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## **Work intensification and professionalism : A study of teachers' perceptions in the state school system in Western Australia**

Niall B. Richardson  
*Edith Cowan University*

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**WORK INTENSIFICATION AND  
PROFESSIONALISM:  
A STUDY OF  
TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS IN THE STATE  
SCHOOL SYSTEM IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**by Niall Bruce Richardson, MA, MBA**

**A Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the award of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**In the School of Management,  
Faculty of Business and Public Administration  
Edith Cowan University  
Perth, Western Australia**

**Date of Submission: August, 2004**

## USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.



# **ABSTRACT**

The past two decades have witnessed the introduction throughout much of the Western world of what has become known as economic rationalism, and for some commentators, as economic liberalism. Grounded in neo-classical economic theory, and with close kinship to the Taylorist and Fordist principles of the early decades of the twentieth century, the vision of economic rationalism has led to measures which have tended to favour the business sector in Australia. Throughout the 1990s, the focus has been on the notions of competitiveness, competition, productivity, efficiency, and profit, while the notions of the individual, and of social justice and equity, have often appeared to become correspondingly less important.

As a result, there has emerged an increasing differentiation between the interests of capital and labour or, more broadly, between commercial and social interests. The differentiation is becoming increasingly stark, and one aspect which has attracted attention is that of work intensification.

The thesis revolves around three research questions, related to the issue of work intensification, and with a focus on teachers. For the sake of the study, teachers are deemed to include principals and deputy principals who, especially in smaller schools, have both teaching and administrative duties. The study examines the extent of teacher work intensification. Consequently, the first question is:

**“To what extent does work intensification exist amongst teachers in Western Australian State Schools?”**

From the start, the research indicated not merely differences of opinion but also confusion over what should be considered normal work or normal work expectations. While some studies in Australia and overseas have examined the question of work intensification, most of these have concentrated on work in industries such as construction, mining, and manufacturing. By comparison, relatively little research has looked at work intensification in relation to professionals. This research distinguishes between several interpretations of professionalism, and examines teacher

work intensification as a professional process.

The second research question is:

**“What is the nature of work intensification amongst teachers?”**

This question involves consideration of the extent to which work intensification is as physical or psychological, and the extent to which it may reflect self-imposed and/or externally-imposed work expectations. Logically, this leads into discussion of the reasons for work intensification, and its outcomes. Consequently, the third research question is:

**“What are the causes and effects of work intensification for teachers?”**

This research examines the extent to which work intensification can be attributed to factors which are to some extent within the individual teacher's control and to those which are not.

The overall study is based on data collected from teachers and school principals in a representative number of schools, covering the range of situations and environments experienced by teachers in the Western Australian State School system. Variables covered include age, gender, location, and union membership. Data was collected by means of surveys and interviews, as well as from information on the public record. Comparisons are made with several British and North American studies of the 1990s.

Clear findings were obtained in respect of each research question, underlining the importance to teachers of the issue of work intensification. It was apparent from teachers' responses that work intensification was considered to exist, and that the levels and scope of intensification had increased in recent years. Work intensification was experienced more by some groups of teachers, including male teachers, teachers aged forty and over, primary teachers, and members of the State School Teachers' Union.

As well as having physical aspects such as increasing workload, work intensification was perceived by a large majority of teachers surveyed to be psychological in nature, with stress a major factor. Work intensification was perceived to be externally-imposed, and a majority indicated that they had given strong thought to resignation. In some cases, however, this appeared to lead to further stress, as it ran counter to the individuals' dedication to teaching.

The pace of change, complexity, class sizes, and student behaviour were all identified as major causes of work intensification. Many teachers believed that pressures were being placed on their rights, conditions of work, and professional status, and commented on the increased and increasing numbers of non-teaching roles which they were being expected to fill.

Such issues were perceived as detracting from the core function of teaching, chiefly due to the negative effects of work intensification on preparation time and health. Most affected were male teachers, secondary teachers, and teachers forty and over. The frequently-mentioned determination that students' education should not suffer led frequently to problems with the balance between work and family, and this often had in turn an adverse effect on work performance.

Future research could include studies of community expectations with regard to public education, as well as studies of the costs of work intensification, comparing preventive measures with issues such as worker's compensation, health care, and rehabilitation.

# **DECLARATION**

**I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:**

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;**
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or**
- (iii) contain any defamatory material.**



**NIALLRICHARDSON**

16.3.2005

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Long hours of proof-reading, together with interesting and insightful discussions over coffee, were contributed by Mr. Brian Wolfenden, recently retired from secondary teaching after a career of some note.

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

“Teaching alone is stressful, but even worse when you are expected to work half the night and most of your weekends.”

(Primary Teacher, Pilot Study)

### Background to the Research

It has long been known in the education sector that teachers are commonly obliged to work long hours, in order to satisfy the commitments of their work. A survey conducted by the State School Teachers' Union (“Survey”, 1999), found that the average working week for State School teachers in Western Australia was between fifty and fifty-five hours, and that teachers in ninety percent of workplaces worked more than forty hours per week. At the same time, a teacher shortage has been identified in Western Australian schools (Byrne, 1999; “Don’t Blame Teachers”, 1999; “Teacher Shortage”, 2003), with new teacher supply at times less than 70 percent of demand (“Big Teacher Shortage”; 22 January 1999). This would appear to be supported by the work of Ballantyne, Bain & Preston (2002), who indicates an overall fall in numbers of teacher graduates in Western Australia from 1999 to 2001, particularly in the areas of primary teaching.

The beginning of July 2003 saw the renewal of a suggestion by the Prime Minister of Australia that school days should be extended, and last from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm (Kearney, 2003), with students’ time being taken up with a potential mix of homework and other organised activities. Although the suggestion was welcomed by politicians, it was less well-received by teacher bodies, which have regularly been critical of teacher workload. Indeed, in Western Australia, teachers’ concerns over increased workloads has led to periodical industrial action, most recently in 2000 and 2003.

### Teacher Responsibilities

In its 1997-1998 *Annual Report* (p.9), the Education Department of

Western Australia included a Mission Statement outlining its guiding values. Among the references to both staff and students, to the working environment and to education and learning, was the assertion that Departmental staff had the “right to a workplace free of discrimination, abuse or exploitation”. Simultaneously, however, other values referred to staff having high expectations of themselves, striving for excellence, being challenged to give of their best, and accepting responsibility.

Such acceptance of responsibility, together with a striving for excellence, can become a double-edged sword for teachers, however, and may come at a significant cost, especially in terms of time (Etheridge Morgan, Valesky, Hall & Terrell, 1994; Hargreaves, 1994; Drago, Cloud, Riggs, Caplan, Constanza, Davies & Park, 1997). Traditionally, much teachers’ time has been taken up with preparation of lessons - including lesson plans, teaching aids, teaching materials, handouts - and marking of assignments and examinations. By its nature, this work cannot always be carried out in class or in time allocated to “Duties Other Than Teaching” (DOTT time).

Increasingly, however, there are indications that teachers are experiencing intensification in their work. In addition to the traditional aspect of their occupation, outlined above, teachers perceive themselves as being required to make increased time commitments to functions such as committee meetings, staff meetings, parent liaison, pastoral duties, and liaison with outside organisations. Normally, these must be carried out during the working day, which frequently forces teachers to undertake their normal preparation and marking work at night and on weekends. Set vacation periods may also be at least partly taken up with activities such as professional development, or school camps and excursions.

The issue of teacher workload has occupied a considerable amount of the thinking of the State School Teachers Union of Western Australia (SSTUWA) since the late 1990s - coinciding with the introduction of Curriculum Framework changes in teaching - to the extent of running a concerted campaign (the Work Overload Campaign) to raise teacher awareness of both rights and responsibilities. Articles and advertisements in the Union-published *Western Teacher* endeavoured to convince

teachers to “Just Say No”.

Whether such union campaigning will prove to be effective in the long term remains to be seen, especially in a context which has included a fall in teacher union membership numbers (Bailey, Horstman, Berger & Fells, 2000). The 1990s saw a move by Western Australian governments for devolution to schools of many operational responsibilities. Despite delays, this has now been largely implemented in schools. Simultaneously, there have been changes in areas such as curriculum, reporting, and professional development requirements (EDWA *Annual Report*, 1997-1998).

Further changes, designed to align the education systems in all states in areas such as school starting age, a national curriculum, and minimum standards for people with disabilities, were foreshadowed after a meeting of State and Federal Education Ministers in July 2003 (Manton, 2003). Implications of such comprehensive changes would be likely to create additional demands on teachers to adjust their current practices, and to lead to further intensification of work.

## **The Philosophical Context**

A characteristic of industrial relations / labour process literature would appear to be a division along the lines of two paradigms, described in this study as the free market paradigm and the social justice paradigm. Overall, there would appear to be quite stark a divide, philosophically, logically, and linguistically, between the two. Their relevance to the research is heightened as they appear to reflect many public policy decisions - see, for example, Shaw (1999), Buchanan, O’Keeffe & Brethert (1999), and Quinlan & Mayhew (2001) on ideological motivations - which may be considered to have acted to create or increase work intensification.

Variously described as economic rationalist, economic liberalist (Valentine, 1996), conservative, and neo-liberal (Burgess & Campbell, 1998), the free market paradigm would appear to be strongly functionalist in outlook, focusing on order and control. It is unitarist rather than pluralist, and strongly supportive of management prerogative (Kierath, 1995; Reith,



1996; Phillips, 1998; Gahan & Hearn-MacKinnon, 2000), to the extent that the business sector, both as a concept and as a part of society, is viewed as being of paramount importance. According to Ford (see Lessem, 1991) and to Clark (1998), this may even be to the point of being sacred, and with unquestionable moral status. Supporters of a more moderate pace of change would appear to find themselves confronting an intimidating mindset, one which does not seem to allow for discussion, let alone opposition. In such an environment, proposals for alternative approaches to work-related matters may frequently flounder.

The second paradigm, while not denying the importance of efficiency and profitability, concentrates more on issues such as justice, fairness, equity (O'Connor, 1994; Muetzelfeldt, 1994; Frazer, 1995; Pocock & Wright, 1997; Zifcak, 1997; Shaw, 1997; Shaw, 1999; Probert, Ewer & Walsh, 2000), and health and safety (Heiler, 1996, 1998; Spurgeon, Harrington & Cooper, 1997; Bent, 1998; Callus, Moorehead, Cully & Buchanan, 1999). The business sector is seen as merely one part of the overall community, and is therefore expected to operate as such, and within the framework of overall community values.

A parallel dichotomy between opposing philosophies is to be found in the literature on the two concepts central to this research: work intensification and professionalism. Literature on work intensification, for example, tends to be divided amongst that which is generally supportive, premised on increased efficiency and productivity (Thomas, 1998; John, 1997; Fielding, 1995; Di Milia, 1998; Wallace, 1998; Wooden, 1999), and that which opposes it, often strongly, and often on the basis of human and social costs (Burgess & Campbell, 1998; Buchanan, 1997; Callus, 1999; Buchanan et al, 1999). This latter approach seeks to take into account the fact that people may be affected in differing ways, both in the workplace - including across different work sites in an organisation, as a result, for example, of differing leadership styles - and away from work.

For the purposes of this research, it is considered that any interpretation of work intensification should be comprehensive enough to permit realistic examination of the topic, and which is able to take into account the

realities of the workplace. Restricting the definition to the equivalent of productivity, of physically doing more in a given amount of time, after the manner of Scientific Management, would seem likely to exclude much administrative and professional activity. Indeed, any occupation, such as teaching, based as much on quality as on quantity would be excluded.

Finding a consensus on the issue of work intensification for professionals can prove to be difficult, however. This may be seen as partly due to the subjective nature of the topic, and partly to a situation where, despite application of the term “professional” to a wide range of occupations, there is a lack of any standardised definition or benchmarks over what constitutes professionalism.

As a result, a range of opinions appears with respect to teacher work intensification. On the one hand, interpretations would appear to refer to de facto Total Quality Management systems (Duignan & Macpherson, 1992; Taylor & Bullard, 1995), focusing on matters such as shared visions and goals, accountability, control, performance management and mission statements. By contrast, writers such as Hargreaves (1994), Riley & Nuttall (1994), Elliott (1998), and Hawthorne (1999) would appear to be more philosophical, concentrating on issues such as trust, autonomy, respect, creativity, responsiveness, dedication, and dynamism.

Clearly, there would appear to be a considerable, and quite fundamental, difference in understanding of the term “professionalism” (Thompson & McHugh, 1995). An awareness of the term and its implications may be necessary, in order that people in professional areas such as teaching may not be left open to exploitation. A later section in this chapter therefore puts forward definitions for both work intensification and professionalism.

## **Purpose and Significance of the Research**

This research into the work situation of State School teachers in Western Australia was undertaken in an effort to gain a clearer understanding of the relationship of work intensification to a specific body of professionals, and to fill a perceived gap in industrial relations and labour process

literature. Some writers (for example, Spurgeon et al, 1997; Bent, 1998), calling for more research into work intensification, refer to the situation regarding professionals. However, much research into the topic has tended to have a limited focus, and is generally concerned with manual workers, and with purely physical factors such as hours of work and productivity.

Some research has been carried out internationally, for example by Hargreaves (1994), and Drago et al (1997). In Western Australia, Lock (1993), Martin (1991), and Leggett (1997), have examined different aspects of the work situation of teachers such as stress and job satisfaction. In contrast, the focus of this research is on teacher work intensification, and its significance in the overall education system. It examines the extent to which work intensification is an issue for teachers, and why it has become a significant factor for them. In addition, there is an examination of the effects on professional and personal life, and of the issue of professionalism, which Hargreaves (1994) suggests is a factor contributing to some teacher work intensification.

This research is premised partly on the notion that non-teaching matters should be as integral to any discussion of teacher work intensification as classroom activities are. A fundamental need for research is created by the existence of work intensification as a factor in the work environment. However, the contribution of this research to the overall body of literature on industrial relations and the labour process comes from the particular focus on professionals, using a broad-based interpretation of work intensification, which includes rather than excludes issues, and which thus addresses the realities of the modern workplace. Implications also emerge for fields such as education, occupational health and safety, and social and industrial psychology.

## **Research Questions**

The thesis revolves around three research questions, which facilitate an analysis of the perceptions of teachers with respect to the issue of work intensification in teaching. Teachers are deemed to include principals and deputy principals who, especially in smaller schools, have both teaching

and administrative duties. As an important aim of the study is to examine the extent of work intensification as it affects teachers, the first question is:

*“To what extent does work intensification exist amongst teachers in Western Australian State Schools?”*

The significance of this point is that, from the start, the research indicated not merely differences of opinion but also confusion over what could be considered normal work or work expectations, much less what constituted work intensification (Leggett, 1997; Spaul, 1997). This created a need for a definition which could be used as a realistic point of departure for analysing the issue of work intensification.

Given that work intensification is considered by some writers to be a significant factor in teaching (Hargreaves, 1994; Drago et al, 1997), it then becomes necessary to determine its nature, partly to facilitate its identification, and partly to examine possible coping strategies. The second research question therefore becomes:

*“What is the nature of work intensification amongst teachers?”*

This question involves consideration of the extent to which work intensification is as physical or psychological, and the extent to which it reflects self-imposed and/or externally-imposed work expectations. Logically, this leads into discussion of the reasons for it, and the outcomes. Consequently, the third research question is:

*“What are the causes and effects of work intensification for teachers?”*

This research examines the extent to which intensification can be attributed to factors at least to some extent within the individual teacher's control - such as the amount of preparation, or involvement in extra-curricular activities - and to those outside the individual's control, such as devolution. The overall study is based on data collected from teachers and school principals in schools throughout the state, covering the broad range of situations and environments - such as city, country, primary, and

secondary - experienced by teachers in the Western Australian State School system. Other variables covered include age, gender, and seniority.

## **Objectives**

Underpinning the research questions are a number of secondary objectives, concentrating on, and directing, the detail of the data collection. These objectives are:

1. To what extent has work intensification created or exacerbated problems, and to what extent can it realistically continue to be expected of teachers?
2. To what extent is it possible for intensification of work to be addressed by increased efficiency of work practices?
3. Based on findings, what can be done in terms of policy and practice to address the question of work intensification?
4. What areas need further study?

## **Methodology**

### **Quantitative Approach**

The research has been based on, and closely linked with, the overall aim of examining the situation faced by teachers in the Western Australian State School system. Consistent with Yin (1994), it was decided that, in order to achieve an accurate picture of the situation, information would need to be obtained from a range of sources, the most likely being teaching staff from a representative selection of schools. In order that the information might be as comprehensive as possible, and thus more likely to be applicable to teaching staff in general, a mainly quantitative approach was decided upon. This would be centred on a survey, preceded by a pilot study, and supported by individual interviews.

## **Pilot Study**

In order to provide worthwhile data, it was realised that a comprehensive survey questionnaire would be needed. At the same time, it was necessary that it should be as concise as possible, and the questions relevant. As a result, it was decided that a pilot study would be a useful research tool, for the data which it could provide on the substantive topic of work intensification and related issues such as health and safety, and social and domestic issues. The pilot study would also provide initial feedback on the value of the questionnaire used as a potential survey instrument.

Questionnaires were distributed to people working in a representative range of environments. The main criterion was to achieve a balance between city and country schools, and primary and secondary schools. Further divisions were by gender and by seniority.

Interviews were based on a number of preset questions, but were able to range over any issues which the participants considered relevant. The duration of each interview thus depended on the degree to which individuals wished to talk, and ranged from one hour to four hours, with an average of slightly under two hours.

## **Survey**

As the principal means of data collection, a survey of 1000 State School teachers was carried out in the third quarter of 2001, approximately a year after the pilot study. With support from the State School Teachers' Union, and the assistance of the Education Department of Western Australia, a random sample of active teaching staff was undertaken. The survey instrument consisted of a questionnaire covering the existence, nature, causes and effects of work intensification, as well as demographic topics.

## **Interviews**

A small number of individual interviews were carried out in late 2001 and early 2002, in response to an invitation included in the letter which

accompanied the survey. In line with expectations, the interviews provided the opportunity to examine in more detail some issues - such as professionalism - which did not lend themselves to empirical responses. Consequently, while only a limited number were conducted, they were an important element in providing subjective data, enabling a more comprehensive picture of the teaching profession to be gained.

## **Outline of the Research**

The project examines the issue of work intensification using a broad, inclusive interpretation of the topic. This, it is considered, provides a far more realistic and useful picture of the work situation of teachers than an approach with a more limited focus. It examines not only workload issues, but also a range of related issues such as health and safety, effects on work performance, morale, and the social and domestic lives of teachers.

Chapter Two examines the literature of work intensification and its related issues from both sides of the labour process debate, and as it applies to education. Work intensification is shown to be considered by many commentators as being as much psychological as physical, and to affect health and both professional and personal life. Considerable attention is paid to the question of professionalism, and three interpretations - professionalism as adherence to policy; as performance; and as reflection and responsibility - are identified and discussed. Issues examined include control, coercion, congruence and consent. It is suggested that a synthesis of views is needed, and a model is proposed showing relationships between work intensification and the three interpretations of professionalism.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology followed, describing how, in order to secure necessary data, the research combined a survey of teachers with a qualitative approach. This survey enjoyed a good response rate, and data obtained from it was reinforced by information obtained in individual interviews. Information was able to be gathered from three sources - the survey, interviews, and the pilot study - and during three distinct blocks of time over a period of approximately twenty-one months.

The research findings are contained in Chapters Four and Five. Chapter Four outlines firstly the demography of respondents to the survey, using a number of variables such as gender, age, and teaching level. These variables then form the basis of the two findings chapters: These variables were suggested firstly by the range of work environments in the Education Department and, in the case of socio-economic level, by consultation with teachers in the public education system.

Chapter Four examines the existence and nature of work intensification. The fundamental issue discussed is whether teachers perceive work intensification to exist, and whether they consider it to be of importance. Responses are examined along the lines of demographic variables. Issues covered include hours worked, pace of work, effort, range of duties, complexity of work, stress, and responsibility. Similarly, the nature of work intensification examines the extent to which work intensification is viewed by teachers as physical and/or psychological. The chapter also looks at whether intensification is seen as being imposed by others, either directly or indirectly,, or as being more self-imposed.

Chapter Five continues the examination of findings, concentrating on the causes and effects of work intensification. The question of professionalism as a possible cause is covered in more detail, and includes discussion of teacher perceptions of themselves as professionals, together with their perceptions of how they are viewed by the community. The effects of work intensification covered include the impact on personal and professional life, in areas such as health, work performance, family life and relationships.

Chapter Six brings together the various strands examined in preceding chapters, linking them to the literature, and identifying implications for teachers, for the public education system, and for teacher unions. Implications for possible further research are also outlined.



## **Limitations of the Study**

At the outset of this research, because of the size and breadth of the school education sector in Western Australia, it was apparent that some limitations would need to be put in place, especially in relation to data collection. This was in order to ensure that the data obtained might be both concise and representative, and that the research timeframe might not be excessive.

The first limitation was the decision to examine the situation in only the State School system, albeit for both primary and secondary schools. The private school system in reality consists of a variety of systems - Catholic, non-Catholic, religious, non-religious, boarding schools, and non-boarding schools - covering a wide variety of philosophical and organisational approaches to education. Each therefore places different pressures on teachers. It was decided that including private schools would expand the necessary research beyond a reasonable scope, and that it would introduce too many variables, with the likelihood of distorting the overall data. By comparison, the public education system was relatively homogeneous, and capable of supplying meaningful information, as a result of changes experienced in recent years. It was therefore decided to concentrate the research on this system.

A second limitation consisted of the exclusion from the study of administrative staff. While information received during the pilot study indicated an increase in administrative workloads - especially for school registrars - the aim was to examine the situation of teaching staff, not of the schools themselves, although that might conceivably be a worthwhile area for research. As the two types of work are by their nature different, with different aims, demands, and stresses, it was felt that including administrative staff would have led to distortions.

## **Definitions**

### **Work Intensification**

Obtaining a definition of work intensification would often seem as complex as the issue itself, although it also owes much to the insights of writers such as Marx (1974) and Braverman (1974). For this research, it is considered that the concept of work used should also be stated. Work is considered to include all activity related to an individual's occupation, whether paid or unpaid, manual or intellectual, at the workplace or away from the workplace. It includes both physical and psychological aspects, and a range of causes and effects. Following on from this, a reasonable interim definition of work intensification might be considered as

“the emergence or creation of work-related requirements or functions, which lead to increased physical or psychological demands and pressures on individual employees, both inside and outside the workplace”.

All these elements of intensification will be examined in later chapters. Special attention will be paid to the extent to which they affect, or are affected by, social considerations.

### **Professionalism**

Professionalism is a concept of importance to teachers, but which would appear to be open to interpretation. From the literature, three basic interpretations of professionalism would appear to emerge, and these form the basis for much of the discussion in this thesis. Work intensification occurring under these interpretations may be either physical or psychological in nature.

#### **Professionalism as Adherence to Policy**

Professionalism is viewed as acceptance of the policies of the employer (Mulgan, 2000), with a strong component of hard work and accountability (Leggett, 1997). The emphasis is on control. Work intensification may occur through management imposition of additional

functions.

### **Professionalism as Performance**

People are devoted to their work, and may equate professionalism with taking on increasing amounts of work, without any conscious consideration or understanding of overwork (Hargreaves, 1994). The work is all, and gives identity (Thompson & McHugh, 1995). Analysis of workload tends to be incidental. Work intensification may occur through manipulation of staff expectations and values (Burawoy, 1979). Work intensification may also be self-generated as a result of such values.

### **Professionalism as Reflection and Responsibility**

People are aware of work demands and pressures, and assess them critically. Resistance may occur as a result of differences between management and professional values (Thompson & McHugh, 1995). At the same time, people may often continue reluctantly to take on an increasing workload (Endicott, 1997), because of a belief in the need to help their clients. Professionalism is equated with service provision to clients, based on the professionals' own assessment of the needs of those people. Work intensification may be either imposed by management, or self-generated.

## **Summary**

**An examination of work intensification must necessarily cover a broad range of fields, including industrial relations, education, professionalism, occupational health and safety, and family matters. Reflecting this, a broad definition of work intensification is likely to be necessary, to take into account both physical and psychological causes, indicators, and effects. Conceptually, the industrial relations system is viewed as the overall context of employment regulation, within which the issue of work intensification has emerged as part of the labour process. This may be largely as a result of philosophical approaches to social organisation, while professionalism amongst State School teachers themselves also emerges as a possible contributor to their work intensification. Overall, the topic is approached with a view to examining the “what, how and why” of work intensification, and its effects on teachers.**

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter examines the issue of work intensification, particularly work intensification as a professional process, with a focus on teachers. Arriving at an understanding of the actuality of the modern work situation of teachers, has often necessitated using an indirect approach, however, due to the relatively limited amount of literature dealing specifically with work intensification. Even defining the issue has tended to be a complex process as seen in Chapter One. Consequently, examining work intensification has necessitated the inclusion of literature on a wide range of related areas, such as industrial relations, health, and philosophy. Specific issues covered include the division of intensification into physical and psychological aspects, and the effect on families. Such coverage has permitted an understanding of the framework within which teachers operate.

In the context of this research, it is suggested that a fundamental element of the work intensification experienced by teachers is its relationship to professionalism. This relationship is examined in three parts, corresponding to the interpretations of professionalism identified in Chapter One - professionalism as adherence to policy, professionalism as quality of performance, and professionalism as reflection and responsibility. The category headings themselves evolved during the course of the research. They derive partly from the literature covered in this chapter, and partly *ex post facto* from the written and verbal comments of the teachers involved in the research. The concept of professionalism as adherence to policy, for example, is informed partly by the work of writers such as Mulgan (2000) and Geiselhardt (2000), while professionalism as reflection and responsibility also incorporates both aspects of Critical Theory and teacher responses in relation to work intensification.

A strength of the approach used is the flexibility which it provides to the researcher to consider the interplay of different elements. These have

importance not merely as categories, but as concepts relating closely to the actuality of the work context of teaching staff in the public education system. This is particularly important in view of the different approaches, as discussed later, for example by Spaul (1997), Leggett (1997), and Endicott (1997), to the role and organisation of teaching in schools between the Education Departments and the teachers employed by them. The three categories are used to place in perspective differences between managerialist views of process, control and accountability, and the more autonomy-oriented, student-centred, educationist views of teachers.

In this chapter, professionalism is considered to be capable of both positive and negative influences. This would, however, be likely to depend on the perceptions of stakeholders to the understanding and consideration of both general concepts, and the operational realities of teaching on a daily basis. At the end of the chapter, the three interpretations of professionalism are brought together in a model which shows their relative importance to each other, and to work intensification amongst professionals.

## **Work Intensification as a Professional Process**

### **Professionalism as Adherence to Policy**

#### **The Rationalist Drive for Control**

##### **Control as a Concept**

In the overall pursuit of efficiency, productivity, and profitability, a significant element in managerialist policies have been the related notions of control and management prerogative (Kierath, 1995; Buchanan, 1997; O'Donnell, Allan & Peetz, 2001), with a parallel reduction in the opportunity for dissent. This will be shown later to have significance with regard to work intensification.

Throughout the 1990s, governments in Australia enacted legislation which had a marked effect on the national industrial relations environment. Changes were seen by some as increasing, or restoring, management prerogative in the workplace and in the overall industrial process (John,

1997; Gahan & Hearn-MacKinnon, 2000), and as seeking to minimise the role and influence of the trade union movement (Pocock & Wright, 1997; MacDermott, 1997; Shaw, 1999). Buchanan et al (1999, pp.125-126) suggest profit as a motivation, and note the statement by the then Minister for Workplace Relations that the government was on the “side of making profits ..... the side of people who own capital”.

The rationalist approach to the workplace may be viewed as an attempt to understand the world of work in a relatively ordered manner, in order to ensure the stability which is seen to maximise economic benefit. As such, it falls well within the Burrell & Morgan (1979) interpretation of the functionalist paradigm, in relation to both organisational and social issues.

“The functionalist paradigm ... seeks to provide essentially rational explanations of social affairs. (...) It ... emphasises the importance of understanding order, equilibrium and stability in society, and the way in which these can be maintained. It is concerned with the effective regulation and control of social affairs.”

(Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p.26)

Social affairs may be seen to include the complete range of activities of people as social entities, both individually and collectively. Included in this range must be the interactions between individuals and groups of individuals. Given the changeability of human relationships, this in turn leads almost inevitably to the point where compromise and uncertainty become significant factors.

The concept of bounded rationality - a “unitary view of organisation based upon a qualified principle of rationality” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, pp.206-207) - addresses this issue. The notion of Administrative Man “satisficing”, compared to Economic Man succeeding, offers an answer to the question of why actions in an organisation may differ from those expected under the rational model - “not in managerial shortcomings but in fundamental limitations of human cognition and the characteristics of organisational behaviour that stem from these limitations” (Paterson, 1988, p.79).

Success under a rationalist approach to management may be likely to

depend on the extent to which the uncertainty inherent in human relationships may be minimised, and this may be considered by organisations to be difficult without recourse to the concept of control. Emphasised under the classical theory of organisations, as well as under the Taylorist approach to management (Taksa, 1992), this control aims at promoting harmony and congruence of ideas and interests, through such notions as shared culture and interests, teamwork, and absence of conflict.

## **Managerialism**

The culture of cooperation envisaged by the approach outlined above underpins the functionalist view of professionalism. However, discussing the overall public service experience, Trosa (1997, p.242) suggests that managerialism has “resulted in a ‘top-down’ form of policy planning and management that does not allow enough space for rectification, pragmatic adjustment and innovation.” Instead of being able to benefit from iterative learning, organisations often have needed to cope with the relative inflexibility of imposed planning. Whether discussion is about different phases of managerialism (Considine & Painter, 1997), social, ethical and political aspects (Muetzelfeldt, 1994; Zifcak, 1997), or post-managerialist contractualism (Davis, 1997; Trosa, 1997), the common denominator would appear to be an effective increase in control being imposed on staff:

“The new public management ... embodies an ‘output’ emphasis and defines and attempts to measure management performance on the basis of outputs, wherever possible in quantifiable terms. Rather than rewarding public servants for rule conformity, error avoidance and attention to detail, it rewards them for achieving output targets and punishes them for underperformance. It conceives of public sector activity as a productive process and strives for higher productivity ... through improved efficiency and cost-effectiveness.”

(Painter, 1988, pp.39-40)

In the context of public service organisations, the managerialist model envisages an agency structure, with devolved cost centres operating on a free market basis while accountable to a central policy office (Davis, 1997; Trosa, 1997), and offering the possibility of efficiency and cost gains



through increased flexibility. It is at this point that managerialism can be seen to coincide with economic rationalist thought, the linkages growing stronger throughout the 1990s (Considine & Painter, 1997, p.4). For the economic rationalist, or economic liberal, the primacy of the market, efficiency, and the minimisation of government regulation and participation are among the most important of management concepts, indicating a preference for individual action over collective action (Pusey, 1991; Valentine, 1996). However, Valentine (1996, p.6) also notes that

“liberalism in the economic area does not always imply that a person is a liberal in all matters. Although conservatives often support market-based policies in the economic area, they are more likely to adopt illiberal attitudes on social questions.”

Such a situation may be seen as having negative consequences, however. Muetzelfeldt (1994) examines the creation of a situation which permits such things as the erosion of civil and industrial rights, and the gradual intensification of work pressures. This, he argues, combined budget-driven managerialism with an ostensible customer focus, but in a manner contrary to the overall public interest of the community. “Public interest”, as a concept, was of interest to the government only where it could be measured by customer responses, which meant that the “market” was the only legitimate mechanism for expressing interests. Any distortion of the market would thus be against the common good.

After an examination of the Victorian police service, Muetzelfeldt (1994, p.6) contends that a complete concentration on the concept of the market could lead to “pernicious social effects”, such as a potential reduction of citizenship and social rights. He sees the central issue as “the attempted removal of legitimacy from the political notions of stakeholder and constituency, and their replacement with the apolitical notion of customer” (Zifcak, 1997, p.9). In something of an echo of Pusey (1991, pp.239-240), he suggests that there is a need for an audit of democracy, concentrating on social, economic, industrial and cultural aspects.

Zifcak (1997), also looking at the Victorian experience of managerialism, tends to look more closely at what he identifies as “a democratic deficit of very considerable proportions” (Zifcak, 1997, p.106). He suggests that,

although managerialism may be able to increase efficiency and cost-consciousness in public service organisations, “this may come at considerable cost to political and democratic accountability” (Zifcak, 1997, p.116). A concern is the dominance of economic and political ideology over open and impartial discussion: “In the sceptics’ view, ideology and unilateralism had trumped dialogue and measure as the *modus vivendi* of managerial life” (Zifcak, 1997, p.109).

A contrasting approach is provided by F.A. Hayek (1976), whose views are seen by some to underpin much of the rationalist approach to policy, and to have exerted a large influence on conservative philosophy over the second half of the twentieth century (Gregg & Kasper, 1999). A forthright advocate of the free market, Hayek (1976) also held highly conservative social, industrial and political views. The essence of the Hayekian philosophy is the supremacy of individual freedom, to which all else should be subordinated.

In applying this approach to economic activity, Hayek (1976) is a firm believer in market forces as arbiter of what is right. He sees management as the victim of control which, he believes, originates with government, and is a potential obstacle to freedom. The freedom in question is the operation of a free market - viewed as the ultimate, impartial embodiment of individual freedom (Hayek, 1976; Phillips, 1998; Spring, 1998), and the basis of prosperity (Kukathas, 1999). In order to preserve individual freedom, the solution is to eliminate interference with the free market, which Hayek (1976) sees as classic liberalism.

This interpretation of liberalism is linked to economic rationalism, which is then described as economic liberalism - “an important aspect of the broader political theory known as liberalism” (Valentine, 1996, p.5). Importantly, economic liberals are critical of bureaucrats, and of government intervention in the economy (Valentine, 1996). Employment regulation and industrial relations systems are characterised as grotesque, and as imposing a form of socialism in the workplace: “This subjugation of liberty at work is a key legal tool used by governments seeking to use the market as an instrument of social control” (Phillips, 1998, p.5).

## **Control and Work Intensification**

The perceived connection between rationalism and work intensification has been a contentious issue, with some writers effectively denying the existence of work intensification (Wooden, 1999; Moore, 2000), or avoiding all use of the term, concentrating instead on terms such as productivity techniques, and efficiency (Thomas, 1998). Indeed, Wooden (1999, p.26) argues that the situation in relation to working time has improved: “[T]he trend towards longer hours is actually far weaker than the trend towards shorter hours (ie, part-time jobs). There is no general trend towards working longer; instead, working time arrangements have become much more diversified”. It is argued that surveys are likely to be over-reporting, in respect of working hours, and implied that longer working weeks may be due to diversification of arrangements.

In general, writers such as Di Milia (1998), Fielding (1995), Hawke & Wooden (1997), or Thomas (1998), appear to argue that in fact employees benefit from changes in work. Wooden (2002, p.62) even suggests that changes are voluntary, and views AWIRS 1995 data as indicating “that the majority of Australians working long hours appear to want to work these hours.” It is suggested (Fielding, 1995; Kierath, 1995; Reith, 1996) that, unlike in past decades, workers are now advanced enough or knowledgeable enough to be able to make mature decisions in their own interests - essentially by being flexible, and accepting amendments to hours of work or to the structure of the working week.

This concept is contested (Ellem, 1999; Barnes & Fieldes, 2000; Roan, Bramble & Lafferty, 2001), with a contention that work changes in fact have been proposed, and even demanded, by employers, rather than emerging from genuine negotiation. Supporting this contention, Buchanan et al (1999, p.102) state that,

“Within the unionised sector, bargaining is increasingly being conducted on employers’ terms.... Even where collective agreements are struck with unions, they are often negotiated in the shadow of job losses, under the threat of non-union contracts (either individual or collective), and with increasingly heavy penalties for non-protected industrial action.”

In such a situation, the existence of unions is considered an important protection against impositions by management, such as work intensification. O'Connor (1994), Frazer (1995, 1997), and Pocock and Wright (1997) suggest that there can be no balance or equity without the participation of unions and good industrial relations legislation. Similarly, Keenoy and Kelly (1996, p.398) view the market model as attempting to justify "the inequality and inequity found in labour markets", and to remove from management any responsibility for the outcomes of allocating labour. Essentially, it might be questioned whether the market approach seeks freedom from regulatory control for business, while simultaneously seeking to place increased controls and demands on employees. Consequently, the more that this is facilitated in an organisation, the more likely it may be that the employees will be vulnerable to work intensification.

**Work Intensification - A Radical View**

Throughout the literature of the labour process, an ongoing theme has been the Marxist identification of capital and labour as two of the major elements of the "substructure" of society (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p.328). In particular, the notion of conflict between the two is seen as the standard dynamic of the process overall (Thompson & McHugh, 1995; Keenoy & Kelly, 1996; Deery, Plowman & Walsh, 1997). Within such an environment, issues such as those of control and work intensification may be of major importance in the labour process (Thompson & McHugh, 1995). Far from being of minor importance, the labour process may be seen to have a political goal "to develop ideas and practices which empower workers and their organisations" (Thompson, 1990, p.122).

Following this line of thought, a rather less-than-sanguine view is provided by Harry Braverman. In 1974, in a work which, according to Burrell (1990, p.276) "regained for industrial sociology ... a distinctive competence", Braverman published *Labour and Monopoly Capital*. The book's aim was to try to reconcile a contradiction between ever-increasing demands for education, training and intelligence amongst workers, and growing dissatisfaction with the conditions of work. This led him to search for "the causes, the dynamic underlying the incessant transformation of work in the modern era" (Braverman, 1974, p.4).

This interest in the transformation of work in turn led into a study of management, technology, corporations, social life and, ultimately, of capitalism over the previous century. One of the principal elements of Braverman's work, along with the separation of conception and execution, exploitation, and work intensification, is a concentration on scientific management and its influence on modern corporations and the capitalist society. This influence was considered never to have disappeared and able never to be overestimated (Braverman, 1974, p.86).

The importance of this influence centres on the issue of control, which is considered to have been "the essential feature of management throughout its history" (Braverman, 1974, p.90), and as representing "an answer to the problem of how best to control 'alienated' labour" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p.380). This could be achieved in part by the notion of deskilling, which cheapened the worker "by decreasing his training and increasing his output" (Braverman, 1974, p.118). Indeed, control over resistant employees could be sought by a process of repeatedly cheapening and intensifying work (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980, p.61).

An additional means of cheapening labour was by the removal of workers from decision-making processes and reserving this function for management, leaving "the possibility of employee discretion ... almost non-existent" (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980, pp.96-7). With less control over their work this separation left both the traditional members of the working class and expanding categories of workers in offices and service industries, including teachers, open to intensification of their work with little chance to resist.

In this situation of vulnerability, one of the important concepts commonly raised is that of alienation, or the "cognitive wedge ... which divorces man from his true being" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p.311), and suggests a conflict between the individual's inner self and the external world. The worker is seen as no longer being at one with his work, and as no longer having the same understanding of the overall work process, which in turn leads to further loss of control over the methods of production (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980). In the concluding section of this chapter a model will be

proposed which ties in the three interpretations of professionalism discussed in this research, along with the relationship to work intensification. Adapted from Martin (2001), who describes in graphic form the ideas of Clegg and Dunkerley (1980), the model views alienation as one possible outcome of work intensification in a cycle of power, control, and resistance.

Since the late 1970s, one of the longer-lasting debates concerning labour process theory has involved criticism of the work of Braverman (1974). Essentially, this has been for his proffering a view of the labour process which is often considered to concentrate too heavily on conflictual issues, such as Taylorisation (see, for example, Burawoy, 1979; Knights, 1990; Willmott, 1990; Sakolosky, 1992). By contrast, too little emphasis is considered to have been laid on issues such as consciousness and subjectivity.

As suggested, however, by writers such as Dunford (1988), Taksa (1992), Shaw (1997), Taylor & Bain (1999), and Ellem (2000), Taylorism remains a potent force, and has led to much of the modern focus on control and efficiency. This being the case, Braverman (1974) may be considered to have laid the groundwork for a more critical examination of management's role in the workplace.

### **Physical Work Intensification**

The issue of work intensification raised by Braverman (1974) has persisted despite criticism. The practical and physical nature of it, in the skilled and semi-skilled workforce, is relatively easily understood. One of the most commonly-understood measures is that of increased hours of work, in the form of longer shifts, longer working weeks, averaging of hours per week, and unpaid overtime. Trends include the need for shift workers to either work longer shifts (twelve hours instead of eight) in a normal working week, or to work a compressed working week of fewer days per week, but longer days (Di Milia, 1998; Thomas, 1998; Wallace, 1998; Heiler, 1998; Bent, 1998; Benson, 1998). It is noted that more research is needed on the question of extended working weeks (Spurgeon et al, 1997; Smith,

Folkard, Tucker & Macdonald, 1998), as against longer shifts, for example in relation to hospitality staff (Timo, 1996) and long-distance truck drivers (ACIRRT, 1999).

However, there is a limited amount of research into the situation facing professional or semi-professional employees. Increased hours of work, often ostensibly of a “voluntary” nature, affect occupations such as lawyers (Hunter & McKelvie, 1999) and teachers (Hargreaves, 1994). The expectation exists that, as salaried professionals, they will work the hours necessary to complete their tasks, if need be regardless of the consequences for other aspects of their lives (Etheridge et al, 1994).

Increased numbers of functions to be completed, independently of whether hours of work are extended, constitute another major form of work intensification although, in some cases, this is treated separately as task broadening (O'Donnell, Peetz & Allan, 1998; Allan, O'Donnell & Peetz, 1999). It may result from jobs being combined, or from a range of jobs being devolved or decentralised (Etheridge et al, 1994). For teachers this also includes an increase in meetings, accountability and reporting tasks (Endicott, 1997; Glover & Miller, 1999).

Similar information was provided by feedback during a campaign against work overload, undertaken by the State School Teachers Union of Western Australia (SSTUWA) in the late 1990s. This indicated that teachers perceived the main problem to be the time and effort having to be allocated to curriculum changes, administration (mainly new accountability and reporting requirements), committee meetings, and general non-teaching work (“Backing for work overload”, 1999). As indicated by Endicott (1997) and Glover and Miller (1999), such changes in the working life of teachers may well lead to problems of time.

“Professional educators who are trained to educate are increasingly frustrated by the imposition of an increasingly diverse workload that cannot fit within the time available to a classroom teacher ...”

(Endicott, 1997, p.25)

The physical nature of work intensification may also include increased

requirements concerning quality, regardless of previous quality levels. Similarly, it may include pressure over continuous improvement, and an increased need for regular training, especially in information technology, and especially for teachers (Welch, 1986). In education, it would appear that expertise in a particular field may not now be sufficient to last throughout a person's career, with a greater need existing for regular updating in order simply to keep abreast of developments, as found during devolution of decision making to schools in Memphis, Tennessee (Etheridge et al, 1994).

Education is an ongoing process, however, and determining a point at which specific changes might be called complete may be difficult. Indeed, during the Memphis project (Etheridge et al, 1994), it was felt that between five and ten years (in other words, potentially up to 2000) might be required before its success could be known. The trial period might seem slightly long, given that the project's ostensible reason was to improve the quality of the schools involved, in order to address urgent student performance problems from 1991 (Etheridge et al, 1994), and as potentially almost an entire cohort would have passed through the system by the time the outcome was determined.

In this case, however, Etheridge et al (1994) concluded that rapid solutions were unlikely to be possible. This was because of a need to provide both initial training in quality management concepts for all teachers, together with follow-up training, and because of the need to monitor performance over at least one year. Staff turnover then led to further delays, as training was conducted for the replacement staff. In the meantime, teachers were required to undertake the initial training and periodical refresher training, attend meetings, and participate in the overall decision-making process, all of which led to increases in workload.

In Western Australia also, a relatively-lengthy period was envisaged for the introduction of the Curriculum Framework, a strategic repositioning of the State teaching system from a focus on inputs to a focus on student outcomes. After trials in several schools, it was expected by the Education Department that full implementation would be carried out progressively



over five years, being completed in 2004 (Curriculum Council, 1998). The process of implementation was largely the responsibility of each school.

Typically, implementation included both meetings and professional development. The former included both multiple small-group and whole-school meetings. These were held in order to understand what was envisaged, to identify where changes to teaching practice were needed in order to achieve outcomes, and to determine where professional development would be appropriate. As with the Memphis project observed by Etheridge et al (1994), great emphasis was placed on teachers developing a shared understanding of the new system, which required reflection on both operational practices and the philosophy of teaching. Change led to an increase in both non-teaching functions such as meetings, and demands on teachers' time (Curriculum Council, 1998).

In addition to an increase in functions, both in education and generally, as a result of such change, there would appear to have been parallel growth in work intensification (through excessive time worked), in part-time work and in long-term unemployment. The end result has been that, while some people work excessive numbers of hours per week, others have been obliged to work on a part-time or casual basis, or not at all (Buchanan & Bearfield, 1997; Sheehan, 1998; Ellem, 1999; Burgess, 2002). For some, however,, the trend towards part-time work is also seen as a positive step, on the one hand as a refutation that hours of work are increasing (Wooden, 1999), and on the other hand as evidence that the current Australian industrial relations environment, based on the Workplace Relations Act (1996), should be considered family-friendly (Reith, 1999).

This latter point would appear to be based on the logic that, since employers have acquired greater control over determining the mix of hours appropriate to their businesses, and since they have increased the proportion of part-time staff, this consequently provides more time for more employees to be with their families. As an approach, this would appear to be somewhat disingenuous, however, and may be considered something of an effort at rationalisation after the event. It would seem to overlook the problems faced by those who would wish to work full-time but who are obliged to accept part-time or casual work (Burgess, 2002), and who are

therefore more vulnerable to exploitation (Junor, 1998).

Support for this concept is provided by Hunter and McKelvie (1999), who examine the reverse situation, where problems result, in relation to the balance between work and family responsibilities in the legal profession in Victoria. After an examination of issues such as excessive hours of work, employer expectations, promotional prospects, health and marital problems, they conclude that, far too often, family commitments and part-time work are viewed by the profession as equating either to lack of dedication or to incompetence. As a result, they suggest that the notion of flexibility, based on employer requirements, is an overrated concept, because of the highly negative impact on families.

### **Psychological Work Intensification**

In recent years, it has become more apparent, particularly in education, that as well as increases in physical aspects of work, work intensification frequently includes a significant psychological aspect. Employees may find themselves in an increasingly intensive and pressurised work environment, even where physical issues such as hours of work show little or no change. Psychological work intensification covers issues such as job insecurity and precariousness of work (Burgess & Campbell, 1998; Burchell et al, 1999; Callus, 1999; Nolan, Wichert & Burchell, 2000; Callus & Lansbury, 2002). health and safety (Heiler, 1996; Spurgeon et al, 1997; Burchell et al, 1999), and family and social responsibilities (Hunter & McKelvie, 1999; T. Costello, 1999; Nolan et al, 2000).

By undertaking to work for an organisation, a person accepts an implied loss of some freedom of action in their life, or of some element of personal control of their time, both inside and outside the workplace. In most instances a balance is found, whereby the individual accepts a certain level of compensation in lieu of this lost element of control. One form of psychological intensification may therefore be seen to emerge when the balance between compensation and control is lost, and when employees sense a decline in autonomy and trust (Arkin, 1997).

