Strategies used by beginning class III and IV rural school principals in dealing with problems encountered in the initial stages of their appointments

Gail Marguerite McLay

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STRATEGIES USED BY BEGINNING CLASS III AND IV RURAL SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN DEALING WITH PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF THEIR APPOINTMENTS

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USE OF THESIS

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STRATEGIES USED BY BEGINNING CLASS III AND IV RURAL SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN DEALING WITH PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF THEIR APPOINTMENTS

BY

Gail Marguerite McLAY

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of Bachelor of Education (Honours) at the Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia.

Date of submission: 23.7. 92
DECLARATION

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

Gail McLay
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ABSTRACT

In Western Australia, in the last decade, there can be little doubt that educational leaders at all levels have faced substantial changes in their roles. New dimensions have been added to the role of principal and this emergent role is yet to be clearly identified. Principals are no longer solely conduits for centrally determined policies. They are now expected to undertake responsibilities such as school development planning, school based decision making and managing school grants.

The appointment of a teacher to the principalship of the smaller rural school, in this study a Class III or IV school, is a significant step since it often represents the first attempt at principalship. Primary school principals practising in remote areas of Western Australia experience many of the problems encountered by their urban counterparts. Rural areas however, provide unique problems not encountered in city schools. These include the isolation factor and the effects of living and working in small, close-knit communities where the school is often the focus of the community.

Many principals entering this situation for the first time have inadequate training or experience for their new role. They are faced with having to effectively manage a school with professional help, in most cases, at a great distance. Community involvement in these remote rural centres is reported as "intense" and the principal has the additional responsibility of maintaining harmonious relationships between the school and the community.
The purpose of this study was to identify the major professional and nonprofessional problems of thirteen beginning principals of small rural schools in Western Australia during the initial stage of their appointments in 1991. It reports those problems and the coping strategies used by the beginning principals and the type of support available.

Using a qualitative research design, it was found that the nonprofessional factors caused more problems for the principals than the professional factors. The major nonprofessional problems were a function of the isolation factor both for the principals and their families. The major professional problems centred on time management and managing change in communities perceived to be resistant to change. The coping strategies reported were varied. An emergent theme, however, was that one should accept the community as it was and endeavour to adapt oneself to the lifestyle.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Study

This is a study of the strategies used by principals in small rural schools to deal with problems encountered in the first few months of their appointment. It reports the perceptions of those principals both with regard to problems encountered in their professional and non-professional roles and the attempts to deal effectively with those problems.

The appointment of a teacher to the principalship of the smaller rural school, a Class III or Class IV school, is a significant step since it often represents the first attempt at principalship. The newly appointed officer must grapple with interpreting the new professional role in a new context. This is often a difficult task for professionals who, for the most part, experience many things for the first time. They are taking on, for example, an administrative role, multi-level teaching, living and working in a remote rural setting and being socially and professionally isolated.

Given the geographical range of rural situations, it is expected that there will be a great diversity in the type of problems encountered. However, it is also expected that common sets of problems should emerge. Such problems as inadequate housing, isolation from colleagues, high costs of living, high costs of returning home for holidays and having to play a pivotal role in a community with probable alien interests and values make up a complex matrix of factors. The beginning principals of Class III and Class IV rural schools may need to address sets of problems perhaps not encountered by their urban counterparts. These will require particular strategies to be used by the principals based on their experience, the
type of support network they see as available and their perceptions of the severity
and type of problem.

1.2 Background to the Study
In recent years the education system in Western Australia has undergone profound
system level changes. The Beazley (1984) inquiry into education in Western
Australia was in response to an international trend demanding greater effectiveness
and economic efficiency from government departments. Subsequently the
Government White Paper, Managing Change in the Public Sector (Burke, 1986)
proposed a corporate management style for all departments and proposed
guidelines to meet the political and economic challenges for change. It pointed out
that to meet these challenges a flexible and adaptable management structure must
exist.

In 1987, the Ministry of Education released Better Schools in Western Australia:
A Programme for Improvement. This was based upon the Government White
Paper rationale for change and outlined the specific approach the education system
needed to provide an administration which was flexible and responsive to
economic, political and community needs. Among other strategies, a decentralized
administration was suggested.

