found that Level Two's are given little recognition and their professionalism is threatened by inflexible conditions, delegation, low trust and poor resources.

Typically, Level Two teachers have little power and are blamed for poor student performances. Teachers described a system which offers no promotion or financial reward for the experience and classroom performance of highly competent teachers. The increased workload for teachers which results from having to implement continuous, unresourced and poorly articulated change goes unrecognised. With the perception that public education is becoming run down and that it receives little community support, the status of teaching and teacher morale is low.

No professional recognition.

The findings of this study in relation to the workload associated with the corporate reform of teachers' work were discussed in section three of this chapter. Also relevant to the findings presented in this final perspective are those stories which described the domination of teachers' work by the managerialist values and imperatives now operating in corporate schools. These images appear in section one of this chapter. It is the lack of recognition of the *corporate workload*, and of teachers' duties in general, that is now the

subject of discussion.

Teachers described circumstances in corporate schools where they are taken for granted by management, and contempt is shown for their core, professional duties. One teacher described the management's attitude towards teachers in relation to the vast extra-curricular workload expected of them:

> None of this is recognised. They say, 'As a professional you would do this as a course of events'. They call professional one thing, but they act as something else. They just don't treat you as a professional person when it comes to being professional.

When asked if the corporate system of school management in general encouraged professionalism among teachers another teacher declared:

> No. Well, no, no, we're delegated tasks. There's no professionalism in there at all. You know, in the true corporate one [school], well no I should say an administration-driven one, no, you're delegated a task and you will carry out that task and that's it.

A source of strong ill-feeling among teachers was the lack of recognition for the implementation of the reforms which were impacting so adversely on their work. Frequently singled out as a specific example of this was the development of new curriculum:

> The financial reorganisation of the school, I can't believe improved the children's education. No. What has improved the children's education is the efforts of individual teachers to improve their curriculum. And that was often done by voluntary meetings . . . We didn't get any credit for it. The government, the principal of the school, I would imagine that they were aware of what we were doing, but they didn't actually come and say 'Well done for doing this extra work'.

Insofar as [National] curriculum development went in Britain, one teacher spoke of the *day courses* and *weekend conferences* that had to be attended in teachers' own time. Asked how much recognition and reward there was for teachers' time, and their new knowledge and skills, the teacher declared:

> Absolutely none . . . And sadly there was very little recognition by the world outside education of the work and that learning.

As an example of this phenomenon of non-recognition, another teacher cited their experience in the context of a high-profile exhibition of students' work at a prestigious city venue. The teacher began:

> I was proud of my work . . . but [the principal] didn't come up to me. [The principal] said nothing to me all night. [The principal] might have smiled at me, [the principal] said nothing to me afterwards at school, there were scratches on the board, on the whiteboard at school, 'a successful exhibition'.

Despite this type of voluntary effort over many years at the school, the teacher concluded:

> I've never been recognised by the boss, the principal, on anything I've done.

The corporate agenda in public education, and its attendant values has not only resulted in low recognition of teachers ' core duties, it has alienated highly experienced teachers from the decision-making processes in the school. Teachers' sense of personal and professional worth have been obviously affected by this treatment. Reflecting this circumstance were the comments of two teachers:

> I'm only just off 50 . . . you know I've been around the system for a hell of a long time. But at no stage are you asked or invited for comment.

and,

> I think if you've got to 20, 25 years' experience they're now telling you to go and suck eggs . . . but I feel like as a 25 year on the job teacher I don't need to sit down and say 'I am doing this because of this reason', it's written into the program anyway.

No promotion or financial reward.

In addition to the lack of professional recognition for their part in the implementation of the corporate reforms, the study found that teachers believed there was a lack of financial reward for their efforts. This perception of the reform was discussed in relation to factors such as productivity and performance appraisal which attracted financial recognition in the corporate world. When reflecting on this comparison between the corporate school and private enterprise, teachers demonstrated an awareness that school reform was being done *on the cheap*. Making this point are the comments of one teacher:

> In business your on-line manager would see you every year and, you know, interview you and make a report on your achievements or success or performance that year. And in the world of business you were rewarded, you know, you might have been given a pay rise, you might have been given some salary enhancements in other forms and you were given praise in terms of appraisal. Has the Principal of the school ever come and thanked me personally for the contribution I've made to the education of the children? In all my 20 years of education, never.