## **Job Insecurity and Precariousness of Employment**

One of the reasons advanced for psychological work intensification during the 1990s has been the growth of precariousness of employment (Buchanan, 1997; ACIRRT, 1999; Ellem, 1999; SSTUWA, 1999), a term “that attempts to encompass the full range of attributes associated with employment quality” (Burgess & Campbell, 1998, p.6). This highlights a situation where, superficially, little may change in the workplace, but where there may be a growing sense of insecurity - “a major source of private misery and public dysfunction” (Nolan et al, 2000, p.203).

Some of the defining characteristics of precariousness are seen as low levels of pay and high levels of labour insecurity, the latter including concerns over employment, function, health and safety, earnings, benefits, working time, representation, and training (Burgess & Campbell, 1998, Burchell et al, 1999). Pressure may be placed on employees to accept changes such as averaging of hours, annualising of income, or removal of conditions such as some forms of leave, or workers’ compensation (Heiler, 1996, Quinlan, 1997). Perhaps more importantly, it can involve employees in all areas of work and at all levels:

“Broad groups of blue-collar and white-collar workers, in both private and public sectors, are increasingly subject to pressures to work longer, to move between jobs and tasks at their employer’s discretion, to sacrifice their leave entitlements, to renounce their union representation, or to convert part of their wages and salaries into contingent payments. “

(Burgess & Campbell, 1998, p.10)

Australia is seen by the OECD as being one of a small number of (mainly Anglophone) countries with special problems as a result of increased employment insecurity, inequality of earnings, non-standard work arrangements, and declining collectivism (Burgess & Campbell, 1998). Current approaches to industrial relations are seen as a misguided attempt to increase competitiveness of Australian businesses. Public policy, it is suggested, should concentrate firstly on the effect of changes on people, both individually and collectively, as precariousness has implications for the health of the country as a whole.

Just as importantly, perhaps, in terms of public policy, is the continuing assumption by government of full-time, permanent employment, despite the reality of the growth in part-time and casual jobs and the consistent decline numbers of full-time jobs (Buchanan, 1997; Callus, 1999; Bagnall, 1999; Ellem, 1999). Increasing casualisation of the workforce is likely to lead to increasing levels of intensification, as a result of the greater vulnerability of employees to pressure from employers to agree to changes in work arrangements (Junor, 1998).

This employee vulnerability has tended to be intensified by a legislation-initiated fall in protection by both unions and Industrial Relations Commissions. Many Agreements have been signed in the shadow of potential job losses (Buchanan et al, 1999), and this has frequently led to clauses allowing employers to change working conditions (Barnes & Fieldes, 2000), work functions, and hours of work, including averaging of hours and payments.

Employers have continued to take advantage of this practice. It has often occurred without prior consultation, and has often been set in motion by means of pre-emptive actions such as lockouts (Ellem, 2000). It has also been common for agreements to contain clauses enabling objections or opposition to the actions of management to be construed as breaches of contract, meriting dismissal. As a result of greater feelings of insecurity engendered by such practices, individuals are likely to experience more pressure to accept change (Heiler, 1996).

Contrary to such assessments, Government would appear to view current policy much more favourably, often rejecting even the notion of insecurity. Indeed, it is maintained that perceptions of job security have increased rather than decreased during the late 1990s, and that, in this regard, Australia “ranks very highly in international terms” (Reith, 2000, p.12). Likewise, the effect of casualisation is rejected as influencing perceptions of job security. Instead, it is maintained that the increased flexibility in work-time arrangements and the consequent growth in part-time and casual employment enable more time to be spent with families, and therefore are family-friendly (Reith, 1999). In such a situation, official

perceptions clearly differ from those of many commentators. While confusion of interpretations (such as between job security and job stability) might be argued, it is unlikely that any changes in public policy would occur in the short term.

### Trust

A logical corollary to the issue of control, discussed earlier, is that there is likely to be the perception of a simultaneous decline in trust towards employees or, as suggested by Riley & Nuttall (1994), a redirection of trust. While this may vary from workplace to workplace, the likely outcome is increasing tension (Probert et al, 2000) and thus a form of psychological work intensification. This may also create a reciprocal lack of trust if employees come to believe that management is not looking after their interests (Burchell et al, 1999).

Wood & Jones (1993) see productivity being derived from trust and humane treatment of staff, while Riley & Nuttall (1994) see instead a new reliance on monitoring. Within the state education system in Western Australia, monitoring of work performance in some form has always existed. In itself, that may not be cause for concern. During the 1990s, however, other work intensification pressures on teachers emerged, due in part to the implementation by the Education Department of a range of new measures, including increased accountability requirements. While these led to increased amounts of physical work, to a large extent the concerns of teachers were over the implications for their status as professionals.

Effectively, the situation revolves around the question of whether teachers are trained professionals, trusted and allowed autonomy in their work, or functionaries requiring regulation and control (Spaull, 1997; Leggett, 1997). It is the lack of trust which the latter implies, together with a rise in expectations and demands, which have combined to create the stress which is an important and ongoing form of psychological work intensification.

Duignan and Macpherson (1992, p.179) discuss a virtual total quality

management standpoint of “managerial services consistent with a responsive and reflective bureaucratic mindset”, where advancement depends less on seniority and technical competence and more on “educative performance and outcomes”. Cohesive systems, with shared vision, concrete goals, and school-based management, are seen as essential for success, and for professionals to be able to hold themselves accountable (Taylor & Bullard, 1995).

Such an approach, however, is frequently seen by teachers not as evidence of professionalism, but as a threat to professionalism. In both Victoria and Western Australia, such threats have been perceived to be as a result of managerialist practices. Spaul (1997) outlines measures and attempts of the Victorian government to marginalise education unions and to assert control over teachers - to exercise its “exclusive prerogative” (Spaul, 1997, p.295) without interference from the Australian Industrial Relations Commission or from any teacher unions. This approach is the opposite of that of the Australian Education Union (AEU), which emphasises professionalism, trust, and democracy. Teachers, experiencing increases in workload and class sizes, feared becoming functionaries, asked to do more, but distrusted and disempowered (Riley & Nuttall, 1994; Spaul, 1997).

Similarly, Leggett (1997) examines the situation facing secondary school teachers in the Western Australian State School system, as a result of a drive to impose managerialist systems upon them. Schools are seen as being placed under increasing pressure to accede to government wishes, with the implication (similar to Mulgan, 2000) that this now constitutes professionalism. Concern is expressed by schools that they are being regarded as business units, and the students as products.

Leggett (1997) identifies different paradigms operating at Departmental and school levels: the distinctions between management control and professional responsibility; untrusted functionary and trusted professional; and performance management and professional expertise. Leggett (1997) describes a process of education authorities announcing a problem (in this case accountability) of which schools were unaware, and then creating extra work requirements in order to address it. A link may thus be traced

between managerialism and physical work intensification in education.

A warning is sounded that attempts to standardise thought and performance may be “not only unfeasible, but also undesirable because of its inflexibility, and morally distasteful because of manipulative overtones” (Sinclair, 1991, pp.140-141), and that it may easily lead to the loss of the creative and responsive element involved in educational professionalism (Riley & Nuttall, 1994; Hargreaves, 1994). Similarly, it is considered important that teachers be trusted to make discretionary decisions in the best interests of their students, and allowed the flexibility to incorporate all aspects of their work into an effective whole (Hargreaves, 1994).

### **Work Intensification - Implications for Professionals**

In Western Australia, a concern of education authorities has been to provide for greater community involvement in State Schools and for schools to reflect local community needs (EDWA, *Annual Report, 1998-1999*, p.19). This would appear to be a good expression of the EDWA view of the 1990s, which have seen change in areas such as structure, curriculum, performance review, accountability, selection and promotion.

Concerns over developments in education in both Western Australia and nationally have expressed by some commentators (Spaull, 1997; Leggett, 1997; Endicott, 1997). The reality for teachers would appear to be the need to cope with frequent change in a wide range of areas. These include the range and type of duties, pressures to accept change, concerns over teacher status, student behaviour, accountability, work performance and monitoring (Probert et al, 2000). Indeed, it could be argued that the greater the physical demands, the greater the need to cope with psychological work intensification. The challenge for teachers may be to find strategies for coping with work intensification rather than to oppose it.

### **Professionalism as Performance**

The previous section examined work intensification against the background of a management-oriented approach which Braverman (1974)

viewed as control, and which viewed professionalism as adherence to policy and procedure. This section now examines the situation more from the standpoint of employees. It examines how and why individuals should come to experience work intensification. It also explores contrast to the Braverman (1974) view of the individual as victim. In the process, this section considers the work of Burawoy (1979) and his concept of individual consent. It is also argued that one interpretation of professionalism revolves around the perceived quality of individual performance, often to the exclusion of other considerations such as workload and demands on time. It is suggested that this determination may often result from feelings of guilt, or a desire for perfection, and that this may leave individuals open to manipulation.

### **Congruence and Consent**

In seeking to explain society, and to provide sufficient understanding of the interplay of issues to permit planning for the future, it follows that one element of theoretical analysis should also be to examine the type of analysis being used, and the philosophical background to it. Without constant reflection, both theory and practice may risk becoming rigid and inflexible, and fail to take into account external developments (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996).

While the control model has occupied the attention of many commentators in relation to the labour process (Braverman, 1974; Taksa, 1992; Buchanan et al, 1999; Geiselhart, 2000), a counterpoint is suggested by Burawoy (1979). The basis of his approach is formed by the linking of the concept of common or congruent interests - already part of Taylorist / Fordist thinking (Lessem, 1991; Taksa, 1992) - with the concept of consent.

The work of Burawoy (1979) is considered by Knights (1990) to compensate for the theoretical discourse in the labour process debate which tends to rationalise away the subjective element by reliance on formal categories and abstract typifications. The “empirical ethnography” of work on a factory floor is seen as being used to explain “how capitalism has been able continuously to secure increasing volumes of surplus value



at one and the same time as it obscures the precise exploitative character of its control over the labour process” (Knights, 1990, p.309).

The implication would seem to be that the overt exploitation occurring under a control model of management may be replaced by disguised exploitation. However, the crux of the Burawoy (1979) thesis, not addressed by Braverman (1974), is that this situation may come about due to effective collusion between management and labour. The question examined in this section, with regard to teachers, is the extent to which such collusion is in fact identifiable with the view of professionalism described here as quality and cooperation.

### **Congruence**

The need to create congruence of interests between management and labour is one of the precepts of scientific management, often overlooked despite its importance (Taksa, 1992). Subsequently, it has been adopted regularly in literature on management and quality (Fielding, 1995; Wooden, 1999; Dale, Boaden, Wilcox & McQuater, 1994), by proponents of rationalist change. Labour is deemed in this literature to work harder, and to accept management direction and control, as a result of sharing the same aims as management and of having the same goals.

In such cases, the concept of congruence may come to be treated as an all-encompassing, self-evident truth. Burawoy (1979) would appear to follow this path, indicating the importance - and legitimacy - of the market and the profit motive for both management and labour. As a result he sees resistance and conflict existing for relatively minor issues only, and only up to the point where the overall interests of the organisation would be threatened with disruption.

The work of Burawoy (1979) is in effect permeated by the theme of (a move towards) the ideal of a happy, contented workforce, with the same basic desire as employers for a harmonious labour process. This desire finds expression in a common recognition of the importance of profit. Both capital and labour are seen to have a congruence of interests over the

operation of the labour process. Conflict between the two - or between labour and the representatives of capital, Management - is replaced with competition between workers (both individuals and groups). This is seen as a healthy way of raising efficiency and productivity - and thus of long-term benefit to all. The framework for this is the internal labour market:

**“The internal labour market not only redistributes conflict in a lateral direction and fosters individualism and autonomy through limited mobility; it also provides a material basis for presentation of the company’s interests as the interests of all. The rewards of seniority - better jobs, improved fringe benefits, job security, social status, and so forth - engender a commitment to the enterprise and its survival.”**

**(Burawoy, 1979, p.106)**

Similarly, Marchington (1992) combines the concepts of congruence and consent. Participation in the labour process, either in a general sense or in a specific work environment, is considered to indicate consent on the part of labour. Indeed, he expresses “a belief that labour relations comprise in part a harmony between the different groups in any hierarchical organisation” (Marchington, 1992, p.151).

This approach assumes a uniformity of thought, consciousness and understanding on the part of labour, as well as an acceptance of the status quo. There would appear also to be an assumption that no alternative realities exist. What does not appear to be considered is the potential for alienation to occur in this situation (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). The possibility that participation may be reluctant, and for reasons - such as, naturally, survival - other than the aims and objectives of the organisation, is not examined.

## **Consent**

By way of highlighting the operation of the modern labour process, Burawoy (1979) contrasts it with the operation of what is presented as an idealised form of the feudal system. In that context, the distinction between necessary and surplus value (effectively, the break-even point and profit) was incorporated in the legal system. Tenant farmers received land from the lord, and thereby had a duty to provide in return, as rent, a

given amount of labour to the lord. This then allowed the farmer to spend the remainder of his time working to provide for his own needs. The other main difference seen between this feudal model and the modern labour process model is that, in producing his necessary value, the farmer provided his own means of production, while the modern process worker provides only labour.

The characteristic of both feudal and modern systems, according to Burawoy (1979), is the operation of a form of consent between parties. Appropriating this image, Costello (1986b) seeks to show that, even in mediaeval times, employment was on the basis of agreements freely entered into by people with an equal interest. This did not mean equality of return - merely that each party to the agreement was equally entitled to a return.

In the abstract, consent is an enticing concept, with the potential to counter the notion of conflict - seen traditionally as the central feature of relations between capital and labour (Keenoy & Kelly, 1996) - and thus to provide an alternative underpinning for the entire labour system. Given this importance, an accurate definition of consent therefore becomes crucial. As proffered by Burawoy (1979), however, it often emerges in a relatively problematic manner, grounded in a curious appreciation of human nature. The contention which raises most questions is that consent is physical and implied, rather than psychological and conscious.

“Unlike legitimacy, which is a subjective state of mind that individuals carry around with them, consent is expressed through, and is the result of, the organisation of activities. It is to be distinguished from the specific consciousness or subjective attributes of the individual who engages in those activities. Within the labor process the basis of consent lies in the organisation of activities as though they presented the worker with real choices, however narrowly confined those choices might be. It is participation in choosing that generates consent.”

(Burawoy, 1979, p.27)

What appears to be overlooked, however, is that consent must be both conscious and subjective. While consent may be demonstrated by an individual's actions, the logic of human nature demands that, where

consent has been given, it must have been given - and given consciously - prior to the action being commenced. Mere physical involvement in a physical process can be regarded as evidence only of the involvement itself (Ackers & Black, 1992). Unless there is separate evidence of consent, the behaviour of individuals could as easily be interpreted as submission to, or subjugation by, a more powerful force (whence the notion of coercion), or as the result of manipulation.

The characteristic of true consent is that it requires an equality - particularly an equality of knowledge and understanding (Alvesson, 1987) - between parties to an agreement. While such equality is often strongly asserted, the reality may be different. Even in the case of mediaeval peasants as discussed by Burawoy (1979) this holds true. Under the feudal system, serfdom was not the result of a choice: one either was a serf or was not, and serfs were obliged to submit to their social condition through the application of coercive laws, and the ever-present threat of punishment for transgressions (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980, pp.45, 410).

In the modern workplace as well, a fine line may exist between consent and compulsion, and distinguishing between them may be difficult. As Ackers and Black (1992, p.191) suggest. "where power relations are involved, active consent and dull compulsion are interwoven in such a highly complex way ... that it is difficult to impute one or the other from observed behaviour or expressed attitudes".

Nevertheless, Sturdy (1992) suggests that, where there is a choice between the two, the decision is likely to be in favour of consent. This is partly because the individual may not be in a position to take any resistant action, and partly because many people obtain a sense of identity and well-being from their work: "The possibility of securing an alternative identity in resistance is crucially limited by processes of individualisation that hinder the formation of a sustained and shared 'culture of resistance'" (Sturdy, 1992, p.142). This individualisation - an increasingly common element of the labour process during the 1990s (Ford, 1999) - may render labour far more liable to exploitation and, frequently, to the use of coercive, or divide-and-rule, measures by management (Taksa, 1992; Dunford, 1988).

An important aspect of the analysis by Burawoy (1979) is the extent to which ostensible consent may be the result of manipulation. Burawoy (1979) suggests that this is due to cooperation between management and unions, and suggests that the role of unions is the maintenance of the status quo of a docile - or at least controlled - work force (Burawoy, 1979, p.112). A similar situation of cooperation between unions and management is advocated by Kenyon and Lewis (1996). By contrast, however, Buchanan and Hall (2002) see problems with such cooperation, and determine that discussions have been largely directed by management in such situations. This has resulted in a diminution of union influence in the workplace. Employees have fared little better, often finding themselves confronted with downsizing, leading to work intensification and stress for remaining staff.

Ontologically, it would appear that there is a quite strong tendency towards an objectivist view of the world in general, and of the labour process in particular, which would tend to place Burawoy (1979) in the divide between rationalist and radical thought in relation to the labour process. He does acknowledge that individual consciousness, influenced by the external environment, plays a significant role in influencing the attitudes and behaviour of people in the workplace. However, he is more concerned to explain why exploitation and manipulation do not always lead to resistance.

Burawoy (1979) suggests the existence of an external reality, which is then imposed on workers, albeit often without their being fully aware of it. There would appear to be an underlying assumption in Burawoy (1979) of submission, and of continued domination due largely to a lack of understanding by individuals of their true situation. In this, it might be argued that Burawoy (1979) is not too dissimilar to Braverman (1974), or to the view of some critical theorists that subtle control may exist and grow unless individuals are able to remain self-reflective (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996, pp. 76-77).

Overall, it is the combination of the coercive element and the lack of choice which may be considered to call into question the theory of consent. The

reality remains that mere submission, no matter how complete, is not consent (Ackers & Black, 1992). Thus, while Burawoy (1979) has been considered to provide a sound contradiction of ‘Braverman’s thesis of labour intensification resulting from the increase of management control and the separation of conception and execution’ (Knights, 1990, p.309), his case remains incomplete, and questions and inconsistencies remain. Consequently, it can be argued that Burawoy (1979) and Braverman (1974) each provide a necessary element for understanding work intensification and that, taken together, they help to build a framework for understanding the situation as a whole.

### **Teacher Work Intensification and Socialised Consent**

The notions of congruence and consent expressed by Burawoy (1979) are not restricted to workplaces in the manufacturing industry, but may also be found in the operations of other organisations. Indeed, in the field of education, they may be seen to have close links with the notion of professionalism, and with strong implications for work intensification.

Teachers would appear to focus on the academic well-being and achievements of students (Leggett, 1997) and often to see professionalism as being shown by the quality of the education provided. This may then lead to an expectation of being accorded trust and respect, as a result of a self image as trained and experienced people able to make autonomous, discretionary decisions regarding the education of the students in their charge. In this manner, an identity may be constructed which “forms both a bulwark against threats and provides personal standards for social comparison and action” (Thompson & McHugh, 1995, p.335).

However, while such an approach may enable individuals to work within the context of a particular work or social environment, it may also mean simply a change of emphasis over work intensification, from externally-imposed expectations and requirements to self-imposed expectations and guilt (Hargreaves, 1994; Drago et al, 1997; Aronsson, 1999).

The problem for teachers would appear to be the potential identification of

the task with the executor (Aronsson 1999, p.11), to the extent that a clash occurs between workload, family, and professionalism, and notions of what is normal begin to fray (Probert et al, 2000). As a result, the ability of individuals to analyse workload objectively will be affected, and the workload itself will tend to be underestimated (Probert et al, 2000, p.41).

Effectively, this means that the concept of professionalism may become a double-edged sword, giving teachers a belief in their status and value, but simultaneously leading them to voluntarily accept work intensification - albeit without necessarily recognising what is occurring. Professionalism thus may become a form of indirect control through a process of manufactured, or socialised, consent:

“Working hard was not simply a question of bowing reluctantly to outside pressures. Many of the demands and expectations of teaching appeared to come from within teachers themselves, and frequently teachers appeared to drive themselves with almost merciless enthusiasm and commitment in an attempt to meet the virtually unattainable standards of pedagogical perfection they set themselves.”

(Hargreaves, 1994, p.126)

The suggestion is that it is the rhetoric of professionalism which legitimates work intensification as it “seduces teachers into consorting with their own exploitation” (Hargreaves, 1994, p.15). The Hargreaves (1994) suggestion is thus that interpreting professionalism to be quality of work may lead teachers into taking on increasing amounts of work, under the guise of an unrealistic search for perfection. This would appear to reinforce the view of Peters and Waterman (1982, p.260) regarding the importance of language - “Once they start talking the philosophy, they may start living it, even if, initially, the words have no meaning”.

Closely linked with this view of professionalism Hargreaves (1994) suggests, is the notion of guilt - particularly depressive guilt - whereby teachers, with a strong commitment to care and to education, come to believe that they have failed to do as good a job as they should, and that they need to make a greater effort. As perfection may be difficult to achieve - if for no other reason than the continual developments in

technology, for example - such an attitude may indeed be a virtual guarantee of never-ending work intensification, as teachers give ever more of themselves in pursuit of the impossible.

In addition to identifying strong links between professionalism and work intensification in teaching, this may lay teachers open to manipulation:

“...teachers’ work has become increasingly intensified, with teachers expected to respond to greater pressures and comply with multiple innovations under conditions that are at best stable and at worst deteriorating. Under this view, extended professionalism is a rhetorical ruse, a strategy for getting teachers to collaborate willingly in their own exploitation, as more and more effort is extracted from them.”

(Hargreaves, 1994, p.118)

Hargreaves (1994) dissects in some detail the nature of teacher work intensification, and concludes that its source is “a bureaucratically-driven escalation of pressures, expectations and controls concerning what teachers do and how much they should do within the school day” (Hargreaves, 1994, p.108). His suggestion is that teachers should instead be allowed a stronger role in curriculum development and scheduling at the school level - in other words, introducing a policy of devolution, which would appear to be supported by Holland (1993), Taylor and Bullard (1995), and Elliott (1998). The assumption would appear to be that teachers are better placed to organise such matters efficiently, and that professional autonomy would help them to minimise work intensification.

Devolution would seem to be favoured also by Thompson and McHugh (1995, p.338), although from a standpoint which appears more reminiscent of Burawoy (1979) and the notion of consent. It is suggested that organisations may find it easier to let staff “initiate the enactment of the correct scripts”, or the accepted manner of operation. Such anticipatory socialisation, it is considered, allows control to be applied indirectly and effectively, and without conflict. Where individuals can be induced to work in a cooperative manner, for example by means of a focus on their role as professionals (Thompson & McHugh, 1995, p.337), rather than by the imposition of direct controls as seen by Braverman (1974), the



likelihood of alienation occurring may be reduced. On this basis, it can be argued that professionalism could be viewed as a means of manufacturing consent. Parallels thus become discernible with Burawoy (1979).

By contrast, however, it is also implied (Etheridge et al, 1994; Leggett, 1997; Endicott, 1997) that devolution may be a significant factor in causing the direct and indirect problems of teacher work intensification, particularly where increased duties are not matched by staffing increases.

### **Professionalism as Reflection and Responsibility**

Within the education sector, it has long been known that teachers are often obliged to work long hours, traditionally in order to cope with the demands of preparation of material and teaching aids, and of marking of students' work. Out-of-hours work is placed at up to four hours or more per day (Endicott, 1997). However, it has been noted that teachers are increasingly concerned about factors such as the range and type of duties, deadlines, the pace of change, and expectations (Probert et al, 2000).

In addition to these demands placed upon them, teachers have long been considered by the community at large to have a social responsibility. Indeed, as indicated by a secondary teacher on p.145, teachers may often be obliged to work through vacation periods in order to prepare for coming terms. Vacations then become merely a break from class time. However, there would appear to be a lack of agreement in the community and amongst commentators about the nature and causes of work intensification, and differences over the actual role, status and responsibilities of teachers in general (Leggett, 1997; Spaul, 1997). In common with people working in other service industries, teachers are viewed as having responsibilities towards society which exceed mere technical competence. In addition to the responsibility which teachers generally have with regard to students and their education (Hargreaves, 1994; Endicott, 1997), there has been increasingly imposed the concept of accountability (Endicott, 1997; Probert et al, 2000).

As employer organisations, Australian State Education Departments may

be considered to have relatively unusual structures, consisting, as they do, of a large number of component workplaces of many different sizes, and operating in many different environments. With the geographical isolation of many schools, particularly primary schools in country regions, and the smallness of many of them, it may be almost inevitable that, in order to cope with the demands of work, many teachers develop attributes such as self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and decision-making ability.

As a result, while the desire to help students may remain, there may be less willingness to view the working environment and structure uncritically. This may be seen as a third approach to teacher professionalism - that of reflection and responsibility. Under this approach, individuals are able to reflect critically on the extent to which work intensification is being experienced, or is likely to be experienced, as a result of increased demands in the workplace (Etheridge et al, 1994), as well as the likely effects on themselves, on their work performance, and on their families. As a result of this knowledge and awareness, teachers may more accurately determine the degree to which changes will be accepted or resisted. While there may remain a strong sense of responsibility towards students, it will not necessarily be an overriding one, and teachers will be more able to counter the effects of domination in the workplace (Alvesson, 1987; Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). The following section examines the value of critical theory in helping teachers arrive at this point.

## **A Critical Approach**

Attempts to place issues in perspective lead to consideration of critical theory, and its “concern to develop a more rational, enlightened society through a process of critical reflection upon the organisation and efficacy of existing institutions and ideologies” (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996, p.67). By the very nature of this process of reflection, critical theory must be considered as part of the radical school of thought, and it is not surprising to find it located by Burrell & Morgan (1979) in the Radical Humanist paradigm. It is, however, considered to be less radical in its approach than Marxism, as it does not anticipate revolutionary change, but seeks instead a form of “practical rationality ... [which] is at once a condition and a consequence of the open, democratic determination of ends” (Alvesson &

Willmott, 1996, p.64).

In relation to work intensification, critical theory may be seen as providing a potential framework within which core elements of the work situation can begin to be identified and examined realistically, and where the situation described by Hargreaves (1994) - of teachers being seduced by rhetoric - may be avoided. Because work intensification is a complex phenomenon, with a wide range of causes and effects, any analysis requires flexibility to be applied to many different situations.

Critical theory would appear to offer this flexibility. It takes nothing for granted - even itself - and seeks to view the totality of each situation. It does not seek to identify one all-encompassing, everlasting solution, however. It “opposes those ideologies and illusions which work against the individual’s independent and free choices” (Alvesson, 1987, p.13), and effectively frees the analyst from the limitations of more rigid sectional theory, such as Marxism. Its flexible approach also helps to explain issues across long periods and varying conditions (Reed, 1996).

One of the key elements of critical theory is the belief that the individual in society is often subject to domination by the forces of rationalism. As with Marxist analysis, critical theory considers this domination as a significant part of the experience of life (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). It seeks to emancipate the individual from it and to encourage independence of thought and freedom of choice (Alvesson, 1987; Yarrow, 1992; Alvesson & Willmott, 1996; Alvesson & Deetz, 1996). However, whereas the approach followed by Braverman (1974) focuses on class conflict, and sees work intensification as being essentially management attempts to exploit labour, the critical view is more that of the individual being subject to domination by a range of forces, both at work and in private life (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). It is seen as a case of the

“intensified subjection of individuals to the enormous apparatus of production and distribution, ..... the deprivatization of free time, in the almost indistinguishable fusion of constructive and destructive social labour”

(Marcuse, 1970, quoted in Habermas, 1987, p.83)

The forces of rationality are often exemplified by developments in science, technology, and ideology, and by style and use of language (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Habermas, 1987; Alvesson, 1987; Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). These factors are viewed as dominating the thoughts and actions of both the community and the individual, and as seeking to create conformity. This ideological hegemony “in the schools, family and workshop [was how] capitalism was most likely to develop and increase the unseen power of the ruling class, by attacking and infiltrating the consciousness of the individual worker” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p.289).

As Burrell & Morgan (1979) point out, the strength of ideological hegemony is also its weakness, as the individual remains his own theorist, and thus is potentially able to reach individual conclusions. Where this includes an ongoing determination to critically question all aspects of society, even those elements commonly regarded as standard belief, the effect may be to counter, or avoid, domination.

The struggle between domination and freedom is illustrated in a fundamental Habermasian comparison between the concepts of work and interaction (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Work is considered to be “the dominant form of social action within capitalist industrialised society ... which reflects an unequal power relationship” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p.295). By contrast, interaction envisages communication existing independently of power, and as emancipating the individual from work and domination. Critical theory thus provides for the existence of two opposing approaches, which essentially may be seen as representing the control model and the cooperation model of society respectively. The latter would appear to be represented in literature from the early 1990s (for example, Deery, 1990; Ferguson & Ogden, 1993), which stresses the need for, and benefits of, cooperation between parties to the labour process.

Where the opportunity for cooperation does not exist, however, critical theory “explicitly declares an emancipatory interest; that is, its aim is to release constraints on human freedom and potential” (Murray & Ozanne, 1991, p.129). In this sense, critical theory may be seen to differ from both the unitarist approach to the work environment, which emphasises

conformity, and Marxism, in that it tends to discount the likelihood of uprisings of a social class (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). Instead, it concentrates on the emancipation of the individual through a resistance to “the conformist-shaping powers of the mass media, business and government” (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996, p.70).

By engaging in questioning of such issues, the individual may be able to avoid the tendency towards passive acceptance of the status quo (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Action taken on the basis of critical analysis should include such things as public control of technological advances, and a strong focus on creating undistorted communication. However, there is also a need to examine the overall situation, rather than seeking to impose a solution which may address only a part of a perceived situation:

“Problems arising in different sectors of society ought to be related to the totality in which they are expressions and not to be met by knowledge and technological developments aimed at the better functioning of particular components.”

(Alvesson, 1987, p.13)

Using this flexibility, the critical approach provides a means of realistically identifying and appraising the existence, nature and impact of work intensification. It avoids the stereotyping of employees into large-scale social, industrial or bureaucratic environments such as those discussed by Braverman (1974) and Burawoy (1979). It may also be applied to, and used by, all members of the workforce, including professionals. As such, it can be argued that critical theory provides a means of reflection and, potentially, a means of resistance to excessive work demands.

Alternatively, critical theory also argues that, if individuals remain unreflective, they may experience alienation, as the benefits they are supposed to obtain from the process of consent are not intrinsically rewarding (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). The following section examines some of the perceived physical and psychological effects of work intensification on individuals, in areas such as health and family matters, while a model proposed at the end of the chapter provides a framework on which the various approaches may be placed in relationship to each other.

## **Effects of Work Intensification**

As discussed previously in this chapter, work intensification should be regarded as a complex phenomenon, with a range of manifestations and causes. Just as importantly, it also includes a range of effects which, in turn, may impact on work performance, in a cycle of increasing pressure. This becomes a key factor for teachers, who may need to cope not only with long hours of work away from the workplace, but also with a cumulative impact on matters such as health, sleep, and family relationships. Thus it could be argued that an understanding of the extent and seriousness of work intensification may be assisted by consideration of non-work matters. This section responds to the third research question, by examining on the effects of work intensification on health and family matters, and suggests that such issues should be taken into account by employers.

### **Health**

It would seem logical to assume that a successful system of industrial relations would seek a compromise position between a purely business approach to work intensification, and a purely individual approach, especially in terms of benefits for each. Some writers, such as Benson (1998) and Bent (1998), do attempt to link the two, especially in the area of health. Loudoun and Harley (2001, p.416) suggest that there has been “growing recognition of the nexus between industrial relations and occupational health and safety” over the last two decades.

Frequently, however, this linkage would seem to be more apparent than real and, at least potentially, merely an effort to justify the additional demands which are being made increasingly by employers. Loudoun and Harley (2001, p.403) criticise the modern bargaining process encouraged by federal legislation for leading to “the increased introduction of unsafe shiftworking arrangements”, and indicate their concern that the onus appears to be increasingly on employees to identify potential safety issues, and to include them in their agreements. Endicott (1997) displays similar concerns in relation to teachers.

Writers such as Heiler (1996, 1998), Buchanan, Van Barneveld, O'Loughlin and Pragnell (1997), Spurgeon et al (1997), Burchell et al (1999), and Loudoun and Harley (2001) indicate that there is indeed evidence to raise health and safety concerns about extended working hours, and related matters such as the effects on home, family, leisure, and quality of life. Other writers, such as Spearritt and Edgar (1994), Hunter and McKelvie (1999), Horstman and Barrera (1998), and Pocock (2002) outline issues relating to the interface of work and family matters, including frustration and dissatisfaction. Pocock and Wright (1997), Buchanan et al (1997) and O'Donnell et al (2001) also indicate that changes to wages and hours of work have led to an increase in stress, particularly in feminised work areas.

This approach is not universally accepted, however. A counter-tendency noted by writers such as Crawford (1997) and Arkin (1997) is for some organisations to treat issues such as stress, job satisfaction, health, and morale as little more than abstract concepts, rather than issues which impact on the lives of individuals.

Where it is accepted that individuals are affected by work issues, such as increased hours of work, an attempt may be made to view this in a positive light. Reith (1999) and Wooden (2002), for example, suggest that people working long hours do so from choice. Smith et al (1998), Wallace (1998), and Wooden (2002) also seek to show that, as well as supporting business, in terms of productivity, longer hours of work are not only not detrimental to employees, but that they may actually be beneficial to them.

As change is thus argued as being in the individual's interests (Fielding, 1995), it is the individual whom it is considered must adapt, either by improving work practices and overall efficiency; by undergoing training; or by adjusting attitudes to bring personal goals into line with management visions and goals. The onus for adapting is thus placed on the individual. Any subsequent resistance to change may be seen as the result of deficiencies, or neuroses, on the part of those individuals (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980, p.128). As Crawford (1997) indicates, such an approach may give a sense of the victim being blamed for the problem, despite ostensible concern from the organisation:

**“Blaming the individual is of course an easy way to avoid tackling root problems in the organisation, but burnout happens to all levels of individuals when a situation arises that they cannot cope with by their usual coping strategies. They can become overloaded with too much change, too many demands on their time, and not enough time in which to do the core job effectively. If time is given to such a person by those in management positions to listen, support, and help, then the vicious cycle of perceived worthlessness can be avoided, and also perhaps long-term sick leave. So we have the idea that valuing individuals within an organisation may mitigate the effects of some of the forces that are feeding the feelings of stress and inadequacy.”**

**(Crawford, 1997, p.107)**

**This theme is visited also by Heiler (1996), who points out strongly the health and safety implications of “individualisation”, whereby staff are encouraged to link their individual performances to the well-being of the organisation as a whole. Heiler warns that this may often lead to efforts to work faster, and to do more, with the potential to then lead to accidents. Similarly, Burchell et al (1999, p.30), argue that “whilst ... intensification of work may have eased the pressure on organisations, it is likely to have impoverished the health and well-being of their employees”. Heiler (1996) notes also that often workplace accidents are dismissed as the result of individual carelessness in work practices - in other words, not the responsibility of the employer.**

**The linking of stress with the notions of worthlessness, inadequacy, and inability to cope with change would appear to indicate that the individual may be important only to the extent of being a viable part of an overall organisation. Yet such a course may only exacerbate work intensification, if problem areas are not eliminated from the work environment.**

**“The increased retention rate, combined with more limited sanctions for disruptive behaviour, mean that, in some schools, teachers are expected to put their physical and mental wellbeing in jeopardy each day as pawns in the bigger game of providing education to students who do not want to learn. The stress of trying to cope with change in these circumstances can be destructive to health.”**

**(Endicott, 1997, p.27)**



The imposition of duties which lead to teacher work intensification may constitute, for an education authority, a breach of the duty of care of an employer towards an employee (Endicott, 1997). While direct control may often be favoured by management, effects of such control may be manifested in a wide range of ailments, particularly psychological disorders, which can be considered compensable work injuries (Endicott, 1997).

What emerges is an apparent need for research to examine objectively the effects of work intensification on health and safety, and the subsequent costs of these on profitability. For example, Benson (1998) indicates that costs associated with fatigue, poor performance, and injury may outweigh apparent savings in terms of staff costs, and end by worsening an organisation's overall situation. In addition, Spurgeon et al (1998) note that more research is needed on extended working hours in general, and not merely on shift work, as has been the tendency to date.

## **Work Intensification and Families**

Much of the literature of work intensification has tended to focus on organisational matters of efficiency, productivity and competitiveness, with health and safety occupying a lesser position. Less important still would appear to have been social and domestic effects of work intensification.

Some examination has been made of the situation experienced by women (Short, Preston, & Peetz, 1993; Heiler, 1996; Pocock & Wright 1997; Hunter & McKelvie, 1999). This would seem to have focused largely on issues such as hours of work, remuneration, and on career choices compared to males. Often the effects on families of increased work demands is mentioned only in passing (Etheridge et al, 1994). However, it is also recognised that more research is needed (Heiler, 1996; Bent, 1998). Pocock (2002) would appear to have responded to this need with a study of the work / life balance which also includes consideration of children.

The effects on families become important in relation to work intensification in part because of implications for theoretical discussion. Whereas functionalist thought may focus on concepts such as order, equilibrium and stability (Burrell & Morgan, 1979), it may be questioned whether such

stability and equilibrium are possible in anything other than short-term situations. The implication of much research is that lack of stability may be more likely. Braverman (1974), for example, sees contradictions between growing demands being placed on people at the same time as there is increasing dissatisfaction with conditions of work. Similarly, Nolan et al (2000) see insecurity as a problem, leading ultimately to alienation.

It is also considered that individuals may be affected both at work and at home (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Alvesson & Willmott, 1996; Burchell et al, 1999; Probert et al, 2000). The more that people experience conflicting priorities between workload, family and professionalism, the greater will be the effect on their ability to determine what is normal (Probert et al, 2000). A cycle of increasing dissatisfaction is possible, with potential consequences at both work and home.

What becomes noticeable in the literature is the existence of two themes in relation to work intensification and families. These are generally identified as the work / family split and as family friendliness. There is a natural overlap between the two and, in specific situations, each may be seen as a factor of the other. Between them, they cover the operational aspects of the linkage between work and family, and the effects of that linkage.

As a generalisation, the work / family split tends to deal mainly with the fundamental issue of the time allocated to work compared to that allocated to family matters (Horstman & Barrera, 1998; Hunter & McKelvie, 1999). Family friendliness, on the other hand, covers a wider range, including workplaces, working conditions, and legislation (Spearritt & Edgar, 1994; Di Milia, 1998); women in the workforce (Junor, 1998; Hunter & McKelvie, 1999); and effects on domestic life (Hunter & McKelvie, 1999).

It has been suggested that the relationship of work to family matters may be seen as a “human” problem rather than a “women’s” problem (Spearritt & Edgar, 1994). However, it would appear that many of the aspects of modern work practices, especially work intensification, still tend to impact most heavily on women (Heiler, 1996; Ginn & Sandell, 1997; Junor, 1998; Hunter & McKelvie, 1999), whether in terms of career

prospects, or internal family dynamics. The question of time is important also, as this is frequently where the impact of work intensification becomes most noticeable for families (Drago et al, 1997; Charlesworth, 1997; Sappey, Maconachie, Sappey & Teo, 1999).

Hunter and McKelvie (1999) suggest that an important reason for problems relating to the balance of work and family is that the optimum years for starting families coincide with the years of greatest effort in establishing careers. During that time, it is expected that professionals will work long hours. Anything else may be seen as lack of commitment and may affect advancement (Hunter & McKelvie, 1999; Probert et al, 2000). However, as Burchell et al (1999) note, tension in relationships may be caused more by the pressure to work longer hours on a regular basis than simply by the total number of hours worked. This may be particularly so when high pressure for output is combined with job insecurity.

Horstman and Barrera (1998) note the suggestion that the concept of seeking a balance between work and family could need to be replaced by that of a balance between career and family. In something of an echo of this, Reith (1999) suggests that it is likely that people will experience a variety of work situations - full-time, part-time, career breaks, different types of work - during the course of a career.

These work situations are put forward by some writers as family-friendly and supportive of the work / family split. It is suggested, for example (Wallace, 1998), that extended periods of work have positive outcomes, including improved sleep duration and quality, quicker recovery time from sleep, and greater social and family satisfaction. In contrast, Bent (1998), sees extended hours of work as leading to fatigue, including cumulative fatigue, which then impacts on individual ability to participate in social and domestic life. This implies that, for a family, the important consideration may thus be the pressures experienced, such as insecurity of employment, rather than simply a question of absolute time (Allan et al 1999, p.530; Burchell et al, 1999). Psychological forms of work intensification may thus have a greater effect on families than do physical forms.

Unfortunately, a review of literature of work intensification and the family tends to raise as many questions as it answers. With the existence of a range of lifestyles in contemporary society, it is perhaps necessary to query the very concept of the family, and the extent to which it remains a valid one. To the extent that it is valid, the question then arises as to whether it is possible to find a balance of time allocated between work and home, which is satisfactory for employer, employee, and employee's family.

Where such a balance is not found, what is the rebound, or spillover, effect of domestic stress on performance and safety at work (Nolan et al, 2000)? Is it a question of apparent initial cost savings and productivity gains being outweighed by longer-term indirect costs, such as stress leave and worker's compensation? As noted by Bent (1998) and Spurgeon et al (1997), a need exists for more research in these areas, particularly with the extension of non-standard and extended hours of work in recent years.

## **Conclusion - Towards a Synthesis?**

### **Work Intensification**

In a situation of increased labour weakness, the level of management control, whether actual or perceived, tends to be greater, and used for the benefit of the organisation (Barnes & Fieldes, 2000; Roan et al, 2001). Labour control over work matters becomes correspondingly weaker and more fragmented, leaving employees more open to work intensification.

In the brief examination above of approaches to the study of work intensification, it is apparent that there exists a range of views. While each makes a contribution, ultimately, it would appear unlikely that any single theoretical approach can be used in isolation to fully explain work intensification. Such an explanation is in fact likely to require a synthesis of a range of theories - the Marxist concepts of power, conflict, and class consciousness; the Burawoy (1979) theory of consent; Braverman's (1974) critique of the Taylorist notions of control and common interests, and the critical theorists' notion of individual freedom from domination (see, for example, Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). This research therefore

proposes a model which may help to place competing views in context, in a framework within which work intensification may be located.

### **Towards a New Model**

What emerges from a study of the literature is a relationship between work intensification and professionalism. In this situation, the need for a framework assumes a greater importance, as there is often less certitude in interpreting issues of quality, achievement, status, and responsibility when applied to the work of professionals.

As indicated by Hargreaves (1994) and Leggett (1997), this relationship is frequently bound up with the issue of control, both direct and indirect. Direct control may take the form of an imposition of increased workload, more urgent deadlines, longer hours, additional duties or additional responsibilities. In contrast to this, indirect control may consist of issues such as increased expectations, or concerns about status or security (Burgess & Campbell, 1998; Nolan et al, 2000). All of these forms of work intensification apply especially to professionals, and especially to those involved in education (Etheridge et al, 1994; Hargreaves, 1994; Drago et al, 1997; Spaul, 1997; Leggett, 1997; Aronsson, 1999).

The relationship above may be bound up with a cycle of action and reaction. As discussed by Martin (2001), with reference to the work of Clegg and Dunkerley (1980),, imposition of direct control may lead to resistance, in turn leading to management perceptions of the need for additional direct control. Figure 2.1 below moves beyond the traditional conflictual model outlined by Martin (2001), while also proposing a similar self-sustaining sequence. The major differences lie in the expansion to include self-generated work changes, in the addition of professionalism as a key element in the process, and in the relationship of the three categories of professionalism to each other and to work intensification.

Broadly speaking, Figure 2.1 is a “convection” model of power, control and resistance in the work environment. The model is divided into two interdependent streams, which may be seen as approximating to

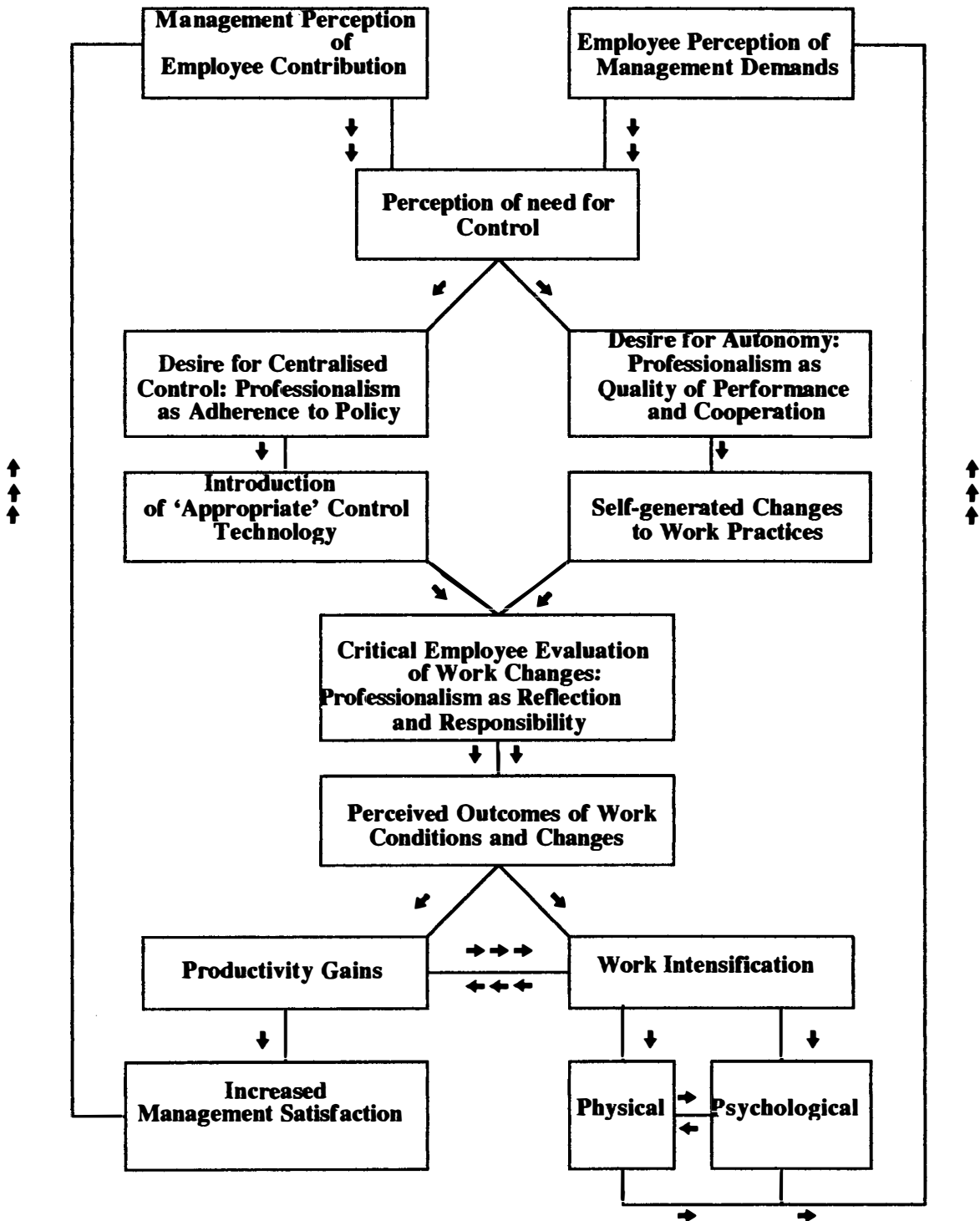
management and staff approaches, with a number of common stages. As with normal convection, the outcome (for example, work intensification) may vary depending on where pressure is applied. This may itself depend on the strength with which the various interpretations of professionalism are held by stakeholders.