The restructuring of the bureaucracies of the system has been according to
cost-effective designs which has resulted in decentralized administration and the
devolution of decision-making to schools. This, coupled with increasing local
accountability and declining levels of resources for education has placed the
principal in a new, multi-faceted role involving a complex range of administrative
tasks and responsibilities. Recent indications are that the role of principal in the
current political arena is not clearly defined. Many principals have inadequate
training and experience for the task.
Recent research (Harvey, 1988; Washbourne, 1988) examined the learning experiences and professional development needs of newly appointed principals. Harvey (1989, pp. 146-148) recommended the need for further research by obtaining data concerning the levels of administrative skills and the specific professional development needs of beginning principals. That author recommended the development of job descriptions and suggested that they are critical to the articulation of appropriate professional development needs.

In Western Australia, present formal support systems for newly appointed Class III and Class IV principals include initiatives from Central and District Offices and professional organizations such as the Primary Principals' Association. Induction programmes are currently conducted by the Ministry of Education. However, Harvey (1989) suggested that a review be undertaken to see if the content and delivery of support can be further improved.

As a result of the 1990 Memorandum of Agreement between the State School Teachers' Union and the Ministry of Education, Class IV schools will cease to exist from 1992 and all schools with less than 100 students will form a new Class 3 category. Because of this impending change this study will include some current Class III schools.

1.3 **Statement of the Problem**

This study will identify the problems encountered by beginning principals in Class III or Class IV rural schools in the initial stages of their appointments and the coping strategies they use. While there are a number of Class III and Class IV schools in metropolitan areas this study will focus on those in rural areas.

A beginning principal is defined as a person appointed to the principalship for the first time without any previous experience in the role. A Class III school is defined under regulation 162 (WA Education Department, 1960) as a school which
has an average daily enrolment of less than 100 and to which not less than two full
time teachers are assigned. A Class IV school is defined under the same regulation
as a school to which less than two full-time teachers are assigned.

The term "rural" in this study is used in the same context as that used by the
Ministry of Education in relation to defining geographical regions. The
Commonwealth Schools Commission publication Schooling in Rural Australia
(1988) reported some of the commonalities among the rural community. These
features include living at a distance from any major centre of population,
dependence on agricultural or mining industries and a relative lack of community
services.

For the purposes of this study, "problem" is defined as a degree of anxiety or
concern. In some cases the perceived problems may well be the symptoms rather
than the causes and it may be difficult for the subjects to articulate the problem.
The problems will be categorized in two ways; Firstly, those which relate directly
to the workplace or organization and pertain to learning the role as it relates to
administrative tasks (planning, staff management, curriculum management,
students, administration routines and external relationships); Secondly, those
which originate in the personal domain and pertain to the difficulties of establishing
oneself in a new community. In the rural context these factors are complex and it
is sometimes difficult to make a clear distinction between professional and
nonprofessional problems.

Several factors may have combined to result in a problematic situation for
beginning principals in Class III and Class IV Western Australian rural schools in
the initial stages of their appointments.
Some of these factors could be:

1. the restructuring of the Ministry of Education and the resulting changing role of the principal;
2. research showing that beginning principals are inadequately prepared for their new roles;
3. the lack of previous research into coping strategies for people in this situation;
4. the isolation involved for the Class III and Class IV rural principal and the lack of support within close proximity;
5. the unique environment of the small rural school and the close community ties;
6. the difficulty for some beginning principals of not only taking on a new role but at the same time learning to live in an environment often completely alien to them; and
7. the critical nature of the initial step into the principalship.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

The demands on a beginning principal bear directly upon the changed leadership role of the school principal. Better Schools (1987) implied that principals should adopt a new style of management. The thrust of the State Government policy regarding management of change in the public sector is based upon the principles of Human Resource Management Theory. According to Washbourne (1988, p. 46),

...the implications of this for the role of the school principal are broadly that they must achieve a balance between relationship and task-oriented behaviour according to the contingencies of the local situation in which they are placed and the situational elements that pertain.
New dimensions have been added to the role of principal and this emergent role is yet to be clearly identified. They are now expected to undertake responsibilities such as school development planning, school based decision-making and managing school grants. These new dimensions which have been added to the role of principal place additional burdens on beginning principals, not adequately trained for their new role and who are sent to isolated environments where advice and support are not within close proximity as in urban centres.

Beginning principals are faced not only with an emerging nontraditional and undefined role which is a result of Ministry restructuring but also with the problems associated with moving from the "teacher" mindset into the "principal" mindset. This process will vary in time and ease according to each appointee's background and personality.

The "self determining school" is another product of the restructuring and another facet that beginning principals must interpret. A self determining school is one where there is capacity to make policies at school level and where there are opportunities for participation. Principals need to have the capacity to involve parents and teachers in policy making at school level.