When considering the workload for teachers involved in the reform of public education, another teacher echoed the same awareness:

But in the world of education there aren't the financial rewards available.

The motivation for teachers to undertake the additional duties associated with the reform of their work was described by one teacher as teacher professionalism. However, in an analysis of the expectations and treatment of teachers in the corporate school that teacher : poke of how the professional attitude of teachers was not being recognised:

But they don't pay you in accordance with your professionalism.

Another source of frustration for teachers in terms of gaining recognition for the work they carry out has to do with stated and implied community perceptions of public education. A common feeling expressed by teachers in the research was that not only do they attract very low status in the community, state and federal governments are perceived to make no effort to defend the position of public education. Such an approach by conservative governments in Australia is being increasingly seen by teachers as an intentional strategy to encourage the shift of students to the private system.

In relation to public pressure, many teachers pointed to the misapportioned blame they received for students' social behaviour. One teacher spoke of the intensifying burden teachers faced in having to promote school image in a competitive corporate system of education:

> We see not just the parents of our kids, but the community at large makes value judgements on the school from all sorts of standpoints. The behavior of the kids going to and from school makes an impact, the stories that they hear of . . . what kids are doing on the weekend

Another teacher spoke about the same problem:

> And you see from certain sections of the public they consider the misbehavior of some to be the responsibility of the teachers. You know, if you as a school have got kids in your control as it were you're expected to have a positive impact on their way of life in terms of their behavior in society and so on, and if kids misbehave outside school certain people consider it a criticism of the teachers.

Conclusion.

The new values which are perceived to prevail in the corporate school have contributed to teachers experiencing an overall sense of lost worth. The findings made throughout this study bear testimony to the fact that morale among teachers in public schools is low. This image is captured in a statement made in relation to the values currently being promoted in corporate schools:

> The gardens and all those sorts of things make aesthetic improvement for people, but I don't think teachers are seen as a valuable resource.

The perception that the image held of teachers by the wider community is low was expressed by a teacher who felt a sense of embarrassment about their occupation. That teacher admitted that in a social context:

> I won't put up my hand and say 'I'm a teacher', like it's almost an embarrassment. I can't justify an argument anywhere that says, you know, I'm proud of what I'm doing or I even know what I'm doing.

Despite the personal and professional conflict experienced by teachers, a resilience and professional attitude among teachers remained:

> I think most teachers are dedicated and will try their best to enhance the learning in their particular classroom. So no matter what the system tried

to impose on them, I think in the classroom ... I think sometimes the doors just shut and, you know, some good teaching does go on.

However, with highly experienced teachers expressing feelings of disenchantment with the profession, one is left to question the future of public education. As indicated by one of the respondents, teachers are certainly not able to promote teaching as an attractive form of employment for aspiring professionals. A low opinion of teaching as a career was expressed by one teacher who admitted:

> I mean to say, when I first started teaching it was a profession to be in. These days, no, Year 12s I sort of say to them, you know, don't look at teaching, look at something else.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

<u>Introduction</u>

The findings of this study are critical of the impact corporate reform is having on teachers and the ability of schools to improve student learning. The findings support criticisms raised in Chapter Three of the study, particularly in relation to teacher workload and industry culture. It is worth mentioning that at the beginning of 1998 public education in Western Australia had experienced a decade of corporate reform. It was during 1997, however, that the Federal Minister for Schools, Dr David Kemp, oversaw a report, *National School English Literacy Survey* which expressed severe criticism of the levels of literacy being achieved by Australian students.

The findings of this study support the Minister's implied view that the corporate reform of public education has not achieved improved student learning. Rather than blame teachers and students for perceived poor educational outcomes, however, this study focuses on a number of *crises of management* in public education as factors affecting school performance.