### **The Management Stream**

Of the two streams, this is closely adapted from on the model proposed by Martin (2001, p.835), and reflects the traditional model of conflict between capital and labour examined by Braverman (1974). The approach may be seen as relatively straightforward, with an emphasis on direct control of employees by management.

The process commences with an appreciation by management of the current situation in the workplace, a form of overall performance appraisal of the contribution of staff to the efficient operation of the organisation. At this point, perceptions may emerge as to the need for further measures. Such perceptions are essentially a form of conclusion, based on the initial information available, and may be influenced by factors such as the underlying social philosophy of each party, as well as by external factors such as economic conditions. Typically, management perception is likely to be that improvement is needed, and that such improvement is most likely to be gained from imposition of additional demands on staff. These demands may be in the form of direct control, as concluded by Braverman (1974), or of indirect control. These two forms of control may occur simultaneously.

Direct control may be closely linked with one view of professionalism. As indicated by Mulgan (2000) and Geiselhardt (2000), management may frequently see professionalism as adherence to official policy. The issue then becomes the extent to which individuals must be obliged to achieve this end. To ensure this, aspects of “appropriate control technology” (such as performance reviews or reporting requirements) may be introduced. When implemented, as in the Education Department of Western Australia, such measures may have implications for workload.



**Figure 2.1:**  
**Work Intensification and Professionalism**  
**A Convection Model of Power, Control, and Resistance**  
 (Adapted from Martin, J (2001, p.835). Organizational Behaviour  
 Thomson Learning)

## **The Staff Stream and Indirect Control**

Where management will evaluate staff performance, staff will gain a similar initial perception of the demands placed upon them by management, and of the extent to which controls are needed in order to implement those demands. A frequent response of staff is likely to be a desire for autonomy. This may be even more likely with regard to professionals (Hargreaves, 1994), particularly where there is a differing interpretation of professionalism, or where a centralised bureaucracy is seen as a major source of work intensification.

As writers such as Hargreaves (1994) indicate, however, mere autonomy may not guarantee the absence of work intensification. This may be the case particularly for professionals, and particularly for those who view professionalism as referring to performance of the core work of staff, such as teaching. This has the potential to lead to additional work, resulting from a self-generated desire for perfection, and to further increases due to a sense of guilt at having failed to achieve this goal (Hargreaves, 1994; Leggett, 1997; Spaul, 1997). So intense may be the desire to do so, however, that it is argued (Aronsson, 1999; Probert et al, 2000) that individuals may lose the sense of what constitutes a normal workload.

At this stage in the model, similarities may be seen also to the work of Burawoy (1979), in that individuals may be seduced or manipulated into following a particular course of action. Hargreaves (1994) suggests that teachers may be so seduced by the rhetoric of professionalism that they effectively collude in their own exploitation. In this sense, therefore, professionalism may lead to a form of manufactured consent. By being prepared to take advantage of this situation, management may exert an element of indirect control.

## **A Third Way**

As seen above, while the two streams in the model are fundamentally different, linkages may often exist. After initial evaluations of the work situation, it may in fact be open to both management and employees to



select either or both direct and indirect means of control, based on their perceptions of what is required. However, decisions taken at this point of themselves will tend to lead to increases in workload and expectations, as simultaneous management and staff satisfaction is likely to be rare.

Work intensification may be affected by a third form of professionalism: that of reflection and responsibility. This is predicated on awareness of the individual, and on a willingness to question, and would appear to be a prerequisite for an understanding by the individual, of their work situation, and of the presence - or absence - of domination by forces in society (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). As such, this may provide the means for a critical evaluation of preceding stages.

This third form of professionalism may be considered as a crucial stage in the organisation of work, constituting a balance against excessive workload demands. It permits engagement in a physical process while retaining psychological autonomy, in a sense uniting the dedication of professionalism, and the desire to fulfil obligations towards students, with critical theory's desire to question.

An advantage of this model is that it places the three forms of professionalism examined in this research in a framework relative to each other. It is argued that the strength of the third form of professionalism is the important factor with regard to work outcomes. In this situation, individuals view their role as being to provide a given service for clients (or, for teachers, their students). The reaction to potential work increases is determined in part by consideration of the likely effects on their capacity to provide that service. Perspectives such as occupational health and safety, stress, gender, and social and domestic effects, are able to be addressed as intrinsic elements of the issue of work intensification, and may lead to either acceptance or a degree of resistance.

It is at this stage that decisions made by both management and staff may facilitate either control and conflict, as suggested by Braverman (1974), or cooperation and consent, as suggested by Burawoy (1979). They may also help to determine the degree to which work changes come to be regarded

as productivity gains or as work intensification. These two outcomes may tend to exert a mutual influence on each other, as may the two forms of work intensification, and may lead to increases in either management satisfaction or employee dissatisfaction. In turn, these will cause both parties to re-evaluate their initial perceptions, and the cycle begins again.

This model has particular application to education, and to professionals in general, due to the interdependence of each part. However, in education, a typical manufacturing form of work intensification - seeking extra output for a given amount of time - is unlikely to be applicable, due to the nature of the work. Even defining overall productivity in education, according to Marginson (1993, p.112) “eludes measurement” It therefore becomes important that other factors be used to determine the quality of work.

In education the debate in recent years has been over whether teachers should be regarded as professional educators, trusted with providing a high-quality education for their students, or more as administrators, complying with prescriptive operating and reporting procedures. As a result, attempts to introduce or increase elements of direct control may be likely to lead to a dilemma for teachers, faced with a need to reconcile traditional classroom excellence to compliance with additional operational and administrative requirements. This also raises the question of status, which has long been a factor in teacher stress and dissatisfaction, in turn contributing to further work intensification.

Whether the experiences of teachers will be likely to lead to a review of policies and conditions is perhaps unlikely in the short term, partly due to a comparative lack of research on work intensification, its causes and effects. What the literature does point to is a need for additional, objective research on work intensification amongst professionals. Such research would need to be both comprehensive and inclusive, examining the issue from an overall perspective. Similarly, while it is probable that subjectivity and bias will never be eliminated from the field of industrial relations, attention and effort may have to be put into refining, and gaining some consensus on, definitions of issues and terminology, in order that researchers may at least begin from a more standardised point of departure.

## **Summary**

This chapter examined literature relating to work intensification and the labour process, from both theoretical and functional perspectives. Work intensification and its related issues were examined in the context of education, and from both sides of the labour process debate. It was argued that work intensification should be regarded frequently as much psychological in nature as physical, and with the potential for significant effects to be felt in respect of both professional and personal life, including the effects on families.

Considerable attention was paid to the question of professionalism. Three interpretations - professionalism as adherence to policy; as quality of performance; and as reflection and responsibility - were identified and discussed. These three interpretations were related to theoretical approaches by writers such as Braverman (1974), Burawoy (1979), and Hargreaves (1994), dealing with issues of control, coercion, congruence and consent.

It was suggested that no one theory might be exclusively able to explain the modern work environment, and that a synthesis of opposing views might be needed, especially for professionals in the public education system. While receiving much support during the last two decades, for example, the notion of consent as expressed by Burawoy (1979) could not be considered any more applicable than the often-criticised work of Braverman (1974), which dealt with issues of power, control and conflict. Also central to a synthesis should be a strong critical approach, with its emphasis on questioning and on the individual. A model was proposed which suggested an interaction of the various approaches.

The review of literature indicated a need for additional research on work intensification, its causes and effects, particularly amongst professionals. Such research would need to be both comprehensive and inclusive, and to address issues such as health, stress, gender, and social and domestic effects as intrinsic elements of the issue of work intensification.

## **Chapter 3**

# **METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines methods used in the research, including both philosophical and practical approaches. It describes the qualitative and quantitative approaches adopted. Also outlined are details of the data collection methods employed, including the compilation of the survey instrument.

### **Quantitative or Qualitative?**

In the field of social research, while numerous techniques exist for the collection of data, it is possible to categorise these broadly as the more applied or scientific approaches, and the more philosophical approaches. Respectively, these are then often identified with quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Quantitative research is often seen as being based on logical-positivism, which maintains that there exists a single reality, objective by nature, which is thus independent of all subjective factors. Research is conducted in an effort to identify this single reality, and may be carried out on an experimental basis, such as by tests, questionnaires, or standardised interviews.

Qualitative research, on the other hand, is based on the contention that there may exist multiple realities, which depend for their meaning on the perceptions of individuals and groups of individuals. This has been described as the naturalistic-phenomenological approach, whose aim is to “discover the natural flow of events and processes, and how participants interpret them.” (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993, p.372). People are seen as complex, unpredictable individuals, and the aim of qualitative research therefore becomes to obtain an understanding of their values, interpretations, and belief systems (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001).

An early issue to be resolved was which of these two approaches should

form the basis of the research. Ultimately, it was decided that the research should be based on the use of a large-scale quantitative survey, supported by qualitative data. Both approaches have advantages, and a combination of the two may provide valuable insights precisely because of the differences (Cavana et al, 2001).

For the purposes of this research, a survey was considered the most appropriate and effective means of obtaining a base of information large enough and comprehensive enough to enable meaningful analysis to be undertaken. Similarly, for reasons of time and efficiency, individual interviews were used as the principal means of obtaining qualitative data. Such data, while obtained from a relatively small number of people, was supported by written comments provided by over a third of the survey respondents. Its greatest value lay in providing information on teacher perceptions of more abstract concepts, such as professionalism.

## **Methodological Philosophy**

In order to identify and record perceptions, a range of methodologies are available for use, such as positivism, interpretive analysis, ethnography, and naturalistic and phenomenological approaches. However, given the specialised nature of the occupation examined, no single philosophical approach appeared to be exclusively suited to this research. Instead, the approach which appeared to provide the most comprehensive basis for analysis of teacher work intensification involved a combination of the objectivity of logical-positivism and the subjectivity of interpretivism.

### **Positivism**

Positivism is seen as the philosophy underpinning quantitative research, as it seeks - and expects to find - data which are verifiable. From the positivist standpoint, it is assumed that a reality exists, "driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms. ... Research can, in principle, converge on the 'true' state of affairs" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.109). Knowledge is gained by accumulation, until such time as there is enough to enable predictions or causal linkages to be made. With an aim of explaining, predicting and

controlling physical and human phenomena, researchers are expected to be objective, and independent from influence either on or from participants (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Indeed, the independence of social science from the social world being examined has been considered an essential aspect of it being deemed a science (Hughes, 1980).

This separation of fact from value, while clearly delimiting the range and type of data collected, may also reduce the impact of ethical issues compared to those encountered in qualitative inquiry. At the same time, however, positivism seeks to create a unity between idealism and materialism (Hughes, 1980), asserting that the natural and social sciences share a common foundation, that philosophy is dependent on science, that there is a reality which is separate from the senses of the individual, and that there is thus a distinction between fact and value. As a result, positivism is considered to recognise “only two forms of knowledge as having any legitimacy and authority, the empirical and the logical” (Hughes, 1980, p.21).

For critics of positivism like Hughes (1980), the attempt to reduce reality merely to the level of observation of phenomena, enabling behavioural predictions to be made, causes problems of acceptance:

“Regarding the social sciences as efforts to formulate what our societies, our culture, can mean, are capable of, may develop ... is no less an important task than being scientific.”

(Hughes, 1980, p.130)

Such an approach becomes “a moral enterprise” (Hughes, 1980, p.130) which, while not wishing to see the end of rational inquiry, does wish to guard against a slavish following of it to the exclusion of all other approaches.

### **Interpretive Analysis**

Interpretive theory may be explained as a belief that there is no separate, objective reality, and that what is referred to as reality is constructed

continually by the people in it at a particular moment. Thus, in order to understand reality, it is necessary not merely to be aware of, or to search for, the meanings of social phenomena, as occurs with phenomenological studies, but also of the interpretations of those meanings. This involves an approach whereby the researcher “must elucidate the process of meaning construction and clarify what and how meanings are embodied in the language and actions of social actors” (Schwandt, 1994, p.118).

It must also be considered, however, that the process applies to researchers even during their research. Thus the end result of a person following this approach may be an interpretation of the interpretations of others. Following such an approach, however, it may also be considered that the application of interpretive analysis itself is little more than an interpretation of others’ interpretations of the interpretations of social actors. Such a process could in principle be followed in a neverending, never-completed manner, never reaching a conclusion - which is precisely the point of interpretive analysis: there is no objective reality, but merely a continual construction and reconstruction of meaning.

A strength of interpretive inquiry is its very flexibility of method, and its ability to be adapted to the purposes of researchers in specific projects. The basic approach is to explore “the processes by which ... meanings are created, negotiated, sustained and modified within a specific context of human action” (Schwandt, 1994, p.120). Potentially therefore, this may be adapted into the context of an individual’s workplace, for example in schools, or of work in general, or of social or domestic life. Interpretive inquiry will examine not so much the actions of an individual or a group, but how and why they interpret those actions and the actions of others with whom they come into contact.

As a movement within interpretivism, phenomenology has been defined as “an analysis of qualitative data to provide an understanding of a concept from participants’ perspectives and views of social realities” (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993, p.95). Reality is seen as an “act of consciousness” (Hughes, 1980, p.117), in a world created through consciousness (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p.233), and this consciousness alone is believed to make

experience meaningful. The role of the social scientist then becomes essentially one of displaying the meanings of social actors, although this may mean reconciling these subjective meanings with the scientists' own aspirations to derive more objective meanings. Care needs to be taken that such a reconciliation is "within the context of human activity which has created them and which cannot be understood apart from this scheme of action" (Hughes, 1980, p.119).

This approach therefore involves the use of the social actors' concepts as a yardstick for understanding by the scientist. Using this approach, data will be collected "in the form of words rather than numbers" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993, p.42). The main methods of data collection are in-depth conversations and written personal experiences, aimed at distilling the essence of experience to find its reflective meanings (Moore, 1994).

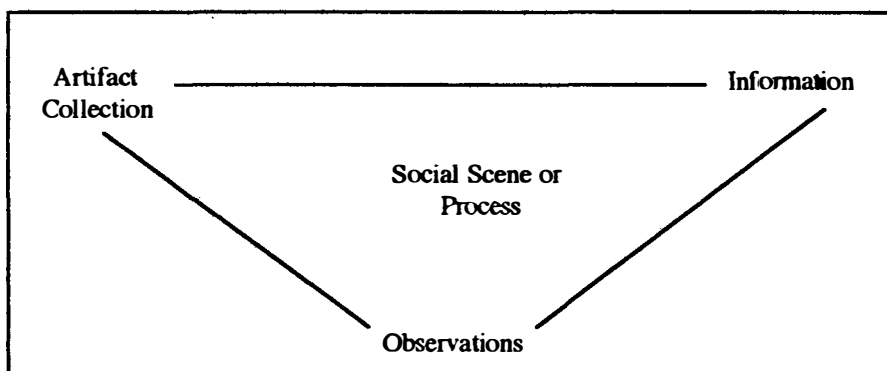
### **Triangulation**

Triangulation is not a theoretical approach as such, but rather a cross-validation, or verification, technique in qualitative research (Cavana et al, 2001), used "in order to increase confidence in research findings" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.24). Triangulation may take a number of forms (Janesick, 1994):

- \* Data triangulation, or the use of various data sources;
- \* Investigator triangulation, or the use of different investigators;
- \* Theory triangulation, or use of multiple perspectives to interpret data;
- \* Methodological triangulation, or the use of multiple methodologies to examine an issue;
- \* Interdisciplinary triangulation, or the use of disciplines such as art, history, and sociology, as well as psychology.

The overall concept (in this instance, of methodological triangulation) is shown in Figure 3.1 below.





**Figure 3.1** **Triangulation**

(Source: McMillan & Schumacher, 1993, p.499)

As McMillan & Schumacher (1993, p.498) indicate, even a single observed and recorded event may be meaningful. Equally, however, triangulation does not in or of itself guarantee the validity of data collected. Care must be taken, therefore, when seeking to draw conclusions, even when triangulation has been possible.

### **Application of Methodology**

The methodology used in this research was aimed at examining the work intensification situation faced by teachers in the Western Australian State School system. It was considered that, in order to achieve an accurate picture of the situation, detailed information would be needed, and teaching staff were expected to constitute the major source of this information. Given the largely subjective nature of the topic, the data collection and analysis were expected to use both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

During the course of the study, a range of philosophical and methodological approaches was examined, and aspects of several were able to be utilised. In some cases, however, time constraints proved to be an issue - as, for example, with attempts at organising several focus groups - and a number of individual interviews, were utilised instead. Interviews were also preferred to the use of case studies, as it was felt that this could enable data to be sought from a wider range of work environments.

Subsequently, the data collected from interviews was able to be used in conjunction with that obtained from the survey and from an earlier pilot study. This therefore provided for data to be collected from three different sources, and over three distinct periods.

Ultimately, the methodology used in the analysis of the “culture” of teachers appeared to fall more within an interpretivist-positivist framework. The interpretivist search for the process by which meaning is created was considered applicable to the question of how and why teachers should accept intensification of work, and whether this was partly due to concepts such as professionalism, or perfectionism, giving meaning to the lives of the people concerned.

This approach was considered to have an important role in the quantitative aspect of the study, as well as the qualitative. While the main data collection technique used in the study - the survey of teachers - might suggest a positivist approach to research, the aim was not so much to seek information on an objective reality, but rather to seek information on people’s perceptions of reality. In any given situation, there are likely to be as many perceptions as there are participants, due to differences in individual circumstances and environments, thus giving the underlying assumptions a distinctly qualitative flavour.

This became particularly important in relation to issues such as professionalism and health, where the information provided was in the form of written, often emotive, comment, and in responses by interviewees. Thus, while the survey of teachers might be viewed as an attempt at quantification, throughout the study it was considered important to avoid the taking of definitive standpoints, and care was taken to seek a balance between the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

As a result of the ex post facto nature of the project, and its concentration on industrial relations and operational aspects of the education system, rather than on detailed pedagogical issues, it was considered inappropriate to approach the research by means of pre-testing, post-testing, and the use of control groups. In place of this approach, it was decided to seek data

from a range of sources: a pilot study, including both questionnaires and interviews; a large-scale survey using questionnaires; and a small number of individual teacher interviews. The information thus obtained is outlined in the Findings chapters.

## **Data Collection**

### **The Pilot Study**

In order to answer the three research questions, both quantitative data and qualitative data were required. A collection of data was undertaken initially in a small pilot study, and subsequently in a larger survey. The inclusion of a pilot study in the overall structure of the research was considered likely to serve a number of purposes, all of which were subsequently fulfilled:

- (a) to determine the inherent value and importance of the research topic, including from the point of view of participants;
- (b) to obtain preliminary data, which would hopefully also reinforce the value of the topic, partly in and of itself, and partly by being able to be compared with data obtained from surveys carried out by the State School Teachers' Union and by the ACTU;
- (c) To test the suitability of the data collection instrument in practice, and to provide time for any refinements necessary; and
- (d) to identify any further issues or directions prior the main study, and to assist with the design of the data collection instruments used.

## **The Pilot Study Survey**

While pilot studies are considered to be an advantage, and worth doing wherever possible (Isaac & Michael, 1997), one of the evident limitations is likely to be that of a relatively small number of people involved. For the purposes of this study, it was realised that, in order to provide worthwhile data, any questionnaire used would need to be relatively comprehensive. At the same time, it was necessary that it should be as concise as possible, and the questions relevant. If this could be ensured, the pilot study could be potentially useful, both for the data which it could provide on the substantive topic, and for obtaining initial feedback on the questionnaire itself as a data collection instrument, prior to it being used more widely.

With this in mind, a questionnaire was designed to cover a range of issues of relevance to the topic of work intensification. The advantages of a reasonably detailed survey were considered to outweigh the possible disadvantage of resistance by respondents. A total of 66 questions were used, based partly on research carried out to that point, and partly on anecdotal evidence obtained from teachers and from media reports during industrial disputation by teachers during 2000. Of the questions, 52 were intended to be answered by all respondents, and fourteen by Principals and Deputy Principals.

The majority of the questions in the survey were of a forced choice variety, which required that the respondents answer along a Likert scale between extremes. In these cases, a total of five choices was provided, with 1 and 5 being the extremes, and 3 being neutral, or a combination. Other questions required a response selected from slightly different ranges, for example, the number of hours worked in an average week, or the frequency of minor health problems. A small number of questions required brief written answers.

In keeping with the definition of work intensification suggested in Chapter One, it was felt that the study needed to do more than merely re-examine issues such as salary, and teacher status, which have often been the focus of discussion and industrial disputation during the 1990s.

Previous research has shown work intensification to be much broader in its scope and in its effects on both individuals and overall efficiency (see Heiler, 1996; Endicott, 1997; Bent, 1998; Burgess & Campbell, 1998; Callus, 1999).

The aim of the survey was to obtain sufficient information to construct a realistic picture of the situation confronting teachers in Western Australia, specifically to determine the validity of the topic before proceeding with larger-scale research. Issues were covered on the level of individual experience, and included workload, professional outcomes, efficiency, health, family responsibilities, and social life. In terms of the overall structure of the research, the survey thus addressed the existence and effects of work intensification.

### **Target Group**

In seeking an appropriate framework for selection of participants for a pilot study, consideration was given to the merits of probability and non-probability sampling. As McMillan & Schumacher (1993) indicate, the latter is a very common approach used in research involving education, and often relies on using the subjects who happen to be available. This approach was considered to be suitable for research involving teachers themselves, as well as pedagogical matters, and was adopted for the pilot study. Participants were drawn from teachers known to the researcher, and thus formed a non-probability sample. In the final analysis, this group turned out to cover all the categories of teacher which it had been hoped to cover, and in approximately the same proportions as in the Education Department of Western Australia (EDWA). The categories included:

- \* teachers from city and country schools;
- \* primary and secondary teachers;
- \* male and female teachers;
- \* older and younger teachers;
- \* full-time and part-time teachers;
- \* principals.

A total of nineteen questionnaires was distributed, and fourteen returned. Where possible, the initial response was followed with an interview. Most of the respondents had been involved mainly in teaching duties, while four were either Principals or Deputy Principals. Ages ranged from the mid-twenties, and with less than three years' experience, to sixty, and in the year of retirement. Five respondents were male, and fourteen were female, largely reflecting the current downward trend in the numbers of younger male teachers. Three of these five were in their mid-forties, and the other two were in their late fifties. Female respondents covered approximately a 35-year age range. All respondents participated willingly, although three were cautious, until they understood the nature of the request.

### **Pilot Study Interviews**

The use of interviews in the pilot study was intended to complement the questionnaire, and to obtain mainly qualitative information dealing largely with causes of work intensification. Interviews were based on a number of preset questions, but ranged over any issues which the participants considered relevant. The duration of each interview thus depended on the degree to which individuals wished to talk. Over a period of several weeks ten interviews were conducted. Participants were advised at the start of their freedom to end the interview at any time, although all but one ended by going for longer than expected. Interviews ranged from one hour to four hours, with an average of slightly under two hours. Interviews all took place in relaxed surroundings, generally in private homes, but also including the office of one principal.

The overall focus of the interviews was on teachers' understanding of, and attitude towards, work intensification in the light of concepts such as professionalism, and the general distinction between process-oriented and people-oriented approaches. The issue of professionalism (with questions relating to guilt, perfectionism and open-endedness) was largely based on the work of Hargreaves (1994). Interviews were also influenced, with respect to other issues such as precariousness, and the possible effects of individual work situations, by Burgess and Campbell (1998) and Bent (1998).

## **The Teacher Survey**

Surveys are a common and frequent means of obtaining information for the purposes of research, describing “the incidence, frequency, and distribution of the characteristics of an identified population” (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993, p.279), and able to be used for examining the relationships between variables. Overall, surveys remain a quick and effective means of obtaining information about both physical frequencies and opinions from a particular target group in the population (Isaac & Michael, 1997, p.136).

A note of caution about potential disadvantages of surveys may be sounded, in relation to issues such as uncontrolled response rates, the possibility of oversimplification of important topics, or of respondents providing inaccurate information (Isaac & Michael, 1997). However, it is probable that they are outweighed by the advantages to be derived from the use of surveys. Unlike interviews or controlled experiments, there is less likelihood of direct influence on respondents by the researcher during data collection.

Similarly, the element of anonymity is an advantage (Isaac & Michael, 1997), which may minimise any undue influence on the respondent, either from the researcher or from colleagues. An option to supply information not specifically requested in the survey questions, but which is considered relevant by respondents, may also assist with reliability of data, while any tendency towards giving inaccurate answers should be further countered by the selection of a sufficiently large sample, thereby facilitating the identification of patterns and relationships, instead of a search for data of an absolute nature.

Following University Ethics Committee approval of the research project, successful approaches were made to the Education Department of Western Australia (EDWA) and the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia (SSTUWA) for support for the research. A brief item was included in the union publication, *Western Teacher*, advising that a survey was to be conducted, and inviting participation from any members interested who

were not included in the initial mailout. This had a very small response.

EDWA support was particularly important in the selection of the sample to be used in the survey. The final selection was made randomly from among all active EDWA teaching staff, including principals. Krejcie and Morgan (1970), quoted in Isaac and Michael (1997, p. 201), indicate that, for a population size of between 15,000 and 20,000 - as is the case with the state school teacher population in Western Australia - the preferred size for a random sample is 377. Such a sample is considered to provide data to within  $\pm .05$  of the population proportion with a ninety-five percent level of confidence.

It was decided that a distribution of one thousand questionnaires would be appropriate, in order to achieve a meaningful amount of data but, in order to minimise disruption to teachers, questionnaires were sent to those selected at the beginning of the third term of the school year. Of the thousand forms sent, 370 were returned, giving a response rate of 37 percent. Four proved to be invalid, being returned with notations that the people concerned had either only just commenced teaching, or had just resigned, and therefore had not considered it worthwhile completing the form.

### **The Survey Instrument**

The questionnaire used in the survey was based largely on the one used in the pilot study. While this study had involved only a limited number of people, it demonstrated a need for simplicity and lack of ambiguity. Based on comments from the people involved, some amendments were made to the questionnaire. Further refinements were made following consultation with a number of teachers not otherwise involved in the research.

In total, eighteen questions were asked in the survey. Most were subdivided, in order to facilitate more precise responses. As with the pilot study, most of the questions were of a forced answer variety, in order to obtain a critical mass of information on a series of issues which could be readily cross correlated. Approximately half the questions therefore utilised



a three-point or five-point scale, chiefly to assist with later data entry and analysis. Adequate provision was also made for respondents to make written comment, and approximately half took advantage of this. This provided a valuable indication of teacher perceptions in relation to more subjective issues, such as health, and reactions to curriculum and reporting changes.

Demographic data was provided in response to Questions Twelve and Thirteen (Section C). These covered, respectively, personal details such as age, gender, marital status, and family situation, and professional details such as employment type and status, teaching level, geographic location, and union membership. Issues such as class size, experience, and school role were covered also.

These demographic variables formed the basis of analysis of the findings, and assisted with the identifying the relative importance of issues such as the effect of work intensification on health and on families, and the position of teacher unions. In addition, the detail provided permitted comparison with official Education Department figures, and helped to ensure a greater degree of validity for the survey.

Apart from general demographic questions, the survey was aimed at identifying teacher perceptions of the existence, nature, causes and effects of work intensification and - given that these issues appeared to represent a general flow of logic - questions were largely arranged in the same order.

Question One was designed to indicate the extent to which work intensification was considered to exist. Questions 1.2, 1.3 and 1.7, dealing with effort and pace of work, and stress were taken from the Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey of 1995. These later enabled some direct comparisons to be made with the analysis of AWIRS 95 by Moorehead, Steele, Alexander, Stephen and Duffing (1997). Question Seven then provided information on current workload.

The nature of work intensification provided the basis for Question Four. Initially - based on the work of writers such as Burgess & Campbell (1998)

and Callus (1999) - the aim was to examine the extent to which intensification could be considered to have a psychological element, as well as physical. This aim was expanded to include examination of the perceived origin of work intensification. This looked particularly at whether teachers' perceptions tended to reinforce the view of Braverman (1974) that work intensification was an imposition by management, or whether they would reveal an element of self-imposition, as examined in different settings by Burawoy (1979) and Hargreaves (1994).

Details on perceived causes of work intensification were provided by responses to Question Two, and by many of the written comments. Questions Five and Six, on coping strategies and possible solutions, also provided indirect information on causes. In light of industrial disputation during 2000, which included a demand by the Teachers' Union for a salary increase of 15 percent over two years, it was considered that Questions 6.1 and 6.2 had the capacity to reveal teacher preferences for either additional salary or additional staff. In terms of future industrial relations strategies, this comparison was potentially of considerable significance.

The effects of work intensification were the focus of several other questions. Effects on professional life were covered in Question Three, Questions 1.8 and 1.9 looked at satisfaction, and Questions Eight to Eleven (Section B) dealt with personal, domestic and social effects. In this section, as in others, teachers were afforded the opportunity to provide additional information not catered for by the set questions. This provided a useful and necessary means of obtaining information of a more personal nature, and thus of highlighting effects of intensification on the individual level.

A final section of five questions (Section D) was set aside for Principals and Deputy Principals (although it was also answered by approximately forty percent of the teachers), partly in order to obtain information from the perspective of school management, and partly for general comparison with the teacher responses. Prior to their being approved, and then printed and distributed, draft copies of the questionnaire were examined by a number of teachers (not otherwise involved in the study) for relevance, logic, ease

of understanding, and ease of reading. Various minor changes resulted from this process.

## **Validity**

One of the concerns of successful research is to ensure as far as possible internal validity and external reliability. These refer respectively to the extent to which confidence can be placed in the cause and effect relationship of variables used in the research, and to the extent to which the research can be replicated or generalised in other settings (Gay & Diehl, 1992; Cavana et al, 2001).

During the course of the research, care was taken to maximise internal validity and ensure that results were not contaminated by forms of bias. Testing bias was unlikely to be experienced, as the ex post facto nature of the research involved the majority of respondents (other than those who were later interviewed) only once. Consequently, they were not sensitised to issues by pre- and post-tests. Similarly, maturation effects were not expected to occur, as teachers were asked to respond to only one survey. Instrumentation bias and statistical regression were considered unlikely, as the survey instrument was used only once, and no further surveys were carried out.

Selection bias was not considered likely, due to the random selection of the teachers used in the sample. It was assumed that the selection was made from a normally distributed population. Despite a change of government in Western Australia in 2001, there were no subsequent policy reversals regarding conditions of work for teachers. As a result, there were no unexpected major external influences on the research, and thus history effects were considered to be minimised. Overall, it was considered that the research had a high level of internal validity.

The question of whether the findings may be generalised to other settings is likely to depend on the circumstances under which further research would be carried out. This could be affected, for example, by the ease of obtaining a random sample of research subjects within a sufficiently

homogeneous group. With public education systems, such groupings are available reasonably readily, as in similar contexts such as nursing. Cavana et al (2001) suggest that external reliability may be obtained at the same time as internal validity if causal relationships can be tested in a controlled situation prior to being tested in the field. It may be argued that the pilot study should be viewed in this light, as a form of control. Overall, it is possible to be confident that a high level of external reliability would be obtainable in similar studies carried out in public education systems.

## **Interviews**

One of the advantages of conducting interviews is the increased potential for the researcher to explore more complex issues, to “bring out the effective and value-laden aspects of the subject’s response and to determine the personal significance of his attitudes” (Sellitz, Jahoda, Deutsch & Cook, 1974, p.263). As a result, given that education has been the cause of debate and disputation in Western Australia in recent years, it was considered necessary that the study contain this means of obtaining qualitative as well as a quantitative information

Five interviews were conducted in late 2001 and the first half of 2002. Discussions were one-off arrangements with survey respondents who had indicated an interest in further input. Interviews were conducted in private settings, each lasting approximately two hours. Questions were drawn largely from the pilot study interview, and included standard questions and free-flowing discussion. Topics were discussed in considerable depth, often with little prompting from the interviewer, and were largely those which did not lend themselves to inclusion in the survey, such as the industrial relations situation in schools, personal circumstances, and professionalism. Answers were recorded and later transcribed.

Particularly when viewed in conjunction with those conducted for the pilot study, the later interviews provided a good insight into the thoughts and understandings of teachers in Western Australia. This was particularly so in terms of the more subjective issues, such as professionalism, as the teachers involved were able to express emotions more fully. Responses

were discursive, and gave interviewees an opportunity to discuss at length matters which they considered important. As such, despite the smaller numbers involved, they provided an essential service, in complementing the survey data.

## **Expectations of the Research**

Given the nature of the research questions, it was expected that the research data would relate to the understanding and interpretation by participants of work intensification, and related issues such as professionalism, health, and social and domestic matters. These issues would be important in determining the outcome of the research, and it was planned that they would be examined from the point of view of schools and of staff. This, it was hoped, would make possible the development of a basic profile of teachers and/or situations where work intensification would be a factor.

It was hoped also to examine the correlations between profile factors, potential causal or aggravating factors relating to work intensification, and outcomes. Profile factors consisted of a range of common demographic variables, while other variables were classified as causal or outcome factors as a result partly of information from the pilot study, and partly of advice from teachers who examined the draft questionnaires. The three categories are shown in Table 3.1 below, and the interactions are explored in Chapters Four and Five.

In addition, the literature examined provided useful information on specific issues. AWIRS 1995, from which a number of questions were taken, was particularly useful in this regard. A number of writers - for example, Heiler (1996), Drago et al (1997), Bent (1998), and Callus (1999) - were also influential in suggesting linkages between various issues, and in indicating the potential breadth of definition of the work intensification issue.

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**Table 3.1****Work Intensification: Anticipated Correlations**  
**Western Australian State School Teachers**

<b><u>Profile Factors</u></b>	<b><u>Causal Factors</u></b>	<b><u>Outcome factors</u></b>
Gender	Class Size	Work Performance
Age / Seniority	Location	Health
Marital Status	Level of Teaching	Morale
Employment Status	Number of Duties	Effect on Family Life
Employment type	Professionalism	Effect on Social Life
Union Membership	Work Requirements	
Location	Community Expectations	
Level of Teaching	Employment Basis	
Level of Responsibility	Level of Responsibility	
	Change	

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Examination of the profile factors necessitated a process of subdivision into component parts, in order to facilitate comparisons. The actual subdivisions used were those of the Education Department itself (EDWA, 1998, 2000), Considerable flexibility was able to be achieved in the subdivision process, and it was expected that this in turn would enable data to be examined from many different standpoints. The overall division is outlined in Table 3.2 below.

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**Table 3.2****Subdivision of Profile Factors**

LEVEL OF TEACHING	Primary or Secondary
LOCATION	City or Country
LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY	Principal or Teacher
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	Permanent, Temporary
EMPLOYMENT TYPE	Full-time, Part-time
GENDER	Male or female
MARITAL STATUS	Married or Single
UNION MEMBERSHIP	Membership / No Membership

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Another important element in the research was expected to be the relationship of the quantitative analysis to the qualitative. It was expected that these would be used in conjunction with each other to examine connections between the attitudes and patterns identified in interviews,

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and those shown by responses to questionnaires. Links were expected to be examined, for example, between matters such as work intensification, stress, health, or morale, on the one hand, and a range of perceived causes on the other. It was also expected that information from the survey and the interviews would be examined together with that from the pilot study, as a form of cross-method triangulation (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993) in order to validate data obtained and conclusions reached.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Quantitative**

#### **Significance**

The quantitative data used in this study, once obtained from the questionnaires completed, was analysed on the basis of the profile factors listed above. In particular throughout the findings chapters, this necessitated ensuring the significance of statistics displayed. As indicated by Sprinthall (1994, p.162), significance as a concept is “based on whether or not an event could reasonably be expected to occur strictly as a result of chance.”

An event is thus significant where chance can be rejected, even marginally, and not significant if it is due to chance alone. Unlike correlation, which seeks to determine associations between possibly unlike variables, or “qualitatively different measurements” (Sprinthall, 1994, p.231), the question of significance is applied to determining differences in measurement, and is indicated by means of the *t*-ratio.

In this study, where relevant, this approach has been applied to figures showing differences between variables, for example, between male and female responses. The confidence standard sought was at the 0.05 level. In many cases this was found to be a minimum. Calculations were carried out with the ABStat Version 1.1 Basic Statistical Analysis package (1994). The paired, or dependent, *t*-test function was selected, due to the nature of the samples used. This version of the *t*-test is considered appropriate when a

correlation exists between pairs of scores (Sprinthall, 1994), and when subjects “are matched on one or more attributes” (Hale, 1990, p.89). In *ex post facto* research, where controlled pre-testing and post-testing of a sample population is not possible, the *t*-test may help to indicate “whether two groups represent different populations” (Sprinthall, 1994, p.264). The overall purpose is to help decide whether the differences between two sample means is due to chance or to true differences between population means (Shavelson, 1988). It is not, however, designed to indicate whether the relationship is one of cause and effect, as this may be due to additional elements not included in a particular calculation.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis, according to Harman (1968, p.11), has as its chief aim “to attain scientific parsimony or economy of description”. This is an aim which can be achieved by examining the correlations between a set of variables, and subsequently being able to describe the variables in terms of a smaller number of categories, called factors. Similarly, Agresti and Finlay (1986) consider it to be useful in reducing a large number of variables to fewer, statistically independent factors. As outlined in Chapter Four, an analysis was carried out in respect of questions concerning the nature of work intensification

Qualitative

While much of the data used in this study was quantitative in nature, an important feature of the research was the use of qualitative data, obtained from both written comment and interview. The analysis of this data was essentially conceptual in nature, but with a significant interpretive element. As McMillan & Schumacher (1993, p.448) indicate, “the analysis of an educational concept like *professionalism* may be the focus of an entire study”. At the same time, the concepts were also interpreted in the context of economic, social, political, and other factors.

Interpretational analysis largely took the form of an examination of themes, defined as describing “the specific and distinctive recurring qualities,



characteristics, subjects of discourse, or concerns expressed” McMillan & Schumacher (1993, p.508). Themes to emerge from the pilot study included nurturing, perfectionism, and guilt, all of which might be considered capable of having a strong impact on an individual’s understanding of concepts such as professionalism.

Additional themes were then seen to emerge from the main survey and from interviews. An examination of understanding of issues by teachers - indeed, of matters affecting ability to understand - was found to be an important aspect of the overall study, especially when linked to an analysis of themes identified. Triangulation between the various sources of data, and between the times at which data was collected, was used as a means of validating conclusions. The benefit of these approaches was to assist in discerning patterns of behaviour and interpretation, and thus to superimpose a degree of objectivity on subjective data.

## Summary

This chapter examined the methodological approaches available for the research, indicating that the approach favoured was a combined form of interpretivist-positivist analysis. Because the *ex post facto* nature of the study precluded the “true” research practice of using pre- and post-testing and control groups, use was made of several sources of data, during three distinct blocks of time over approximately twenty-one months, in order to achieve triangulation. The sources used were a small pilot study, consisting of questionnaires and interviews, a large-scale, random-sample survey of teachers, and a series of teacher interviews. It was noted that, while the use of a survey was a method suggesting a logical-positivist approach, the information obtained from it was concerned with the perceptions of respondents, rather than the search for an objective reality. The survey thus combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

## **Chapter 4**

# **WORK INTENSIFICATION: EXISTENCE AND NATURE**

### **Introduction**

As indicated in the chapter on methodology, a survey was conducted of one thousand teaching staff of the Education Department of Western Australia. Data thus collected can be taken to reflect the perceptions of respondents at a particular point in time. Valid responses - those where questions were answered - were received from 366 people, a response rate of 37 percent. Several more were received from individuals who had either just begun their teaching careers or who had just resigned, and who therefore considered themselves unable to participate.

The aim of this chapter and the following chapter is to examine statistical, written, and interview survey data, in an effort to determine teachers' perceptions of the following work intensification issues:

1. The existence of work intensification
2. The nature and characteristics of work intensification
3. The causes of work intensification
4. The effects of work intensification on:
  - a) the individual
  - b) the family
  - c) Health
  - d) Professional life
5. Coping strategies and solutions in relation to work intensification

This chapter examines the first two issues, and the remainder are addressed in Chapter Five.

The survey instrument used (see Appendix A) was structured largely to

correspond with these issues, in order to facilitate analysis and, ultimately, to answer the overall research questions. This chapter is therefore structured along similar lines. A preliminary element discussed, however, is that of the demographic characteristics of the sample.

## **Demography**

A logical element in the examination of a survey is an initial examination of the demography of respondents to that survey, in an effort to determine the validity of the responses in terms of their composition, in this case by relating them to the Education Department in general.

A number of basic demographic elements were identified, prior to the survey being conducted. These were gender; geographical location; level of teaching; and age. Following anecdotal evidence and advice from a number of teachers, several additional elements were added. These were employment status; type of employment; union membership; and the socio-economic level of the area in which each school was located. As well as permitting a comparison of the respondents to Departmental staffing composition, such elements were expected to help in determining the relative importance of factors to each other.

## **Gender**

The question of gender was considered to be an important aspect of analysis, due to indications that females are more likely than males to experience work intensification (Heiler, 1996), and that family / work balance, and related issues such as career advancement, also have a greater potential for affecting females than males (Hunter & McKelvie, 1999). The likely importance of gender was also emphasised by the considerable imbalance between male and female teaching staff numbers in the Education Department (EDWA). Details published in Annual Reports by EDWA provide a considerable amount of information in relation to staffing, and indicate that, in 1997, female staff comprised 65 percent of the total teaching staff, and that males comprised 35 percent. By 2001, the respective figures were 67 percent and 33 percent. Similar figures were

provided for by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), although indicating a decline in male numbers.

Response figures from the survey corresponded well with both EDWA and ABS figures. Female teachers provided 69 percent of replies, and males provided 31 percent. This difference became more pronounced following a breakdown into those employed at different levels, as seen in Table 4.1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

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<b>Table 4.1</b>					
<b><u>State School System, Western Australia</u></b>					
<b><u>Percentage Breakdown of Teaching Staff</u></b>					
<b><u>By Gender / By Teaching Level</u></b>					
	<b><u>1997*</u></b>	<b><u>1998*</u></b>	<b><u>1999**</u></b>	<b><u>2001*</u></b>	<b><u>2001***</u></b>
Primary (Female)	73	74	75	76	78
Primary (Male)	27	26	25	24	22
Secondary (Female)	49	50	51	50	52
Secondary (Male)	51	50	49	50	48

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\* Source: Annual Reports, 1997-98, 1998-99, 2001-2002, Education Department of Western Australia

\*\* Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. No. 4221.0

\*\*\* Source: Teacher Survey

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Viewed together, the official figures and the survey figures would seem to support the concept of the feminisation of work (Sheehan, 1998), and to point to a continuing decrease in the proportion of male staff employed, at both primary and secondary levels. By the time the survey was conducted in 2001, the trend towards a decline in male numbers had accelerated in primary schools. ABS figures relating to education and training (Cat. No. 4224.0) show this trend towards feminisation as the experience in all states and territories in Australia, and as a particularly noticeable trend in primary schools from 1987 to 1997.

### **Age**

Given the suggestion that work intensification should properly be seen as having both physical and psychological elements (Callus, 1997), it was considered reasonable to anticipate a relationship between the former and age. While an initial assumption might be that work intensification could

impact older teachers more than younger ones, it might also be considered that older, more experienced staff could be in a better position to identify work intensification, and thus be more able to resist its imposition and to implement coping strategies. Those with less experience, not having as wide a frame of reference, might be expected to accept more easily the conditions which prevail at a given time.

In an effort to provide a basis for analysis of the relationship of age to work intensification, the survey instrument provided for age groups by decade, dividing respondents into those aged 20 and over, 30 and over, 40 and over, 50 and over, and 60 and over. It was anticipated, however, that a more basic division might be more useful. Given that changes to the structure and organisation of public education in Western Australia began in earnest in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it was considered that a valid dividing line would be the age of those teachers with experience prior to that period. As a result, this line was set at the age of forty. As indicated in Table 4.2, such a division highlighted a large imbalance between the two age groupings.

**Table 4.2**

<b><u>Teaching Staff, WA State Schools</u></b>		
<b><u>By Gender and Age (%)</u></b>		
	<b><u>40 &amp; Over</u></b>	<b><u>Under 40</u></b>
<b>Male</b>	80	20
<b>Female</b>	63	36

(n = 247 Forty +; 114, Under-40)

The figures shown are the ratio of respondents in each category to the numbers identifying themselves as male or female. In terms of overall numbers, the largest single category was that of females over the age of forty (43 percent), the vast majority of whom Table 4.1 would suggest are employed in primary schools. While the overall numbers of male teachers were much lower than those for females, Table 4.2 would appear to highlight an even more pronounced trend towards an aging male teacher population, with 80 percent of male respondents aged over forty. Clearly, the implication would appear to be that fewer young males are entering the teaching profession. This appears to be consistent with ABS figures

(Cat. No. 4224.0), showing an aging trend for teaching staff in Australia overall, and thus having implications for future recruiting strategies.

Of possible importance also is the comparative survey response rate, between the overall sample provided and the replies received. While there was almost no difference in figures for gender (Males 37 percent; females 36 percent), a greater difference occurred for age (Forty and over 38 percent; under-forty 33 percent). This became particularly noticeable for males (Forty and over 40 percent; under-forty 29 percent), and implies a greater level of interest in the sub-group of males aged forty and over.

### **Level of Teaching**

Consistent with EDWA practice, the level of teaching refers to specialisation in primary, secondary, or other areas. For the purposes of this research, the “other” category is considered as a whole, because of the small numbers involved. In practice, teachers in this category included those working in kindergartens and special education. The level of teaching of respondents was deemed to be a valid factor for consideration, due to the differences in the nature of teaching in each level - for example, the age and maturity of students; the type, number and complexity of subjects taught; and (depending on the actual subjects) class sizes. Each might be considered capable of affecting both the work situation and perceptions of teachers, and consequently the responses provided. Overall, 210 respondents identified themselves as working in primary education, compared to 136 in secondary education, and 15 in other areas. Numbers included both classroom teachers and principals.

### **Geographical Location**

With the abolition of the transfer system for promotional positions (EDWA, 1998), and the introduction of site-based merit-selection committees, the geographical location of schools might be seen as having the potential for underpinning work intensification of a psychological nature, in particular in relation to the promotion and transfer of teachers in country regions and/ or in specialised fields such as Languages other than English (LOTE).

Consequently, it was considered valid to distinguish between city and country locations as a potential trigger for work intensification. Of the 366 respondents 219, or 60 percent, worked in city locations, while 142, or 39 percent, worked in country locations. Five respondents failed to indicate the location of their workplace. These figures show that, at 41 percent, the response rate from country-based teachers was the highest of the sub-groups, just exceeding that of male teachers forty and over. The response from city-based teachers was 34 percent.