Schools are negotiated structures which engage in a cycle of activities. Demands on the principal are varied depending on the rhythm and momentum of the school year. The problems and experiences associated with the start-up phase of the school year may differ from those which usually occur mid year or at the end of the school year. Also, even within this timeframe demands on the principal are not static. Problems within the start-up phase could be actually confronting the demands of administration, setting priorities, delegating and developing a network of influence.
In a study by Harvey (1989), it was found that, in most small schools, the principal's main frames of reference were to continue the existing patterns of organisation, to maintain standards of educational achievement, to support staff with classroom teaching and to promote good working relationships among members of the schools community. There were three basic things these people had to learn:

1. detailed working knowledge of school operations - many appointees have teacher identity rather than principal identity,
2. network of influence - links with the school community
3. what the principalship is all about.

The same study clarifies the demands faced by a beginning principal in the context of the cyclical nature of the school year. Term one, the start-up phase of a school, centres on the process of establishing a presence in the school and special effort must be made for the principal not to make changes that will diminish support from staff, students and the community or to promote consciously their own values in the school. In the rural context, where the school is a community focus, caution must be exercised with regard to principal-initiated changes since principals vary in their capacity to read the culture of the school accurately. Harvey (1989, p.20) asserted that:

Typically the new principals were overwhelmed with information concerning current school initiatives, resources and environmental factors. Paradoxically it was difficult for the principals to obtain and interpret feedback which established the degree of acceptance by staff of their pattern of influence.
1.5 Research Questions

The main questions to be addressed in this study are:

1. What professional problems were encountered by principals in the initial stages of their appointments and what strategies did they use to help overcome these professional problems?

2. What nonprofessional problems were encountered by principals in the initial stages of their appointments and what strategies did they use to help overcome these nonprofessional problems?

Additional questions will be addressed to provide background data:

3. What were the selection criteria for Class III and Class IV principals?

4. What form of induction did principals receive?

5. What prior knowledge of the role of a Class III or Class IV principal did the new appointee have?

1.6 Significance of the study

Primary school principals practising in remote areas of Western Australia experience many of the problems encountered by their urban colleagues. Rural areas, however, provide many unique problems not relevant to city schools. Principals entering this situation for the first time have inadequate training for or experience of the job ahead of them. Many have never lived in a rural community for an extended period of time. They are faced with having to run a school effectively and efficiently with help, in most cases, at a great distance.

The failure of an educational system to provide adequate support for newly appointed principals would represent a substantial waste of human resource (Harvey, 1988). Information about the needs of principals in the current economic, political and social climate will aid in the development of relevant,
needs-based induction programmes. In particular, this study will provide some insight into the coping strategies adopted by beginning Class III and Class IV principals in response to problems encountered in the first few months of their appointments.

This study will have significance for beginning Class III and Class IV principals. Identification of the major problems and the coping strategies adopted will provide new appointees with a practical guide about what to expect in their new jobs. This will lead to a clearer understanding of the role of the principal and prepare them for likely difficulties. In light of the problems identified the Ministry of Education will be able to examine the content of current induction courses in order to evaluate their relevance to the current needs of newly appointed Class III and Class IV principals.

This study will add to the limited research addressing this topic and will serve as a record to broaden knowledge in this area. Tertiary institutions will be able to evaluate current preservice courses in the light of current data and professional associations, such as the Primary Principals' Association and the International Institute for Policy and Administrative Studies will be able to update professional packages being offered to newly appointed Class III and Class IV rural principals.

1.7 Limitations of the study

There are several limitations of this study. As noted in Chapter 2 there is a gap in the literature. Most of the recent literature is North American and focuses on beginning principals without particular reference to rural settings. Local studies by Harvey (1988) and Washbourne (1988) address the professional development needs of newly appointed principals without the specific context of the Class III or Class IV rural school. The range of experience and backgrounds of the new appointees poses questions about the reliability and validity of the collected data and subsequent analysis. This study is limited also to newly appointed Class III
and Class IV rural school principals only and the assumptions cannot necessarily be generalized to include all principals.

1.8 Methodology

1.8.1 Data Collection

The sample consisted of the fourteen newly appointed principals to Class III and Class IV rural schools in 1991. The school communities were distributed throughout Western Australia and consisted of a variety of small rural schools including aboriginal schools. Other sources of data included Central and District Office personnel and in some cases the spouses of the principals.

The method employed in this study was based on a descriptive and qualitative design of research. A descriptive study can be defined as a study that describes and interprets 'what is'. It is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, options that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident or trends that are developing (Best, 1981, p.93).