This, the final chapter reviews the findings made in relation to Level Two teachers' perceptions of the corporate reform of their work. On the basis of what was found to be serious teacher criticism of the corporatisation of public

education in Western Australia, a number of suggestions are made in the context of improving not only outcomes for students but importantly, the personal and professional conditions for teachers in public schools. It is in the context of these findings, and with a view to making schools more critical, collaborative and equitable places that the following discussion begins.

Legitimacy

Teachers largely rejected the principles and values which they perceived to have underpinned educational reform in Western Australia since the late 1980s. Respondents were convinced that an emphasis on economic rationalist values such as cost effectiveness, competition, flexibility, decentralisation and deregulation is inappropriate in public education. There was a strong feeling among teachers that new educational policy was heavily influenced by politics and industry, and that it brought no improvement to the quality of students' education. Regarding the legitimacy of such current policy then, the following beliefs were expressed:

- Corporate reform is being driven by industry and a political ideology which includes privatisation and cost cutting.

- The corporatisation of public education is inappropriate.

- Corporatism hasn't produced any better educational results.

The conclusion drawn from these findings is that the philosophy and ideology of corporate managerialism lacked legitimacy among the participants in the study.

<u>Democracy</u>

The findings of this study indicate that teachers did not believe that the rhetoric of devolution and decentralisation match many of the realities in public schools. For a number of reasons including the culture of corporatism, the low trust of teachers and a lack of resources, teachers found that communication is a one way process dominated by EDWA policy and the school principal.

The existence of a committee system to act as a decision-making forum was largely viewed as *tokenism* to the principle of shared decision-making. Committee membership (rather than performance) is critically perceived among Level Two's to be a prerequisite for classroom teachers wanting to gain recognition and achieve promotion in the corporate school. However, there is a strong perception that committees operate under the strict control of school management and EDWA policy. Contrary to managerialist assertions that corporate schools provide conditions for collaborative and participative decision-making, this study found:

- School-based decision making is dominated by EDWA policies and the principal in a top-down, control oriented fashion.

- Accountability is a one-way process where Level Two teachers do not have the opportunity to make their views heard.

Based on these findings, the study concludes that for reasons of domination and control, corporate managerialism did not give case study participants a

strong sense of personal and professional confidence.

Values

The managerialist approach to decision-making at the school level was seen to virtually eliminate a pedagogical and socially democratic influence on changes in the school. Many classroom teachers were disaffected by the corporate culture in schools where the importance of managerialist values and imperatives were seen to have eclipsed the pedagogical processes. This shift in values alienated many of the school's most experienced teachers. This study found that Level Two teachers perceived a change in schools whereby:

- A cultural shift has occurred where the focus on students and teaching is eclipsed by concerns for individual self-promotion and school image.

The conclusion drawn from this finding is that corporate values dominated the culture and practices of the case study school. These circumstances created division and alienated advocates of a strong focus on classrooms and classroom teaching.

Workload

Teachers frequently spoke of the workload involved in the implementation of educational reforms over the last decade. In terms of the total reform process, the provision of physical resources, time and professional development for

teachers to accommodate workplace change has been inadequate. The *corporate workload* has placed such an excessive demand on teachers' time that student learning is adversely affected. On the issue of corporate change and its implementation in schools, this study concluded:

- Corporate changes cause teachers uncertainty and a large, unresourced workload.

- There has been an increased workload associated with corporatism, particularly to do with accountability and management.

- Because it prevents teachers from engaging in informal and social discussion the increased workload associated with corporatisation causes stress among teachers.

- The increased workload for teachers which results from having to implement continuous, unresourced and poorly articulated change goes unrecognised.

Based on these findings the study concludes that the workload associated with the corporate reforms has a counterproductive impact on classroom teachers and the ability of the case study school to deliver high-quality education services.