**Socio-Economic Level**

A question on the socio-economic level of schools, or of the areas in which schools were located, was included in the survey as a result of anecdotal evidence from a number of teachers, who were approached for advice on the content and style, but who were not otherwise involved with the exercise. It was considered by these teachers that a strong relationship was likely between socio-economic factors and work intensification, due to the impact, for example, of the home life of students on their classroom behaviour, and on discipline.

As a result, respondents were asked to make a judgement on the socio-economic level of the area in which they worked, using a scale of Low - Medium - High. Responses were:

**Table 4.3**

**Perceived Socio-Economic Levels of School Areas**

<u>Level</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Low	139	38
Medium	181	50
High	41	11
Unknown	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>
	366	100.0

**Employment Type and Employment Status**

Consistent with EDWA practice, Employment Type was used to indicate whether teachers were employed on a part-time or full-time basis, while Employment Status was used to distinguish between Casual, Temporary, and Permanent employment. Responses to the survey indicated a



preponderance of full-time teachers - 287, or 79 percent - while a similar number - 293, or 80 percent - were employed on a permanent basis. Table 4.4 below shows the combined breakdown.

<b>Table 4.4</b> <b><u>Teaching Staff, WA State Schools</u></b> <b><u>By Employment Type and Employment Status</u></b>		
	<b><u>Temporary</u></b>	<b><u>Permanent</u></b>
<b>Full-Time</b>	45	242
<b>Part-Time</b>	22	51

**Union Membership**

Historically, State School teachers in Western Australia have been strongly unionised, while the principal body, the State School Teachers’ Union of WA (SSTUWA) has been active in recent years in campaigning over issues such as salaries, and workload (*Western Teacher*, 1999, 2000). Consequently, the level of union membership amongst teachers was considered to be a potentially important element in the examination of work intensification.

Teachers surveyed were asked to nominate whether they belonged to a union or association, and to indicate which. Responses to the survey suggested that a large majority belonged to the SSTU, while a sizable minority were affiliated with no professional association. Some discrepancies occurred, as not all teachers answered every demographic question.

<b>Table 4.5</b> <b><u>Union Membership, WA State School Teachers</u></b> <b><u>By Gender / By Teaching Level</u></b>							
	<b><u>None</u></b>	<b><u>SSTU</u></b>	<b><u>PPA</u></b>	<b><u>SPA</u></b>	<b><u>Other</u></b>	<b><u>Unknown</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
<b><u>All Teachers</u></b>	108	233	9	0	1	15	366
<b><u>Males</u></b>	25	75	6	0	1		
<b><u>Females</u></b>	83	158	3	0			
<b><u>Primary</u></b>	60	122	9	0	0		
<b><u>Secondary</u></b>	34	96	0	0	1		
<b><u>Other</u></b>	8	6	0	0	0		

Note: SSTU - State School Teachers’ Union  
PPA - Primary Principals’ Association  
SPA - Secondary Principals’ Association

Allowing for the larger absolute numbers of female respondents, it would appear nonetheless that a greater proportion of male teachers (73 percent) were members of the SSTU or a professional association, compared to 64 percent of female teachers. A noticeable feature of the data was the apparent choice of the majority of respondents between membership of the SSTU, and no membership of any professional body. Similarly, while a majority of respondents were members of the SSTU, the proportion of secondary school teachers (71 percent) was noticeably greater than that for primary school teachers (58 percent).

## **The Existence of Work Intensification**

### **Pilot Study Outcomes**

A gratifying aspect of the pilot study was the high response rate for the questionnaires, and the high rate of interviews obtained from those respondents, over seventy percent in each case. The questions in the responses received were answered comprehensively, and provided a significant amount of mainly quantitative information. Results on hours of work, for example, showed a good correlation with union-based survey data (*"Survey"*, 1999).

The data collected from the questionnaires indicated an expected distinction between primary and secondary teaching workloads, but also showed differences in attitude between male and female teachers, and between different age groups. All the teachers, for example, indicated experiencing at least two of the following effects: low morale, long hours, heavy workload, stress, and exhaustion. The male teachers indicated that there was no scope for further increases in workload, and no willingness to try, whereas the tendency amongst the female teachers was to look for ways in which they could do more.

Similarly, the more experienced teachers tended to show less flexibility than younger colleagues. All teachers displayed a high degree of commitment to their work and to the wellbeing of their students. A more disturbing pattern to emerge involved coping strategies, with seventy

percent of the interviewees needing to make use of at least one of alcohol, stress leave, or anti-depressant medication, in order to relax or recover from work. Such outcomes were considered to validate the topic of work intensification, and the pilot study subsequently formed the basis of questions for the main survey.

**Survey**

One of the main aims of the survey of teachers was to examine the question of work intensification on a larger scale than was possible with the pilot study. The initial object was to determine the extent to which, in the perceptions of the respondents, work intensification was considered to exist. Consequently, Question One of the survey dealt with issues, such as hours of work, range of duties, responsibility, complexity, and stress, which were considered components of work intensification. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which these issues had increased, decreased, or remained unchanged, over the previous two years. As a point of comparison, three questions, dealing with effort, pace of work, and stress, were adapted from AWIRS 95.

The content of the questions in the survey was determined firstly by the assumption that work intensification could exist, reinforced by the outcomes of the pilot study, and secondly by interpretations of the term to emerge from the literature. Work intensification was shown in the review of literature to prompt a range of often diverging views amongst writers - compare, for example, Thomas (1998) or Wooden (1999) with Callus (1999). In the survey, rather than restricting it to mere productivity issues, as implied by Allan et al (1999), it was decided to provide for a possible range of interpretations - for example the division into physical and psychological elements, as suggested by writers such as Callus (1999). This became important, as shown later in this chapter, when examining the nature of work intensification.

Responses to Question One are shown in Table 4.6 below, and indicate that a large majority of respondents had experienced considerable increases in aspects of their working life such as hours worked, effort, and

pace of work.

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**Table 4.6**

**Changes In Work Factors, WA State School Teachers (%)**

	<b><u>Increased</u></b>	<b><u>No Change</u></b>	<b><u>Decreased</u></b>	<b><u>Unknown</u></b>
<b>Hours Worked</b>	72	21	7	
<b>Effort</b>	80	16	3	
<b>Pace of Work</b>	78	18	3	1
<b>Duties</b>	83	14	2	1
<b>Responsibility</b>	80	17	2	1
<b>Complexity</b>	89	9	1	1
<b>Stress</b>	83	12	3	2

Note: Total of valid responses: 366

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While a majority of respondents (72 percent) had experienced an increase in their hours of work, all other variables were noticeably higher. The range of duties (83 percent), the complexity of those duties (89 percent), and the stress experienced (83 percent) appeared of much greater significance to teachers, being noticeably above the mean of 81 percent (295 respondents). This was perhaps not unexpected, as long hours have traditionally been a factor in teaching, and would not in themselves be as remarkable as other issues. A similar pattern emerged from an examination of the figures when viewed against the various demographic variables.

**Gender**

A more detailed picture was obtained in relation to the perception of these issues by gender. For each factor listed, a greater proportion of male respondents than female indicated that they had experienced an increase. As shown in Table 4.7, for all but one factor - Complexity, where the difference was less than three per cent - the gap between male and female respondents was quite marked. Using the paired t-test calculation, the figures were shown to be statistically significant at both the .05 level and the .001 level.

**Table 4.7**  
**Increases in Work Factors, WA State School Teachers**  
**By Gender (%)**

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Hours Worked	81	66
Effort	87	77
Pace of Work	82	76
Duties	87	81
Responsibility	83	78
Complexity	91	89
Stress	88	81
Mean	85.34	78.28
t (Gender, 6df): -19.028 (n = 113 male; 248 female)		

It was noticeable that 66 percent of females indicated an increase in the hours worked, compared to 81 percent of males. The figures suggested a greater overall responsiveness to stimuli on the part of males. Females tended to be more affected by the elements of stress and complexity, suggesting a greater responsiveness to less physical aspects of work.

Following this line, the survey suggested that female teachers were more prepared to expand on issues through open-ended sections - indicating potentially a greater capacity for reflection, or simply a greater willingness to express views. Where the general survey responses provided a mass of statistical information, the written comments helped to express and clarify the specific views of the teachers involved, and were invaluable in giving an insight into their perceptions. Of the descriptive comments received, 89 percent were from female teachers and, altogether, 33 percent of female respondents provided this form of information, compared to under eight percent of males.

### Age

An examination of survey responses on the combined basis of gender and age (Table 4.8) suggested that work intensification was likely to be experienced - or, at least, perceived - most frequently by teachers aged forty and over, and particularly by male teachers. The exception to this concerned the issue of complexity, with an increase reported by as large a proportion of female teachers over forty as male teachers over forty (92

percent). Increased Complexity was noted by the highest number of teachers aged over forty, both male and female, closely followed in each case by Stress and Effort.

Responses from male teachers aged under forty tended to be more uniform - albeit still indicating that a majority had experienced increases in the variables examined. By contrast, a clear distinction was indicated by female teachers aged under forty. In general, increases in the more physical variables (hours of work, effort, and pace of work) were significantly less than for most other variables. As indicated in Table 4.6 below, this may have been due to many respondents reporting no change in work factors, rather than there being large numbers reporting a decrease.

**Table 4.8**  
**Increases in Work Factors, WA State School Teachers**  
**By Gender / By Age (%)**

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Females</u>
	<u>40 +</u>	<u>U - 40</u>	<u>40 +</u>	<u>U - 40</u>
<b>Hours Worked</b>	83	74	71	60
<b>Effort</b>	88	83	83	67
<b>Pace of Work</b>	82	83	77	76
<b>Duties</b>	87	87	82	82
<b>Responsibility</b>	84	78	75	84
<b>Complexity</b>	92	83	92	85
<b>Stress</b>	89	83	85	77
	(n=90)	(n=23)	(n=157)	(n=91)

t (age, 6df): 26.212

Overall, increases in work intensification factors were noted most frequently by male respondents over forty, and least by females under forty. The exceptions to this were in relation to increases in the range of duties, and in responsibility. Many differences were only relative, though, and a large majority of all categories of respondent reported experiencing increases in their work.

This said, the issue of age would appear to be a significant variable in relation to the work of teachers, and to work intensification. A t-ratio of 26.212 was calculated on the basis of the age difference (40-plus compared to under-40), and was found to be significant at the .01 and .001

levels. Almost 75 percent of the expanded responses received were from teachers aged forty and over, compared to 68 percent of overall responses. In many of these cases, a recurrent theme was of the desire to be able to use the expertise gained from experience, and to concentrate on teaching. The views of one respondent were quite forthright:

“I feel more is expected of teachers each year. Our role not only involves education, but also as pastoral carers, and admin bookkeepers. We seem to be the barometer for our society. If something is failing, then get the teachers to incorporate it into their educational processes. The majority of the staff here are aged 42 +, and do not want to be told any more. We’ve had to adapt and change enough. We just want to ‘teach’ without all the bullshit.”

(Primary teacher, 22 years’ experience, Survey)

**Teaching Level**

When viewed on the basis of teaching level (primary or secondary), figures suggest that little difference existed between the two main categories. Indeed, the difference was less than one percent in the case of three of the variables (hours of work, effort, and responsibility), while in only two cases - range of duties, and stress - was the difference greater than two percent. More secondary teachers reported an increase in the range of their duties, while more primary teachers reported increases in stress levels. The relative increase reported in stress was greater for primary teachers than for secondary, while the reverse applied to the range of duties required to be carried out.

<b>Table 4.9</b>		
<b><u>Increased Work Factors, WA State School Teachers</u></b>		
<b><u>By Teaching Level (%)</u></b>		
	<b><u>Primary</u></b>	<b><u>Secondary</u></b>
<b>Work Time</b>	73	72
<b>Effort</b>	80	80
<b>Pace of Work</b>	78	79
<b>Range of Duties</b>	82	85
<b>Responsibility</b>	81	81
<b>Complexity</b>	90	91
<b>Stress</b>	86	83

(n = 210 Primary; 136 Secondary)

Overall, however, responses proved inconclusive in relation to the basic distinction between primary and secondary teachers, even though increases in all factors were experienced by a majority of respondents, . A more detailed picture emerged from a further division of those categories by gender, as shown in Table 4.10.

<b>Table 4.10</b> <b><u>Increased Work Factors, WA State School Teachers</u></b> <b><u>By Teaching Level and Gender (%)</u></b>				
	<u>Primary</u>		<u>Secondary</u>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
<b>Work Time</b>	87	69	77	68
<b>Effort</b>	91	77	83	77
<b>Pace of Work</b>	89	75	77	82
<b>Range of Duties</b>	83	82	89	82
<b>Responsibility</b>	89	79	72	83
<b>Complexity</b>	89	90	91	92
<b>Stress</b>	91	84	85	82
	(n=46)	(n=164)	(n=65)	(n=71)

Male teachers were shown consistently to feel increases more than females. This applied in particular to the more physical aspects of work intensification, which showed a marked difference, especially for male teachers working in primary schools. More male teachers experienced increases in the level of stress and, indeed, male primary teachers were the most affected, with 91 percent noting increases. Overall, males in primary teaching appeared more likely than their secondary counterparts to experience increases in their work.

A more evenly-balanced situation existed for female teachers, with a slight trend towards those in secondary schools being more likely to experience increases in work. As with males, however, stress was reported by a greater proportion of female primary teachers, while across both teaching levels, marginally more female teachers noted increases in the complexity of work

Responses overall suggested a trend for primary teachers to experience work intensification to a marginally greater extent than secondary teachers, as some respondents explained:

“As a primary teacher, our ‘job description’ is getting more and more facets, so that we no longer just ‘teach’. We now



nurse, counsel, take over the parenting/social role, and have to be a psych. It is no wonder young kids aren't interested in the job - especially with the current community perceptions of teachers and the profession. I really love teaching, but am frustrated with these non-stop additional 'duties' that take away the hands-on teaching time."

(Primary teacher, 31 years' experience, Survey)

"We are constantly expected to do more in less time, with less. This can't continue forever!"

(Primary principal, 22 years' experience, Survey)

As such comments indicate, school principals experienced - and observed - work intensification just as teachers did. Due to their role, principals were often able to view situations as both individuals and managers. If anything, their views as managers were stronger and more forthright than were their responses in relation to themselves. The views of principals are covered in more detail later.

**Geographical Location**

An initial assumption of the research was that the geographical location of schools might be expected to have an impact on the survey, as a result of issues such as isolation, access to professional development and support facilities, or career path problems. In addition, operational issues such as combined classes in smaller schools created a potential for country-based teachers to experience some forms of work intensification to a greater extent than did their city counterparts.

**Table 4.11**  
**Increases in Work Factors, WA State School Teachers**  
**By Geographical Location (%)**

	<u>City</u>	<u>Country</u>
Hours Worked	73	70
Effort	79	82
Pace of Work	81	75
Range of Duties	84	83
Responsibility	80	80
Complexity	89	91
Stress	82	86
Mean	81.15	81.89
t (Location, 6df): 34.082, significant at .01, .001 (n = 219 City; 142 Country)		

The expected difference was borne out by responses to the survey, in relation to effort required, complexity of work, and stress. A greater proportion of country teachers reported increases in these variables, and this may well warrant specific research. For the remaining variables, increases were noted by a greater percentage of city teachers.

However, in relation to two aspects of work - the range of duties, and responsibility - differences between city and country teachers were minimal, suggesting that the issues were widespread and unaffected by location. Respondents from country schools appeared less likely to experience an increase in the pace of work, although this was still important, and was reported by almost 75 percent of country teachers.

The size of country schools emerged as a potentially important element. Respondents suggested a difference between large country schools, or those in regional centres, little different from a city environment, and those in more isolated communities. The latter were staffed by small numbers of teachers, who considered themselves at a disadvantage, for example in relation to sharing workload and to the amount of time available.

**“In a small country school such as mine, every staff member already does much more than is required - therefore the extras put on us are really extras on top of extras!!”**

**(Primary teacher, 24 years’ experience, Survey)**

**“I will leave the profession I love, because of increased workload, or I may opt for part-time teaching. It has become too stressful. Primary teachers are still receiving half the DOTT of High School & pre-Primary, yet we have more contact time with the children. Did you know in the early 1980s 79% of graduates put in for country service? This is now down to 22%.”**

**(Primary teacher, 9 years’ experience, Survey)**

## **Employment Type**

A large majority of respondents (287 of 366) were employed on a full-time basis, while 75 were employed on a part-time basis. Only one respondent was employed on a casual basis, and has thus been omitted from the

majority of the analysis. In all cases, intensification was noted by a significantly lower proportion of part-time respondents, although increased complexity was noted by a large majority of people in each category (92 percent full-time and 80 percent part-time).

**Table 4.12**  
**Increases in Work Factors, WA State School Teachers**  
**By Employment Type (%)**

	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-time</u>
Work Time	78	59
Effort	82	64
Pace of Work	82	64
Range of Duties	87	68
Responsibility	84	63
Complexity	92	80
Stress	86	72
	(n=287)	(n=75)

While the majority of part-time teachers appeared likely to experience high levels of work intensification, the extent of this remained less than for full-time teachers. This may be due to a simple matter of time, with some respondents noting that they had changed to part-time status (generally 0.6 or 0.8 of full time) precisely in order to be able to cope with the increased amount of work required of them.

“I have become part-time (0.8) in order to cope with my workload. Therefore I am fairly satisfied with my performance now. I virtually work full-time to cope with my workload. I can’t take on any more than I am doing now.”

(Secondary teacher, 21 years’ experience, Survey)

“During the year 2001 I have chosen to work 4 days a week instead of 5 days. This was to give me time for a life other than teaching. Also less energy is required for 4 days.”

(Primary teacher, 17 years’ experience, Survey)

As suggested by the first respondent, above, even a part-time working week would appear to have the potential to occupy what would otherwise be considered a full-time workload.

This was supported by the comments of one secondary teacher. When interviewed, she indicated that she had switched to 0.8 time several years

earlier, as a full-time workload had become too great. In this case, however, the additional time was not given as a whole, but was spread throughout the week. The teacher thus found herself obliged to be at school for the same amount of time as she had previously, but simply with slightly fewer teaching periods. She still found it necessary often to work until late at night, prompting a comment that “I’m still working a more-than-full-time job, but now it’s for a part-time salary.”

Many other respondents reported health problems, due principally to workload, and to subsequent fatigue and exhaustion. Those matters will be considered later, in an examination of the individual and social effects of work intensification on teachers.

**Employment Status**

Employment as a teacher may be on a casual, temporary. or permanent basis. Responses showed that, while all staff had experienced increases in work, these were more likely to be noted by teachers who were employed on a permanent basis. This difference was most marked in relation to the more physical aspects of hours, effort and pace, as shown in Table 4.13.

**Table 4.13**  
**Increases in Work Factors, WA State School Teachers**  
**By Employment Status (%)**

	<u>Temporary</u>	<u>Permanent</u>
<b>Hours Worked</b>	61	74
<b>Effort</b>	63	83
<b>Pace of Work</b>	67	81
<b>Range of Duties</b>	79	85
<b>Responsibility</b>	76	81
<b>Complexity</b>	84	91
<b>Stress</b>	81	85

(n = 67 temporary; 293 permanent)

It would seem unlikely that the differences in Table 4.13 between temporary and permanent staff could be due to some respondents working shorter hours. Indeed, the majority of temporary staff (67 percent) were also working on a full-time basis. Responses indicated that the problem was more likely to be the uncertainty of being employed on a temporary basis, as suggested by Hall and Harley’s (2000) analysis of AWIRS95.

**“The thing I find most stressful is the insecurity of being a temporary teacher’. I am willing to undertake heavier workloads and put in extra hours, but often feel unrewarded for extra effort, because of the insecurity of not knowing if, where and when I will be teaching the following year.**

**(Special education teacher, 13 years’ experience, Survey)**

**“The school I work at is stressful. I’m a temporary teacher, given Year 1 because no permanent teacher wants to teach them. I wait every year to find out if I have a job. I work hard and get results, but I resent the way some permanent teachers view their permanency as something that puts them on a higher platform. I have met the odd one who thinks this permanency is a reason to be given a job. Sorry! I’ve had a bad day & am b.....!!”**

**(Primary teacher, 31 years’ experience, Survey)**

The trend to emerge from the survey, in respect of all categories of respondent, was for the more psychological areas of teaching - indicated by the variables responsibility, complexity, and stress - to lead to higher levels of work intensification than the physical aspects. This will be examined in more detail later in the chapter.

### **Socio-Economic Level**

The socio-economic level of school areas was included as a survey variable at the behest of a number of teachers, who considered it to be potentially extremely important. Respondents were therefore asked to describe the socio-economic area in which they worked, and the responses shown are in Table 4.3. It was expected that a relationship would be likely between work intensification and socio-economic levels, and that this relationship could tend to strengthen as the socio-economic level decreased.

At the same time, it was recognised that asking for subjective evaluation of an area by respondents raised the possibility of variations due to, for example, the socio-economic context of a teacher’s own upbringing. Responses should therefore be treated more as indicative than definitive.

Responses indicated that a large majority of teachers in all socio-economic

levels - low, medium, and high - experienced increases in all areas of their work. However, the greatest comparative increases were not experienced by teachers in low socio-economic areas. Indeed, with the exceptions of the variables pace of work and range of duties, the rate of increase was in fact least in those areas, as indicated in Table 4.14 below.

**Table 4.14**  
**Increased Work Factors, WA State School Teachers**  
**By Socio-Economic Area (%)**

	<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>
<b>Hours Worked</b>	71	71	78 *
<b>Effort</b>	76	83	83 *
<b>Pace of Work</b>	80	77	80 *
<b>Range of Duties</b>	82	85 *	80
<b>Responsibility</b>	76	83 *	78
<b>Complexity</b>	83	93	95 *
<b>Stress</b>	79	87 *	85
	(n=139)	(n=181)	(n=41)

\* Highest relative increase for each variable  
t (Low/medium, 6df): -12.236, significant at .001

While some of the differences were marginal, the trend shown was for increases in work intensification to be experienced by a higher proportion of teachers in higher socio-economic areas. Indeed, in terms of hours of work, effort, pace of work, and complexity of work, the largest increases were found in high socio-economic areas.

Surprisingly, the increase in stress experienced by teachers in low socio-economic areas, while very high at 79 percent, was nonetheless noticeably lower than that experienced by teachers in other areas. An explanation for this, raised anecdotally by one teacher interviewed, revolved around a generally higher level of parent education. This led to a tendency for those parents to be more demanding of teachers in relation to matters of student achievement.

**Union Membership**

Given the role of the State School Teachers' Union (SSTU) in campaigning for teachers' salaries and working conditions, it was expected that union members would be more aware than non-members of issues relating to

these matters. As a corollary, it was also expected that the survey would show any increases in work factors tending to be smaller for members of the SSTU. In fact, as Table 4.15 below indicates, the opposite was found to be the case.

**Table 4.15**  
**Increased Work Factors, WA State School Teachers**  
**By Union Membership (%)**

	<u>None</u>	<u>SSTUWA</u>
Hours Worked	69	73
Effort	74	82
Pace of Work	70	81
Range of Duties	80	84
Responsibility	76	81
Complexity	87	91
Stress	75	87
	(n=108)	(n=233)

Organisations other than the SSTU (total 10 respondents) were omitted due to the small base. For all work factors, increases were noted by a larger percentage of union members. Only in terms of the increased complexity of work did the figures approach the same level for both of these categories of respondent. The difference between union and non-union members is reason to pause, however. Further research might reveal whether the apparent increases were in reality experienced by more union members than non-union members, or whether, for example, union members were simply more aware of the increases.

One point which does deserve some attention, though, is the significantly higher, and somewhat surprising, percentage of SSTU members noting increases in work-related stress levels. The figures for non-members and SSTU members were therefore broken down into several other categories - gender, teaching level, age, location, and socio-economic level - in order to seek some explanation. A comparison was then made with the percentage of each of these categories of teachers who had reported increases in stress.

**Table 4.16**  
**Work Intensification: W.A. State School Teachers**  
**Comparative Stress Levels (%)**

	<u>Non-Union</u>	<u>SSTU</u>
<b>Male</b>	68	93
<b>Female</b>	77	84
<b>Primary</b>	87	93
<b>Secondary</b>	71	89
<b>Age 40+</b>	79	87
<b>Age U-40</b>	70	84
<b>City</b>	75	85
<b>Country</b>	76	91
<b>Low Socio</b>	65	84
<b>Medium</b>	82	89
<b>High</b>	75	89

(n = 108 Non-Union; 233 SSTU)

Table 4.16 indicates that, in each category, increased stress was reported more by members of the SSTU. Differences for male teachers between union and non-union members would appear to be exceptionally large, at 25 percent, while those for secondary teachers, country teachers, and those in low socio-economic areas were also very large. By contrast, previous Tables for each of these categories show a far greater degree of uniformity, with comparatively small differences.

One explanation, implied by the responses, relates to the theoretical basis for the organisation of work, and suggests that the stress experienced by union members may in fact be a characteristic of union membership. Following this approach, the figures in relation to stress may well reflect the differing understandings of professionalism by managerialist and educationist elements within the Education Department, and in schools (Leggett, 1997; Spaul, 1997). In this situation, teachers may experience pressure to conform to official directions and policies and, as a corollary, to face management opposition to union philosophies and activities. The following passages were typical of many of the survey responses.

“Ambitious Principals, driven by equally ambitious District Directors, push for changes (regardless of validity or worth) and increase pressure on teachers to participate in more activities outside regular hours. This has led to lower staff



morale; more illness amongst my peers, even younger ones (30s); and has shifted/blurred teacher focus from doing what they do well - teach. Principals then enforce the ideas through Performance Management. The situation above has been used to drive out 'union' teachers from certain schools and EDWA as a whole.”

(Primary teacher, 13 years’ experience, Survey)

“It is hard to distinguish between actual workload and what (others) decide to do at school, that impacts on workload (Priority Files, Portfolios, extra yard duty, MSB policies, curriculum initiatives). There are teachers of 20+ years in our school (who) say they never had to work so hard. The end of term processes cause a great deal of unrest every year. One of my great pressures is a personal belief system about teaching, opposed by Admin, especially the Principal. A great source of stress has been trying to uphold and promote the union perspective re merit selection, workload, and class sizes, when these are not in line with Admin.”

(Primary teacher, 8 years’ experience, Survey)

Similar responses came from a number of interviews, conducted in situations of confidentiality. Teachers spoke of pressure to conform with management policy and, in one case, of “an atmosphere of fear” amongst colleagues. Pressures spoken of ranged from being screamed at in private, to being insulted and abused in meetings, to performance management concerns. Performance management was reported as being strongly related to the practice of merit selection in schools, such that those teachers due for reassessment would feel themselves under pressure to avoid confrontation. Perceptions of management hostility in this survey would appear to have been a factor in promoting stress amongst some SSTU members.

Overall, the importance of figures relating to union membership may be to confirm - or, at least, to strongly suggest - union membership as a significant factor in relation to stress, with a tendency to make differences more pronounced than might otherwise be the case. Table 4.16 would suggest this in relation to males, secondary teachers, those under the age of forty, and country teachers. As a result, the question of SSTU membership,

and its influence on teachers might well be considered to merit further research, possibly including an examination of reasons for and against membership.

**A Comparison with AWIRS 1995**

Included in the 1995 AWIRS survey was an examination of changes to the intensity of employees’ work (Moorehead et al, 1997). In seeking to determine the extent to which this had increased, Moorehead et al (1997) concentrated on three variables: effort, pace, and stress. The overall figures showed that 59 percent of employees indicated an increase in effort required at work, 50 percent an increase in the stress involved, and 46 percent an increase in the pace of work.

These figures varied from sector to sector. In the field of education, 63 percent of employees showed increases in required effort and in stress. This was considered to be a high level, and it was noted that ”professionals and para-professionals were more likely than other employees to report increases in stress” (Moorehead et al, 1997, p.274). Managers were identified as the most likely people to experience increase in all three variables, while casual and part-time staff were considered the least likely to report any increases.

In their analysis of the AWIRS data, Moorehead et al (1997) suggested that factors indicated a lower likelihood of experiencing work intensification by “those aged 50 years or over, ... part-time employees, ... and casual employees” (Moorehead et al, 1997, p.274). Seven years later, as shown in Table 4.12, amongst State School teachers in Western Australia, work intensification was indeed experienced by a smaller proportion of part-time teachers. At the same time, however, it was experienced also by a larger proportion of the older respondents, both male and female, and often by a significant margin.

The AWIRS figures were further broken down by O’Donnell et al (2001), to show comparisons between private and public sectors. It was determined firstly that public sector employees were more likely than

private sector employees to experience work intensification. Within the public sector, the largest impact of work changes was felt in public service departments - Effort 62 percent, Pace 51 percent, Stress 60 percent - compared to government business enterprises and non-commercial authorities. As even these figures are significantly lower than those from the survey of WA State School teachers, it would appear that Education may be an exceptional case, requiring different treatment.

The method used by Moorehead et al (1997) was the creation of an Index of Work Intensification. This Index identified employees who were considered to be experiencing Low, Medium, or High levels of work intensification, the categories corresponding respectively to those who had reported increases in none or one variable, two variables, and three variables. The three variables used were pace of work, effort, and stress.

The Index indicated that 49 percent of employees had experienced a low level of work intensification, while 24 percent had experienced medium levels, and 28 percent high levels. The AWIRS figures further indicated that a high score on the Work Intensification Index had been achieved by those working in education, with 35 percent of those people experiencing an increase in all three variables.

As part of the survey for this research, the issues of effort, pace and stress were put to the respondents. The specific questions asked were:

To what extent, over the past two years:

- (i) Has the effort you put into your work changed?
- (ii) Has the pace at which you do your work changed?
- (iii) Has the stress you have in your work changed?

Increases in these areas were reported respectively by 80 percent, 78 percent, and 83 percent of respondents, although by a higher proportion of males than females. Even so, the results were significantly higher than those reported in the AWIRS figures. In order to facilitate a closer comparison, survey figures for effort, pace and stress were used to create a

Work Intensification Index (Table 4.17), following the procedure used by Moorehead et al (1997).

As with the initial survey figures, the results in Table 4.17 differed considerably from the AWIRS findings. While the number of medium scores in the survey corresponded to the AWIRS figures, the contrast between the other figures was quite stark. This suggested an increasingly pervasive extent of work intensification amongst State School teachers since the mid-1990s, and a greater proportion of people consequently experiencing increases across a wider range of work factors.

Evidence that such increases might not be unique would appear to be provided by research carried out in a number of surveys in the United Kingdom (Green, 2001). Surveys conducted over two periods, 1981-86 and 1992-97, indicated that, from the one period to the next, work intensification in education had experienced a significant increase from 21.4 percent to 57.4 percent. “Over 1992-7/8, ... the intensification of labour was greater in the public than in the private sector, and within the public sector greatest of all in education ...” (Green, 2001, p.73).

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<b>Table 4.17</b>				
<b>Comparative Work Intensification Index</b>				
	<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>	
<b>AWIRS 1995</b>				
<b>All Employees</b>	49	24	28	
<b>Professionals</b>	40	24	36	
<b>Survey, 2001</b>				
<b>Total</b>	16	21	62	
<b>Males</b>	12	14	73	
<b>Females</b>	17	24	58	
<b>Primary</b>	17	17	65	
<b>Secondary</b>	14	23	63	
<b>Age 40+</b>	13	21	66	
<b>Age Under-40</b>	24	22	57	
<b>Non-Union</b>	26	22	52	
<b>Union (SSTU)</b>	12	21	66	

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As a result of the differences in the overall AWIRS and survey figures,

however, it was considered prudent to derive a number of breakdowns (Table 4.17, above), in order to seek a clearer picture of the nature of the difference. Based on the findings in previous sections, the demographic variables selected for comparison were gender, age, teaching level, and union membership, as it was felt that these would be likely to provide the clearest indication of which groups were experiencing greater levels of work intensification.

The breakdown figures for a medium rate of work intensification show a clear correspondence to both the figure from the survey as a whole, and the AWIRS figure. Between 21 percent and 25 percent of respondents had experienced increases in two of the three variables, effort, pace and stress. Two exceptions to this rule stood out quite markedly, however - primary teachers, with an Index rate of 17 percent, and male teachers, with a rate of only 14 percent. Given this, it was perhaps not surprising to note that male teachers also rated well above the survey average for a high rate of intensification, with a figure of 73 percent. Based on these figures, it would appear that males are indeed that category of teacher most affected by work intensification in the Western Australian State School system.

Other clear contrasts in the Index occurred in relation to age and to union membership. Of teachers aged forty and over, 66 percent experienced a high rate of intensification, compared with 57 percent of those aged under forty. The difference in relation to union membership was almost as great as that for gender, with a high rate of intensification being experienced by 66 percent of SSTU members, and only 52 percent of non-members.

Overall, while all categories experienced some degree of work intensification, a clear pattern emerged for the most affected to be male teachers, teachers aged over forty, and members of the State School Teachers' Union. Women, younger teachers, and non-union members were noticeably less affected. The division between primary and secondary teachers was less clear, however. The parity on the Index between these two categories would suggest that, just as little value was to be had from the simple separation of teachers into city and country, further detail may be required in relation to primary and secondary teachers.

## The Nature of Work Intensification

In the first part of this chapter a large majority of teachers were shown as having experienced work intensification. Increases were reported in hours of work, pace of work, effort, responsibility, stress and complexity. There was more work, it was more complex and stressful, and it necessitated greater effort by individuals to cope with new requirements. The survey response - up to 89 percent of teachers reporting increases (see Table 4.6) - coincided with a 1999 Teachers' Union (SSTUWA) survey, which showed concern by 85 percent of teachers over workload, job intensification, and job insecurity ("Survey", 1999). Based on such figures, work intensification must be seen as a highly important issue for teachers.

Given this importance, a knowledge of the nature of work intensification would help to understand the context in which it occurs, and to suggest strategies for coping with it. Survey Question Four examined the nature of work intensification. Table 4.18 below shows responses.

**Table 4.18**  
**THE NATURE OF WORK INTENSIFICATION (%)**

To what extent:		1	2	3	4	5
Have changes in your work been:						
a. required changes?	**	2	3	8	45	40
b. your own choice?	**	14	23	25	28	7
Do you feel in control of your work?	***	6	27	33	27	6
Have you ever felt under any pressure to take on additional work?	**	3	4	14	51	27
Have you been required to take on additional subjects or functions?	***	7	10	14	43	25
Do you feel able to say no to extra work?	***	19	33	25	15	8
Do you feel an obligation to take on more?	**	5	10	22	46	17
Do you gain self-image from work?	***	12	23	30	30	4
Does doing more increase your satisfaction?	**	30	26	28	13	3
Do you look forward to work each morning?	*	13	20	39	20	8
Have you considered leaving teaching?	*	12	12	13	31	30
Do you see work intensification as:						
a. being physical?	*	10	13	23	37	14
b. being psychological?	*	1	3	6	48	42
To what extent would you be able to cope with any increases in workload?	*	16	38	23	18	4
Do you view changes more as:						
a. Impositions	**	5	19	28	28	16
b. Challenges	**	7	10	25	42	9

\* Physical / Psychological    \*\* Externally-imposed / Self-imposed    \*\*\* Both

In an initial effort to reduce the responses to more manageable proportions, an analysis of the sixteen variables in Question Four of the survey was carried out using SPSS. Unfortunately, there was no factor identified which could be used to explain a large enough proportion of the variance to be considered important. Whereas a significant factor might be expected to explain 70 percent or more, the most significant one able to be identified explained only 24.72 percent, and the others even less, as indicated in Table 4.19 below.

**Table 4.19**  
**Percentage of Variance Explained by Each Factor**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>% of Variance</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
1	24.72	24.72
2	13.58	38.30
3	7.48	45.75
4	7.19	52.94
5	6.13	59.07
6	5.49	64.56
7	5.12	69.68
8	4.71	74.38
9	4.32	78.70
10	4.08	82.78
11	3.98	86.77
12	3.28	90.04
13	2.85	92.89
14	2.63	95.52
15	2.44	97.97
16	2.03	100.00

Eight factors are required in order to explain approximately 75 percent of the variability, and thus to accurately represent the information from the question. However, the presence of eight factors creates difficulty in determining the relative importance of each variable. It was not possible to eliminate weak factors, as all were weak. Overall, the variables in Question Four appeared to cover a wide range of topics, and responses could not be reduced statistically to a smaller number of factors. As a result, it was decided that the nature of work intensification should be approached on the basis of the information to emerge from the literature review in Chapter Two. From this standpoint, the issue was to determine the extent to which work intensification might be considered physical or psychological, and to which it might be imposed on teachers by others or self-generated by the teachers. Findings are contained in the following sections.

## **Work Intensification: Physical or Psychological?**

In Chapter Two, a wide range of interpretations was seen to exist in respect of the nature of work intensification. This included differences over whether intensification referred only to an increase of physical work carried out in a given period (Allan et al, 1999), or whether there was a wider interpretation possible, allowing for a psychological aspect (Callus, 1999).

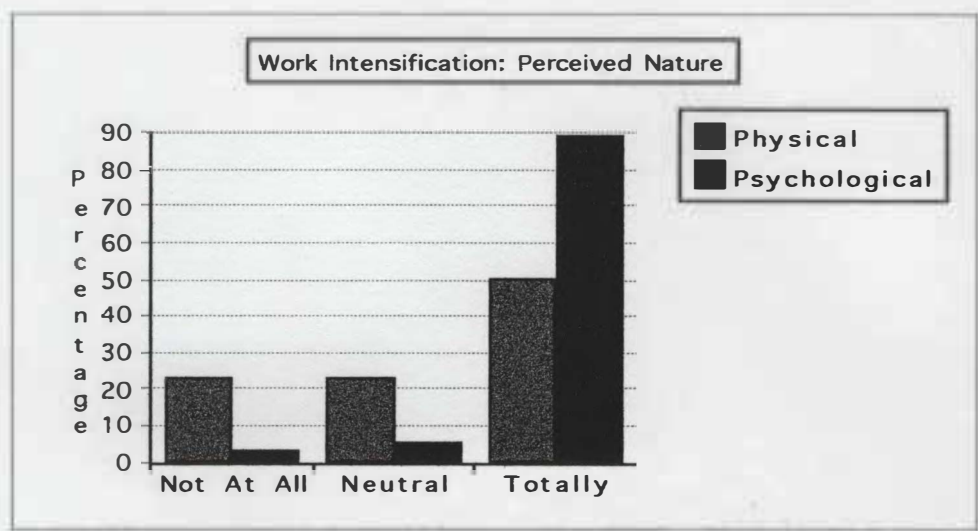
Responses to the pilot study suggested that the most powerful physical aspects of teaching indicating work intensification included issues such as class sizes, the number of meetings, the amount of administrative duties and report-writing, and the hours of work (inside and outside the school) needed in order to cope with the workload. These issues will be discussed in the following chapter, in the context of perceived causes of intensification. For the purposes of this discussion, physical work intensification in teaching is likely to involve issues other than simple productivity measurements - which, as Marginson (1993) points out, are difficult to determine in education.

Work intensification of a psychological nature would appear to consist of various forms of pressure being placed upon, or experienced by, individuals. This pressure may be positive, and include issues such as trust, respect, responsibility, or professionalism, providing the motivation for teachers to undertake additional work. Alternatively, pressure may be essentially negative, and revolve around issues such as criticism, distrust, coercion, deskilling, insecurity and lack of certainty. Some pressures may be internal to the workplace, and some external, originating from education authorities or from the community. Some also, suggests Hargreaves (1994), may be internal to the individual, and exist as a result of a desire to excel at teaching.

With the above points in mind, Question 4.11 asked to what extent work intensification was viewed as being physical or psychological. These were provided as parallel options, rather than as mutually exclusive alternatives. This was perhaps as well, as respondents often considered that both were



possible. Figure 4.1 below shows that while 51 percent of respondents indicated that they strongly considered work intensification to be physical in nature, 90 percent considered it to be largely psychological. Such a response can be considered quite emphatic, and likely to have a range of causes and a range of implications.



**Figure 4.1: Perceived Nature of Work Intensification**

One implication of the responses in Figure 4.1 is that the teaching environment is perceived consciously as one of psychological pressures, rather than as one merely of hard or prolonged physical activity. As will be discussed in the next chapter, teachers’ perceptions of work intensification resulted from a range of causes, including the pressures to cope with issues such as constant change and an increasing workload, Departmental and community expectations, a need to act often in a de facto parenting role, attitudes of principals, and a lack of understanding or appreciation. These often led to feelings of bewilderment, anger, and disillusionment, as teachers sought to cope with the demands placed upon them. In turn, these often appeared to lead to further pressures, as they conflicted with the teachers’ professionalism and their dedication to teaching.

A further implication to emerge from the perception of work intensification as being psychological is the possibility that issues such as long hours, or after-hours work, or multiple duties, are already seen - either consciously or subconsciously - to be a familiar part of the working environment, and that

increases in these areas thus become less noteworthy. This would appear to be the view of at least a proportion of teachers, as suggested by written comments.

“I already work longer hours, and take work home. I need a home life too. Much of the pressure is directly related to accountability. Stress levels. Ability to relax / switch off. I’m constantly thinking and rethinking about work-related issues - accountability, resources, testing, Curriculum Framework, multi-age groupings, etc. Can you keep everyone happy all of the time?”

(Primary teacher, 2 years’ experience, Survey)

“There is a feeling with teaching that your work is never finished. There is always something else that needs doing. This contributes to my having a shorter memory span. I need to write things down, because my mind is always cluttered! If I don’t write it down, I forget it. I can find it difficult to ‘switch off’.”

(Primary teacher, 10 years’ experience, Survey)

To examine the situation in more detail, the figures showing the strong responses in relation to the nature of work intensification were broken down by demographic variables (Table 4.20). As discussed below, it could be argued that, based on these figures, certain categories of teacher might be more susceptible to certain types of intensification.

<b>Table 4.20</b>		
<b>The Nature of Work Intensification</b>		
<b><u>By Demographic Variables (%)</u></b>		
	<b><u>Physical</u></b>	<b><u>Psychological</u></b>
<b><u>Overall</u></b>	51	90
<b><u>Male</u></b>	50	89
<b><u>Female</u></b>	51	89
<b><u>Age 40+</u></b>	51	89
<b><u>Age U-40</u></b>	50	94
<b><u>City</u></b>	57	88
<b><u>Country</u></b>	41	92
<b><u>Primary</u></b>	53	90
<b><u>Secondary</u></b>	49	90
<b><u>Non Union</u></b>	47	92
<b><u>SSTU</u></b>	52	89

To provide a means of comparison with the overall figures, questions were also asked in respect of matters such as looking forward to work (Question 4.9), and thoughts of resignation (Question 4.10). Looking forward to work each day, in an abstract sense, was considered to be suggestive of the state of mind which would be taken into the workplace, while the existence of strong thoughts of resignation would suggest the extent to which teachers might feel themselves driven, in their efforts to cope with work intensification.

The underlying assumption was that strong responses could tend to reinforce the psychological view of work intensification. This was borne out in terms of Question 4.10, with 61 percent of teachers overall reporting that they had given strong consideration to leaving teaching, and thus indicating the existence of serious concerns in relation to the situation regarding work intensification.

Indeed, more than any other test, the consideration of resignation would appear to suggest problems of coping. Indeed, when asked specifically (Question 4.12) about the extent to which they could cope with any increases in workload, 54 percent of respondents indicated that they could not, while only 22 percent were confident of their ability to do so. As suggested by comments such as those below, many workload changes may be absorbed in the short term, while the longer term outlook can be more problematic.

**“At the moment I am doing weeks of 50 hours plus. At the moment I will and can cope. The important point for me is that if this continues for one or two years I, like other staff, will leave teaching. I am very passionate about my work and can honestly say that I love my job but, if the work increases or if I need to continue to do 50+ hours, I doubt I’ll feel the same way about this job say in two years or so!”**

**(Secondary teacher, 4 years’ experience, Survey)**

**“I feel that most teachers are not opposed to work intensification if they can see a need for change and / or improvement. This does not seem to have happened. Many**

experienced teachers are confused about what is expected of them and have lost confidence in their own teaching abilities.”

(Primary teacher, 23 years’ experience, Survey)

“Changeovers between classes have become quite stressful. Confrontations occur which are beyond my control. You can only be in one place at a time. I already take work home daily, so I have no intention of increasing the load. I’ve increased onsite hours at school, usually leaving just before cleaning staff at 5.30. I’m attending sessions with a psychologist to learn strategies to cope.”

(Primary teacher, 25 years’ experience, Survey)

The situation was less definite in respect of responses to Question 4.9. These showed that, while 33 percent of teachers did not look forward to going to work each day, 28 percent of respondents did so, and 39 percent adopted a neutral position. The implication of the responses to these two questions is that teachers compartmentalise attitudes towards different issues, allowing them to hold a more positive approach to work when this is viewed on a daily basis. This may be largely due to teachers’ attitudes towards their students, and to their professionalism, as explained by a senior secondary teacher.

“The definitive professional needs to have a strong duty of care, as they are often responsible for the wellbeing of others. They need to have a strong sense of responsibility, and to come to terms with changing requirements. For teachers, this is especially important, as they are responsible for the intellectual development of the students in their charge. ... Teaching attracts nice, caring people who enjoy working with students. ... You can’t afford to waste time by being negative. No day is a dead loss.”

(Secondary teacher, 40 years’ experience, Pilot study interview)

Gender

As shown in Table 4.10, in general, a higher proportion of male than female respondents reported the existence of work intensification. The proportion

was often distinctly greater for males, although in all cases intensification was reported by a majority of teachers. In relation to the overall nature of intensification, both male and female teachers followed the pattern of unambiguously identifying it as more psychological than physical.

Generally speaking, a considerably larger proportion of male teachers gave negative responses in relation to psychological issues. In relation to looking forward to work (Question 4.9), such responses came from 28 percent of female teachers, and from 41 percent of male teachers. Similarly, 71 percent of male teachers had given serious thought to resigning from the profession (Question 4.10), compared with 56 percent of female teachers. Thus, while more female teachers identified work intensification as psychological (Table 4.19), it could be argued that they also considered themselves less affected by, or more able to cope with, the various stresses involved.

Age

A higher proportion of teachers aged forty and over saw work intensification as physical, according to Table 4.20, while a higher proportion of those under forty saw it as psychological. As with gender, it would appear that the group most inclined (in this case, at 94 percent) to see intensification as psychological was also the group most able to cope. A total of 35 percent of older teachers reported not looking forward to going to work, while 62 percent had seriously considered resignation. The figures for teachers under forty were 27 percent and 61 percent respectively.

Geographical Location

Country teachers appeared much less likely than city colleagues (41 percent and 57 percent, respectively) to consider work intensification as physical. Countering this was the comment of a country teacher, indicating the perception that he and his colleagues in smaller schools were already obliged to undertake a wider range of tasks than those in larger schools, and that additional duties were thus “extras on top of extras”. Of

particular interest, for example, might be linkages between the physical pressures of work and psychological reactions, and whether there might be a spill-over effect from one to the other. The question of access to resources and support networks was hinted at by some respondents.