Accountability

The inadequacy of resources for teachers to fulfil accountability demands presents a personal and professional threat to classroom teachers. The inadequate resources also contributes to circumstances which impact upon classroom teachers' opportunity for professional growth and promotion. Teachers spoke of resources for professional development being proportionally allocated so that by the time they came down to teachers, there was very little money left. In view of this, teachers felt they had inadequate access to information regarding the reform process and were, therefore, disempowered and vulnerable. The emphasis in schools on the key, corporate strategy of accountability attracted strong teacher criticism. From a Level Two teachers' perspective the study found:

- Accountability is a one-way process where Level Two's do not have the opportunity to make their views heard.

- Time taken with accountability documentation and other new, introduced demands has meant less time is being spent on students and teaching.

- With decreasing resources, teachers are having to be more accountable for professional decisions and judgements and their students' results.

- Level Two teachers are vulnerable to accountability demands where, amidst circumstances including change and the lack of a duty statement, there is uncertainty and confusion.

On the basis of these findings the study concludes that the poorly resourced, increased workload threatened teachers' perceptions of teaching as work, and made them vulnerable to the accountability process.

Teacher Morale

Respondents expressed a view that the work they do, and the pedagogical expertise they bring to a school is undervalued. Teachers resented the fact that recognition in the corporate school is not achieved by classroom performance, but by engaging in the non-core duties of school management. Not only did teachers feel undervalued and unrecognised, there was frequent criticism made of management practices, particularly local processes perceived to be utilised for teacher discipline and control. The corporate values which eclipse those of the pedagogical process in schools are seen to be contributing to an unmistakable decline in teacher morale. In relation to job satisfaction and teacher morale, the study found:

- Level Two teachers are given little recognition and their professionalism is threatened by inflexible conditions, delegation, low trust and poor resources. They have little power and are blamed for poor performances by students.

- Level Two teachers attract little recognition in the corporate school, particularly following the abolition of the role played by subject superintendents.

- There is no promotion or financial reward for the teaching experience and classroom performance of Level Two teachers.

- With the perception that public education is becoming run down and that it receives little community support, the status of teaching and teacher morale is low.

The conclusion drawn from these findings is that for reasons including diminishing status and credibility of public education, unresourced workloads and a lack of incentives, the professional morale of participant teachers is declining.

What Can Be Done?

This study has identified a number of crises facing teachers in the corporate school. These findings are not totally unique as they tend to reinforce the conclusions of an emerging body of critical educational research (Goodson, 1992; Hargreaves, 1994; Hattam, 1995; Pelletier, 1991; Rizvi, 1994; Shacklock, 1995; Smyth, 1995). The purpose of this final section is to suggest a way forward by outlining some social democratic principles as a basis for reform of public education.

While the suggestions of the study are primarily designed to improve the professional and physical working environment for classroom teachers, they are made with the expectation of enhancing the quality of public education. My approach for improvement draws on the principles of critical theory, especially the notion of *teacher empowerment* and its potential to improve the quality of teaching and learning for all. The suggestions draw on the work of Smyth (1995), Hattam (1995), Hargreaves (1994) and others who recommend educational reform which is built upon social democratic principles.

In a critique of what is happening to teachers' work, Smyth (1995, p. 17) argues the need for schools to become *critical collaborative communities*. With the aim of achieving improved educational outcomes, Smyth (1995) elaborates the need for schools which are:

- critical -- in the sense that we need to challenge the status quo and the aspects of power, privilege and status that shape the structures within which we do things.

- collaborative -- because meaningful change is only possible through joint collective and political action.

- communities -- because how we relate to and learn with one another has more in common with what occurs in families than what management and organizational theorists tell us occurs in formal organisations. (p. 17)

The findings of this case study highlight the urgent need to rethink the principles informing school reform. The democratic principles and values underpinning Smyth's vision offer a sound starting point. For him, the notion of teacher empowerment, a commitment to shared decision-making and the development of a culture of interdependence, teacher professionalism and critical thinking should be the cornerstones of what happens in schools (1995, p. 19).