**Table 4.21**

**Work Intensification: W.A. State School Teachers**

<b><u>Anticipation of Work</u></b>			
<b><u>Negative Responses (%)</u></b>			
Male	41	28	Female
Age 40+	35	27	Age U-40
City	33	30	Country
Primary	33	34	Secondary
Temporary	33	32	Permanent
Non-Union	32	32	SSTU

**Table 4.22**

**Work Intensification: W.A. State School Teachers**

<b><u>Strong Thoughts of Resignation (%)</u></b>			
Male	71	56	Female
Age 40+	62	61	Age U-40
City	62	61	Country
Primary	63	62	Secondary
Temporary	48	65	Permanent
Non-Union	59	62	SSTU

Table 4.20 indicates that 92 percent of country teachers considered work intensification to be psychological, compared to 88 percent of city teachers. However, Tables 4.21 and 4.22 - both of which may be considered as psychological responses to the work situation - show that a smaller proportion of country teachers than city teachers also responded negatively to questions on looking forward to work, and on thoughts of resignation. Whether this indicates a greater awareness by country teachers of psychological pressures, or a better ability to cope with pressures when they do arise, might be open to question, however, as differences are marginal.

**Teaching Level**

Table 4.20 shows that 53 percent of primary teachers saw work

intensification was seen as physical. This was compared to 49 percent of secondary teachers. By contrast, 90 percent of both primary and secondary teachers considered work intensification to be psychological.

Supporting this, Tables 4.21 and 4.22 show that a higher proportion of primary teachers (63 percent to 62 percent) reported having thought seriously of resignation, while marginally more secondary teachers (34 percent to 33 percent) gave negative responses to looking forward to work. An issue which is cause for concern, however, is that such a large proportion of all teachers would appear to have given, or to be giving, consideration to resignation, even though many professed to love teaching. Clearly, whether the basis for such an attitude were physical or psychological, or both, the effect on teachers was clearly psychological.

**Union Membership**

Increases in the variables in Table 4.15 were reported consistently by a higher proportion of members of the State School Teachers' Union (SSTU) than non-members. Similarly, the Work Intensification Index (Table 4.17), based on figures for Effort, Pace of Work, and Stress, showed that 66 percent of SSTU members experienced a high rate of intensification, as against 52 percent of non-union members. Table 4.20 continued to show this trend, with 52 percent of SSTU members considering work intensification to be physical, compared with 47 percent of non-union teachers.

The trend was reversed over responses to Question 4.11b ("To what extent do you consider work intensification to be psychological?"). A higher proportion (92 percent) of non-union teachers considered intensification to be psychological. That response rate was the third highest recorded in Table 4.20, and seemed to suggest that teachers might feel more vulnerable if they have no union protection from workplace pressures. In order to examine the matter further, responses showing the perception that work intensification was strongly psychological were themselves broken down by several demographic variables, and then further divided into those from non-union teachers and those from SSTU

members. Members of other organisations were not included, due to the small numbers involved. Table 4.23 shows the proportion of each category - for example, the number of male SSTU members, or the number of city-based non-union teachers.

**Table 4.23**  
**The Psychological Nature of Work Intensification**  
**By Demographic Variables (%)**

	<u>Non-Union</u>	<u>SSTUWA</u>
<u>Overall</u>	92	89
<u>Male</u>	88	91
<u>Female</u>	93	89
<u>Age 40+</u>	90	89
<u>Age U-40</u>	93	92
<u>City</u>	89	89
<u>Country</u>	96	91
<u>Primary</u>	94	93
<u>Secondary</u>	88	94
<u>Temporary</u>	92	90
<u>Permanent</u>	93	91
<u>Full-Time</u>	93	90
<u>Part-Time</u>	89	96

From the differences in Table 4.23 it is possible to discern categories which might experience greater vulnerability to work intensification - particularly intensification of a psychological nature. This appeared to be indicated most notably by:

- \* Non-union female teachers (93 percent);
- \* Teachers aged under forty, both members and non-members of the SSTU;
- \* Country teachers, particularly those not in the SSTU (96 percent);
- \* Secondary teachers, especially SSTU members (94 percent);
- \* Non-union primary teachers (94 percent).

Both temporary and permanent non-union teachers showed higher response rates than colleagues in the SSTU. The same may be true of figures for full-time non-union teachers. With few exceptions, it would



appear that a linkage exists between union membership and perceptions of psychological work intensification. One implication - which would provide support for the writing of Burgess & Campbell (1998) on precariousness - is that this reflects a degree of isolation or uncertainty by non-union teachers, as they lack the support network available to SSTU members.

### **Work Intensification: Self-Imposed or Externally-Imposed?**

In Chapter Two it was seen that work intensification was considered by some writers - such as Bent (1998), and Callus (1999) - to be psychological as well as physical. This was reflected in the perceptions of respondents to the survey, as discussed in the previous section.

A second indicator used to examine the nature of work intensification was its origin. This centred on the question of whether it could be considered to be self-imposed or externally-imposed. This meant examining whether teachers perceived themselves to be mainly one of several categories:

- \* The victims of circumstances outside their control, as indicated by Braverman (1974);
- \* The willing accomplices, as implied by Burawoy (1979), subjected to more subtle manipulation;
- \* The dedicated individual, seduced by the rhetoric of professionalism (Hargreaves, 1994); or
- \* The knowing professional, also dedicated, but able to critically analyse work intensification in the context of the perceived interests of students, and to accept or resist demands in order that these interests are not affected.

The arguments put forward by Hargreaves (1994) are particularly important, as they suggest that teachers' very professionalism may be a negative force in their working life, leading them in a search for teaching perfection, and causing feelings of guilt when perfection cannot be achieved. Subsequently, on the assumption that working harder will help them to achieve this state, teachers may be likely to take on increasing amounts of work, without necessarily being fully aware of the increase or

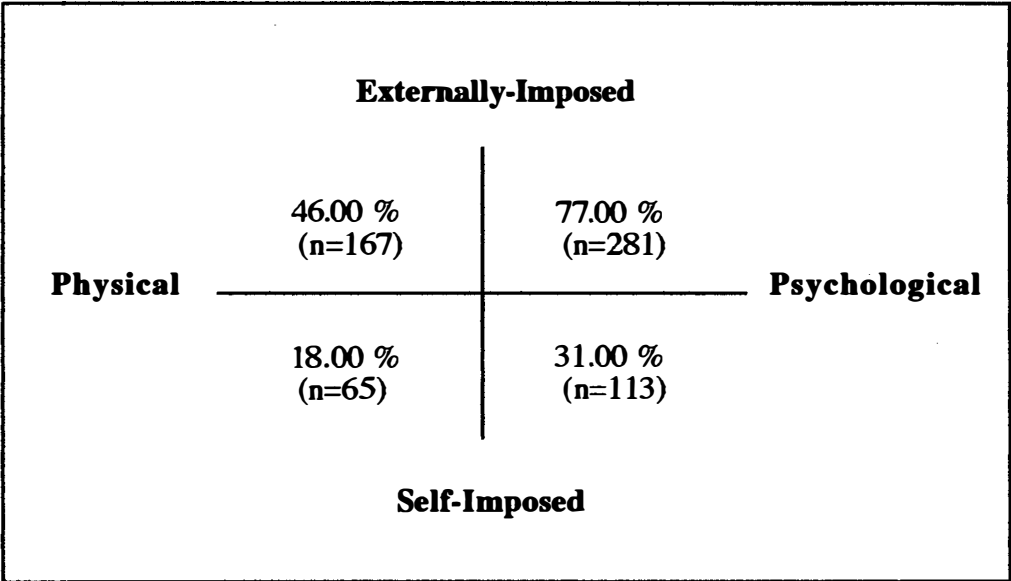
of the impact in other aspects of their life.

The situation regarding the perceived origins of work intensification were addressed in Question Four of the survey. This question included a number of variables (see Table 4.18) designed to indicate firstly where teachers saw work intensification originating and, secondly, the extent to which they felt in control of the decision-making processes in their lives. The fundamental issue was whether changes which teachers had experienced in their work were required of them (in other words, imposed by others) or whether they were undertaken through the choice of the teachers themselves (in other words, self-imposed).

The responses in Table 4.18 in respect of these issues appeared to be quite unequivocal: Question 4.1a ("To what extent have changes in your work been required changes?") had a positive response rate of 85 percent. This was then supported by responses to a number of secondary questions: 78 percent reported experiencing pressure to take on extra work; 79 percent had been required to take on additional subjects or functions; 51 percent felt unable to refuse extra work; and 56 percent indicated that doing more did not lead to an increase in satisfaction.

However, this was not complemented to the same extent by responses to Question 4.1b ("To what extent have changes in your work been your own choice?"), which showed close similarity between those who agreed that changes were their own choice (35 percent) and those who disagreed (37 percent). In an effort to clarify the overall situation, the relationship between the character and provenance of work intensification was examined. The combined figures obtained were not mutually exclusive allowing, for example, for respondents to consider intensification to be both physical and psychological - which was the case in 46 percent of responses. Figure 4.2 thus contains a proportion of overlapping responses, showing clearly that teachers considered work intensification not only to be imposed upon them by others, but also to be more psychological than physical.

The key to Figure 4.2 would appear to be the upper right quadrant, which indicates the perceptions of a large majority of respondents. A total of 77 percent viewed the work intensification which they had experienced to be both externally-imposed and psychological, while only 18 percent held the opposite view, that it was self-imposed and physical. Perceived causes of teacher views will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.



**Figure 4.2: Perceived Nature of Work Intensification**

As with other issues, the provenance of work intensification was examined using demographic variables. In addition, secondary questions were included, in order to gain a more comprehensive view of the situation. The secondary questions related to gaining satisfaction from doing extra work, pressure and requirement to do extra, and the ability to refuse. The Tables in the following sections show positive responses (4 or 5 in the survey form) in relation to the first three variables, and negative responses to the last two variables. Together, they appear capable of contributing to an understanding of the overall attitudes of teachers.

Gender

As Table 4.18 indicates, a large majority of respondents considered that changes to their work had been required changes - in other words, not activities undertaken on their own initiative. A gender breakdown (Table 4.24) suggests that the situation perceived by male teachers was less positive than by females. Consistently strong differences between male and female responses

**Table 4.24**  
**Work Intensification: W.A.State School Teachers**  
**Perceptions of External Imposition**  
**By Gender (%)**

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
<b>Required Changes</b>	89	84
<b>Pressure to do Extra</b>	84	74
<b>Required to do Extra</b>	77	64
<b>Increased Satisfaction *</b>	66	51
<b>Ability to Say No *</b>	52	50

\* Note: These figures indicate negative responses  
(n=113 Male; 250 Female) t (Gender, 4df): -7.938

to most, if not all, questions, might be considered to imply a relatively fundamental difference of approach to work-related issues. In each case in the above Table, the male responses were suggestive of a group which perceived itself to be under considerable pressure. The picture to emerge from the first three variables is of people who saw work-related changes to have been imposed changes; who had been required formally to undertake additional functions or duties; and who had faced pressure to do more.

The last two variables were derived from Question 4.8 (“To what extent does doing more increase your satisfaction?”) and Question 4.5 (“To what extent do you feel able to say no to extra work?”). The expectation was that a strong positive response to these questions would indicate a propensity for work intensification to be self-imposed. A negative response would suggest the contrary, that work intensification was imposed by others, and would support the findings of writers such as Ironside, Seifert & Sinclair (1994), Callus (1999), and Hunter and McKelvie (1999).

Table 4.23 shows that most teachers did not gain increased satisfaction from doing additional work, and that a small majority also did not feel able to refuse additional work. The figures show a greater negative response by males to both questions, suggesting that males might either have been subjected more often to pressure, or have perceived that to be the case. Responses to these two questions suggest the perception by teachers of a lack of choice, implying that changes were considered to be externally-imposed. The responses would appear also to reinforce the responses to Question 1.8, which showed that 59 percent of male teachers and 44 percent of female teachers reported decreased levels of job satisfaction.

Age

Earlier in the chapter, Table 4.8 indicated that work intensification was reported consistently by a higher proportion of teachers aged forty and over, both in general and when subdivided by gender. Similarly, Table 4.25 shows that, amongst teachers aged forty and over, 90 percent considered changes to their work to have been required changes. After that, however, the results became less clear-cut. While 60 percent of older teachers reported not obtaining increased satisfaction from doing additional work, a higher proportion of teachers under forty reported being required to do extra, or being under pressure to do so. Similarly, 54 percent felt unable to refuse additional work, compared to 49 percent of older colleagues.

**Table 4.25**  
**Work Intensification: W.A.State School Teachers**  
**Perceptions of External Imposition**  
**By Age (%)**

	<b><u>40+</u></b>	<b><u>U-40</u></b>
<b>Required Changes</b>	90	80
<b>Pressure to do Extra</b>	77	82
<b>Required to do Extra</b>	65	67
<b>Increased Satisfaction *</b>	60	51
<b>Ability to Say No *</b>	49	54

*t* (Age, 4df): 8.189    \* Note: Figures indicate negative responses  
(n = 247 Forty +; 114 Under-40)

In an effort to gain a clearer understanding of this situation, a breakdown was done of those teachers reporting that they did not gain satisfaction

from doing additional work. The responses for the question were examined from the following standpoints, with the aim of covering both professional and personal aspects of working life:

- \* Teachers with and without children aged under eighteen;
- \* Satisfaction levels over the work / family split;
- \* Health;
- \* Energy levels during an average week;
- \* Teaching performance; and
- \* Preparation time.

Overall, the results of this breakdown were inconclusive, with each age group reporting dissatisfaction in relation to both professional and personal life. It was found, for example, that 48 percent of the older teachers (as against 43 percent of younger colleagues) reported a negative reaction in relation to teaching performance, and that they appeared slightly more inclined (46 percent to 43 percent) to report a lack of satisfaction when families included children under eighteen.

At the same time, however, as with the overall figures in Table 4.25, the pattern which emerged suggested that often the older age group were less likely to experience dissatisfaction over the extra workload resulting from work intensification. This was the case in relation to energy, to health, to satisfaction over the work / family split, and to preparation time. It was particularly noticeable also when there were no children under eighteen. In that situation negative responses were received from 57 percent of teachers under forty, compared to 40 percent of older teachers. An implication of the figures obtained is that differences examined on the basis of age may be as much apparent as real, and that dissatisfaction is in fact more evenly spread amongst teachers than it might seem at first glance.

### **Geographical Location**

Table 4.26 below shows that an often large majority of both city and country teachers considered work intensification to be externally imposed,

and that, for three of the five variables, a slight majority existed in favour of country teachers. The exception to this was provided by responses concerning satisfaction derived from doing additional work. This showed a response rate of 60 percent by city teachers, and just 49 percent by country teachers.

Further breakdown of those figures showed that negative responses had been received from 68 percent of city teachers aged forty and over, but only 45 percent of city teachers under forty. For country teachers, the reverse occurred, with negative responses from 51 percent of those under forty, and 48 from those percent forty and over. As mentioned in relation to the physical and psychological aspects of work intensification, it may be that factors not directly connected with teaching played a part in the responses. These may include issues such as the amount of driving time, seniority, or administrative duties.

Table 4.26

Work Intensification: W.A.State School Teachers

Perceptions of External Imposition

By Geographical Location (%)

	City	Country
Required Changes	86	87
Pressure to do Extra	77	78
Required to do Extra	68	70
Increased Satisfaction *	60	49
Ability to Say No *	52	49

$t$  (Location, 4df): 8.642

\* Note: Figures denote negative responses

(n = 219 City; 142 Country)

### Teaching Level

The clear pattern to emerge in Table 4.27 below was for a higher proportion of primary teachers to indicate that work intensification was externally-imposed, although the differences were consistently moderate, implying that the issue was one on which there was broad agreement throughout the teacher body. By contrast, a slightly larger proportion of secondary teachers (82 percent to 80 percent) reported being under pressure to take on additional work. The closeness of the figures would seem to correspond with figures in Table 4.20 which showed that 90

percent of both primary and secondary teachers saw work intensification as psychological.

**Table 4.27**  
**Work Intensification: W.A.State School Teachers**  
**Perceptions of External Imposition**  
**By Teaching Level (%)**

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>
<b>Required Changes</b>	90	86
<b>Pressure to do Extra</b>	80	82
<b>Required to do Extra</b>	71	68
<b>Increased Satisfaction *</b>	59	54
<b>Ability to Say No *</b>	53	49

*t* (Level, 4df): 12.368 \* Note: Figures denote negative responses

**Employment Status**

Table 4.28 indicates that permanent teachers working on a full-time basis were noticeably more likely than other categories to regard work intensification as being externally-imposed. While there were larger responses across all five variables from permanent full-time teachers, the most striking difference was in relation to Question 4.3 (“To what extent have you ever felt under any pressure to take on additional work?”). A total of 84 percent reported having experienced pressure, compared to only 53 percent of permanent part-time teachers.

The lower response rate from permanent part-time teachers could well be seen to reflect the existence of a trend for teachers to move to part-time work, in order to be able to cope with the (relative) workload. In this manner, the actual workload for a part-time teacher (school-based work plus out-of-hours work) could be made to approximate the hours of a normal full-time job in fields other than teaching.

By contrast, the strongest perceptions by temporary teachers of work being externally imposed appeared to come from those who were working on a part-time basis. Why a greater proportion of part-time temporary staff should feel that they were under pressure to take on additional work, or why they should be required to do so, may reflect a level of insecurity, such as suggested by Hall and Harley (2000), and the desire, mentioned by



several teachers, of actually wanting to be in a situation requiring longer hours. This was mentioned as likely to mean that they had been accepted more into the mainstream of the Education Department. Indeed, taking on additional work can be calculated to ensure good standing, and to provide a greater likelihood of re-employment in the following year.

<b>Table 4.28</b> <b><u>Work Intensification: W.A.State School Teachers</u></b> <b><u>Perceptions of External Imposition</u></b> <b><u>By Employment Status and Type (%)</u></b>				
	<b><u>Temporary</u></b>		<b><u>Permanent</u></b>	
	<b><u>F / T</u></b>	<b><u>P / T</u></b>	<b><u>F / T</u></b>	<b><u>P / T</u></b>
<b>Required Changes</b>	80	77	91	76
<b>Pressure to do Extra</b>	69	82	84	53
<b>Required to do Extra</b>	53	72	76	55
<b>Increased Satisfaction *</b>	47	32	61	59
<b>Ability to Say No *</b>	54	59	51	47

\* Note: Figures denote negative responses (n = 67 Temporary; 293 Permanent)

The greatest difference came in the response of part-time temporary teachers over whether doing more led to increased satisfaction. The negative response of 32 percent was not only quite distinct from the 47 percent registered by full-time temporary teachers, but markedly lower than all other categories (see Table 4.29 below). This may suggest that doing more actually would increase satisfaction, although only 23 percent indicated this directly. A strong implication would seem to be not so much that work intensification was self-imposed, but that part-time temporary teachers - again, possibly in an instinctive desire to become part of the mainstream - would like to be given the opportunity to be willing accomplices.

<b>Table 4.29</b> <b><u>Work Intensification: W.A. State School Teachers</u></b> <b><u>Extra Work Causing Increased Satisfaction:</u></b> <b><u>Negative Responses (%)</u></b>				
<b>Males</b>	66	51	<b>Female</b>	
<b>Age 40+</b>	60	51	<b>Age U-40</b>	
<b>City</b>	60	49	<b>Country</b>	
<b>Primary</b>	59	54	<b>Secondary</b>	
<b>Temporary</b>	42	60	<b>Permanent</b>	
<b>Non-Union</b>	53	58	<b>SSTU</b>	

Union Membership

Issues were reported by a larger proportion of SSTU members than non-members, according to a breakdown of responses on the basis of union membership. A feature of most variables in Table 4.30 was the comparative closeness of responses. The exception was that a higher proportion of SSTU members reported having been under pressure to take on additional work. The implication is that both union and non-union teachers, in similar proportions, considered additional work to be in the form of required changes, that both had been required to do additional work, and that both obtained little satisfaction from doing extra. Consequently, it would seem that, regardless of membership or otherwise of unions, teachers considered themselves to be faced with work intensification imposed by others.

**Table 4.30**  
**Work Intensification: W.A.State School Teachers**  
**Perceptions of External Imposition**  
**By Union Membership (%)**

	<u>Non-union</u>	<u>SSTU</u>
Required Changes	70	74
Pressure to do Extra	69	80
Required to do Extra	68	68
Increased Satisfaction *	53	58
Ability to Say No *	53	49

\* Note: These figures indicate negative responses  
(n = 108 Non-union; 233 SSTUWA)

Of possibly more interest, however, were the responses to Question 4.5 (“To what extent do you feel able to say no to extra work?”). While the actual figures were slightly less than others in Table 4.30, the existence of a higher proportion of non-union teachers unable to say no might suggest that these teachers felt less overall security, possibly as result of lacking a reliable support base, supplied to others by the SSTU. Indeed, it would seem that this point might have the potential to explain the incidence of work intensification for a significant proportion of non-union teachers. In an effort to gain a more precise indication, a further breakdown was made of the responses from non-union teachers. Table 4.31 shows the proportion of each category of non-union teachers unable to refuse

additional work. This applied, for example, to 48 percent of male non-union teachers.

**Table 4.31**  
**Work Intensification: W.A. State School Teachers**  
**Inability to Refuse Extra Work: Non-Union Teachers (%)**

<b>Male</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Age 40+</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>Age U-40</b>
<b>City</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>Country</b>
<b>Primary</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
<b>Temporary</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>

(n = 108 Non-union teachers)

With this breakdown, it became apparent that a number of categories of non-union teachers were seemingly more affected by being unable to say no to additional work. Non-union female teachers, country teachers, primary teachers, and temporary teachers all would appear to have a clear vulnerability to work intensification, through an inability to refuse to take on additional work. To the list perhaps should be added teachers aged under forty, and part-time teachers, as it became apparent also that one-fifth of these people (20 percent of part-time teachers overall and 21 percent of those under forty) were affected. It may be that there could be implications for future SSTU recruiting strategies.

## **Summary**

**This chapter has examined the issues of the existence and nature of work intensification, in each case considering information obtained (consisting of survey data, written comments, and interview responses) by a number of demographic variables. These variables were suggested firstly by the range of work environments in the Education Department and, in the case of socio-economic level, by consultation with teachers in the public education system.**

**The extremely high rate of response to survey questions suggested that teachers' interest in the issue was high. This was reinforced by repeated comments which suggested that their concerns were deep, and strongly held. Based on information examined, a number of issues emerged. Teachers believed that work intensification existed, that it was an issue of importance, that it was both physical and psychological in nature, and that it was generally imposed rather than self-generated.**

**Those most consistently affected by work intensification were males, teachers aged forty and over, full-time teachers, union members, and those from schools in high socio-economic areas. Differences tended to be more marginal in relation to geographical location and teaching level. By contrast, female teachers under forty are the least likely to do so, particularly in relation to the physical aspects such as hours worked, pace of work, and effort. All categories, however, show a very high response rate in relation to the complexity of work, stress, and responsibility.**

**An element of ambivalence was discerned amongst teachers with regard to their general situation. While remaining dedicated to the concept of teaching, a large proportion (over sixty percent) of teaching staff had given strong consideration to resigning. The implications of this would seem to be a matter for potential concern for education authorities**

**One element hinted at by respondents was that of professionalism. Asked specifically in Question 13 to indicate the extent to which changes were regarded as impositions or as challenges, 54 percent of respondents**

indicated that they were challenges. This was seemingly regardless of other considerations, The issue of professionalism will be covered in the next chapter, in relation to the perceived causes of work intensification. Overall, the chapter provides justification for the study of the topic of work intensification, together with ample evidence of its importance.

## **Chapter 5**

# **WORK INTENSIFICATION: CAUSES AND EFFECTS**

### **Introduction**

This chapter continues the examination of findings begun in Chapter Four, and concentrates on causes and effects of work intensification as perceived by teachers. An examination is made of different categories of causes. A range of issues such as class sizes and staffing policy is thus able to be examined, along with their significance for teachers. The role of professionalism in relation to work intensification is covered, including a discussion of both teacher perceptions of themselves as professionals, and their perceptions of how they are viewed in turn by the community. The effects of work intensification include the impact on personal and professional life, in areas such as health, work performance, and the work / family split. Finally, the chapter examines the views and experiences of principals both as individuals and as managers.

### **Causes of Work Intensification**

As a phenomenon, work intensification has its place in the labour process and industrial relations lore of the past thirty years. As seen in the previous chapter, the nature of intensification can differ quite markedly, depending on underlying points of view involved. Similarly, often due to individual experiences, different causes of intensification may be perceived.

In the survey of teachers, respondents were asked to rate seven possible reasons contributing to work intensification. These reasons were selected for inclusion partly on the basis of a pilot study carried out in 2000, partly on the basis of literature examined, and partly on the basis of prior discussions with teachers on the content and style of the questionnaire. Accountability and curriculum changes, and administrative requirements were seen by teachers in the pilot study as being of particular importance.

The other possible causes were considered significant, but slightly less important. Responses were asked for using a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Large extent). For the purposes of this research, a positive response is shown by 4 and 5 on the scale. Table 5.1 below shows results.

<b>Table 5.1</b>					
<b><u>Perceived Causes of Work Intensification (%)</u></b>					
	<b><u>Not</u></b>				<b><u>Large</u></b>
	<b><u>At All</u></b>				<b><u>Extent</u></b>
	<b><u>1</u></b>	<b><u>2</u></b>	<b><u>3</u></b>	<b><u>4</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>
<b>Extent of Teaching Duties</b>	8	9	22	32	25
<b>Accountability Requirements</b>	3	1	10	36	49
<b>Administration</b>	3	3	13	33	45
<b>Out-of-Hours Activities</b>	9	12	26	27	24
<b>Curriculum Changes</b>	1	2	6	23	66
<b>Community Expectations</b>	5	8	25	35	27
<b>IT Changes</b>	4	5	16	34	39

In addition to the seven causes listed in Table 5.1, respondents were provided with a number of opportunities to identify others which they considered to be of importance, or which they had experienced or observed in their working environment. This facility was used by respondents to give the benefit of their experience in the education system, with the results shown in Table 5.2 below.

The issues listed in Table 5.2 were consolidated into groups, which were then further consolidated into two categories of group - Education, and Structure and Operation. Finally, these two categories were linked to overall philosophical approaches, in order to distil their intellectual essence. The structure of Table 5.2 will be used as the basis for discussing causes of work intensification, with reference to data from Table 5.1, and to comments from teachers.

Responses to the survey questions suggested that, while all the suggested issues were seen by a majority of teachers as reasons for work intensification, two stood out above the others. Curriculum changes were nominated as a large cause by 89 percent of respondents, and accountability requirements were nominated by 85 percent. Other important causes of work intensification were administration requirements (78 percent) and information technology (73 percent).

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**Table 5.2**  
**Perceived Causes of Work Intensification - Other Reasons**

Level 1 Issues	Level 2 Grouping	Level 3 Category	Level 4 Philosophy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Constant change</li> <li>* Rushed implementations</li> <li>* Poor guidelines</li> <li>* Poor leadership / direction</li> <li>* Confusion, uncertainty</li> <li>* Training</li> <li>* Unrealistic timeframes</li> <li>* Unrealistic expectations</li> <li>* Conflicting demands</li> </ul>	Change [75]		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Large classes</li> <li>* Insufficient DOTT Time</li> <li>* Deficient Administration</li> <li>* Controlling environment</li> <li>* Insufficient resources</li> <li>* Insufficient funding</li> <li>* Meetings / committees</li> <li>* Reporting / paperwork</li> <li>* Range of non-ed duties</li> <li>* Out-of hours activities</li> <li>* Counselling / Pastoral care</li> </ul>	Organisation and Duties [134]	Structure & Operation	Managerialist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Merit selection</li> <li>* Insufficient numbers</li> <li>* Uncertainty over postings</li> <li>* Performance management</li> <li>* Poor staff management</li> </ul>	Staffing Operations [45]		
*****			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Behaviour and attitudes</li> <li>* Dysfunctional families</li> <li>* Poor parenting</li> <li>* Immature children</li> <li>* Children at risk</li> <li>* Learning disabilities</li> </ul>	Students [53]		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Curriculum Framework</li> <li>* Outcome Statements</li> <li>* Individualised learning</li> <li>* Inclusive Education</li> <li>* National Testing</li> <li>* Number of subjects</li> <li>* Changing subjects, roles</li> <li>* Split classes</li> </ul>	Pedagogy [55]	Education	Educationalist
*****			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Professional isolation</li> <li>* Absence of mentoring</li> <li>* Level of responsibility</li> <li>* Lack of communication</li> <li>* Expectations: self, peers, school</li> <li>* Increased professionalism</li> <li>* Lack of appreciation</li> <li>* No consultation / collaboration</li> </ul>	Professionalism [35]	Professional	Professional

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In total, approximately four hundred points were made. As indicated in Table 5.2, these tended to fall into a number of quite clear groupings - Change; Organisation and Duties; Staffing Operations; Students; Pedagogy; and Professionalism. All the issues were raised as causes of work intensification.

The section on Change consisted mainly of those issues involved in the actual process of change, including value judgements by respondents on the need for change, the pace of change, guidelines and directions, leadership, and expectations. Organisation and Duties included matters relating more to the ongoing physical operation of schools, such as non-teaching duties, administration, resources, time, funding, and - particularly - class sizes. Staffing Operations involved more general personnel issues, such as staffing levels and staff selection, and appeared important enough to respondents to warrant consideration as a discrete section.

The other three groupings dealt respectively with matters relating more specifically to students and their families; to learning and the teaching process; and to professional standards and status. While some overlap was apparent in the nature of these sections, sufficient differences were seen to exist to justify separate examination.

It was considered that the first three groupings could be viewed as naturally relating to organisational matters, while the remainder related more to education. As a result, it was considered appropriate that the groupings of factors be separated into three categories, which were then titled Structure and Operations, Education, and Professional. It appeared also that the seven causal factors listed in Table 5.1 could be logically situated under the various groupings. Curriculum change and I/T changes naturally related to Change, while accountability, administration, and out-of-hours activities related to Organisation and Duties. Finally, teaching duties and community expectations appeared to fit most appropriately into a discussion of Pedagogy.

Following this organisation of respondents' suggested causes, it was noticed that the categories appeared to coincide with a philosophical

division into streams which were more management-oriented and more education-oriented. Consequently, as Table 5.2 indicates, it was possible to structure discussion in this chapter according to what are described broadly as the Managerialist Approach, the Educationalist Approach, and the Professional Approach.

From Table 5.2, the Organisation and Structure section was most frequently cited as causes of work intensification. Within that section, the largest single issue to concern teachers was that of class sizes. However, all sections proved to be important, as further information was provided through written comments on survey forms, and through interviews. The latter were often particularly useful, due to the candid nature of many comments. The following discussion combines information from all three sources - questionnaires, comments, and interviews - in order to examine causes of work intensification. This discussion follows the managerialist, educationalist, and professional approaches outlined in Table 5.2.

## **The Managerialist Approach**

### **Change**

#### **General**

A thread running through the areas of work shown in Table 5.1 was the element of change, including that category of change which can be considered outside the power of individual teachers to influence or control. Accountability requirements and curriculum changes, for example, would appear to be the consequence of the introduction of the Curriculum Framework and Student Outcome Statements. Similarly, information technology is under constant development, often requiring regular training in order to update skill levels.

The question of change included not merely technical or procedural elements, however. Comments of many respondents revolved around issues such as the pace of change, the implementation of change, the reasons for change and, indeed, the very fact of change. A common

perception was that change had become a constant factor, so frequent as to preclude any chance of proper understanding and consolidation by teachers.

**“There has been so much change over the last few years, and into the next few, that it is increasingly difficult if not downright impossible to even guesstimate the degree of success for better / worse, because nothing sits still long enough for more than token evaluation, which is substantially summary and subjective in nature.”**

**(Secondary teacher, 26 years’ experience, Pilot Study)**

Expectations were seen as unrealistic, guidelines and direction were lacking, confusion was common, resources and staffing were inadequate, training was either excessive or non-existent, and reporting requirements were a time-consuming burden. The question of lack of support and direction was a common theme in many responses.

**“The continued uncertainty with regard to outcome statements is very negative. Firm direction is needed from EDWA. The present system is woefully inefficient”**

**(Secondary teacher, 23 years’ experience, Survey)**

**“Admin enforced change without clear guidelines. The inconsistency is stressful, and does nothing to raise the standard of teaching.”**

**(Primary teacher, 20 years’ experience, Survey)**

**“The rewards of teaching are offset by ... the uncertainty of where we’re going and how we’re going to get there.”**

**(Primary Principal, 25 years’ experience, Survey)**

The perception of change as being unnecessary was mentioned repeatedly by respondents as an element in work intensification. Change was often interpreted, therefore, as being something devised by central office staff, generally with a view to enhancing their own chances of promotion.

Combined with a sense of powerlessness, or frustration, this led often to criticism of “central office CV writers”. Typical of this sentiment were the following responses.

“My usual reaction is anger & frustration, then slowly ease myself into it with some cynicism. Education is a political basketball used by individuals to bounce themselves into the limelight by experimenting with new ideas, students being the score.”

(Primary teacher, 23 years’ experience, Survey)

“I probably resent the latest changes, as the system was working well. I’m not confident that we’ll get anything out of them.”

(Secondary teacher, 41 years’ experience, Survey)

Information Technology

One area of change to have become more familiar during the past two decades is that of information technology. While often understood in principle, developments in information technology were often seen by respondents as a source of additional work - due to issues such as additional training and preliminary data entry - rather than of efficiency, or of advantage to a teacher. Indeed, it was considered that, even once all preparatory work was completed, the existence of computers often led Administrations to expect greater output of work by teachers using them. Table 5.1 indicated that 73 percent of respondents considered information technology to be a significant cause of work intensification. Table 5.3 examines this further according to demographic variables.

**Table 5.3**  
**Western Australian State School Teachers**  
**Information Technology as a Cause of Work Intensification**  
**By Demographic Groups (%)**

<b>Male</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>74 Female</b>
<b>Age 40 +</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>64 Age U-40</b>
<b>Primary</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>69 Secondary</b>
<b>City</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>76 Country</b>
<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>69 Part-Time</b>
<b>Non-Union</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>79 SSTU</b>

The negligible difference to be found between the responses of city and country teachers implied that geographical location was not in itself perceived as a causal factor, in relation to information technology and work intensification. By contrast, other variables showed considerable differences. Of interest was the situation of female teachers, where 74 percent considered IT changes to be a cause of work intensification, compared to 65 percent of male teachers. The unusual aspect of this figure was the size of the difference, as well as the fact that the pattern was for male teachers to be in a slight majority in relation to most of the other potential causes.

A similar situation existed in respect of the age demographic, which suggested that teachers aged forty and over were much more likely than younger colleagues to identify information technology as a cause of work intensification. Typical of many responses was that of a female teacher in her forties, confronted with the need to organise her time to physically fit in the additional workload involved with the use of computers.

“At this point I feel that I am not in any position to cope with any further workload, but I know if the event occurs I will manage! I have done so for the past two years. I need an increased amount of time to prepare for the approaching term’s work, during school holidays - in particular the January and mid-year breaks for the start of the new semester. The changing format for reporting (computerisation) restricts when and where reports can be prepared, and intrudes significantly on personal time during the actual data entry time.”

(Secondary teacher, 14 years’ experience, Survey)

On one level, such an attitude on the part of older teachers might be considered not unexpected, given the relatively recent spread of information technology, in particular the internet, and a consequent need to learn and adapt to new processes. However, some respondents implied that differences could be as much a result of experience in the profession as of age itself, and could reflect a certain resistance to change rather than an inability to do so. Responses emphasised, for example, the amount of time required for tasks such as entering material (for example, student

marks) into computers, updating teaching aids, and preparing presentations.

Training was seen as an additional issue in relation to IT, both necessary and problematic: necessary because of an increasing general use of technology as an educational tool, and problematic because of the time and effort required for the training - or indeed because of a perceived lack of training. Teachers, it was considered, could not be expected "to develop technological skills without time and funds being allocated".

## **Organisation**

### **Devolution**

Interaction, and the formation of constructive relationships, with the local community has tended to receive greater attention in recent years, as a result of the devolution of many functions to schools, and the implementation of school-based decision making (SBDM) groups, however named in individual localities. The aim of the process, according to the Education Department, was "to encourage the local solution of local problems and strengthen the movement toward self-managing schools within an overall framework of goals, policies, standards and accountability" (EDWA, 1998, p.47). Typically, SBDM groups may be chaired by a person from the local community, will tend to meet after hours, and will involve the participation of both community and school representatives.

While not feeling threatened as professionals by such meetings, respondents noted the need to educate the community representatives in order that they might understand something of the education system. While the people involved were seen as generally supportive, both teachers and principals felt that they were "into petty things", "had no understanding of pedagogical matters", "had barrows to push", or "were a waste of time". Consequently, while SBDM groups were seen by the Department to have educational and organisational benefits, their use appeared to be seen by staff as also representing an imposition on them,

especially in relation to time and to non-work commitments. The devolution underpinning this situation often appeared to be viewed with some cynicism, and even desperation.

**“Devolution has deflected the core business of education away from students, as teachers are now curriculum developers, etc.. It’s like a jigsaw puzzle without a picture. It has given us opportunities, but EDWA has devolved so much that you get fed up with opportunities.”**

**(Secondary teacher, 26 years’ experience, Pilot Study)**

**“Devolution is having a major effect on workload. Support from the central organisation has vanished and resources to make sense of the new curriculum are ineffective. Staff work almost in isolation, perhaps producing excellent outcomes without anyone knowing, or any cross fertilisation. The only reaction is when something goes wrong and then the teacher / school is responsible. There are teachers working hard to implement changes, without recognition, resources or time. Negative morale. IT advances mean teachers can do more. Now they are expected to do so.”**

**(Secondary teacher, 31 years’ experience, Survey)**

Such a perception was indeed encountered frequently in relation to meetings in general. The response of one veteran primary teacher of forty years’ experience that “all the extra meetings and collaborating exercises we are expected to attend are often hours wasted” was common amongst those whose principal aim in life was to educate the students in their care. This theme of wasted time came through also during the earlier Pilot Study, which indicated that, along with curriculum changes, the questions of devolution and resultant meetings - ranging from internal staff meetings and school committee meetings to District Committee meetings and community groups - were seen as the equal largest cause of work intensification.

### **Out-of-Hours Activities**

As a natural consequence of such attitudes towards meetings, respondents

were asked to indicate the extent to which out-of-hours duties in general were perceived as a cause of work intensification. Interestingly, despite repeated mention of issues such as long hours, work taken home, late nights, lack of sleep, exhaustion, and lack of time for family and social activities, only 51 percent identified out-of-hours work as an important factor. This appeared to be a relatively consistent response across demographic factors, with similarities within and between variables, as shown in Table 5.4.

An apparent exception to this emerged when responses were examined from the point of view of employment status, with a total of 54 percent of full-time staff considering out-of-hours activities as a cause of intensification, compared to only 39 percent of part-time staff. This difference could be seen as a reflection of the fact that the latter by definition work fewer hours than full-time staff, such that consequently they may be less likely to need to undertake activities outside normal working hours. It may also reflect the option (mentioned in the previous chapter) taken by some teachers to reduce their hours of work in order to seek a balance between work and non-work activities and time.

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<b>Table 5.4</b>			
<b><u>Western Australian State School Teachers</u></b>			
<b><u>Out-of Hours Activities as a Cause of Work Intensification</u></b>			
<b><u>By Demographic Groups (%)</u></b>			
<b>Male</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Age 40 +</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>Age U-40</b>
<b>Primary</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
<b>City</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>Country</b>
<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
<b>Non-Union</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>SSTU</b>

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Overall, it would appear that, while out-of-hours activities may affect many teachers greatly, they are not an issue for approximately fifty percent of teachers. The implication would appear to be either that, for these people, they may not exist to the same extent as they do for others, or that they may be accepted as normal and thus not considered a factor in relation to work intensification.



A potential explanation for this last point arose during interviews with a number of teachers, who appeared to have some difficulty in estimating the number of hours worked during a typical week. They indicated that they worked a total of approximately thirty hours, which seemed inconsistent with previous mention of heavy workloads. However, it transpired that an average working week was in fact considerably longer, and that these people worked for at least sixty hours per week. At least thirty hours of effort had not been taken into account, because it generally took place away from the school. “Oh, you count that as work, too, do you?” was the question commonly asked by those teachers. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the responses was that they should come from teachers of several decades’ experience.

Such a perspective was a concern, initially, because of its potential to distort survey results, if at all widespread amongst teachers. Fortunately, however, this appeared not to be the case. The majority of respondents (77 percent overall, and 87 percent of full-time teachers) reported having a typical working week of over forty hours. Despite this, though, only 54 percent of full-time teachers considered out-of-hours activities a cause of work intensification. For many, it would seem, such activity was normal, which would suggest that other factors were considered as more important. One of the more common of these was the issue of class size.

## **Class Sizes**

The need for smaller classes was one of the factors most consistently identified by respondents as a cause of work intensification. While contending with different forms of paperwork and administration (preparation, marking, examinations, reports, portfolios) already gave a relatively heavy workload, and was cause for concern in itself, such issues typically assumed a greater importance when combined with large classes. In addition, changes to the education system appeared to add an extra dimension to the situation. Common aspects appeared to be the concept of individualised learning, development of and adaptation to curriculum changes, and the integration of children with disabilities into the mainstream system.

**“The major issue for primary teachers is class sizes. [It] would go long way to alleviate many stress problems and develop job satisfaction by being able to help with difficulties, and having time to do so. Additional support to address IEP and Extension needs would also alleviate problems. At present we hold accountability discussions and set up programmes, but often these are impracticable.”**

**(Primary teacher, 13 years’ experience, Survey)**

**“We have been asked to implement new courses, which we have had to develop. We have been asked to work towards individualised learning styles for our lower school students, and yet there has been no effort from my employer to reduce my class sizes from 32. At present, it is impractical to facilitate promoting a Year 9 student’s strengths meaningfully - especially if he’s one of 32 students within a class.”**

**(Secondary teacher, 16 years’ experience, Survey)**

Class sizes were mentioned specifically by forty-two respondents (11 percent), and indirectly by many more, for example in calls for additional staffing. As described in the following section on staffing matters, it was noticeable that a large proportion of respondents considered extra staffing more important than increased salary.

Determining a single point at which classes may be considered to be large - or large enough to cause or contribute to work intensification - may be problematic, however. Teacher perceptions may also play a significant part also, as indications of the existence of work intensification came from teachers with small classes. It was thus considered important to obtain information about class sizes, and Question 13 in the survey asked “What is your current normal class size?” An assumption made was that primary teachers would tend to have year classes, while secondary teachers could have multiple classes for their subjects, and would need to average their figures. Of the 366 respondents, thirty-seven reported taking no classes. Of the remaining 329, thirty had classes of less than twenty students, 107 had classes of 20 - 25 students, and 192 had classes in excess of twenty-five.

Of this last group, sixty-one reported classes in excess of thirty, which may

be considered large in any context. Of these respondents, nearly three-quarters (forty-five teachers) also nominated the extent of teaching duties as being an important cause of work intensification. The corresponding figure for those with classes in excess of twenty-five students was 125, or 65 percent of the 192 respondents concerned. These figures, when compared to 57 percent of respondents overall, in relation to teaching duties (see Table 5.1), suggested that perceptions in this area were unusually responsive to variations in class size.

This same pattern of perceptions emerged for each variable. The clear trend shown in Table 5.5 below was for the proportion of respondents nominating issues as causes of work intensification to rise as class sizes increased. The largest perceived causes of work intensification were identified as accountability requirements, administration, and curriculum and I/T changes, although Extent of Teaching Duties showed the greatest volatility. From this two possible inferences may be drawn: either that increasing class sizes lead to work intensification; or that class sizes influence perceptions of work intensification; and that teachers with classes in excess of thirty students are likely to be more prone to having such perceptions. The possibility must also be considered that perceptions then become the reality of work for those teachers.

**Table 5.5**  
**Western Australian State School Teachers**  
**Teacher Perceptions of Causes of Work Intensification**  
**Effect of Class Sizes on Perceptions (%)**

	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Classes Over 25</u>	<u>Classes Over 30</u>
<b>Extent of Teaching Duties</b>	57	65	74
<b>Accountability Requirements</b>	86	89	93
<b>Administration</b>	79	81	84
<b>Out-of-Hours Activities</b>	51	52	54
<b>Curriculum Changes</b>	89	94	95
<b>Community Expectations</b>	61	65	67
<b>IT Changes</b>	74	79	84

## **Staffing Operations**

For many respondents, the matter of staffing emerged as an issue with natural links to the question of class sizes. Responses covered a variety of matters, including lack of staff in general, lack of specialist staff and clerical staff, merit selection, relief provisions, performance management, and uncertainty concerning postings and appointments. Indeed, amongst many respondents, there appeared to be not only a strong sense of having to cope with changes imposed upon them, but also a strong sense of bewilderment, as they attempted to understand what was happening in the education system.

“As a teacher holding a level 3 position, my concerns are: (1) There are few possibilities to change schools, and employment opportunities, as there is a nil transfer system; (2) I’ve two years more of tenure after this, and then where do I go? (3) the school I work at is to be rebuilt, and teaching will be remodelled, and this causes anxiety amongst staff as concerns are held - will the future learning be any better than what is here anyway?”

(Secondary teacher, 31 years’ experience, Survey)

“I feel that most teachers are not opposed to work intensification if they can see a need for change and / or improvement. This does not seem to have happened. Many experienced teachers are confused about what is expected of them and have lost confidence in their own teaching abilities.”

(Primary teacher, 23 years’ experience, Survey)

Detailed responses appeared to be received chiefly from older teachers, or those with at least ten years of experience behind them. For many, however, experience would appear to have been a double-edged sword. As well as having the knowledge and understanding to help in identifying work intensification, these teachers would appear to have an understanding of what was - or could be - regarded as normal, although one felt this to be so rare that he was prompted to ask whether there was, in fact, “such a thing as an average week”. Expectations by the

Education Department, by schools and especially by the community were such, declared another, that “excellence is now considered to be normal”.

One of the cornerstones of the Education Department’s system of values, in fact, is that teachers are expected to “strive to achieve” standards of excellence, and that they are challenged “to give of our best” (EDWA, 1998, p.9). Indeed, it would appear that, in the environment of constant change in which they have found themselves, teachers have been thus encouraged to adopt an aim of constant improvement, but that they may not necessarily have any real understanding of how to determine when a level of excellence has been attained.

## **Relief**

While an aim of high standards might be considered a legitimate part of a management strategy, or a management philosophy, it would appear that many teachers had the tendency to view this as anything but reasonable, with a disproportionate - and continually increasing - amount of effort on their part, and little reciprocity by the Department. This situation appeared to surface especially in relation to issues of staffing, and of relief staff in particular. Respondents repeatedly commented on the problems faced, when ill, of trying to obtain relief staff, as well as of having to provide work for the students to undertake, and to resolve any problems arising from their absence.