Hattam (1995), a colleague of Smyth's also calls for the management of teachers' work to be based on more democratic practices. For teachers to have an *authentic voice*, Hattam (1995) argues the need for governments to:

- provide a space for teachers to engage in debate about not only the technical, administrative or practical issues, but also the moral and ethical issues, such as the purposes of education and the relationship between education and society;

- be committed to a broad distribution of knowledge about education;

- provide adequate funding to schools for the purchasing of educational materials required by teachers; and

- actively seek the voice of teachers on what defines competent teaching; (p. 2)

Hattam's attention to the importance of teachers, and teaching and learning in

the reform of public education is central to the recommendations made in the last part of this chapter.

In response to the findings of this case study, and premised on the social democratic principles outlined by Smyth (1994; 1995) and Hattam (1995), the following recommendations are made:

- That educational reform be undertaken in a democratic and equitable manner in order to gain the confidence of classroom teachers. It needs to incorporate the indigenous voice of teachers, reflect pedagogical values and be communicated more effectively. The development of a more open, informative and equitable regime at school and system levels would contribute to a basis for achieving this broad objective.

- Greater value be placed on teachers' classroom responsibilities and there be a reduction in administrative work for classroom teachers. Strategies need to be developed at school and system levels which demonstrate meaningful recognition of meritorious performance of classroom teachers in the fulfillment of their core duties.

- Classroom teachers be given greater influence in the decision-making processes at the school and system levels. A commitment to providing genuine equality of access for classroom teachers to exert a wider influence on policies and practices, particularly at local level, needs to be undertaken.

- Improved resources be provided for teachers, particularly the availability of time, professional development and technology to implement changes in curriculum, assessment and school administration. The current lack of resources creates conditions in schools which are counterproductive and cause teachers professional and personal conflict. The widening gap between the expectations placed on teachers, and the means, or resources to meet those demands must be addressed and a negotiated balance be established between the two.

- School management undertake a program which has as its objective, the improvement of opportunities for classroom teachers to develop an improved self image. The successful promotion of this ideal is largely dependent on the aggregate skills of the school managers and their willingness and collective commitment to such a program. It could be reflected in a demonstrated values shift towards greater recognition of the pedagogical process and of the conditions which create a more harmonious, truly professional teaching and learning environment.

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APPENDIX A

STATEMENT OF DISCLOSURE AND INFORMED CONSENT

Edith Cowan University requires researchers to provide potential research participants with a *Statement of Disclosure and Informed Consent*. The purpose of the statement is to inform potential research participants of the details of the study so that they may choose whether or not to agree to participate in the study.

Research Topic

A Critical Analysis of Corporate Managerialism in West Australian Public Education: What do level two, secondary teachers have to say?

Purpose of the inquiry

The purpose of this research and our interview is to hear what you have to say about corporatised public school systems such as that here in Western Australia. Yourself and several other Level Two teachers are being asked to be interviewed as part of the (teacher story) case study research I am undertaking for a MEd. thesis on corporate managerialism. The interview is designed to be an informal, open-ended discussion - the table below lists some of the issues and values raised in the devolution debate which might be useful as a comments guide.

Issues	Values
competition, workload, culture, policy, roles, curriculum	efficiency, coordination accountability, goals, responsibility ...

Procedure

Each participant will be involved in *a tape recorded interview lasting approximately one hour.* A transcript of the interview will be given to each participant for correction, comment and verification before data from all interviews is combined and prepared for analysis.

Guarantee of confidentiality

At no time will you be identified by name, nor will you be asked to provide information which will identify yourself. Recordings of interviews, and the transcripts of interviews will be securely stored in my home office. Interviews will be professionally transcribed and then compiled and analysed as *group data* thus ensuring the anonymity of respondents.

Potential benefits of the research

The findings of this study are expected to provide an evaluative insight into the theory and practice of devolution. At a theoretical level the findings may either support, or reject various principles of devolution and, at a practical level, this inquiry provides a forum for teachers to talk about the reform of their work

I, _____ have read the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising I may withdraw at any time. I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published provided I am not identifiable.

_____   _____
(Participant)   (Date)

_____   _____
(Researcher)   (Date)

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Responsibility

- How is the responsibility for education distributed within the system?
- What do you think of that (workable, equitable, fair ...)?
- How clearly defined are teachers' responsibilities ?
- Are teachers having to accept more or less responsibility in the corporate school? eg's?
- What do you consider are your (two) greatest responsibilities as a teacher? What acknowledgment and recognition does the system give to this hierarchy?

Workload

- Have there been any changes to your workload as a result of the corporatisation of schools and education?
- How has your workload changed (amount, intensity, type, ...eg's)?
- Why were (any) changes to your workload brought about...?
- What impact does (any) change in workload have on teachers../ students?
- How do Level two's adjust to (any) change of workload?
- What impact does the current teacher workload have on the facilitation of improved outcomes / benefits for students...?

Role

- Which roles exercise/can exercise power in corporate schools?
- Describe the 'corporate' role you feel is expected to be fulfilled by L2's.
- How do you feel about this?
- How clear are teachers' roles in the corporate school?

- .

- How adequate are training opportunities for teachers whose roles are changing?

Curriculum

- Is the curriculum broader, more flexible in corporate schools? eg's?
- Who controls curriculum policy?
- How clear is curriculum policy ?
- What level of resources are provided for curriculum changes?

Policy

- What do you think are the factors that ultimately determine various education policy (nationally, system-wide & local)?
- How much influence do teachers have on policy?
- How clearly does EDWA convey policy from its Directorates?
- What do you think about the School Decision Making process?
- How clear is internal, school policy? eg's?
- How clear are the medium and long-term directions for education?

Competition

- What types / levels of competition (for funds/resources, promotional recognition, students etc) are found in corporate schools?
- What do you think about schools competing for students eg. via special programs? What future trends may arise from this?
- How far has the market concept of competition penetrated school cultures?
- How do you feel about the application of market competition to public education?
- What impact does competition within schools, and between schools have or educational outcomes? Why? eg's?

Efficiency

- How efficient are corporate schools? Why? To what extent are you able to determine the best use of your time?
- How has the corporatisation (devolution) of education affected your efficiency as a teacher? ... eg's?
- How is *efficiency* determined (system wide / local level)? How is it measured?

Coordination

- Does devolution provided / enable effective coordination of eg. curriculum, teachers, resources, daily duties, school events, students' time?
- How are resources allocated / coordinated at system and local level? eg's?

Accountability

- How would you describe the level of accountability in the corporate school?
- To whom are teachers accountable? Does this raise any issues for teachers (personally, professionally)?
- How are you held accountable now? ... For what?
- What do you think of the process of accountability at the school level?
- How does the accountability process impact on the flexibility and efficiency of teachers / schools?
- How does *accountability* affect educational outcomes for children?. eg's?

Goals

- Are system wide goals explicit? What capacity do corporate schools have to achieve stated system wide goals?
- Do system wide goals coincide with your teaching goals?

Evaluation.

- What emphasis is placed on *evaluation* in the corporate system ?
- Does the processes of evaluation present any issues for L2's?
- Does the process of teacher / school evaluation enhance learning outcomes for students?

Language

- (Ref. new, corporate jargon used in education - targets, markets, clients, cost-effectiveness, accountability,) Does it 'serve' education well?
- What dominates... What language is most powerful? Why?, ...eg's?

Values

- What activities/types of activity are most highly valued/recognised in the school?

Culture

- Is the classroom at the 'centre' of education culture?
- What do L2's think of the 'corporate' culture? How does it affect attitudes towards the reforms .. are they seen as valid, worthwhile?

Issues

- What sorts of issues confront L2's in the corporate organisation? How do the 'corporate issues' affect teacher effectiveness, efficiency etc?
- How could the culture of the corporate school be described?
- What educational outcomes are being achieved by corporate schools?...How? Why?