These problems comprised such an obstacle that the very act of taking sick leave created its own form of work intensification, such that it was often considered less trouble to actually work through an illness. One primary teacher of thirteen years indicated, “I only stay home if I am vomiting”, while another returned to work only four weeks after surgery for cancer “so my workload wouldn’t be too great”. A typical comment was provided by a secondary school teacher, a veteran of fifteen years:

“There is a shortage of relief teachers in the North-West. If I am unwell, but can still function, I take my classes, as (i) missing a class or two puts them behind, & (ii) it is just as much work organising relevant work as coming to school. I’ve only had 2 sick days in 12 years in the North West!”

A degree of satisfaction was had by a small number of respondents at the idea of “getting rid of the dead wood” - those teachers considered to be lazy or incompetent - as a result of resignations, but such an attitude on the value of colleagues was based on an assumption that any departures would include those perceived to be less than excellent. More commonly, however, teachers perceived themselves to be required to carry out more and more functions, but supported less and less by the Education Department.

“Education needs more human resources. Class teachers are expected to cater for all students, including those with disabilities (deafness, autism, low academic potential). Gone are the days when teachers plan, teach, mark, reteach and write student reports. We have to be accountants (Cost Centres) and write reports for District Directors on our area. Now we do what used to be done by Admin / District Offices, because Central Office and District Offices are being cut to the bone. Schools are being made more autonomous, when it suits the employer. Teachers are carrying out extra workload that should be done by accountants, administration!”

(Primary teacher, 23 years’ experience, Survey)

## Support

A frequent irritant for many teachers appeared to be the need to undertake a range of clerical tasks, such as photocopying, as well as extra yard duty, complaining that these often prevented them from having any but the shortest break from work during the day, and forcing them to eat on the run - when eating was possible - or to survive on coffee. “We literally have to run”, was the comment of one secondary teacher, voicing a regular complaint over pressures of time, and the lack of opportunity for collaboration with colleagues. A repeated theme amongst respondents was the need for additional clerical staff in schools, to assist both teachers and Administration.

“Administrators would benefit from low-cost support to attend to the multitude of minor clerical tasks. Registrars’ workload has increased significantly, which has impacted on school officers. Administration take up the overflow, or don’t ask, because of the additional workload. It merely gets passed

down the line, to the detriment of all. Clerical and aide support is an effective low-cost remedy, to allow educators to focus on education, not the mundane - filing etc.”

(Primary teacher, 25 years’ experience, Survey)

For many teachers, DOTT (Duties Other Than Teaching) time was related to the issue of minor duties. A form of grievance appeared to exist amongst many primary teachers, due to a perceived lack of parity with staff in secondary schools, although the issue was a broad one, with many feeling that insufficient time was available to them to carry out tasks which required action during normal office hours (for example, liaison with outside organisations). Apart from such tasks, DOTT time was also seen as being taken up to too great an extent with clerical duties.

As a result of such comments, respondents were asked in Question 6 of the survey whether having fewer classroom hours (and thus more non-teaching time) would help to alleviate work pressures. Interestingly, the concept of more time was strongly supported by only 45 percent of respondents (164 teachers). It would appear, therefore that, while the issue of time was important for some teachers, other issues were perceived as more so by teachers overall.

One of the most important of these other issues was staff numbers. Question 6 in the survey also asked teachers to indicate the extent to which they considered work pressures might be alleviated by either extra staff or extra salary. Of the 366 respondents, 216 (59 percent) indicated the former, while a further eighty-five respondents indicated a strong and equal preference for both. Combining these two totals, it would appear that the issue of increasing staff numbers formed an issue of importance for a total of 301, or 82 percent, of respondents. This would seem to imply in turn that current levels of staff were perceived to be low - or lower than would be considered ideal - and that this situation was thus seen as an important cause of work intensification.

## **Appointment and Selection**

The mere presence of staff may not be sufficient in itself to reduce work intensification, however. As respondents indicated, the processes surrounding the utilisation and appointment of the staff could themselves lead to, or cause directly, their own brand of intensification, sometimes physical and sometimes psychological. One issue - resulting in higher levels stress, as well as disillusionment, cynicism and anger - was the uncertainty surrounding appointments. As suggested in a typical comment, one group to experience this was those staff on temporary placement.

**“My worst form of stress is caused by the admin of my school. I am a Visual Arts specialist and, for the last five years, I have been told ‘You will be in a classroom next year. No, you won’t. Yes, you will.’ They always leave it until after transfers have closed, and stuff me around incredibly.”**

**(Secondary teacher, 17 years’ experience, Survey)**

While uncertainty in relation to appointment was an important issue for some teachers, affecting their ability to plan, a more important one appeared to be that of the nature of appointment. Similar sentiments of frustration and concern were expressed in relation to the process of merit selection. This process was introduced from 1995 in all new schools, trialled from 1996 for two years in eighty schools, and introduced for all promotions from 1997 (save for a two-year exemption for Level 3 and 4 promotions in some metropolitan secondary schools). The stated aim was to allow “closer and more cooperative relationships to develop between schools and their communities” (EDWA, 1998, p.110). Appointments were typically for a period of three years, after which re-appointment was necessary.

From survey responses and interviews emerged a mixed, but generally unfavourable, attitude towards merit selection. While promotion on the basis of merit was largely accepted as worthwhile, at least in the abstract, the operation of the system in relation to appointments appeared to be less appreciated, and often seen as often having strong disadvantages, even when teachers approved of it in principle.



**“Huge pressure on schools” was being experienced, wrote one secondary school teacher, as some staff were perceived to be focused on assisting students, while others were less committed - “Merit promotion / transfer means many people are putting on the gloss, but aren’t putting in the long-term planning to support the implementation of new Departmental initiatives’.”**

**According to this view, while promotion on merit might be acceptable, as it was for appointment at a new level, local selection was seen as something of a divisive measure. Due to the use of set-term appointments, and a consequent lack of certainty beyond a few years at a time, teachers were obliged to prepare for and undergo a periodical selection process. The uncertainty inherent in such a process was considered to be detracting and distracting from the core business of education.**

**In particular, it was suggested that the need to concentrate a significant amount of time and effort on ensuring continuity of employment was leading to a resistance by some staff to giving proper consideration to important issues. While one aspect of such resistance was due to pressure of time, another cause suggested was that of fear. One senior primary teacher - and staunch member of the SSTU - when interviewed, spoke of an anti-union antagonism which existed as a factor in her school, and of a fear of repercussions which prevented legitimate discussion. Anything less than full support for changes was viewed by Administration as a form of troublemaking, if not sabotage. With a need for periodic support, teachers on merit selection were even less likely to raise questions, when faced with such an attitude from senior staff.**

**“A lot of people who were union members were on merit selection positions, weren’t they? So they are not going to do anything to jeopardise that. (...) I still find that people are not game to speak up at meetings, and feel like their opinions are going to be downtrodden or overridden. I was opposed to merit selection as a process ... because I think it sets up the winners and the non-winners too much and it also makes people fight and give up their teaching time to write the spiels that they have to do.”**

**(Primary teacher, Interview, 2001)**

**“The general feeling is the person who is there at the right time, or can write their CV, is the candidate. It just seems that people who have been given credit before suddenly are not measuring up. (...) You see, it’s a system which is really based on your referee, a lot. And often, in my case, the person who has to be my referee is my Principal. Well, if I don’t see eye-to-eye with my Principal, then I’m immediately disadvantaged.”**

**(Deputy Principal, Interview, 2002)**

Provided that it could be implemented and used positively, it was suggested by this Deputy that merit selection could be “excellent”, as it “opened up the field”. Unfortunately, it was explained, the situation often tended to depend on chance, or personality, or relationships, rather than on ability or past record. It was suggested that, in some circumstances, the process could become a de facto management tool, designed at least in part to control staff, and to minimise dissent. This view did not appear to be widely held, however - or, at least, was not widely stated - as respondents appeared to focus on issues of more immediate importance.

## **The Educationalist Approach**

### **General Perceptions**

From the issues and indicators already covered, it would appear that a majority of teachers in the State School system in Western Australia considered that not only did work intensification exist, but that it had been caused directly and indirectly by a range of measures for which the Education Department was responsible. These included large class sizes; insufficient staff numbers; curriculum changes; new reporting procedures; devolution of much decision making to schools; increased numbers of meetings; insufficient guidance and support from EDWA or its District Offices; local community liaison; increased professional development; and merit selection of staff.

Added to this was a sense that an individual’s work situation could descend to the level almost of a lottery, dependent on the attitude and the

personality of the principal and deputy principals. While this could lead to “fantastic positivity”, as one primary teacher commented, it could as easily lead to anger, cynicism and despair, prompting some to change to part-time work, in order to cope with pressures, or to leave.

“Work intensification appears to be a result of which school staff work at. Some schools place unrealistic expectations on staff in order to appear leaders in curriculum outcomes, while ignoring staff concerns.”

(Secondary teacher, two years’ experience, Survey)

One of the main concerns expressed by respondents was that teachers should be allowed to teach, instead of needing to take on roles which were properly the province of others, either parents, social workers, counsellors, or clerks. Many respondents commented on their love for teaching, and their dedication to helping the students, and wanted the opportunity to actually do this to the best of their ability. As one primary teacher stated, when interviewed, “It might sound corny, but we are educating the future of the country.” In practice, however, many felt that their professionalism was under assault, as they were being prevented from concentrating on teaching, and thus demonstrating their quality, as one experienced teacher indicated:

“Continued intensification has taken time away from students when they should be our No.1 priority. The Department has lost sight of what is important. There is too much emphasis on the new curriculum. Too much attention is being given to merit selection. They are not looking at teachers teaching. (...) I believe it is a job where experience is most desirable.”

(Primary teacher, 19 years’ experience, Survey)

The question, perhaps, is to determine the extent to which these views may be correct, and the extent to which other, less process-oriented factors may be important. Given that work intensification was perceived by teachers to exist, were they essentially the victims of circumstances outside their control or, as Hargreaves (1994) suggests, was there also a contribution to work intensification by the teachers themselves? In seeking an answer, this section will examine teachers’ duties.

## **Students**

Students are clearly an integral part of an education system, and the ultimate reason for its existence. However, for a total of sixty-one respondents, or 17 percent, students were also offered as causes of work intensification. Some of these causes involved students directly, such as negative attitudes and behaviour, while others were more indirect - effectively, the causes of the causes - such as the existence and effects of poor parenting and dysfunctional families. In all, behavioural matters were mentioned by fifty respondents, or 82 percent of those who identified student issues as important, thus making it appear one of the largest single causes of work intensification identified.

Somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, having mentioned poor classroom behaviour as one of the main causes of intensification, few of the respondents spoke at any length about it. One secondary teacher, recently assaulted by a student, did however consider “management of naughty kids and loonies” to be one of the chief reasons for the demands being placed upon him as a professional. Several others wrote briefly of the problems and uncertainty caused by having to deal with uncooperative or violent students while at the same time being constrained in terms of discipline sanctions available to them.

In general, however, the majority of teachers appeared to be more concerned to understand and interpret the behaviour of students, rather than to resort to a control model. It was noted by one female teacher, though, and supported by others, that successful teachers needed strong personalities, and that students would tend to “walk all over” any who showed signs of weakness.

In an ironic twist, the suggestion was made that unwelcome student behaviour could be partly the unintentional result of the education system itself. Encouraged to adopt a questioning approach, students were often unable to realise when they had crossed a boundary between questioning and disrespect. There was a trend for students, even at primary level, to be unaware that there were, or should be, limits to what was acceptable:

**“I personally tend to have a little quiet chat to someone if I feel that they’ve sort of stepped over the mark in their behaviour, but I find frequently - more and more - that they don’t understand what you’re getting at or what you mean. They think it’s quite their right.”**

**(Primary teacher, Interview, 2001)**

One common theme was that student behaviour was a consequence of home life. In turn, this was seen as the result of the influence of television - “often they model themselves on soapies” - or of parental attitudes, and a lack of understanding and support. Many parents, it was felt, either could not or would not cope with the responsibility of raising their children. Teachers often saw themselves as having to act almost as de facto parents during school hours, dealing with “low esteem and aggro” resulting from home life. A typical comment came from one male secondary teacher in his forties, working in what he considered to be a low socio-economic area.

**“Frustration - antisocial and inappropriate behaviour - related to the socio-economic situation. There are so many dysfunctional families. We are powerless and not supported to solve their problems, as well as trying to teach. We need staff to deal with the emotional and psychological problems kids come to school with. I didn’t want to be a social worker. Too many “good” kids are held back by the time needed to deal with poor parenting, or the absence of parents to support kids and teachers too. Schools are a dumping ground for parents who aren’t coping themselves.”**

**(Secondary teacher, 23 years’ experience, Survey)**

While it would appear, from the survey and interviews, that issues such as psychological stress, physical fear, or concern about attacks on authority, are of great importance to individual teachers, the focus of the majority was on trying to understand and cope with the effects of student behaviour on teaching itself. Indeed, student attitudes and behaviour, and family-related deficiencies were seen as constituting the bulk of student-related causes of work intensification, as indicated by one veteran female primary teacher, also working in a low socio-economic area, who concentrated more on the effect of behavioural issues on teaching itself:

**“As a primary teacher, our ‘job description’ is getting more and more facets, so that we no longer just ‘teach’. We now nurse, counsel, take over the parenting/social role, and have to be a psych. It is no wonder young kids aren’t interested in the job - especially with the current community perceptions of teachers and the profession. I really love teaching, but am frustrated with these non-stop additional ‘duties’ that take away the hands-on teaching time.”**

**(Primary teacher, 31 years’ experience, Survey)**

**It would appear that the majority of teachers viewed behavioural matters ultimately as a societal problem, with their own intensification of work resulting from the failure of others to cope with - or to acknowledge - their own responsibilities towards children.**

## **Pedagogy**

### **Teaching**

**Given a relatively low perception of out-of-hours duties as a cause of work intensification, it may be logical to assume that, to the extent that duties were a factor, this was likely to be as a result of duties performed during normal hours instead. With the generally-understood role of teachers as classroom educators, it could be expected that increases in teaching duties would be identified as an important factor leading to work intensification. This was indeed the case for 57 percent of respondents.**

**As Table 5.6 below indicates, even though at times little more than half the respondents considered teaching duties to be important, noticeable differences emerged. Those most affected were female teachers, teachers under forty, and primary teachers. Similarly, a higher proportion of full-time teachers than part-time identified teaching duties as a cause of intensification. In this case, however, it may be necessary to question whether the figures could be affected by lower overall workload on the part of those working part-time.**

**Table 5.6**  
**Extent of Teaching Duties as a Cause of Work Intensification**  
**By Demographic Groups (%)**

<b>Male</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Age 40 +</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>Age U-40</b>
<b>Primary</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
<b>City</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>Country</b>
<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
<b>Non-Union</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>SSTU</b>

As mentioned previously, it was very noticeable that the proportion of teachers identifying the extent of teaching duties as a strong cause of work intensification rose significantly, from 57 percent to 74 percent, as class sizes increased to over twenty-five and then to over thirty. While other other factors - accountability, administration, curriculum changes, and information technology - were more important in terms of absolute numbers, teaching duties proved to be by far the most responsive to variations in class size.

Overall, however, it appeared to be less the education and teaching *per se* which respondents considered to be causes of work intensification, and more a range of issues which surrounded the practice of teaching, and contributed to feelings of frustration, anger, and impotence. Looming large on teachers' horizons were the changes relating to the Curriculum Framework and to Student Outcome Statements. To a slightly lesser extent, individualised learning, and the integration of children with learning disabilities into the mainstream education system, were seen as affecting the ability of teachers to provide the overall quality of education which they desired. Typical of the comments was the following:

“The government is requiring teachers to teach all kids (all 30 of them) at an individual level in 8 (effectively 15) subject areas, and each subject has at least 4 or 5 different sections. This is simply impossible.”

(Primary teacher, 16 years' experience, Survey)

Written comments were received from a wide spectrum of staff - primary and secondary, old and young, city and country - not complaining about

teaching itself, but instead containing the common theme of teachers wishing to teach, yet becoming frustrated at requirements to undertake a larger number of non-teaching, non-educational duties instead.

The overall sense emerging from teachers' responses was of a profession in some crisis, with teachers feeling themselves often unable to carry out their ostensible function of teaching, as a direct consequence of the number, scope, and impact of changes which were being faced on a virtually constant basis. Respondents pleaded repeatedly to be allowed to teach, instead of needing to act in a large range of other functions unrelated to pedagogy, such as acting as substitute parents - over and above normal duty of care issues - and needing to instil some level of social skills and behaviour in the students.

### **The Community**

Closely related to a sense of frustration at being prevented from teaching appeared to be the teachers' view of community perceptions of teachers - which itself seemed to be the cause of additional frustration. A common theme amongst respondents was the belief that - despite having to cope with a much wider range of duties - teachers were undervalued and under-appreciated, both by the community at large and by parents in particular. This was often reciprocated by teachers holding a relatively low opinion of parents, as implied by respondents, whose comments were typically quite blunt:

**"Teachers and schools are taking on social and emotional problems, which once were handled by families, who supported the schools. Now the "spawners" of children expect the school to do this, and are quick to point the finger at the school when children get into trouble or have problems."**

**(Primary teacher, 23 years' experience, Survey)**

A problem with such approaches, however, is the potential for perception - if held strongly enough and for long enough - to become reality. This in turn may create further problems. From the survey, it would appear to be



worthwhile to question whether this could already be the case, for some categories of teacher.

As an example of this, “Community Expectations” appeared to be significant in some demographic categories, even though it rated lower than most other factors as a cause of work intensification. While there was little difference in relation to gender and union membership, noticeable differences emerged in breakdowns by age, teaching level, and employment status. Of respondents aged forty and over, for example, 66 percent cited community expectations as a cause, compared to 54 percent of those aged under forty. A similar perception of community expectations existed in relation to teaching level (66 percent of primary teachers compared to 59 percent of secondary teachers), and to employment status (63 percent of full-time teachers against 55 percent of part-time).

**Table 5.7**  
**Community Expectations as a Cause of Work Intensification**  
**By Demographic Groups (%)**

<b>Male</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Age 40 +</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>Age U-40</b>
<b>Primary</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
<b>City</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>Country</b>
<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
<b>Non-Union</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>SSTU</b>

It is conceivable that the figures in Table 5.7 in fact reflect the smaller size of most primary schools, and the tendency of primary teachers to be class teachers rather than subject teachers. Both of these factors may be seen as likely to lead to a greater immediacy of contact between teachers and parents. It may also be possible that part-time staff are simply present at schools for less time than full-time colleagues, and thus are less likely to encounter parents or to sit on community groups.

Given respondents’ perceptions of being undervalued by the community, it would seem regrettable that, in turn, a majority of teachers should hold negative views on the community, although this would seem to reflect the views of city rather than country teachers. As a possible reflection of

the position of schools and school teachers in smaller country communities, only 58 percent of the latter saw the community as a cause of intensification, compared to 63 percent of city teachers.

## **The Professional Approach**

### **Defining The Professional**

#### **The Concept**

This section concentrates on the state of being a teacher, especially as professional. Given discussion by those involved in the pilot study of what it meant to be a professional, it was considered important to seek some definition of the term, as well as an understanding of its role in work intensification. It was hoped, for example, to determine the extent to which the findings of Hargreaves (1994) - that professionalism could be used and misused to lead to work intensification, and that many teachers went along with this due to feelings of guilt or a drive for perfection - might be duplicated in the Western Australian system.

Information in relation to professionalism was obtained from comments included in responses to the survey, and from interviews, some as part of the pilot study, and some following the survey. Interviews were held with people in a range of situations - old and young, male and female, city and country, primary and secondary, teachers and principals, union members and non-members - thus forming a reasonable representation of the categories of teachers in Western Australia.

Professionalism as a concept may be subject to differing interpretations, often with a high degree of incompatibility. It was seen in Chapter Two that the managerialist view has envisaged compliance with directives on issues such as structure, decision making, and reporting, effectively forming a comprehensive bureaucratic model of education. Teachers, as practitioners of education, were expected to demonstrate their professionalism by the degree to which they accepted the model, and followed it without questioning (Etheridge et al, 1994; Spaul, 1997).

On the other hand, teachers often felt this to be the antithesis of professionalism, and to be a form of deprofessionalisation (Leggett, 1997; Spaul, 1997). Professionalism was seen to be more a case of helping students to learn, with the role of the bureaucracy being to support and facilitate - and, especially, to trust - the teachers in the performance of their work.

The recurring theme from the survey and the interviews was that teachers considered themselves to be professionals, although many also felt that they were not valued as such by either the community or the Education Department. The interesting point to emerge, however, was the initial difficulty which most had in enunciating a clear definition of a professional. Few appeared ever to have given any thought to the point, beyond the notion of it as a self-evident truth linked in some manner to teaching. Indeed, several interviewees appeared initially to be quite disoriented, and even shocked, at being asked for a definition.

The importance of such a situation in relation to work intensification lies in the capacity of teachers firstly to understand their purpose in the workplace and in the community, and secondly to relate their actual work situation to a norm. Without such a capacity for understanding, or without a minimum of indicators, the potential exists for teachers to enter relatively willingly into an environment of work intensification, in the belief that the increasing pressure is normal, not excessive. Indeed, it appeared that this may have occurred already, for some interviewees - thus the surprise shown when asked to analyse their beliefs and understandings.

Defining a professional - or professionalism in general - appeared to have two principal elements, according to respondents. As table 5.8 below indicates, these elements related broadly to the actions and beliefs of teachers, on the one hand, and to the attitude towards teachers by and in the community, on the other - in effect, teachers' perceptions of themselves, and the perceptions of them which they desired from others. The latter thus often involved the teachers' perceptions of others' perceptions.

**Table 5.8**

**Defining The Professional: The Teacher Perception**

Self Perceptions	-----	Levels of Education
	-----	Dedication to Teaching
	-----	Caring Attitude to Students
Desired Perceptions	-----	Trust
	-----	Respect
	-----	Autonomy and Discretion

**Perceptions of Self**

Being a professional, suggested the respondents, involved having a certain level of education and training, and then displaying both dedication to the work of teaching, and a caring attitude towards students. The notion of caring for students emerged as being particularly important, and appeared to result partly from factors such as the domestic situation of some students, and partly from a simple desire to help them to prepare for life. It also led a number of interviewees to become relatively emotional in their responses, in two cases appearing to be on the verge of tears.

Such a reaction was consistent with survey responses. Forty (11 percent) referred to issues such as pastoral care, poor parenting, pseudo-parenting, counselling, and dysfunctional families as causes of work intensification. Also important in this regard was the common need to provide students with the social and moral skills and understanding which - the teachers believed - should have been provided by parents.

On the pedagogical level, professionalism for teachers was seen as working to the best of one’s abilities, “to the highest possible standard”, in terms of preparation, lesson delivery, catering for the needs of students, and keeping abreast of developments and trends in education. This involved, amongst other things, judicious use of non-teaching time for reading and reflection. Ultimately, the aim was to to provide the best possible service for the students, and to give them the best foundation for life possible.

Typical of this approach was the view of a young secondary teacher, who saw her role as one where “students get the best education possible”, including being given as many opportunities and challenges as possible. “Doing it for the kids” was a theme repeated often in both the survey and interviews, often in conjunction with talk of frustration, as respondents spoke of the wish merely to teach.

### **Perceptions of Perceptions**

In addition to their views of themselves, it was informative to note teachers’ perceptions of how, as professionals, they were, or should be, viewed by others. In essence, this appeared to be both a continuation of the manner in which respondents viewed themselves, and a desire for acceptance of this by the wider community. Respondents considered (the majority of) professionals to be trustworthy, and expected both the Education Department and the public to trust them to carry out their role well. However, the majority of respondents considered the opposite to be the case, with unrealistic expectations, administrative tasks and accountability among the major causes of work intensification. Indicated one primary teacher, “Paperwork & accountability is ridiculous. We need less administering, and more teaching time”.

As well as being important in its own right, as an abstract symbol of worth, trust appeared to be seen as potentially leading to a more concrete outcome, that of allowing teachers the discretion to make their own decisions on matters educational. The need and desire for such autonomy was a noticeable theme to emerge from discussion of professionalism, and appeared to be considered to be an essential part of professional status.

In this area, too, respondents appeared to feel that they, frequently, were not given their due. One secondary teacher suggested that this was now largely inherent in the education system: “The system says, ‘We don’t trust you. We must check.’ It’s not satisfying anyone. It has become an industry in its own right.” A veteran of almost three decades, a Head of Department with responsibility for ten colleagues, this teacher regularly

worked over sixty hours per week, and occasionally over seventy. His concern was that teachers now were “too over-governed to be professionals”, and that they were effectively being deprofessionalised into “mere functionaries, shuffling paper”.

As other important values helping to define them as professionals, respondents regularly identified respect and autonomy. As with trust, to which these values would appear to be closely linked, it was commonly believed that respect and autonomy were deserved, and possibly necessary, components of their working life. A common attitude was that teachers should be entitled to expect “Respect from those with whom and for whom they work”. As well as community appreciation, this included recognition by peers and by the formal education system as a whole.

Instead of such recognition, however, the situation which appeared to occupy common ground between teachers of different backgrounds, age, experience and work context was one of isolation and disappointment. While believing in their right to expect trust, it was considered that this was not forthcoming, evidenced by the importance given by the bureaucracy to the accountability requirements, as discussed earlier.

At the same time, however, there appeared to be a strong feeling amongst teachers that they were also receiving insufficient direction, support, and guidance from school administrations and from the Department. Indeed, a total of forty-two teachers, or 11 percent of respondents, referred to issues such as lack of communication, lack of guidelines, lack of support, and poor leadership, suggesting that this area was considered by teachers to be as important an issue in their professional life as class sizes and the notion of a caring attitude towards students.

For some respondents, the situation appeared to go well beyond mere disappointment or confusion, as two secondary teachers indicated:

**“We need support from EDWA, and understanding from the community! The main opinion of any teacher ‘at the chalk face’ would be dissatisfaction with the way change is implemented, managed and financed by EDWA. The representation of education change in the media also skews**

**blame' to teachers for not coping well with 'perfectly sound' EDWA decisions about education change."**

**(City secondary teacher, 16 years' experience, Survey)**

**"Support from the central organisation has vanished and resources to make sense of the new curriculum are ineffective. Staff work almost in isolation ... The only reaction is when something goes wrong and then the teacher / school is responsible. There are teachers working hard to implement changes, without recognition, resources or time"**

**(Country secondary teacher, 31 years' experience, Survey)**

Such an approach was regularly viewed as causing serious damage to the morale and image of teachers, and consequently causing teaching itself to suffer. Other views were more forthright, displaying anger at the Education Department for introducing changes without, for example, "exemplars that work", or sufficient training, resources, or time to learn and adjust. The views expressed suggest the possibility of teacher disillusionment on a potentially large scale, with teachers seeing themselves needing to cope simultaneously with constantly changing - and increasing - demands being imposed on them. In addition, they felt themselves having to confront criticism and lack of appreciation by the community, together with a lack of guidance and support by the education system.

It would appear that - according to teacher perceptions - their views of themselves as professionals filling a vital role in the community were not being matched by the community's or the Department's perceptions of them. Its apparent outcomes were a fall in teacher morale and an increase in stress, also affecting performance. For some, the sense of disappointment which this caused was matched also by a disappointment in the effectiveness of the State School Teachers' Union. This was seen to be largely an industrial organisation, and thus not responding to teachers' desires for professional status and recognition.

## **Professionalism and Work Intensification**

The various themes treated in preceding sections indicate that teachers view themselves as trained, dedicated, caring and trustworthy professionals, worthy of the respect of others. At the same time, however, there also appears to be a common perception by teachers of themselves effectively as being victims - having to contend with work-related impositions and expectations on the one hand, and a lack of trust and appreciation on the other. In turn, these can lead to reactions such as frustration, stress, anger, and low morale, all of which affect attitudes towards work. Clearly in this regard, therefore, work intensification could be considered the result of factors external to the teachers themselves.

Another, contrary, possibility for teacher work intensification is put by Hargreaves (1994), however. Based on a study carried out in Canada, it was suggested that this could also be due to one or more factors internal to each individual - guilt, perfectionism, and open-endedness. In essence, Hargreaves (1994) suggests that many teachers may be induced into accepting increasing levels of work as a result of experiencing these factors, in the belief that they were indicators of true professionalism. Acceptance could be conscious or unconscious, although either could suggest that work intensification was self-imposed.

In order to seek some clarification of this point, interviewees were invited to discuss the place of these factors in their working lives. Like the situation in relation to questions about professionalism, questions about guilt, perfectionism and open-endedness caused surprise in some people, although a number admitted to having to think hard.

### **Guilt**

As described by Hargreaves (1994), guilt as a factor in work intensification operates by placing on teachers the onus for successful teaching. Anything less than complete success - whether perceived in relation to one student or many, or one class or many - may then trigger feelings of guilt for the teacher. This may then lead to increases in the time spent on work,



often out of hours, in order to prepare the perfect lesson and, hopefully therefore, gain the perfect outcome.

During interviews, however, it was discovered that guilt as a motivator for professionals might also prove to be something of a shifting target, either exaggerated or mitigated by a range of factors, and anything but simplistic. A number of teachers appeared to follow the model to some extent, admitting to strong feelings of guilt, a desire to do better, and very high expectations. Even in these cases, though, it did not appear that teachers were surrendering totally to feelings of guilt.

Two possible mitigating factors to emerge were age and experience, as it appeared that these tended to influence teachers' outlook on life. While acknowledging feelings of guilt when younger, and remaining determined to give students the best education possible, the consensus amongst teachers appeared to be that time had given wisdom as well. It was realised that some circumstances were beyond the control of even the most dedicated teachers. If problems arose, the process appeared to be to examine their own performance, then that of the students, than other factors, to identify any areas for possible improvement. It was recognised, however, that matters such as class sizes, student ability, or students' family environments, had the capacity to reduce the effectiveness of even the best preparation. In these cases, it was suggested, experience enabled the teachers to adjust their schedules to incorporate any material missed.

It was also realised that some students "won't achieve, no matter what you do", as several teachers, both primary and secondary, indicated. One secondary teacher of forty years' standing had developed what he regarded as a well-balanced outlook on his profession. "Professionally, I take responsibility for giving the kids enough to cover the course, and for giving explanations and insights on issues such as human nature. I teach the kids first, and the subject second. However, you have to realise that you aren't the only person in the student's life. If the kids don't do enough, you can't be held responsible." Guilt was not a reasonable option for a teacher - or shouldn't be one. Teachers did the best they could, and knew that. There were "limits to what anyone can do".

The overall view appeared to be best summed up in an interview with a primary school Deputy Principal, also since retired, and acknowledged by colleagues and the Department as being an excellent teacher:

“I’ve simply tried to do well, but I don’t feel guilty if different methods don’t work for given students. I’ve always felt that I’ve tried my best, and I’ve probably succeeded as much as anyone could have done. No one has been worse off for being in my class.”

## **Perfectionism**

Perfectionism, or the desire to be the perfect teacher, might appear to be an unexceptional aim, especially for teachers who believe in the need for a caring attitude towards students. The suggestion from Hargreaves (1994), however, is that due to such an aim, teachers may become dissatisfied with their performance, and therefore be prepared to undertake increasing amounts of work in an effort to approach perfection. This would appear to involve an assumption that teachers actions are largely governed by subjective, even emotive, considerations, and that they might thus be partly responsible for any work intensification experienced.

As with the issue of guilt, however, teachers interviewed displayed a range of reactions to questions of perfectionism. This did appear, indeed, to be accepted as a genuine factor in the education environment, with reference to “pushing the envelope”, and “taking perfection to ridiculous lengths”. Like guilt, though, the perception by teachers appeared to be that it was affected by age. While still wishing to do the best they could, the older, more experienced teachers indicated an acceptance of the fact that perfection was likely to be impossible - or, at least, not often possible, and only on a small scale.

The suggestion was made by several people that this should be recognised, and that expectations placed upon teachers should be lowered. One such response was made by a senior secondary teacher, with both a teaching load and an administrative and leadership role as a Head of Department:

**“I am happy when something works well, or is well received. I used to chase perfection but, nowadays, I just try to do my best, and to get the kids to do that. Expectations are often too unrealistic. It’s good to have a component of logical error.”**

**(Secondary teacher, 26 years’ experience, Survey)**

**Helping students to achieve their potential was a common desire - “What are the students getting out of this, and what do I need to do to ensure this?” - although one which often appeared to be frustrated by factors outside the control of teachers. These included class sizes, as discussed earlier, which prevented the teacher devoting more than a minimal amount of time to any given student. The number of classes for which a teacher was responsible and other, non-teaching duties, also tended to restrict the amount of time available for preparation.**

**The general pattern of responses received suggested that perfectionism might well be a strong motivator in relation to the desire to provide a quality education. On the other hand, even those interviewees who admitted to having high expectations of themselves, and to feelings of guilt when these were unable to be met, appeared to accept that limitations existed on the amount of effort possible. The more experienced individuals claimed to have changed with age, to be “past it”, “able to wing it”, and to not feel “the need to be perfect”. Overall, perfectionism appeared to be less of a factor than other issues, such as the attitude towards students.**

### **Open-endedness**

**The open-ended, or neverending, nature of education - “It’s never over!”, “It invades your whole life!” - appeared to be a source of concern, both for survey respondents and for interviewees, seemingly largely to do with the question of time. It was suggested that education might need to be regarded as something which required a lifetime devotion, although comments by others suggested that this could be as much perception as reality. One veteran secondary teacher, for example, spoke eloquently and forcefully for fifty minutes, explaining in detail why she was too busy to spare time for a sixty-minute interview.**

Other teachers interviewed spoke of marital and health problems, including three divorces, and two who had returned to work after experiencing nervous breakdowns. Anti-depressant medication was for some a necessary, ongoing, but not always successful, prop in their daily lives. For some it was simply difficult to find relaxation.

“There is a feeling with teaching that your work is never finished. There is always something else that needs doing. This contributes to [my] having a shorter memory span. I need to write things down, because my mind is always cluttered! If I don’t write it down, I forget it. I can find it difficult to switch off.”

(Primary teacher, 10 years’ experience, Survey)

Typically, the open-endedness of teaching appeared to be linked most frequently with mention of sleep problems, such as falling asleep from exhaustion, inability to sleep, and waking up during the night as a result of thinking about work issues. One young primary teacher referred to her “constant mental obsession with work-related issues”, while nine of the fourteen teachers interviewed (64 percent) indicated the existence of work-related sleep problems. This would appear to be supported solidly by responses to the survey, where 218 people, or 60 percent of the total respondents, indicated that they experienced sleep problems.

Depending on individual preferences and work practices, it seemed possible for teachers to work extremely long days, simply because the time existed, and to seek to fill that time with increasing numbers of tasks, such as greater amounts of preparation, or of committee work. Overall, open-endedness appeared to be perceived by teachers as a definite factor in relation to teaching, although the need for balance was often recognised, and occasionally acted upon.

The key issue for many teachers was time. One primary principal used a policy of fitness - such as canoeing, or kicking a football - in a conscious effort both to maintain health and to avoid spending too much time on work matters. Reflecting the opinions of many, one primary teacher mused,

**“You just can’t do it all, especially if there’s a home to look after. You could work all night, and not do everything. What are people trying to escape from, anyway, by working long hours? You need a balance in life.”** The importance of such a balance - discussed at more length in a later section - was reflected upon by two older teachers, interviewed both before and after retirement. Both dedicated to their profession, they spoke nonetheless of the physical and mental relief of having time to devote to themselves, and of being able at last to begin planning their lives.

### **Professionalism as Mitigation**

This research indicated that a majority of respondents considered work intensification to be principally the result of factors imposed upon them by others, such as the Education Department, individual principals, students, and the general community. The desire repeatedly expressed by teachers was merely to teach, to help students to gain the intellectual understanding of the world, and to be allowed to do this without the need to contend with a range of bureaucratic requirements and additional, non-educational functions. The general reaction was expressed by a veteran secondary teacher: **“How much blood can be wrung out of a stone?”**

Interestingly, however, and perhaps somewhat unexpectedly, one apparent mitigating factor to emerge in relation to the issues of control, guilt, perfectionism, and open-endedness was teachers’ professionalism itself - or their interpretation of professionalism. Professionalism involved having an enquiring and realistic attitude towards life in general, and not merely accepting what was said to them, as indicated by a primary school Deputy Principal.

**“Well, I think that part of being a professional is not being led by the nose. I think that, if anything, I would actually encourage teachers to question more, rather than just being accepting. I just think that we do have to question that this is the correct way to go, and is this the best for the student? And I think that that’s where you’ll become a more professional being, that you do question things, that you don’t just accept anything that’s handed to you.”**

Many of the teachers surveyed indicated that they were well aware of the increasing demands being placed upon them, and of the potential effects. However, a number also indicated that, because of their commitment to providing quality education, they would not allow workload to increase to a point where it affected their basic teaching performance. Professionalism and professional values were seen as a form of protection against the worst of work intensification, and again appeared to take the form of a feeling of social responsibility.

Occasionally, the outcome took the form of passive resistance, as teachers endeavoured to achieve this aim, as one person indicated:

“Most directives are put on teachers .. from people far removed from the reality of the everyday classroom. We are here for the kids but our teaching time is being eroded daily. Head Office or District Office boffins .. haven’t a clue. A lot of my peers and I pay lip service to all we are expected to do, and then retreat to our classroom to do what we do best - TEACH! Opinion is that these ”you beaut” programmes that last for 5 minutes are designed to look good on their next application.”

(Primary teacher, 25 years’ experience, Survey)

The notion of professionalism as protection was illustrated also by the concept of the teacher as facilitator and guide, rather than as provider of detailed information. The approach included discussing lessons with students and even planning lessons in conjunction with them. As much of the educational process used consisted of discussion, with students being encouraged to learn by their own efforts, rather than as passive recipients of information, there was consequently less pressure on the teacher in terms of time and effort to prepare structured material. In this manner, it was possible for some teachers to balance increased demands in some areas with a reduction in others, and to achieve both educational goals and a reasonably balanced life away from work.

Responses appeared to provide solid support for the concept of professionalism as reflection and responsibility, as suggested by the model

in Chapter Two. For all their concern to ensure quality of work, and effective relations with their students, many teachers were not blind to their work situation, and considered demands upon them to be hindrance rather than help. Dedication and caring were not only important indicators of teachers as professionals, but also strong motivators to carry out the role which first attracted them to education - the desire to teach.

## **Effects of Work Intensification**

While it might not be unexpected for a study of work intensification to include a certain negative orientation, and while strong negative elements have indeed emerged, this current research has also highlighted what would appear to be good reason for optimism. One of the points to stand out has been the attitude of teachers. Repeated comments, both written and oral, would seem to suggest that the Western Australian public education system is staffed by dedicated, caring professionals, committed to the interests of their students, and to ensuring high-quality educational outcomes. This emerged despite differing individual circumstances and, in the main, remained independent of the context in which work intensification was experienced.

Having noted the perceptions of teachers in relation to the existence, nature and causes of work intensification, a final avenue to explore is that of effects on teachers, including professional, personal and social effects. Effects on professional life will be examined insofar as they impact on teaching performance, on outcomes, on work relationships, and on health.

Personal and social effects outside the workplace will also be considered in this research, due to their potential to then affect professional actions and competence in their turn. A significant number of respondents indicated that work pressures created problems at home, and led to reciprocal pressure by the families either to reduce their workload, or to leave teaching as a profession. Given the notion, discussed earlier, of teachers as caring professionals, dedicated to the interests of the students in their charge, such pressure from families tended to create a dilemma of competing priorities and, in some cases, to considerable levels of stress.

Even where there was no indication of pressure by families, respondents often indicated the existence of an internal conflict over the balance between work and family.

This work / family balance would appear to have been one of the few relatively tangible means available to respondents to discern the existence of a problem in relation to work. From the purely professional standpoint, many appeared to recognise that they were indeed working harder - longer hours, more functions and tasks, more responsibility - but appeared also to accept such a situation either as a normal expectation of teachers, or as an unwelcome but necessary imposition, due, for example, to deficiencies on the part of the parents of students, or of communities. Their own families appeared to provide one of the few reliable yardsticks for teachers, by which the extent of work demands could be judged.

Another important indicator was health, frequently psychological health. Many respondents indicated that they took little or no sick leave, but that work intensification had a significant effect on their health. Many suffered from stress, low morale, low energy, low expectations, and had considered leaving teaching. While an exodus of teaching staff would clearly have an impact on the operation of the education system, it is important to consider also the impact of teachers remaining in the profession despite experiencing problems attributable to work intensification. Overall, therefore, an examination of the effects of intensification in this chapter will seek to provide a well-rounded, realistic outline, incorporating teachers as members of the community, inside and outside the workplace.

## **Professional Effects**

### **General**

Following the high level of work intensification reported in Chapter Four from information derived from the survey of teachers, it was considered possible that a similar incidence would be reflected in data relating to the effects of intensification. Consequently, respondents were asked in Question 3 to describe the effects of changes in workload requirements



and intensity over the previous two years on a number of aspects of their professional life. The variables on which they were asked to comment were:

- \* Teaching performance
- \* Student outcomes
- \* Preparation time
- \* Professional development
- \* Relations with students
- \* Relations with colleagues
- \* Health.

The first six points were included in order to obtain data on some of the more common and direct aspects of teaching. Based on preliminary discussions with several teachers, prior to the survey, it was considered that, if work intensification were to be perceived by teachers to have an effect on their professional life, it would be likely in one or more of these areas. It was decided that the question on health should be included in three sections of the survey form, relating respectively to work activities (Question 3), and to non-work activities (Questions 9 and 10), in order that the issue might be considered in the context of both environments. The responses were shown in Table 5.9 below.

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<b>Table 5.9</b>			
<b><u>Work Intensification: Effect on Professional Life (%)</u></b>			
	<b><u>Negative</u></b>	<b><u>Neutral</u></b>	<b><u>Positive</u></b>
<b>Teaching Performance</b>	31	42	26
<b>Student Outcomes</b>	20	41	36
<b>Preparation Time</b>	64	24	9
<b>Professional Development</b>	36	39	23
<b>Relations with Colleagues</b>	19	47	32
<b>Relations with Students</b>	17	48	34
<b>Health</b>	58	33	8
<hr/>			
<b>Mean</b>	34.98	39.07	24.04
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	19.27	8.19	11.72
<hr/>			
<b>(n = 366)</b>			

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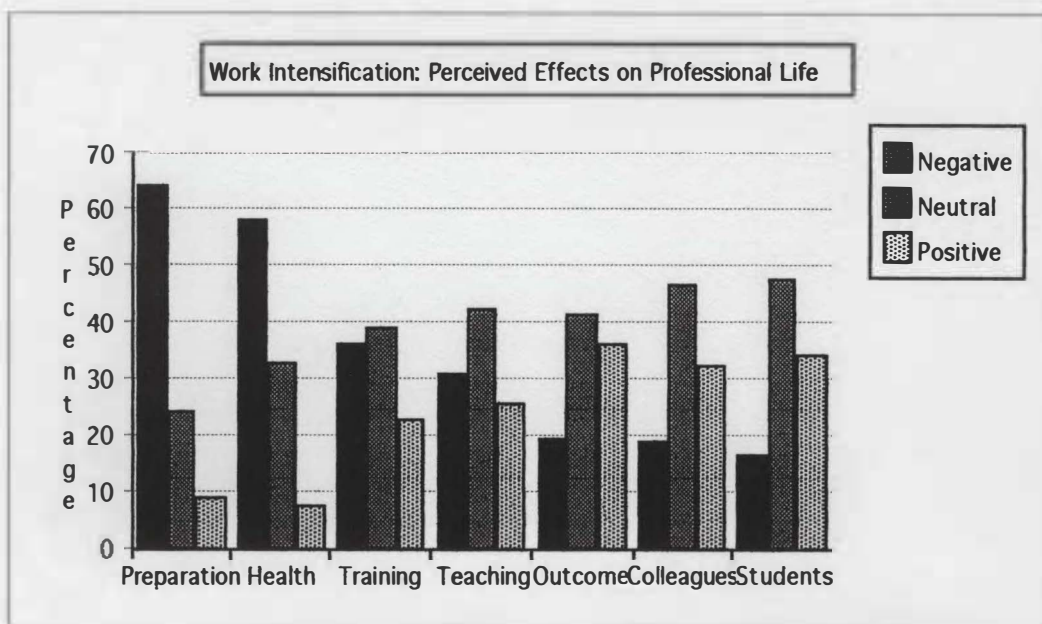
As shown in Table 5.9, one outcome of Question 3 was the large proportion of teachers who provided a neutral response, indicating a perception that the effect of work intensification on their professional life was neither positive nor negative. This was particularly evident in respect

of the question of relations with colleagues and students, where respectively 47 percent and 48 percent indicated a neutral response. With two exceptions - preparation time, and health - the neutral position was in fact the largest single response. With a standard deviation of 8.19, it was also the most uniform across the seven areas, suggesting a form of de facto consensus amongst respondents.

The existence of a relatively large neutral response regarding the effect of work intensification on professional life is interesting, and may be interpreted as a reflection of the professionalism of teachers, and of their determination, borne out in survey comments and interviews, that the students in their care should not be disadvantaged. Attempting to ensure this would appear to have involved adapting to the demands of change - typically by working longer hours and by taking work home - and, as far as possible, maintaining work quality as a constant. From this standpoint, it would appear almost inevitable that a large proportion of respondents should indicate no effect on their work of work intensification. From an organisational standpoint, such adaptability and flexibility would indeed be a quality to be sought after in a workforce.

Equally interesting was the proportion of positive responses. It was apparent, however, that mean and standard deviation figures were somewhat distorted by the large negative responses in respect of preparation time and health. What would appear to have emerged, though, is a division of the responses according to the type of variable.

This becomes more apparent in Figure 5.1 below, suggesting that the variables may be separated into tangible and non-tangible. The former - preparation time, health, training, and teaching performance - would appear to have a distinct connection with the physical aspects of being a teacher, and to involve the passage of time. The latter - student outcomes, relations with colleagues, and relations with students - may be seen as representing a more non-physical element of the education process.



**Figure 5.1 Work Intensification:  
Perceived Effects on Professional Life**

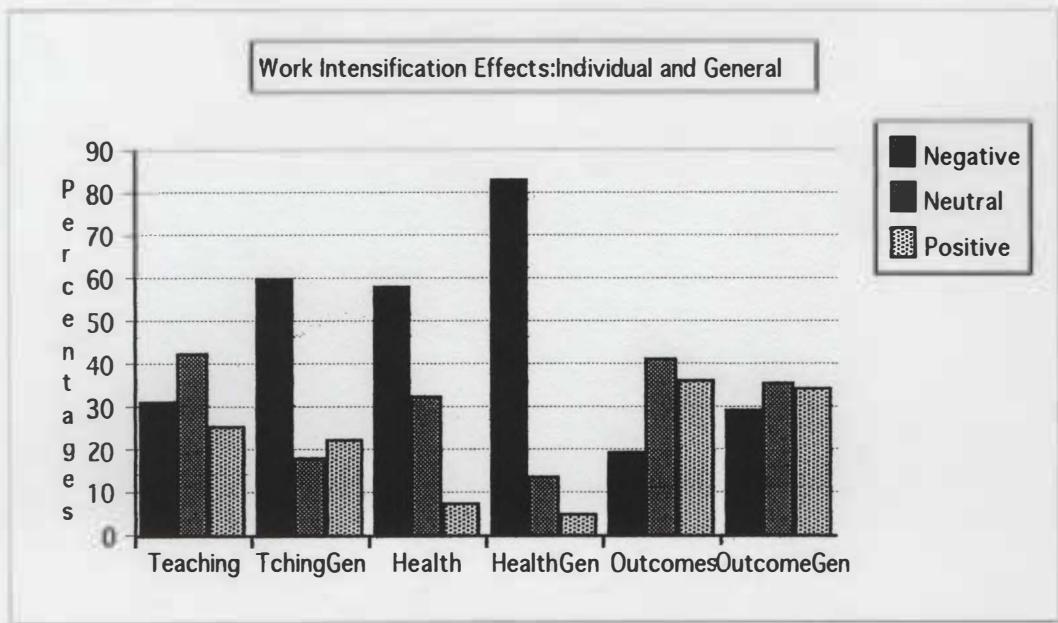
A visible trend suggests that a strong majority of respondents considered work intensification to have had a negative impact on both preparation time and personal health. Similarly, while the neutral response was the largest of the three for the other variables, it was apparent also that the negative responses exceeded positive responses in respect of training (or professional development) and teaching performance. This may suggest a link between negative reaction to change and the extent to which that change is perceived by individuals to affect physical aspects of their working life.

As might be expected from a survey, data obtained indicated a range of views. Changes were also considered, by a large majority of teachers, to have had either no effect or a positive effect on the non-physical aspects of work, namely relationships and student outcomes. At the same time, a significant minority, ranging from 17 percent to 20 percent, considered that the effect of work changes had been negative in these areas as well.

One potentially important point to emerge was the possibility that respondents distinguished between their personal situations as teachers

and the situation of teachers in general. This can be at least postulated by a comparison of answers to Question 3 and Question 16, although answers to the latter were not comprehensive. Question 16 was intended for Principals and Deputy Principals only and, while many teachers answered the question also, they represented only forty percent of the total number of respondents. These did, however, have a similar profile to overall figures.

With that qualification in mind, it would appear that Question 16 indicates a stronger negative perception than does Question 3 to the three variables in common - teaching performance, student outcomes, and staff health. Figure 5.2 below shows the individual and general responses with respect to each of these variables. A pattern of increases in negative responses is matched by significant decreases in the proportion of neutral (or “No change”) responses. This pattern occurred even in relation to student outcomes, where a much greater uniformity of views was obtained. The implication is that, when teachers considered the general situation (both professional and personal) of their colleagues in the school system rather than their own circumstances, the added distance had the effect of permitting responses which were less guarded and more likely to be negative.



**Figure 5.2 Work Intensification Effects on Teaching, Health, and Student Outcomes: Perceived Distinctions between Personal and General Situations**

# Gender

When separated into comparative gender figures, the overall pattern of responses shown in Table 5.9, above, was repeated. However, both within and between genders - particularly in relation to preparation time and health - significant differences emerged also. In relation to all variables, for example, female respondents appeared noticeably more likely to view changes as having had a positive effect. In two cases especially - teaching performance, and student outcomes - the differences appeared quite significant.

**Table 5.10**  
**Work Intensification: Effects, By Gender (%)**

	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>	
	<u>Pos</u>	<u>Neg</u>	<u>Pos</u>	<u>Neg</u>
Teaching Performance	13	45	31	26
Student Outcomes	23	35	43	13
Preparation Time	6	78	10	63
Professional Development	20	47	24	32
Relations with Colleagues	27	24	35	17
Relations with Students	28	27	38	12
Health	5	65	9	58

t (Male-female, Negative, 6df): -2.328      (n = 113 Male; 250 Female)

The converse would appear to be true also, in relation to those respondents who described changes as having negative effects on their working life. For each variable, a greater proportion of male teachers than female teachers reported a negative impact. As with those reporting positive effects, the greatest difference centred on teaching performance (45 percent male to 26 percent female) and student outcomes (35 percent male to 13 percent female).

An even more vivid highlighting of differences may be seen from an examination of internal gender figures. Both male and female teachers indicated clearly an overwhelmingly negative response to changes as they affected preparation time and health. Male teachers, however, still appeared more inclined to hold negative views - for example, 78 percent in relation to preparation time, compared with 63 percent of the female respondents. Apart from those two variables, the internal gender figures

would appear to show male teachers as being likely to consider work intensification as negative regarding teaching performance and professional development, while female teachers appeared equally likely to consider changes as positive, in relation to the non-tangible variables - student outcomes, and relations with colleagues and students.

Whether the figures result from male teachers either experiencing greater levels of intensification, or being less proficient at coping with changes, or merely holding differing approaches to work and to professionalism - for example, action-oriented compared to relationship-oriented - is outside the scope of this study. Nevertheless, it would appear evident that the impact of work intensification on both males and females was often significant, as suggested by the experiences of two respondents.

**“Over past 25 years I have seen little if any improvement in student outcomes from all the changes and schemes implemented. All it has done is increase teachers’ workloads, increase stress levels, decrease job satisfaction and teaching interaction with students. Because of lack of job satisfaction, I recently quit!!”**

**(Male primary teacher, 25 years’ experience, Survey)**

**“Get up at 5.30 to prepare; at school by 8; home at 5.30. Then about 1 hour marking, checking, writing. Then fall asleep in front of TV. I make sure I stay fit. Make myself go to the gym three times a week. Every holiday time, I come down with flu, colds, etc - unreal. I work harder at proving I’m effective and make a difference. So the children don’t miss out on quality time, I take time from family and leisure. I’m fast wearing out. If you look at outcomes, then no child would ever be deemed as “failing”. There is little to NO direction for new teachers”**

**(Female primary teacher, 20 years’ experience, Survey)**

While both are typical of respondents’ comments, the second quotation also provides an interesting example of the contradictions and conflicting attitudes which emerge in relation to work intensification. In this case, the respondent indicated in response to Question 3 that the effect of intensification on her teaching performance had been positive. In response

to Question 16, however, she indicated that the effect on teachers' performance had been "mainly negative". This apparent contradiction was indicated by twenty respondents - twelve out of seventy-six females and eight out of fifteen males - reporting a positive individual effect. It would appear possible that some teachers attempt to create a distinction between their own experiences and those of others. The implication would appear to be that, while the performance of other teachers might be affected negatively, their own performance was not - despite sometimes marked inconvenience to themselves.

Overall, examining the effects of work intensification on the basis of gender suggests a pattern whereby a greater proportion of male teachers indicated negative effects, and a greater proportion of female teachers indicated positive effects. This trend then appeared to continue amongst the small number of respondents who sought to distinguish between effects on their own work and effects on others. Two variables provided an exception: a majority of both male and female teachers indicated negative effects in relation to preparation time and to health.

### Teaching Level

Given the large preponderance of female teachers in primary schools, as outlined in the analysis of the survey demography in the previous chapter, it might have been expected that a tendency would exist for primary teachers to identify positive effects of work intensification, and for their secondary counterparts to identify negative effects. This was indeed the case in respect of negative effects, which were indicated for all variables by a greater proportion of secondary teachers, as outlined in Table 5.11, below.

The difference between levels in relation to professional development was quite marked - 43 percent of secondary teachers compared to 32 percent of primary teachers. Substantial differences were indicated also in respect of teaching performance, student outcomes, and relations with colleagues. For the remaining variables, the figures suggested a greater degree of agreement. An overall majority of both primary and secondary teachers

considered work intensification to have had negative effects on preparation time and health, while the figures relating to relations with students, while lower, were similar.

**Table 5.11**  
**Work Intensification: Effects By Teaching Level (%)**

	<b><u>Primary</u></b>		<b><u>Secondary</u></b>	
	<b><u>Pos</u></b>	<b><u>Neg</u></b>	<b><u>Pos</u></b>	<b><u>Neg</u></b>
<b>Teaching Performance</b>	29	31	18	35
<b>Student Outcomes</b>	38	17	32	24
<b>Preparation Time</b>	7	66	9	67
<b>Professional Development</b>	23	32	24	43
<b>Relations With Colleagues</b>	35	17	29	24
<b>Relations with Students</b>	34	16	34	20
<b>Health</b>	7	57	8	60

(n = 210 Primary; 136 Secondary)

Overall, it would appear that secondary teachers were more likely than primary teachers to view changes in a negative light. The picture would appear to be slightly less well-defined in relation to those viewing change as having had positive effects. With regard to professional development and relations with students, there was parity between primary and secondary respondents. Of the remaining variables, a noticeably-greater proportion of primary teachers considered that work intensification had had a positive effect on teaching performance.

**Employment Type**

Given the regular comments by respondents of a move to part-time work, in order to be able to cope with the pressures of an increased workload, it was considered worthwhile to examine the extent to which such a situation might have an influence on their perceptions regarding work intensification. This was done on the basis of Question 3, which asked about the effect of changes in workload requirements and intensity over the previous two years. it was decided to use responses from part-time teachers as a form of litmus test for the effects of work intensification on professional life, as these teachers could be expected by definition to have a smaller workload than full-time colleagues. Table 5.12 therefore shows the proportions of part-time teachers providing negative, neutral and positive responses to Question 3.



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**Table 5.12**

<b><u>Work Intensification: Part-time Staff</u></b>			
<b><u>Effect on Professional Life (%)</u></b>			
	<b><u>Negative</u></b>	<b><u>Neutral</u></b>	<b><u>Positive</u></b>
<b>Teaching Performance</b>	24	41	35
<b>Student Outcomes</b>	15	39	47
<b>Preparation Time</b>	51	35	15
<b>Professional Development</b>	27	47	27
<b>Relations with Colleagues</b>	12	52	36
<b>Relations with Students</b>	12	52	36
<b>Health</b>	56	31	13

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(n = 75)

Apart from preparation time and health, the figures indicate that work intensification was considered by more part-time teachers as having had positive effects rather than negative, with a maximum of 47 percent in relation to student outcomes. For each variable, part-time teachers reported a higher level of positive responses than were provided overall in Table 5.9. This pattern was particularly noticeable in relation to teaching performance and student outcomes. Similarly, the level of negative responses was lower for each variable, while several of the neutral responses (Professional development, and relations with colleagues and students) also were higher.

The interesting point to emerge was that positive responses tended to be received in respect of both professional and private lives. In response to Question 1.8 (“To what extent does doing more increase your satisfaction?”), for example, 35 percent of part-time teachers reported an increase in job satisfaction, compared with 20 percent overall. Similarly, 23 percent reported an increase in satisfaction with the balance between family and work life. This compared favourably with the figure of 14 percent overall. In addition, fewer part-time teachers reported problems with issues such as sleep, relationships, anger, impatience, and relaxation. Overall, therefore, it could be considered that changes were seen in a positive light by part-time teachers, largely because of a lower workload shielded them from pressures, and provided some time for other activities.

## Age

Age may help to explain or highlight the perceptions of teachers in relation to the existence and causes of work intensification. Specifically, it was noted in the discussion of demography that a logical and useful point of delineation would appear to be the age which would provide teachers with experience of an earlier work environment and conditions. As the education system in Western Australia has been undergoing devolutionary change since the early 1990s, it was considered that a convenient point of delineation would be the age of forty. Using this structure, teacher perceptions of the effects of change are shown in Table 5.13, below.

**Table 5.13**

**Work Intensification: Effects By Age (%)**

	<b><u>Positive</u></b>		<b><u>Negative</u></b>	
	<b><u>40 +</u></b>	<b><u>Under 40</u></b>	<b><u>40 +</u></b>	<b><u>Under 40</u></b>
Teaching Performance	22	34	35	27
Student Outcomes	32	48	23	12
Preparation Time	9	10	65	65
Prof. Development	25	23	38	34
Relations with Colleagues	31	37	19	18
Relations with Students	34	38	17	17
Health	6	11	59	58

t (Age, Positive, 6df): 4.307      (n = 247 Forty +; 114 Under 40)

As with other variables, the same overall distribution pattern between the seven variables would appear to exist in respect of the age of teachers. The near parity of negative perceptions which appears once again regarding preparation time and health suggests that those perceptions are so strongly felt as to cut across all categories of teacher. In general, however, the trends to emerge from the data would appear to indicate, firstly, that teachers aged under forty saw more positive effects than negative, while those forty and over were more likely to view changes as negative. Secondly, for the non-physical variables - student outcomes, and relations with colleagues and students - the effects of work intensification appeared to have been positive for both age groups, and by wide margins.

In terms of the two age groups, one interesting figure to emerge was the large proportion of teachers under forty who reported changes as being

positive in relation to student outcomes, suggesting a possible willingness on the part of younger teachers to adapt to, or to accept, the work environment as it exists at any given time. Indeed, the figures showed that only twelve percent of teachers aged under forty considered changes to have been negative for student outcomes.

Geographic Location

Previous examination of the existence and causes of work intensification has suggested that little difference was to be found between the teachers on the basis of geographical location, although a slightly greater proportion of city-based teachers reported increases. As shown in Table 5.14 below, there also appeared to be little difference overall between city and country respondents, in relation to the effects of work intensification.

<b>Table 5.14</b>				
<b><u>Work Intensification: Effects By Location (%)</u></b>				
	<u>City</u>		<u>Country</u>	
	<u>Pos</u>	<u>Neg</u>	<u>Pos</u>	<u>Neg</u>
Teaching Performance	22	35	32	28
Student Outcomes	33	22	28	17
Preparation Time	9	64	9	66
Professional Development	21	32	27	40
Relations With Colleagues	35	14	30	27
Relations with Students	32	15	39	18
Health	9	58	6	59

n = 219 City; 142 Country)

Within each location category, a greater proportion of positive responses was received in respect of the non-physical variables, student outcomes, and relations with colleagues and students. This coincided with the pattern established in previous sections and, together with the large proportion of respondents (more than fifty percent, in respect of relations with colleagues and students) indicating that changes were neither positive nor negative, appeared to provide further evidence of a determination to not let change interfere with quality of education - in other words, a determination that professionalism should not be compromised.

In terms of professionalism, it is interesting to note the apparent position of country teachers. While a majority atypically saw positive effects of work

intensification on teaching performance, an even larger proportion considered the effect on professional development to have been negative. This could perhaps be seen as a corollary to concerns expressed over the pace of change as a cause of intensification, especially when this coincided with either excessive amounts of professional development - or, alternatively, a perceived lack of guidance or training. In both cases, it would appear that the question of matching change with instruction in the areas to be affected could need to be addressed more precisely in future.

One factor which was considered initially as possibly able to influence the attitudes of teachers was that of school size, particularly in relation to smaller, more isolated country schools. There, it was felt, teachers could find it necessary to undertake a broader range of tasks, due to lower staff numbers. On the other hand, lack of staff numbers in a school could reduce the need for a complex committee structure, in turn reducing the need for attendance at meetings.

Staff numbers were requested in Question 14 of the survey, but were not provided by many respondents, as the section in which it was located was indicated as being for Principals and Deputy Principals. Ultimately, however, numbers were provided by 191 respondents, or 52 percent, enabling trends to be identified. Responses were divided firstly into city (104) and country (87). In an effort to target smaller schools, figures were then divided into those from schools with up to ten staff, those with from eleven to twenty staff, and those with more than twenty staff. It was expected that the third group would include all secondary schools, and the larger primary schools. Finally, within each size range, the numbers of negative responses received were noted.

Somewhat unexpectedly, there emerged from this an apparently direct relationship between school staff numbers and the incidence of negative perceptions. In all cases, for both city and country, this incidence increased in line with the school sizes. The trend also appeared to be that the proportion of negative responses from city schools were larger. This point could not be verified, however, as the figures obtained represented only 47 percent of city-based respondents, compared to 61 percent of country-

based teachers. Nevertheless, the initial figures in Table 5.14 showing a greater importance of teaching performance for city teachers, and a similar importance of professional development for country teachers would appear likely to be confirmed.

### Union Membership

In Chapter Four, it was seen that an extremely large majority of members of the State School Teachers’ Union (193, or 83 percent) reported the existence of work intensification. This compared to 81, or 75 percent, of non-union members. It was noted that the chief area of intensification was complexity of work, reported by 91 percent for SSTU members and 87 percent for non-members, followed (for SSTU members) by the stress of work, at 87 percent.

These would appear to be confirmed by figures showing the major negative effects to have been experienced in relation to preparation time and health. It should be noted that figures for organisations other than the SSTU (such as the Primary Principals’ Association) were omitted from Table 5.15, as it was considered that the small number involved would have made meaningful comparisons impossible.

**Table 5.15**  
**Work Intensification: Effects By Union Membership (%)**

	<u>No Union</u>		<u>SSTU</u>	
	<u>Pos</u>	<u>Neg</u>	<u>Pos</u>	<u>Neg</u>
Teaching Performance	35	28	22	34
Student Outcomes	44	17	35	21
Preparation Time	12	54	8	70
Professional Development	20	36	24	36
Relations With Colleagues	35	15	31	22
Relations with Students	43	12	31	19
Health	12	51	6	60

(n = 108 No Union; 233, SSTUWA)

Overall, it appeared that SSTU members were more inclined to observe negative effects from work intensification although, as with other demographic factors, this was affected by figures for preparation time and health. Apart from those two variables and, to a lesser extent, professional

development, non-union members showed a strong tendency to view changes as positive. As suggested in the previous chapter, further study may be required to determine the validity of the possibility that SSTU members are by virtue of that membership more aware of work intensification, its causes and effects, and consequently less likely to accept that change is positive without clear evidence of this.

On the other hand, given that the figures in Table 5.15 follow the same general pattern for both union and non-union members, and that differences appear to be largely ones of degree, it may also be necessary to question teachers' perceptions of the role and value of the SSTU - whether it might be considered to be more an industrial advocate or a professional association, or whether, indeed, membership has any bearing on perceptions.

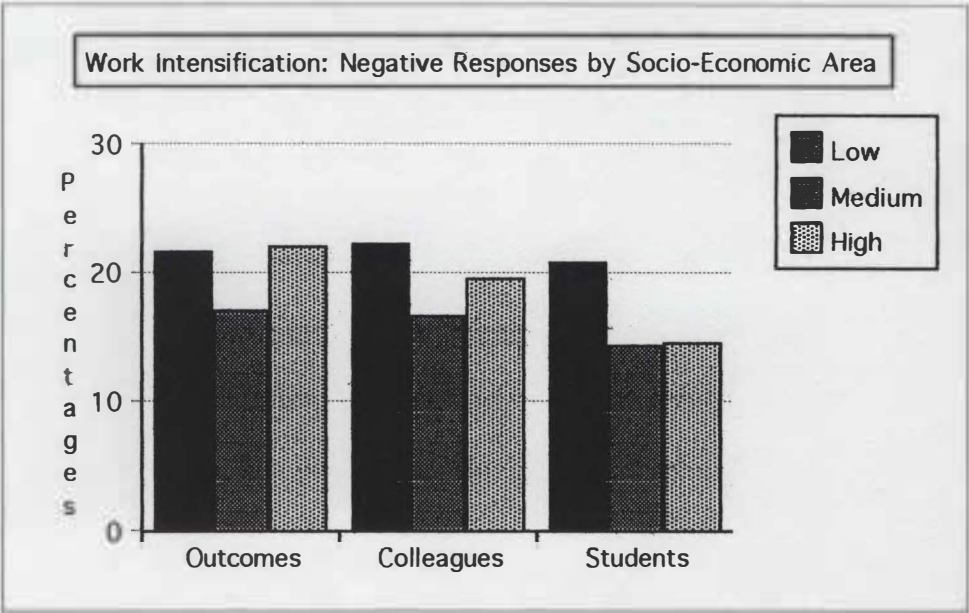
### **Socio-Economic Level**

One of the more intriguing points to emerge from the study was the apparent relationship between work intensification and socio-economic levels of the areas in which the schools were located. As mentioned in the previous chapter, these figures were based solely on the perceptions of respondents, rather than on quantifiable economic data. As indicators, therefore, the results may need to be treated as subjective and prospective rather than objective and definitive. On the other hand, it is likely that this very quality enables such figures to be treated as indicative of teacher attitudes, and potentially of susceptibility to the more psychological effects of intensification.

Chapter Four noted that work intensification appeared to be experienced most consistently by teachers working in high socio-economic areas. This trend would appear to be followed, in relation to the effects of intensification, with the highest levels of negative views (46.00 percent) being held by teachers working in these areas. In low and medium areas also, while the proportion of negative responses was lower, at 35 and 34 percent respectively, these still formed a much larger proportion than positive responses.

It would appear that a much more even balance between levels was achieved in relation to the effects of intensification than in relation to its existence. Indeed, it would appear that, overall, teachers from low socio-economic areas were most likely to view effects of intensification as positive, although differences were relatively marginal. The mean positive totals were 25, 24, and 22 percent for low, medium, and high socio-economic areas respectively.

As with the other demographic variables, respondents considered changes to have been positive in relation to student outcomes, and to relations with colleagues and students. This was balanced to a certain extent by a consistent minority of approximately twenty percent who considered changes to have been negative. A significant aspect of those negative responses was the high response rate from low socio-economic areas, as indicated in the figure below. The importance of these figures was to clarify the link between the three socio-economic levels on the basis of the psychological effects of work intensification. Figure 5.3 outlines the proportions of teachers from each socio-economic area who provided negative responses.



**Figure 5.3:**  
**Effects of Work Intensification**  
**On Student Outcomes, and Relations with Colleagues and Students**  
**Negative Perceptions by Socio-Economic Area**

Overall, as occurred with other demographic variables, the most important issues appeared to be preparation time, health, and professional development. In relation to each of these issues, teachers working in high socio-economic areas had higher response rates, with 73 percent reporting negative effects on preparation time.

## **Personal and Social Effects**

### **General**

As was the case with professional factors, work intensification is likely to affect teachers in differing ways, and to differing extents, in their personal lives. The approach taken in this section revolves around a cautious assumption that personal effects may be likely to be considered negative, almost by definition, as they may suggest a lessening of control, or a subordination of the personal to the professional.

Question 8 asked respondents to indicate the extent to which, during an average week, workload factors had had an impact on their private, social and domestic life. Where there had been an impact, they were asked (Questions 9 and 10) to indicate areas in which it had been felt. Finally, Question 11 asked the extent to which they had taken sick leave during the previous twelve months. It became apparent that the issue was not whether teachers' lives outside work were affected by workload, but merely the extent to which this was the case. Only six respondents indicated that there had been no effect, while two were uncertain. Four failed to answer the question. Of the remainder, 135, or 37 percent, considered that there had been some impact on their lives, while 219, or 60 percent, considered that there had been a large impact. It was decided that the latter should be the focus of the analysis.

As a means of undertaking this analysis, figures on the impact of work on individuals' private lives were examined on the basis of demographic variables, applied to a number of major issues. Both in survey responses and in interviews, the main categories indicated by teachers appeared to be



health (both physical and psychological), family life, and social life. As indicated in Table 5.16, the variables contained in Question 9 of the survey fitted neatly into such a breakdown. The numbers indicate the frequency with which they were mentioned.

**Table 5.16**

<b><u>Work Intensification: Effects on Personal Life</u></b>		
<b><u>Social Life</u></b>	<b><u>Work / Family Balance</u></b>	<b><u>Health</u></b>
106 Social Activities	325 Work taken home	282 Relaxation
152 Socialising	240 After-Hours Activities	218 Sleep
	249 Household Chores	216 Exercise
	101 Children	209 Health
	85 Relationships	57 Alcohol
		28 Anti-depressants
		75 Coffee
		16 Painkillers
		84 Anger
		133 Impatience
		43 Crying

**Social Life**

Of the three categories, social life would appear to be the least affected overall. Only 106 respondents, or 29 percent, replied that non-work social activities - involving specific events such as movies, church and family outings - were affected by work. Slightly larger numbers - 152 respondents, or 42 percent - noted that their ability to socialise with friends was affected. By and large, the pattern in relation to social activities was evident across demographic variables, being noted as a factor by almost one-third of respondents. The only real exception was shown in relation to marital status, with forty percent of non-married respondents - perhaps not unexpectedly - reporting a strong effect on social activities.

A slightly different pattern emerged in respect of teachers' perceptions of the effect on their freedom to socialise generally with friends and relatives. Once again, with 50 percent, non-married respondents represented the category most affected. Most variables showed a relatively high proportion indicating a strong effect in this area - 47 percent of city teachers, and 44 percent in each case of female teachers, secondary teachers, and those aged forty and over. Such figures are perhaps not to be

wondered at - and might indeed tend to understate the situation - given that 325 respondents, or 89 percent, reported an effect on the amount of work which they took home, while 240, or 66 percent, reported a similar effect on the amount of after-hours work-related activities undertaken outside the home, such as meetings and professional development.

**Work / Family Balance**

A more important area of concern for respondents than social life appeared to be represented by the balance between work and family. A total of 215 respondents, or 59 percent, reported that their satisfaction with the balance between work and family life had decreased, and 196, or 54 percent, reported specifically having a low level of satisfaction with it. Approximately a quarter of the respondents indicated that their satisfaction levels had not changed, indicating possibly the use of more effective coping strategies - or the lack of a family - while 14 percent indicated that these levels had increased.

While dissatisfaction over the work / family split was felt strongly by all teachers, as indicated in Table 5.17, male teachers appeared to be the category most affected. Interestingly, perhaps, a significant number of female teachers (69, or 28 percent) indicated that there had been no change, while forty-one, or 16 percent, indicated that changes had been positive.

**Table 5.17**

**Effects of Work Intensification:**  
**Decreased Satisfaction over Work / Family Balance (%)**

<b>Male</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Primary</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
<b>City</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>Country</b>
<b>40+</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>U-40</b>
<b>Temporary</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
<b>No Union</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>SSTU</b>

More than figures alone, however, the written comments of respondents provided a sense of the core feelings of teachers. Repeated statements appeared to indicate a profession whose members were experiencing some

degree of internal conflict. While it took slightly different paths with each individual, it appeared that this conflict was essentially between concern over family (and often health) issues, and a fundamental desire to act in the best interests of their students. It appeared therefore to be something of a confrontation between basic human instinct on the one hand, and professionalism - as perceived by the teachers themselves - on the other.

The proportion of female teachers indicating an increase in satisfaction may represent what would appear to be one effect of work intensification - a tendency for teachers to consider changing from full-time work to part-time, typically in order that work previously done out of hours could now be done during the working week. In turn, this was seen as enabling the people concerned to live their lives more fully. The consequences of failing to give due importance to family life included problems with health, marriages, and children. In a typical comment, a primary school teacher in her thirties reported having reduced her work to a half-time load, and thus being more satisfied with the balance between work and family.

At the same time, however, the change appeared unable to eliminate problems with stress, blood pressure, and with the relationship with her children. In an echo of Hunter & McKelvie (1999), this respondent also indicated her belief that women “who choose to raise a family” continued to face pressure “to still take on more duties and jobs” - suggesting that little account was being taken of the concept of the family, let alone its reality. This reality, as it impacted on female teachers, was outlined more specifically by other respondents, experiencing problems in health, family and relationships:

“I’m spending so much time and effort being positive in class that I’m increasingly cranky with my own children. Classes of 32 are a real handful these days with the type of kids (& their problems) that we teach. I soldier on rather than take sick leave. It’s too time-consuming to set lessons when you’re sick. I’m just so wiped out trying to do a good job ... that I’m a dead loss on weekends. I do at least three hours a night, 7 days a week. My 12 year-old has been nagging me to change jobs.”

(Secondary teacher, 25 years’ experience, Survey)

**“Meeting deadlines is difficult when extra ‘jobs’ with immediate’ outcomes are placed on top of the core job. I can’t help at home as much as I would like. I’m doing school work when the kids are being read to. If I wait until the kids are in bed, I stay up too late and get overtired.**

**(Secondary teacher, 13 years’ experience, Survey)**

**“Work is taking an unfair amount of time.”**

**(Primary teacher, 17 years’ experience, Pilot Study)**

Problems in relationships were in fact reported by 85 respondents, or 23 percent, while those relating to children were reported by 101, or 28 percent. Such figures, while clearly representing a minority of teachers, nonetheless would appear to be significant. Given that problems were indicated by one person in every four, it would perhaps seem worthwhile to consider their effect on personal health (for example in terms of stress), on the health and wellbeing of the teachers’ own children and, not least of all, on the ability of the teachers concerned to continue to provide quality education.

Relationships - both marriages and family life in general - often appeared to be a form of foundation in the lives of teachers and thus, indirectly, central to the question of delivering quality education to their students. The support and encouragement provided by a spouse appeared to act as a mitigating force, enabling the teacher to cope with the effects of work. As expressed by one secondary teacher, with sixteen years of experience, “Without a supportive partner, the impact of workload would be much greater.” Having such a relationship could not guarantee positive outcomes, however, and did not prevent the teacher in question from having problems with sleep, housework, socialising, and with her children. Neither did it reduce the amount of work taken home, or the need to participate in out-of-hours activities.

Over time, with experience of a situation, it could be considered that the onset of relationship problems would be not unexpected. Nevertheless, other factors appeared to influence the behaviour and perceptions of teachers in the survey. Many felt unable to take sick leave, and submitted

to the pressures of work, as a result of what appeared to be an instinctive cost-benefit analysis of the alternatives. Simply put, it was felt to be less inconvenient, and less of a burden, to work through an illness than to give due consideration to personal needs. Similarly, many respondents appeared unable to act on the concept of home life as a separate sphere, or to prevent the excessive intrusion of work. Not surprisingly, this could also lead to problems, as described in typical comments:

**“I find it very difficult achieving a balance. It is a low socio-economic status school, and the problems my students have are immense. I love my job but would love to feel less stressed about life in general. I get very attached to my students, and tend to take their problems to heart. That, and being a wife, mother, etc!!”**

**(Special Education teacher, 14 years’ experience, Survey)**

**“The fun, motivational strategies are going out of my teaching, which isn’t fair on the children. This is because there are too many learning areas to cover, and too much admin work. A marriage of 25 years - divorced. A relationship of 7 years - separated. I can’t have time off. I can’t keep up if I do!”**

**(Primary teacher, 19 years’ experience, Survey)**

A common suggestion put forward was that the family problems experienced by teachers were the ultimate effect of problems within students’ family units, and a subsequent need for teachers to act as surrogate parents. By feeling themselves obliged to act in this role, teachers appeared prepared to give a lesser importance to their own needs,

**“Disintegration of the family unit (ie, the students’ families), eg, teachers having to spend time teaching that which should be taught in the home - manners, social skills, etc. Decreased parental involvement in and out of the classroom. I am having to pay for outside help (eg, for housework, gardening and ironing).”**

**(Primary teacher, 8 years’ experience, Survey)**

While the issue of household chores might appear in and of itself to be relatively mundane, it was nonetheless a matter worthy of note for 249 teachers, or 68 percent of the total number of respondents. While it is clearly possible to arrange paid help for tasks such as housework and child-minding, the need to do so would appear to be indicative of an imbalance between work and family, and even of a system dependent on excessive demands on the free labour of those working in the field.

## **Health**

One of the more apparent effects of work intensification, according to survey responses, was a negative impact on the health of teachers. Health was raised as an important issue by a number of teachers asked to comment on the draft questionnaire, and was thus included specifically in four places (Questions 3, 9, 10, and 16) in the version distributed for the survey. While Questions 3 and 16 asked only about health in general, Questions 9 and 10 also included several specific health items, such as exercise, sleep, or medication. In addition, Question 11 asked for details on the amount of sick leave taken within the previous twelve months. From the responses to the survey, it was possible to gain a reasonably detailed overview of the situation regarding teacher health, as perceived by teachers. A later section will also cover this and a number of other issues from the point of view of school principals.

A noticeable trend was an apparent reluctance to take sick leave. A total of 62 percent of the respondents (227 teachers) reported having taken less than five days of sick leave during the preceding twelve months, while a further 22 percent reported taking between five and ten days. As discussed earlier, this appeared to be due to a perception that it was less inconvenient in the long term to continue working through a period of illness than to arrange relief, prepare work for use by the relief teacher, and to then undertake additional work after returning to work in order to enable the students to catch up on work missed, or imperfectly understood.

As a result of this trend, it would seem possible that the figures for sick leave are themselves a less than perfect indicator of the health of teachers overall - a possibility supported to an extent by comments of some respondents who indicated a pattern of lasting through each teaching term, only to fall ill during term breaks. Overall figures derived from the questions on health are shown in Table 5.18.

**Table 5.18**  
**State School Teachers, Western Australia**  
**Impact of Work Intensification on Health (%)**

<b><u>General View</u></b>	
Negative impact (Q.3)	58
In personal life (Q.9)	57
High effect on health (Q.10)	40
Negative effect on staff health (Q.16)	83
<b><u>Principals' View</u></b>	
Negative impact (Q.16)	70

While all involving the issue of health, the figures in Table 5.18 relate to a range of circumstances, which should be taken into account. Questions 3 and 16 referred to the situation confronting teachers over the previous two years, for example, while questions 9 and 10 referred to the situation experienced in an average week - although, as one teacher commented, "Is there such a thing as an average week?" In addition, Question 16 was indicative only, for teachers in general, as it was not answered by all respondents. It was, however, answered by all those who identified themselves as principals.

The trend emerging from Table 5.18 would appear to be a distinction between the short and long-term perceptions and, once again, between perceptions of self and perceptions of others. The former distinction would appear to be most clearly shown by comparing the information from Questions 3 and 10. When asked to indicate the effect of work intensification over the previous two years, almost 58 percent reported a negative impact. At the same time, asked to indicate the effects of workload on health in an average week a comparatively low figure of 40 percent reported the effect as being high. The implication would appear to

be a certain confidence on the part of teachers in their ability to cope in the short term, but a realisation - upon reflection - that the longer-term situation was more likely to be negative, with a larger impact on health.

A similar conclusion would seem to be possible when comparing the responses which teachers provided about themselves and those provided about teachers in general, even when viewed across the same timeframe. While incomplete, the high response to Question 16 indicated that over 83 percent of those answering (120 out of 144) considered work intensification to have had a negative impact on staff health overall. This was supported by responses from school principals, all of whom responded to the question, and whose views will be examined in the next section.

The same pattern appeared in relation to the more psychological issue of staff morale. During an average week, 37 percent of teachers found that their morale was affected negatively, while this figure rose to 88 percent in Question 16. While the potential may exist for such figures to be moderated, the indications are that a noticeable trend exists: teachers distinguish between themselves and others - whether consciously or subconsciously - and view themselves (as individuals) as more able to cope with work pressures.

The implication would seem to be that teachers may consequently take on ever-increasing amounts of work, and thus reduce their capacity to cope. This situation could be seen as essentially denying the effects of work intensification, and thus tending to reinforce the concerns of Probert et al (2000) about the notions of what is normal fraying. Individuals could thus be laying themselves open to experiencing those effects, or increasing the impact of effects already being felt.

Ability to cope - and inability - was the subject of comment by many respondents, and was evidently a topic of concern. The general pattern appeared to be that responses relating to health fell quite readily into two main categories: physical and psychological. The former was indicated by the general survey responses, while the latter was indicated most commonly in the written comments provided along with those responses.



Responses to Question 9 showed a consistently high rate of physical effects, notably in respect of relaxation, sleep, and exercise. These were reported respectively by 77 percent, 60 percent, and 59 percent of respondents, significantly more than the numbers reporting what might be considered as related to psychological aspects of health - use of alcohol or medication, or emotional reactions to stress. This is perhaps not surprising, given that stress may be caused by many factors other than those related to work. Nonetheless, solid minorities of respondents identified a specific linkage between their work situation and their levels of anger (23 percent) and impatience (37 percent).

Stress and stress-related issues did relate prominently in many of the comments by respondents, and in interviews, covering topics such as mental health, depression, visits to psychologists, memory loss, and an inability to “switch off”. A handful of the more extreme cases talked of using anti-depressant medication to start the day, coffee to keep going (often due to a lack of time to take a proper meal break), and alcohol to “wind down” in the evening.

At the same time, there appeared to be a feeling of not daring to sit down after work, for fear of instantly falling asleep. It could be considered that such a situation would be likely to be reflected in increased stress levels, even to the point where individual health could be openly affected. This would appear to be reflected in the comments below of a primary teacher, which typify the dilemma faced by many of her colleagues in finding a point at which to draw a line between work and non-work activities in their lives.

“I have just (two months ago) been diagnosed with severe depression, and am on medication. I believe that this is due largely to work-related stress. I should probably have taken more [sick leave], but I take my responsibilities too seriously.”

(Primary teacher, 28 years’ experience, Survey)

Noticeably, in this case, instead of there being any attempt to adjust workload requirements, or to take sick leave, the teacher’s action was to

obtain medication in an effort to continue coping with the existing situation - which included a class of thirty-two students. By thus focusing on her students to the exclusion of all else, including her own health, this teacher may well be a metaphor for State School teachers overall. The situation of this individual, married with two children, might also be seen as indicative of the situation of many female colleagues trying to balance careers with home lives - and ultimately suffering problems, in this case health problems, as a direct consequence.

The mention by the teacher above of her responsibilities provides an interesting note of self-awareness. As a result, it may be possible to discern a positive side to her approach to work. If domination of the individual can occur because of a lack of knowledge, then awareness of freedom of choice, and the ability to take action - whether or not any is actually taken - may help to create a process of resistance to the pressures to conform (Alvesson, 1987; Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). This in turn may enable individual teachers to minimise psychological work intensification, and to concentrate on coping with the purely physical. The teacher quoted thus may be seen as providing support for the notion of professionalism as social responsibility. Ultimately, however, a sense of responsibility may not be sufficient, as teachers weigh their options and take action:

**“I AM leaving teaching! 23 years’ experience, Level 3 teacher, had a gutful. To cope we could do less for students who need more, so we can make Admin “look good”. STRESS: this is the killer issue. Due to pedagogical change without adequate resources, and to Outcomes not suiting some circumstances! Low morale of teachers.”**

**(Secondary teacher, 23 years’ experience, Survey)**

As with the primary teacher quoted above, this secondary teacher was needing to work with a class of thirty-two students. As discussed in an earlier section, it is possible that the stress experienced was the result of the pace and nature of change, combined with a need for this change to be implemented in large classes. Certainly, it would appear that carrying out what they perceived to be their role in a responsible, professional manner

may well involve, or lead to, some form of sacrifice for teachers, commonly involving areas such as health, family, marriage, converting to part-time teaching, or resigning.

The question of health was a significant theme to emerge from interviews also, both during the pilot study and following the main survey. Exhaustion, sleep problems, and mental stress appeared to be the major elements causing concern, often in combination with each other, as teachers sought to cope with the increased demands placed on them and, simultaneously, to continue to provide quality education. Physical exhaustion often appeared to be experienced alongside an inability to sleep, or a propensity to wake during the night for several hours, “because of mental tension”, due itself to a concentration on work issues. This tendency appeared to cut across all boundaries, with both primary and secondary teachers, male and female, older and younger, full-time and part-time all displaying some susceptibility to it.

Psychological health, chiefly in the form of stress, appeared to be as important as the physical aspects. It was noticeable that a far greater proportion of teachers mentioned the use of a range of supports - such as medication, alcohol, and counselling - when interviewed than when responding to survey questions. Indeed, there frequently appeared to be not only a readiness to speak of such matters, even in some cases despite this appearing to cause some stress of its own, but also a need to do so. While personal situations were clearly different, it appeared that the teachers interviewed were seeking partly to explain issues as they saw them, and partly also, by way of gaining understanding, to place their own experiences in an overall context.

Determining context would often appear to have been an easier task for respondents to undertake with regard to the situation of other teachers. While comments on teachers in general tended to be rational and well thought out, those relating to themselves tended to be more emotional, and often included discussion of the stresses of their own situations. Of the fifteen people interviewed, for example, three were taking, or had until recently been taking, anti-depressant medication. Three, including two of

those on medication, were on, or had recently returned to work after, a period of stress leave, while a further three regularly used alcohol as a means of recovering from the pressures of their daily work. In addition, all but two indicated that they regularly experienced symptoms of stress.

The implication of teachers' comments was that the work context leading to work intensification could be described partly by timing and partly by personality. In one interviewee's school, for example, stress levels could be expected to rise at certain times of the year - "at report time, and the end of the year" - and had led to "a few cases of stress, marital breakup, and things like that". However, it was suggested by this person - a primary school deputy principal - that the effects on teachers might depend not entirely on the sources of stress *per se*, but also on the degree to which individuals were susceptible to stress. Relatively low levels of pressure might lead to levels of stress which other individuals could regard as disproportionate. Thus a normal work situation for one person could represent significant work intensification for another.

## **Principals**

Of the 366 valid responses received to the survey, thirty were completed by principals. This provided a response rate of 8 percent, and compared more than favourably with official staffing figures, which indicated that principals comprised 5 percent of active teaching staff (*Annual Report, EDWA 1997-1998*). The implication was that principals were indeed interested in the topic of work intensification.

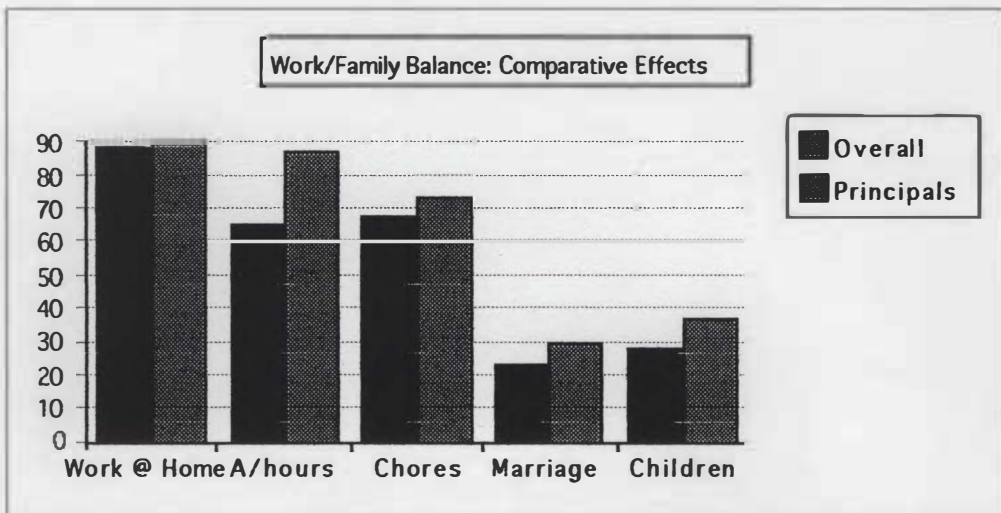
As with respondents in general, it was possible to identify professional and personal aspects of the responses of principals. In addition, though, there appeared to be a degree of ambivalence on their part with regard to teaching staff, as some appeared to have difficulty in determining the extent to which they were educators working on behalf of students, or managers working on behalf of the employer. An early interviewee suggested that insufficient attention was generally given to the situation of principals, and that people in these positions were experiencing levels of

work intensification at least as high as those working solely as classroom teachers. One principal was prompted to suggest that research should be carried out on the number of his fellow Principals taking stress leave.

Due mainly to the differing nature of their work, it was expected that differences would exist between principals and teachers. However, it was also considered that a similar pattern was possible, if only because principals in smaller schools could be expected to have class-teaching duties themselves. Sixteen of the principals who responded to the survey also had teaching duties in primary schools, located mainly in the city. The group included men and women, whose ages covered a range of four decades, and who were working in areas covering all socio-economic levels. All but one were responsible for large classes, seven of which had thirty or more students.

Responses for principals appeared to follow the pattern displayed in the survey overall. In relation to the effects of work intensification on working life, the strongest negative responses were received for preparation time and health (60 and 67 percent respectively). These compared with the overall figures of 64 percent and 58 percent, suggesting that principals perceived noticeably stronger effects on their health than did teachers. It could be argued, though, that the important point is not this difference, but the fact that a strong majority of both groups considered that work intensification had had a negative effect on the health of teachers. Principals also appeared to be less affected with regard to their relations with staff and students, and with student outcomes, with respectively sixty percent, fifty percent and fifty percent indicating no change as a result of work intensification.

While it is possible that the responses above reflect the greater non-teaching component of principals' work, and thus a relative isolation - or insulation - from the daily interaction with classroom matters, in terms of the effect of work intensification on private life, principals often appeared to be affected to a somewhat greater extent than teachers, as suggested in Figure 5.4.



**Figure 5.4:**  
**Work / Family Balance: Areas Affected (Teachers and Principals)**

Responses indicated virtual parity (89 percent overall, 90 percent of Principals) in the numbers needing to take work home. However, a larger difference was shown in terms of attendance at after-hours work-related events (87 percent of Principals to 66 percent overall). The likely implication would appear to be that, by virtue of their positions, Principals were required, or expected, to participate in larger numbers of activities, such as meetings, outside normal working hours. In addition, it would appear that they also found difficulty in completing their administrative work during school hours. While this would be not unexpected for teaching principals, it may also suggest that the workload experienced by principals in general is excessive. This would appear to be the view of many of those in the survey, as typified by the principal of a city primary school.

“Stress. Large increase in duties. We are often required to take on extra. Is there such a thing as an average week? Workload affecting personal life has become the norm. I’m going through depression!”

The effect of their duties on their personal lives was suggested also in relation to the time available for social and leisure activities. However, although a generally higher proportion of Principals was affected in these

areas, the differences were usually only slight. The most marked difference was in relation to the lack of physical exercise, which was reported by 73 percent of Principals, compared to 59 percent in the survey overall.

In general, however, the social life and health responses were very similar for both principals and teachers. The largest effect of work intensification on personal life appeared to involve the balance between the two areas. As shown in Figure 5.4 above, important considerations were marriage and relationships, and relationships with children. Where an approximate average of one-quarter of all teachers reported that these were affected by work intensification, this figure rose to one-third of principals (30 percent in respect of marriages, and 37 percent in respect of children). It would appear possible that these are indicators not so much of physical difficulties associated with work, but more of the time factor. The fact that such a significant proportion could perceive the existence of marriage and family problems as being due to work factors would appear to suggest the need for consideration of priorities by both teachers and the education bureaucracy.

The success of any process for determining such priorities, or the human and social effects of intensification in general, would be likely to depend heavily on the perceptions of participants in the process. In such situations, consideration would need to be given to the context in which perceptions were recorded, due to their potential for change. This point was demonstrated in relation to questions regarding the ability of teachers to cope with further intensification of work. All respondents were asked (Question 4.12), "To what extent would you be able to cope with any increases in workload?". The aim was to determine how close teachers felt themselves to be to the limit of their capacity to cope - whether physically or psychologically.

Responses to Question 4.12 suggested that principals were slightly less negative and more positive than teachers overall. Whereas overall figures showed 54 percent at or near the point of not being able to accept any further increases, the equivalent figure for Principals was 47 percent. Similarly, 37 percent considered themselves able to accept more work,

compared to 22 percent overall. Possibly reflecting the different nature of their duties, the responses suggested that, regardless of other factors, a significant proportion of principals were optimistic about their own capacity to cope with further work intensification.

Further data on capacity came from responses to Question 17 of the survey. The aim of this question was to seek similar information to Question 4.12, but from the point of view of principals as managers, rather than as individuals. The question posed was “To what extent do you feel that continued intensification (as distinct from continued professional development) can realistically be expected of teachers?”

Responses were somewhat unexpected, following those to Question 4.12. A solid majority of 63 percent considered that teachers had reached their limit, and thus could not be expected to take on increasing quantities of work. A further 27 percent considered that increases could be expected of teachers to some extent, while only 7 percent felt that this could be expected to a large extent. It would appear that, while many considered themselves able to cope as individuals, they had simultaneously concluded that, generally speaking, staff could not - or should not have such an expectation placed upon them. The resulting attitudes, otherwise, could be as expressed below, in typical comments.

**“Frustration, disillusionment, health and eventually apathy are the result of continued intensification and demands place upon teachers. It appears that a mindset of “out with the old and in with the new” is a CONSTANT, yet we never have an opportunity to “experience” what the old is !!“**

**(Primary Principal, 22 years’ experience, Survey)**

**“No more work is needed for teachers. There have been lots of changes in the last few years. We need time for consolidation for teachers.”**

**(Primary Principal, 16 years’ experience, Survey)**

**“We are constantly expected to do more in less time, with less. This can’t go on forever!”**

**(Primary Principal, 22 years’ experience, survey)**



That principals held concerns would appear to be clear. A point which may have to be borne in mind, however, is one mentioned repeatedly by respondents: that of quantity versus quality. The reality of a profession such as teaching may be that change is always likely, and that the question will then become one of the pace and nature and amount of change. The greater these variables are, and the degree to which they are obligatory, must logically determine the effects on both the system and the individuals in it. Too little change, and opportunities may be lost; too much and, despite the introduction of processes and projects, the demands on teachers' time may cause a decline in either the quality of the education provided, or in the health of the teachers. Consequently, it may be that consideration of work increases should be examined in the context of matters such as demands on teachers' time, teacher capacity, and the degree to which there are matching increases in resources.

Such a conclusion may be somewhat premature, despite it having been reached by various respondents, and despite frequent concerns of others, particularly in relation to professionalism and the role and status of teachers in the community. However, it may also be worthwhile for future changes to be carried out only after consultation with those whose responsibility it will then be to put it into practice. It would appear that Principals are - as perhaps they should be, as both educators and managers - in a perfect position to provide accurate and timely information on the need for change, and on the likely effects of change.

## **Summary**

**This chapter examined the causes and effects of work intensification, as perceived by State School teachers in Western Australia. It was seen that causes could be separated into three main categories - the managerialist, the educationalist, and the professional approaches - each with a number of sub-categories. For their part, the effects of intensification were able to be examined from both the professional and personal standpoints, again with a number of areas. It was apparent that both causes and effects varied in importance according to the groupings examined.**

**Teacher perceptions of work intensification appeared to be mainly of impositions on time, affecting work performance, health, and family life. More is seen as being expected - even demanded - of teachers, but with little in the way of support. Issues most widely seen by teachers as causes of intensification were matters concerning change management (including the amount and pace of change, and training); increasing workload; student behaviour and discipline; and class sizes. It was shown that perceptions of teaching duties as a significant issue in work intensification increased as class sizes increased.**

**A consistent theme was of teachers as naturally caring, dedicated individuals, interested in providing the best education possible for the students in their care. However, a regular concern of teachers was the need to adopt a multitude of roles (such as social worker, and psychologist) in order to resolve situations, and to instruct students in attitudes and life skills more properly taught in the home. Many believed that, instead of helping to educate students, they were being forced to act in a variety of non-teaching roles, essentially as surrogate parents.**

**Just as important was the perception that there had been little by way of trust or understanding, either from the education bureaucracy or from the public. One result of this was often a sense of anger and frustration towards the community which teachers were endeavouring to serve. Many teachers saw their status as trusted and valued professionals as being under threat.**

The chapter also covered the effects of work intensification. It was seen that there can be an impact on both personal and professional life, in areas such as health, work performance, family life and relationships. Reports of sleeping problems were provided by 60 percent of respondents, while a similar proportion report giving strong consideration to leaving the profession. Similarly, one in four teachers reported having relationship or marital problems as a result of work.

An apparent distinction was made by respondents between their own work situations, and their capacity to cope, on the one hand, and the situation of teachers in the public education system in general. The latter was consistently viewed as being severely affected by work intensification. This conclusion was supported by principals, who considered that teachers were in no position to cope with further work intensification.

Ultimately, dedication and innovation and efficiency on the part of teachers were considered capable of achieving only so much, and matters relating to work intensification were considered to require intervention on a broader basis, by both government and community. However, it appeared that increased public awareness was needed of both the realities of teaching, and the scope of work intensification, in order that teachers' unions might garner community support for a reasonable balance between work requirements and the needs of the individual.

## **Chapter 6**

# **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **General**

Work intensification is an issue with a high emotive content, able to colour the reactions of stakeholders, each of whom may be affected in a variety of ways, and who may have a wide range of perceptions about the relative importance of its elements. As a result, it is not an issue which can be examined as a simple linear process. As viewed by teachers, work intensification is a complex phenomenon with physical, psychological and social aspects. Indeed, it would appear frequently that there are as many different manifestations of intensification as there are individuals or groups experiencing it. This study has focused on one such group, and has provided insights into work intensification through their experiences and perceptions.

The overall aim of this study was to gain an understanding of work intensification in the State School system in Western Australia, and to determine the extent to which intensification was affecting the work and lives of a specific category of professionals. Two noticeable aspects of the study were the extent to which the issue of work intensification evoked emotional responses from many teachers, and the readiness of many to provide detailed answers. Information was obtained by means of an initial 19-person pilot study, followed by a 1000-teacher survey, and interviews. The important consideration was to focus on the perceptions of the teachers, and to ensure that data obtained reflected those perceptions.

The research was based on answering three research questions. These were developed from a review of literature on labour process theory in general and work intensification in particular. A marked distinction emerged in the literature between various schools of thought. Significant gaps became apparent, however, especially in relation to links between work intensification and the work of professionals.

The research questions were:

*“To what extent does work intensification exist amongst teachers in Western Australian State Schools?”*

*“What is the nature of work intensification amongst teachers?”*

*“What are the causes and effects of work intensification for teachers?”*

These questions were aimed at determining the boundaries of work intensification, the extent to which it was a factor in the lives of teachers, and the nature, causes, and effects of intensification. Examination of the specific issues formed the basis of the findings chapters.

Of necessity, determining the answers to these questions involved consideration of a wide range of topics, including change, health, family matters, professionalism, community attitudes and expectations, teachers' functions, and student attitudes. A number of these developed into themes, and are covered later in this chapter.

## **Evaluation**

### **Does Work Intensification Exist?**

One of the underlying issues to emerge in relation to this study was the use of the term “work intensification”, over which a real question would seem to arise. There emerged from the literature two major approaches to the meaning of the term: the wide, inclusive approach, and a more narrow, exclusive approach.

The narrow view of work intensification would appear to rely first and foremost on a view of work as manual activity leading to the production of an amount of tangible goods in a given amount of time. Subsequently, extending this concept, work intensification is seen as referring to either increases in the amount of goods produced (in other words, to increases in productivity), to increases in the amount of time worked, or to increases in

the range of duties. Where it can be shown that hours of work, for example, have decreased, it may be asserted that work intensification does not exist or is minimal (Wooden, 1999; Reith, 1999). An interesting variation on this theme is provided by Allan et al (1999), who examine the three areas of production, hours of work and range of duties, but who allocate the term “work intensification” to only the first category.

The use of narrow definitions for work intensification may be counter-productive, however, with a potential for overlooking the realities of many workplaces. While the approach might well apply in certain situations where tangible goods are produced - such as factories, mines, and fast food outlets - it is difficult to see how it could apply logically to much non-manual activity, or to occupations such as education, where the benchmark for excellence is quality rather than quantity. Indeed, using an exclusive definition, such as that of Allan et al (1999), would seem to lead inevitably to the conclusion that non-manual workplaces could never experience work intensification.

The study showed the wider, inclusive approach to work to be more applicable to the field of education, and bore out the definition of work provided in Chapter One - that work intensification included all activity related to an individual’s occupation, whether paid or unpaid, manual or intellectual, at the workplace or away from the workplace. It showed that work may include non-physical elements, such as psychological causes and effects (Heiler, 1996, 1998; Callus, 1999; Bent, 1998). While some or all of the three areas of physical activity identified by Allan et al (1999) may be involved, work intensification frequently consists of more than these. The physical aspects of a person’s work may change but little, for example, yet the person still experiences severe work intensification, of a more psychological nature.

This is consistent with the views of teachers, as expressed in written and oral information received from different sources during the study. Indeed, teachers’ responses appeared to be quite unequivocal in suggesting that work intensification did exist. When compared with the 1995 AWIRS data,

in a Work Intensification Index based on effort, pace of work, and stress (See Table 4.17), the survey figures suggested that the levels of intensification may have increased in the six years since that survey.

Work intensification was experienced by some teachers involved in the study more than by others. Male teachers - particularly males aged forty and over, and male primary teachers - while comprising a small minority of teachers in general, were more likely than their female colleagues to be affected, although female teachers forty and over reported an equal effect in relation to the complexity of work. Least affected were female teachers under forty. Other categories of teacher most affected by work intensification, as indicated in Table 4.17, included primary teachers and members of the State School Teachers' Union (SSTU).

### **What is the Nature of Work Intensification?**

On the assumption that work intensification does exist in teaching, one of the aims of the study was to determine its nature, as perceived by teachers. Based on the dichotomy in the literature mentioned above, the two aspects which it was intended to examine were the extent to which intensification might be deemed physical or psychological, and the extent to which it might then be able to be classed as either externally-imposed or as self-imposed. These aspects appeared particularly important in relation to education: where Drago et al (1997), for example, concentrated on the question of time demands on teachers, Hargreaves (1994), in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Burawoy (1979), argued persuasively for a form of complicity by teachers in their own exploitation.

Essentially, the question of whether work intensification might be described as physical or psychological lies at the heart of its definition, and thus of its extent, its causes, and its effects. For intensification to be physical only - and only some aspects of physical work at that - could be to define it so narrowly that the validity and importance of the issue itself is placed in doubt.

Indeed, there often appears to be an effort by management to justify measures which are considered to benefit organisations, society, or the

economy. Attempts have made to show that long working days help families and social life (Wallace, 1998), and that compressed working weeks improve sleep duration and quality (Wallace, 1998). Other writers suggest that part-time work shows a decrease in work intensification (Wooden, 1999) and is family-friendly (Reith, 1999), and that “productivity measures” should simply be introduced, rather than being trialled and tested to see if they are in fact productivity measures (Thomas, 1998).

Including psychological elements in a definition of intensification widens its scope, and permits a more realistic consideration of its frequently negative impact on individuals. Commentators and participants may be obliged to reflect more comprehensively on the impact of work-related activities and theories, and even to question the structure of the societal context within which the work environment exists.

The bulk of teachers surveyed (90 percent) indicated a belief that work intensification was psychological in nature, and many commented on pressure, and a perceived lack of trust and respect. Further comments highlighted stress as a major factor in teaching, due to issues such as expectations, and student behaviour. A majority of respondents indicated that they had given strong thought to resignation although, in some cases, this appeared to lead to further stress as it ran counter to the individuals’ stated desire to teach.

The other main element in the nature of work intensification was an examination of whether it might be deemed to be externally-imposed on teachers, or whether it might be more a self-imposed situation. Importantly, discussion of such a point may be seen as central to labour process theory and to its applicability to a professional work environment. Indeed, it would appear that the question might be encapsulated by a comparison of the approaches of Braverman (1974), who viewed employees as essentially the victims of work intensification imposed by their employers and by management, and Burawoy (1979), who concentrated on the notion of consent by employees.



Chapter Four showed that teachers involved in the study were in little doubt that the work intensification which they were experiencing was externally-imposed, with 85 percent supporting this view. Further support was reflected by noticeable consistency within each of the demographic variables used. It was perhaps instructive that a majority also indicated an inability to refuse additional work.

As Ackers & Black (1992) indicate, mere participation in a work situation does not by itself indicate consent. Consent to a process should not be assumed merely by virtue of the fact of people are seen to take part in that process. Indeed, true consent may be difficult to determine, unless it can be seen that a process of consultation has occurred, and that there has been full disclosure of information. This in turn is likely to require an equality between parties to a situation (Alvesson, 1987).

That such equality existed was not the conclusion reached by the majority of teachers in the study. Unlike the Burawoy (1979) thesis, with its view of employees being manipulated jointly and somewhat cynically by management and unions, the majority of teachers believed that what they were experiencing resulted from coercion, and that work intensification was externally-imposed. That they continued to operate in such an environment was due not to de facto consent, but to professionalism and a genuine concern for children's well-being and education.

### **What are the Causes of Work Intensification?**

Overall, possible causes of work intensification identified by teachers were examined from three perspectives: the managerialist, the educationist, and the professional. Broadly, these dealt respectively with the organisation of teaching, with students and the technicalities of teaching, and with the profession of teaching. The organisation of teaching covered issues such as change, devolution, class sizes, and staff selection and support (including relief) - essentially, the physical resources and duties provided for and expected of teachers. Issues covered in the other sections included student behaviour and general attitudes, parenting, teaching, community expectations and pressures, and the meaning of being a professional. This

last was approached both from the ideal of the teacher as viewed by teachers themselves, and teachers' perceptions of how they were viewed by others in reality.

Teacher perceptions of the causes of work intensification, and their relative importance, often depended on situations existing in particular schools, such as size, or the management style used. This point was made in both survey responses and interviews. The major issues mentioned included the pace and frequency of change (at times without training, time, or resources); class sizes; student behaviour; and, mainly for older teachers, information technology.

Another important element in the managerialist approach - the key element for some - was the question of trust. Considered by teachers as a vital part of being professionals, its absence on the part of education authorities and the community was frequently mentioned. In many cases, the lack of trust appeared to reflect quite closely concerns about the nature and impact of government policy on various public service organisations and attitudes raised by writers such as Muetzelfeldt (1994), Zifcak (1997), Leggett (1997), and Geiselhart (2000). For many teachers surveyed, the relationship between teachers and education authorities was one of conflict and resistance, with pressure being felt on their rights, conditions of work, status, and autonomy. Indeed, for some teachers, the situation amounted to a deliberate attempt at deprofessionalisation (Spaull, 1997).

From the educationalist perspective, one of the more important causes of work intensification was perceived to involve student behavioural issues. This included both the disruptive effects on teaching, and the need to take on a quasi parenting role in order to compensate for a lack of effective parenting in students' families. Many respondents commented on the increased and increasing numbers of roles which teachers were being expected to fill, which frequently detracted from the core role of teaching.

At the same time, however, the extent of teaching duties was seen to have increased also, with more being demanded of teachers with regard to the manner of teaching. Most affected were female teachers, those aged under

forty, and primary teachers. The study showed that the effect of teaching duties was seen to increase as class sizes increased. In addition, teachers expressed concerns over the community expectations of teachers, and of the lack of appreciation received for their efforts.

Lack of appreciation emerged as a factor when work intensification was examined from the professional perspective also. The focus of this perspective was largely on what it meant to be a teacher, as viewed by the teachers themselves. Both the literature and the research indicated that professionalism was an important consideration for teachers, and a factor in work intensification. As the model proposed in Chapter Two suggests, some interpretations of professionalism may be perceived to lead to work intensification. Hargreaves (1994) concluded that professionalism in fact often led teachers effectively to collude in their own intensification, not through a desire for additional work but rather a desire for an elusive perfection and, perhaps more importantly, in order to assuage feelings of guilt.

According to this approach, teachers may take on increasing workloads, in an effort to provide the highest quality education possible for their students. Feelings of guilt would then arise due to a belief that they had failed to achieve this, prompting them to work ever harder. However, perfection could never be achieved, according to Hargreaves (1994), as teaching was an open-ended occupation. As it was based on quality rather than quantity, and subject to ongoing change, there could never be a point at which perfection could be seen to be achieved.

Clearly, such an approach could have a powerful effect on the work situation of teachers, depending on the extent to which it could be applied. People involved in the study made repeated assertions that teachers as a body were caring individuals, dedicated to the education and welfare of their students. Teachers indicated consistently that, regardless of workload, health, or other considerations, they would not allow their standards to fall, or their students' education to suffer. One veteran male teacher with thirty-one years' experience typified this approach, commenting, "I choose not to allow physical wellbeing to interfere with work unless at critical point. I have over 1.5 years of sick leave unused."

For many teachers, faced with the impact of intensification, the tendency appeared to be to sacrifice at least some non-work aspects of their life, in order to devote the extra time to work activities. Where professionalism was interpreted as ensuring quality of teaching, there thus emerged a strong similarity to the concept of manufactured consent (Burawoy, 1979). Hargreaves (1994) suggested that this situation was one of which education authorities would tend to take advantage, but without having to expend as much effort, due to the effective cooperation of teachers.

Professionalism was also seen to act to moderate the extent of work intensification. From the teacher viewpoint of themselves as educated, trustworthy and responsible educators (Leggett, 1997; Spaul, 1997), professionalism led some teachers to adopt a more critical evaluation of work, both in itself and as it impacted on their lives. While accepting the need for organisation, there was resistance to the view that professionalism consisted of dedicated obedience to policy direction in the manner identified by Geiselhart (2000). Similarly, while accepting the need for quality of teaching, notions of guilt were rejected. Professionalism was seen as consisting of responsibility towards students, but with an underlying premise that quality of work performance depended upon the maintenance of a healthy balance between work and non-work activities.

### **What are the Effects of Work Intensification?**

The larger the workforce, the more it is likely that the effects of work intensification will be as varied as the numbers of individuals in that workforce. By and large, however, the effects may be classified as impacting on either professional or personal lives, although some, such as health, may appear in both. In relation to professional life, the most consistent reaction by teachers - both in general, and across all the demographic variables - was to identify the negative effect which work intensification had on preparation time and health. These related back to the perception that teachers were effectively prevented from providing the quality teaching they wished to provide, partly due to a lack of time to prepare adequately, and partly because health concerns also intervened.

In addition to preparation time and health, work intensification was also seen, in some cases, to have a negative effect in respect of teaching performance and professional development. In particular, male teachers, secondary teachers, and teachers forty and over were susceptible to experiencing this reaction. Country teachers also considered that there was a strong negative effect on professional development. One of the more noticeable points, however, was the generally high proportion of teachers (on average 39 percent) who indicated that work intensification had had no effect on their professional life, reflecting perhaps the frequently-mentioned determination that this should be so, and that students' education should not suffer.

What would appear to have suffered in many cases, however, were the non-work aspects of teachers' lives - social life, the balance between work and family, and health. Of these, the most important for teachers appeared to be family and health issues, with comments on time and stress reflecting concerns expressed by writers such as Heiler (1996, 1998), Spurgeon et al (1997), Bent (1998), Burchell et al (1999), and Probert et al (2000). Complaints covered matters such as exhaustion, finding time for children, marriage problems, frustration, and stress. A possible concern was that a large proportion of such comments appeared to be received from teachers with twenty or more years of experience. Also of concern was the fact that a majority of school principals considered that teachers could no longer be expected to cope with increasing workloads.

While not perhaps entering the consciousness of teachers, it might be considered that the work situation as reported by them reflects traditional marxist theory of conflict and alienation - conflict both in the general sense of employee versus management, and in the particular sense of individuals trying to balance work with family and health issues, and alienation from their roles as educators and as individuals. To the extent that this is the case, the study would seem to lend weight to the approach typified by Braverman (1974).

## **The Theoretical Framework**

Throughout this research, it was apparent that a range of often strongly differing approaches and views existed with respect to the issues of work intensification and professionalism. While these were generally clearly delineated, gaps in the literature meant that the relative importance was not initially as clear, and loomed as a potential obstacle to understanding. This was overcome in a theoretical sense with the development in Chapter Two of a model which imposed an element of order and perspective, relating differing interpretations of professionalism to each other and to work intensification.

It was seen that changes in the work situation of individuals may be as much perception as reality, but that such perception may also lead to a changed reality. Additional control mechanisms may be imposed in the workplace, additional workload may be generated, or with resistance to changes may emerge. It was seen that, while work situations may often be conflictual, there may also be a strong interplay with notions of consent and of critical thinking. As a result, the model may be seen also to facilitate the placing in context of specific issues, some of which are outlined in the following section, as well as potential solutions to problems.

## **Themes and Trends Emerging from the Research**

A number of patterns and themes stand out from this study, often with important implications for all parties concerned with state education in Western Australia.

### **Change Management**

One of the major issues highlighted in the study was the question of change in the education system. It was apparent that teachers considered that the changes which had occurred in recent years had been imposed, often for other than pedagogical reasons. The response to these changes

appeared to be generally unfavourable, with teachers seemingly unconvinced even of the need for change. One comment, from a secondary teacher, typified the overall attitude - "Improvement and change are not necessarily synonymous." A common complaint was that change appeared to be driven more by Central Office considerations than by educational need.

Even where changes as such were supported, it was stated repeatedly that the pace of change was excessive, preventing teachers from becoming familiar with one before others were introduced. An additional concern was that there was often too little guidance or direction, and either too much professional development to absorb, or too little professional development to explain the changes. Anger, frustration and stress were among the most common reactions to this situation. Teachers considered that demands placed on them were excessive, overloading them with extra functions and duties. At the same time, the provision of resources by the Education Department had often been inadequate to cope with change.

## **Time**

Closely linked with the issue of change was that of time, whether devoted to classroom teaching, preparation and marking, professional development, meetings, liaison with students, parents and community groups, to work-related functions, or to personal and family matters. Part of the problem for many teachers was a lack of support, especially for relatively mundane tasks such as filing and photocopying, which were considered more properly the province of clerical staff.

At times, the provision of apparent labour-saving devices such as computers was also seen as a problem. This was partly due to the training often needed, and partly because of a feeling that teachers were now expected to do even more work themselves. A frequent belief was that neither the community at large nor the Department appeared to understand the many and varied calls on a teacher's time, nor the total amount of time which thus had to be given over to work-related matters during a given week.

Overall, findings supported strongly the notion that changes frequently led to additional work (Etheridge et al, 1994) and affected other aspects of a teacher's life - the "time crunch" described by Drago et al (1997). Across all demographic groups, teachers themselves were in no doubt, for example, that preparation time was the aspect of work most affected by work intensification. This was also linked closely to concerns expressed about professionalism, and the frequent need to choose between quantity and quality of education. Teachers' concerns focused not so much on official hours of work as on a seemingly ever-increasing number of tasks and functions which they considered peripheral to teaching, and which occupied the time needed for lesson preparation.

## **Health**

As with preparation time, a majority of teachers considered that work intensification had had a negative effect on health. Responses appeared to become extremely negative when viewed in relation to the teaching profession in general. Health included both physical and psychological elements, and related closely to the question of stress. Findings reinforced concerns expressed in the literature (Heiler, 1996; Spurgeon et al, 1997; Benson, 1998; Bent, 1998; Hunter & McKelvie, 1999) of the negative effects of work intensification on health and wellbeing. However, despite their importance, the effects of health problems were frequently resisted by teachers, due partly to problems involved with obtaining relief, and partly to an apparent denial of self - again linked to perceptions of professional responsibility.

Overall, the survey responses regarding health suggested a situation not dissimilar to the social and work / family situations. In all three areas there emerged the picture of the teacher as not only often lacking the time for socialising with friends, or for family matters, but apparently finding difficulty even in meeting the more fundamental needs for relaxation and sleep. Approximately one-third would also appear to recognise a need to confront the issue of temper, but - perhaps surprisingly - few reported using common crutches for stress, such as alcohol and medication.



While stress figured commonly in written comments, a common pattern was for teachers to consider themselves able to cope - on a short-term basis at least - while simultaneously considering the teaching profession as a whole to be experiencing comparatively major problems. Teachers interviewed were quite frank and open in discussing personal situations and experiences, but the survey suggested only a limited inclination to use artificial means of stimulation or relaxation.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development was a consistent concern for large numbers of teachers in all categories, but particularly for males, for those in secondary schools, those in the country, and those over the age of forty. Many respondents considered that one of the causes of work intensification had been not merely the quantity and pace of change, but also a lack of guidance, direction and training - leading to problems of implementation.

A number of respondents took the contrary view, that the problem was the requirement to do too much training, thus reducing the amount of time available for other matters, such as preparation, and reflection. In both cases, the perception appeared to be that more effort was needed to synchronise work changes and the related professional development, and to then ensure that this matched the time requirements of teachers in a realistic manner.

### **Experience**

While it did not appear to figure in the literature, one of the more apparent findings to emerge in relation to work intensification was the issue of age and experience. Consistently, teachers aged over forty were most likely to experience - or to perceive the existence of - work intensification, and to consider its effects to be negative. This related to both physical aspects, such as the hours worked, effort, and teaching performance, and psychological aspects such as stress. The implications of this, both from the point of view of the continued professional dedication of the State's

most experienced teachers, and from the point of view of the general health of the teacher body overall should not be underestimated. As the survey suggested that a large proportion of teachers might fall into the experienced category (in this case, sixty-eight percent), care could be needed in order to prevent any large-scale crisis in either the availability or health of teaching personnel.

### **Personal versus General**

One of the more unexpected - and, potentially, most important - outcomes of the study was an apparent distinction of teacher perceptions between the individual and the general. The implication was that teachers tended to consider themselves relatively able to cope with changes, while simultaneously considering that the teaching profession in general were not. The implication of this was that teachers would be then likely to persuade themselves that they were capable of accepting additional workloads and pressures, and that they would thus contribute further to an intensification of work.

While this concept was enticing (for example in respect of teacher health and morale) for providing a possible insight into the influence of professionalism on individual attitudes and actions, and while it appeared to support the findings of Hargreaves (1994) in relation to the causes of work intensification, the pattern could not be confirmed in respect of teachers. However, confirmation would seem more likely to be possible with regard to principals, and would suggest that further specific research might be worthwhile.

### **Uncertainty and Confusion**

Uncertainty appeared to be a significant issue for many teachers, covering a range of topics. A fundamental concern was the inability to find a definitive statement of direction for education which could then be translated into everyday teaching. Many teachers appeared to no longer

have a sense of their role, either as individuals or as members of a profession in the general community, and this reached the extent of creating a sense of isolation. In addition, considerable comment was made over the practice of merit selection - dubbed “the Myth of Merit Selection” by one interviewee - which was often seen as creating uncertainty and insecurity with regard to appointment, and as distracting teachers from teaching. A sense of confusion also appeared to emerge in relation to understanding the changes which were implemented and the expectations which other people had for teachers.

One possible consequence of this was suggested by the overall survey results, where a large minority of respondents appeared to consider the effects of work intensification to have had neither positive nor negative effects. This has the reinforce the distinction between general and individual, and further pointing to a determination by teachers that there should be no effect on the ultimate test of professionalism - teaching. It might be questioned whether it also could point to a lack of decisiveness, or to a form of withdrawal, as suggested by one primary teacher interviewed.

## **Principals**

It was considered important that principals responded to the survey, given their role in a devolved education system. While ultimately their focus was on student education, in an operational sense they formed a level connecting the classroom teacher and the central bureaucracy. Depending on the leadership style of individual Principals, this could represent either a conduit or a protective layer. However, the nature of their role also necessitated at least a degree of analysis of the position of teachers - which was not always evident in the teachers’ responses.

While following the same overall pattern as teachers, and often appearing to believe themselves able to cope with work intensification, the principals surveyed also showed a strong belief that teachers were experiencing problems, and were unable to cope with further intensification. Given their

dual role as educators and managers, principals clearly experienced different forms of intensification, but also felt responsibilities to teachers. Their existence as a discrete grouping would appear to be important, and to provide a worthwhile area for research.

### **Class Sizes**

The examination of work intensification throughout this study considered a number of demographic variables, and some of these, such as age and gender and teaching level, were regularly significant. However, the issue of class sizes appeared to cut across all factors, as one of the most important issues currently in terms of the delivery of education. Class sizes were identified by teachers as a major cause of intensification, and a strong link appeared to be evident between the two. The extent of teaching duties, for example, was itself increasingly seen as a cause of intensification as class sizes increased. When asked to choose between additional salary and additional staff, a large majority of respondents chose the latter, further indicating the significance of the issue.

### **Professionalism**

It is unlikely that any study of the education system could be undertaken without at least a brief examination of the role of professionalism. In this study, the emphasis was on determining the nature of professionalism, and any impact or influence on the intensification of the work of State School teachers. It became apparent from the research that professionalism was indeed an important factor in the minds of teachers.

Differences of interpretation emerged between a managerialist approach, attributed by many teachers to the education authorities (and occasionally to principals), and the more trusting, autonomous approach espoused by teachers themselves. These two approaches to professionalism indicated more than mere differences of opinion, and reflected rather a fundamental philosophical conflict. Such conflict created, or at least exacerbated, work intensification for teachers, with effects felt in the school and at home. The

managerialist approach was seen as leading to additional non-teaching tasks and functions (such as reports, meetings - including with parents and community groups - and training). All of these were time-consuming, and thus diverted teachers' energy and focus away from teaching. as a form of attack on the status of teachers as professionals.

Teachers as a whole were very much aware of their work situation, however, and a generally sceptical attitude was displayed towards the views of the education authorities. Professionalism was seen to revolve around quality in matters pedagogical and responsibility with regard to the education of students. While a potential influence on teachers of ideas of perfectionism was noted, the effective collusion of teachers in their own exploitation noted by Hargreaves (1994) appeared to be generally rejected - although a number of those interviewed admitted to such tendencies when younger. Overall, the scepticism adopted by teachers often appeared to be closely aligned with the questioning approach of the critical theorists, and it appeared that professionalism could be both a bulwark against blind acceptance of official views and a means of seeing the world realistically.

## **Implications**

One of the more important general outcomes of the study has been an appreciation of teachers as professionals, and an increase in knowledge of the work situation confronting professionals in general. It is considered that the study contributes to the literature in the field of work intensification in a number of ways. It defines more inclusively the concept of work intensification, examines its nature, causes and effects, and shows its application to professionals. It examines the various ways in which work intensification forms a significant element in the lives of teachers, and the extent to which it may be considered to be imposed by others or by teachers themselves.

It has been seen in the study that work intensification is a complex phenomenon, with a potential for affecting not merely an individual's work performance, but also areas such as health and safety, relationships,

and family life. The study supports works by writers such as Hargreaves (1994), Heiler (1996), Spurgeon et al (1997), Bent (1998), Callus (1999), and Hunter & McKelvie (1999) in identifying the presence of effects on health, and reinforces the concept that work intensification has both physical and psychological aspects. It also provides implications for teachers, teachers' unions, and the education system overall.

## **Teachers**

The major point to be made about teachers is that they form a body of professionals dedicated to the education of their students. They have adapted to a range of complex changes over a number of years, and managed to cope with increased demands on their time, energy, and health. However, for many teachers it would seem that coping strategies have been failing, and that problems have begun to be experienced with work performance, health, and home life. These problems often then rebound and have a further impact on morale and performance.

Health - including psychological health - was a concern for many teachers, who expressed feelings of anger, confusion, and stress. For teachers, the implications of continuing work intensification is for such matters to be exacerbated beyond reasonable levels, and for this to cause a decline in the quality of their core function - teaching. An increasing trend has seen teachers opting for part-time work, in an effort to reduce the demands upon them, and to restore some balance between work and private lives. Depending on how this is implemented, however, the success of this strategy may be more apparent than real. Such a trend to part-time teaching may have the potential to increase, if measures are not taken to reduce demands on teachers. Ultimately, any such measures may depend on decisions of individual teachers as to what are acceptable work levels.

## **Teacher Unions**

While State School teachers remain relatively highly unionised, chiefly through the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia (SSTUWA), the study indicated that many teachers regarded membership

of the union as not relevant to their needs as professionals, and opted not to join. Some principals belonged to Principals' Associations, but generally teachers who did not join the SSTU tended to avoid all memberships. In some cases, teachers in the study indicated that their SSTU membership was more passive than active, partly because of attitudes towards the union in the school administration, and partly because they themselves wanted an organisation which could cater for their professional needs rather than simply fulfilling an industrial role. This may indicate a need for the SSTU to seek ways of becoming more active in communicating its role and value, and in developing support measures - for example, developing links with the various professional teacher associations.

The study suggested that several groups were more affected than others and therefore potentially more in need of a support network. Amongst non-union teachers, these groups included teachers under forty and female teachers, primary teachers, and country teachers. People in these categories provided response rates of between 93 percent and 96 percent affirming their belief that work intensification was psychological. This suggests the need for specific processes catering for such groups, as well as for others - such as secondary teachers in general and male teachers - who appeared to be more vulnerable than some to intensification.

### **The State Education System**

While workload issues have been a regular focus of the State School Teachers' Union and other organisations, such as the ACTU, for a number of years, this study suggests that more fundamental consideration may need to be given to the issue. Indeed, it could be questioned whether the situation might be considered to have gone beyond the problem stage to that of crisis. Certainly it is considered that serious problems exist. The research showed sixty percent of the teachers involved had given serious consideration to resignation. In addition, sixty percent reported having sleeping problems; nearly half of the people with families had problems with their children; and a quarter of married staff had marriage problems, all due to increased work pressures.

On the credit side, it must again be emphasised that teachers displayed very high levels of dedication to their profession, as well as a determination to ensure that students received a quality education. This was one of the most persistent messages to come from the study, and suggests the importance of maintaining that attitude. The question would appear to be finding a balance between the extent to which teachers need to support change and accept a degree of work intensification in order to cater for that change, and the extent to which the Department might be prepared to support teachers in order to minimise or avoid intensification altogether.

## **Research Implications**

This study has shown that Labour Process Theory continues to be relevant to the modern world of work. Management and employees continue to hold differing perceptions of the processes of work, and these frequently influence perceptions about the meaning and role of work and the values contained therein. Differences have been shown to be not merely contained in literature, but to have a daily impact in the lives of teachers. Findings have tended to vindicate the views of Braverman (1974) on the essentially conflictual nature of work, including work intensification and exploitation of staff, but have suggested also that the notion of consent as put forward by Burawoy (1979) may be the other side of the same coin, not least with regard to education.

In this research, a broad definition of work intensification has been shown to be important, especially as it affects education professionals. Such a definition facilitates development of a more accurate picture of demands and pressures inherent in the working life of teachers than is possible with more limited definitions. A model provided outlines the relationship between work intensification and the different interpretations of professionalism, in a context of control and resistance. It was found to be of considerable value not only in synthesising the literature, but also in structuring and examining the survey and interview data. This research creates a logical network linking work intensification and professionalism in a manner which may be used by researchers to relate management and labour perspectives at different levels and across different occupations.



This both facilitates and leads to the identification of implications for future research, both theoretical and applied. Although centred on education, the current findings are capable of wide application throughout other professions, such as medicine and law, where practitioners may regularly be obliged to cope with the pressures and demands which go to make up work intensification. The professions provide a promising field of research, yet to be fully explored, and yet to be located properly within the general labour process in the community, rather than being considered to exist separately. Questions of control and coercion (Braverman, 1974), consent (Burawoy, 1979), and seduction (Hargreaves, 1994) might validly be examined in this regard, as might linkages between physical effort and psychological reaction.

Within education, the need would appear to exist for an audit of teaching, focusing not on student outcomes or on general pedagogical matters, but on a form of cost-benefit analysis of the organisation of teaching and of the demands placed on teachers themselves. Have we seen, as Miller (1995) suggests, the replacement of academic professionalism with managerialism? Or is public education able to be included in the post-managerialist contractualism identified by Trosa (1997)? Is there common ground between different approaches, or are they mutually exclusive?

Such research could involve development of a model for critically comparing perceived advantages with respect to national education objectives (such as attaining certain levels of literacy and numeracy), and to students themselves, with the costs to teachers and the community. These costs may well involve issues such as teacher health, stress, work / family balance, and effects on work performance and education quality. Important also would be an examination of the role of teacher unions and the industrial relations system in ensuring a sustainable education system.

Based on results of this study, one of the more important requirements of research would appear to be to critically identify community views, aims, and desires with regard to public education, and subsequently to make comparison with current approaches. Such analysis would tend to be strategic, and possibly vital for future directions in education. It is likely

that issues would need to include teacher numbers and professionalism, current and future expectations held of public education, of teachers, and, ultimately, even the desired nature and structure of society.

## **Conclusion**

Work intensification is very real issue for State School teachers in Western Australia. With respect to the first research question, issues of time, class size, the physical effort required of teachers, and health, were major physical indicators of work intensification to emerge from the study. However, teaching has long been an occupation requiring regular and considerable amounts of out-of-hours work, whether it is the traditional marking and preparation, or activities such as supervising sport. Similarly, large classes are not a modern phenomenon. Thus the mere existence of such elements may not necessarily indicate teacher work intensification.

As viewed by teachers, however, the situation in recent years has frequently exceeded what might be considered reasonable limits. Multiple changes, additional duties, functions, expectations, extra complexity, effort, responsibility, and insecurity, have been reported as leading to confusion, frustration, and anger, and to a range of personal, health, domestic, and professional problems. These have often caused teachers' psychological considerations to take on a greater importance than the physical. As part of this, there has been a strong adverse effect on personal life. In turn, this has often had a detrimental effect on work performance and attitudes.

As a result of increased demands and complexity in their work, it is appropriate that indicators of work intensification amongst State School teachers, forming the focus of Research Question One, should include serious psychological issues. These may stem from existing physical work demands, or may exist as discrete work issues, and include health, stress, relations with colleagues, sleep, and marital problems. Whether at a macro level in the Education Department, or in individual schools, it is possible to make a realistic assessment of the situation confronting teachers.

By way of answering the second research question, a large majority of teachers involved in the study considered themselves to have been experiencing a situation imposed upon them externally by government, by the education authorities, and by the community at large. Although teachers in general showed themselves to be dedicated, caring professionals, it may be wondered whether the cumulative effects of work intensification might not prove to be counter-productive, in terms of both teacher welfare and the outcomes currently desired from the public education system. Gaining an understanding of such issues may assist all parties - teachers, unions and the Education Department - to plan realistically for the future.

Ultimately, however, finding a solution to work intensification may be a long-term issue. While it may be a question of action by government, or its agent, the Education Department, it is also likely that an essential precursor to action will be a re-evaluation of the education system by the Western Australian community as a whole. The crucial issue to be decided may well be what the community - as a community - expects and requires of a public education system. What outcomes are seen as optimum? What are the criteria for judging the success or otherwise of the system? In turn, an important part of such a process should be to decide what is expected from teachers within the system, and what the community is prepared to do to ensure that these expectations are both achievable and reasonable.

Determining issues at a strategic level is likely to enable attention to be paid to more operational matters such as performance indicators, and requirements for resources, funding, and staffing. Matters such as class size, professional recognition, community status, remuneration, workload, health, and quality of education may be easier to determine once overall, realistic objectives are identified and understood. This balancing of the needs and requirements of the community, students and teachers, in such a manner as to avoid paradigmatic divisions, may well be the major challenge for public education in Western Australia in the twenty-first century.

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# **Appendix**

## **The Survey Instrument**

# Work Intensification in State Schools

## Teacher Survey

### A) YOUR WORK SITUATION

**1. To what extent, over the past two years,**

**Increased    No Change    Decreased**

- |  |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Have your hours of work changed?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Has the effort you put into your work changed?                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Has the pace at which you do your work changed?                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Has your range of duties changed?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Have you been required<br>to take on extra responsibility?                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Has the complexity of your work changed?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Has the stress you have in your work changed?                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Has your satisfaction with your work changed?                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Has your satisfaction with the balance between<br>family and work life changed? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**2. Where there have been changes in your work or in the work of the school, to what extent do you see the following as reasons? (Please circle one number for each)**

- |                                       | Not<br>at all |   |   | Large<br>Extent |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---|---|-----------------|
| 1. The extent of teaching duties      | 1             | 2 | 3 | 4    5          |
| 2. The extent of non-teaching duties: |               |   |   |                 |
| a. Accountability Requirements        | 1             | 2 | 3 | 4    5          |
| b. Increased Administration           | 1             | 2 | 3 | 4    5          |
| c. Out-of-hours activities            | 1             | 2 | 3 | 4    5          |
| 3. Curriculum Changes                 | 1             | 2 | 3 | 4    5          |
| 4. Community Expectations             | 1             | 2 | 3 | 4    5          |
| 5. Information technology changes     | 1             | 2 | 3 | 4    5          |
| 6. Other (Please indicate)            | 1             | 2 | 3 | 4    5          |
| a. ....                               | 1             | 2 | 3 | 4    5          |
| b. ....                               | 1             | 2 | 3 | 4    5          |
| c. ....                               | 1             | 2 | 3 | 4    5          |

**3. Over the past two years, how would you describe the effect of changes in workload requirements and intensity on: (Please tick)**

	<b>Mainly Negative</b>			<b>Mainly Positive</b>	
1. Your teaching performance?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Your student outcomes?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Your preparation time?	1	2	3	4	5
4. The amount of PD you do?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Your relations with colleagues?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Your relations with students?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Your health?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Other (Please indicate)?					
a. ....	1	2	3	4	5
b. ....	1	2	3	4	5
c. ....	1	2	3	4	5

**4. To what extent:**

	<b>Not at all</b>			<b>Totally</b>	
1. Have changes in your work been:					
a. required changes?	1	2	3	4	5
b. your own choice?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Do you feel in control of your work?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Have you ever felt under any pressure to take on additional work?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Have you been required to take on additional subjects or functions?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Do you feel able to say no to extra work?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Do you feel an obligation to take on more?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Do you gain self-image from work?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Does doing more increase your satisfaction?	1	2	3	4	5
9. Do you look forward to work each morning?	1	2	3	4	5
10 Have you considered leaving teaching?	1	2	3	4	5
11 Do you see work intensification as:					
a. being physical?	1	2	3	4	5
b. being psychological?	1	2	3	4	5
12 To what extent would you be able to cope with any increases in workload?	1	2	3	4	5
13 Do you view changes more as:					
a. Impositions	1	2	3	4	5
b. Challenges	1	2	3	4	5

**5 . What strategies would you use for coping with additional workload? (Tick all relevant boxes)**

1. ☐ Working longer hours?
  2. ☐ Less preparation?
  3. ☐ Taking more work home?
  4. ☐ Other (Please indicate)?
- .....
- .....
- .....

**6 . To what extent would the following help to alleviate work pressures? (Please Tick)**

	Not at all				Totally
1. Extra salary	1	2	3	4	5
2. Extra staff	1	2	3	4	5
3. Fewer classroom hours	1	2	3	4	5
4. More professional development	1	2	3	4	5
5. More preparation time	1	2	3	4	5
6. Extra resources	1	2	3	4	5
7. Other (Please indicate)					
a .....	1	2	3	4	5
b .....	1	2	3	4	5
c .....	1	2	3	4	5

**7 . In an average week, how many hours: (Please tick)**

1. Do you spend on work activities altogether?  
(Include school, home, and elsewhere) ☐ <20 ☐ 21-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ >50
2. Do you spend teaching? ☐ <10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-19 ☐ 20-24 ☐ >25
3. Do you spend on non-teaching activities,  
(eg meetings, functions, sport, preparation,  
marking, admin, drama, union, or pastoral)? ☐ <10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-19 ☐ 20-24 ☐ >25
4. Do you have for DOTT time? ☐ None ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ >10
5. Would be an optimum full-time workload? ☐ 30-34 ☐ 35-39 ☐ 40-44 ☐ 45-49 ☐ >50

## B) SOCIAL / DOMESTIC / PERSONAL

**8. During an average week, to what extent has workload had an impact on your private, social and domestic life? (Please tick one box)**

☐ No Impact   ☐ Some Impact   ☐ Large Impact   ☐ Uncertain

**9. If there has been an impact, in which areas has it been most strongly felt: (Please tick any relevant points)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work which you take home?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socialising with friends or relatives?           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After-hours work-related events (eg, PD, meetings, functions) outside the home? | <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship or marriage problems?               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-work-related social activities (eg, church, movies, family outings)?        | <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship with children?                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Use of: <input type="checkbox"/> alcohol |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The amount of sleep per night?  | <input type="checkbox"/> anti-depressants                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household chores (inside and out)?  | <input type="checkbox"/> coffee   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation (eg, reading, TV, gardening)?  | <input type="checkbox"/> painkillers                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical exercise (eg, sport, gym)?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional problems:                              |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Anger  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Impatience                                       |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Crying   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please indicate)   |   |

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**10. Please indicate:**

	Very Low					Very High				
1. How is your energy in an average week?	1	2	3	4	5					
2. What is the frequency of minor health problems (eg, headaches, migraine, colds)?	1	2	3	4	5					
3. What is your satisfaction level over the split between work and home activities?	1	2	3	4	5					
4. How would you rate your general morale?	1	2	3	4	5					
5. How would you rate the effects of your workload on your health?		1	2	3	4					

**11. How many days of sick leave have you taken during the last twelve months?**

☐ <5   ☐ 5-10   ☐ 11-15   ☐ >15

## C) STATISTICAL DATA

### 12. Personal

- What is your age range: ☐ 20-29 ☐ 50-59  
☐ 30-39 ☐ 60-69  
☐ 40-49
- What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female
- What is your marital status? ☐ Married ☐ Separated ☐ Other  
☐ Single ☐ Divorced
- Is your household ☐ single-income  
☐ multiple income
- Do you have children aged under 18? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, how many? .....
- What are their age ranges? ☐ 0-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ > 15

### 13. Professional

- Is your employment: ☐ Casual?  
☐ Temporary?  
☐ Permanent?
- Are you employed: ☐ Full-time?  
☐ Part-time?
- Are you mainly involved with ☐ Primary education? ☐ Special education?  
☐ Secondary education?  
☐ Other? .....
- Where are you based? ☐ City  
☐ Country
- Is your main work in: ☐ Management (eg, as Principal)?  
☐ Teaching?
- For how many years have you been a teacher? .....
- (Where applicable) For how many years have you been a Principal? .....
- (Where applicable) How many subjects do you teach? .....
- What is your current normal class size? .....
- (Where applicable) Do you teach ☐ Single classes  
☐ Split classes
- How would you describe the socio-economic area where you work? (Please tick)  
☐ Low  
☐ Medium  
☐ High
- Do you belong to a union? ☐ None  
☐ State School Teachers' Union  
☐ Primary Principals' Association  
☐ Secondary Principals' Association  
☐ Other (Please indicate) .....

## D) PRINCIPALS / DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

**14.** How many full-time equivalent teachers are at your school? .....

**15.** To what extent, over the last two years:

Has teachers' work intensified?    ☐ Increased   ☐ No Change   ☐ Decreased

**16.** What has been the effect of workload changes on:

- |                           |  |                                    |  |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Teachers' performance? | <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly Negative | <input type="checkbox"/> No Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly Positive |
| 2. Student outcomes?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly Negative | <input type="checkbox"/> No Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly Positive |
| 3. The health of staff    | <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly Negative | <input type="checkbox"/> No Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly Positive |
| 4. Staff morale           | <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly Negative | <input type="checkbox"/> No Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly Positive |
| 5. Staff turnover         | <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly Negative | <input type="checkbox"/> No Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly Positive |

**17.** To what extent do you feel that continued intensification (as distinct from continued professional improvement) can realistically be expected of teachers?

- ☐ Not at all  
☐ Some Extent  
☐ Large Extent  
☐ Uncertain

**18.** Are there any other points which you wish to make? (Please feel free to add extra sheets if required.)

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.....  
.....  
.....

**Thank You**

Please return the questionnaire in the envelope provided.