The instruments used in this research were a questionnaire (see Appendix 2) and follow-up telephone interviews. These were considered the most feasible data collection techniques considering the small sample size and the vast geographic distances between the researcher and the subjects.

The questionnaire was developed from the works conducted by Lake (1985), Duck et al. (1988), Harvey (1988) and Washbourne (1988). It contained both closed and open-ended items. The open-ended items were included for the purposes of allowing for expression of emergent problems, elaborations and recommendations.
The questionnaire was trialled with an ex-Class III rural school principal and two deputy principals at a Class I metropolitan primary school. Minor changes were made on their recommendations before the instrument was sent to the group. The questionnaires were sent to the group in mid 1991 and all but one were returned by September 1991. Data analysis was completed by December and telephone interviews were conducted in March 1992.

The telephone interviews were conducted in order to clarify points in the questionnaires therefore it was not seen as necessary to contact all principals. Telephone interviews were generally flexible enough to enable the interviewer to adapt the situation to each subject. They were expected to result in more accurate and honest responses since both the interviewer and the respondent can explain and clarify each individual question. The researcher was able to follow up incomplete or unclear responses by further questioning. The advantages of an interview, whether by telephone or face-to-face were described by Tuckman (in Cohen and Manion, 1980, p.243) as:

... providing access to what is 'inside' a person's head, it makes it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs).

1.8.2 Data Analysis

The qualitative or naturalistic procedures used in this study considered the behaviour and mindsets of human beings in the context of their occurrence. The empirical or quantitative mode of collecting and collating information and giving numbers to phenomena is not appropriate for this study, because the phenomena being studied require subjective responses from each respondent.

The descriptive method employed in this study lends itself most effectively to content analysis. In this case 'content analysis' can be defined as the systematic, [qualitative], description of the situation (Gay, 1981). Within this study, the
'situation' was a beginning principal in the first three months of appointment in a Class III or Class IV isolated rural school.

To find out how they responded frequencies of responses to all items were tabulated. Open-ended item analysis was utilized to identify emergent categories of responses noting instances given by one informant, confirmed by another and disconfirmed nowhere in the data. Interview responses were analysed similarly. Telephone interviews were transcribed and the data collected were considered together with the data from the questionnaires.

The reader must be mindful of the time that elapsed between the issue of the questionnaire and the follow-up telephone interviews (six months). Even though the respondents were asked to 'cast their minds back' to the time period in which they completed the questionnaire and comment upon certain responses or lack of responses, it should be realized that the principal's comments may not represent a true indication of the principal's perception of that problem at the time of the questionnaire. Not only is the school year cyclical and the demands on a principal dynamic (Harvey, 1988) but principals' perceptions of their problems may also change over time.

Another difficulty with the questionnaire was that the reporting of problems are perceived problems. It is quite likely that an observer would make a different assessment of what the problems really are. For example, a discipline problem could be a motivation problem. Staff resistance to change could be a personality clash or sexual biases of those groups in the case of female principals. It may well be that a principal knows of a problem but is unsure of the deep-seated reason for it. This phenomenon is understandable considering the context of the study to be the first three months of the principal's appointment into a new role and what may be a totally new environment.
1.9 *Chapter Summary*

This chapter provided an introduction to the study. Firstly, it outlined the purpose of the study which was to report on the perceived problems of beginning rural school principals and the coping strategies used. Secondly, the background of the study was given and mention was made of the need for further research into the professional development needs of beginning principals. Thirdly, the statement of the problem was addressed and seven points were listed. Fourthly, the conceptual framework described the new dimensions added to the role of principal and fifthly, the research questions and additional background questions were detailed. Finally, the significance and limitations of the study were also described while the methodology outlined both the data collection and analysis.
Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction
This review will address two areas, namely the professional development needs of principals and the principalship in the rural context. It is emphasized that the literature regarding newly appointed principals in Class III and Class IV rural schools is limited. This could be because the phenomenon of Class IV principal is relatively recent under Ministry changes to the promotional system. These officers traditionally were known as "teacher-in-charge" and the position held no promotional benefits even though the tasks were similar to those currently undertaken. With the advent of decentralised administration these officers are more responsible and publicly accountable for their decisions. Another reason for the limited literature could be because these schools, particularly Class IV schools, have diminished substantially in number over the last two decades.

2.2 Professional development needs of principals
Nationally and internationally, education is undergoing reform as education and economics are being linked together in an effort to secure economic rationalization. There is acceptance at all levels of the pivotal role of the school principal in effecting educational change as well as the recognition that first year principals have unique needs. Duke (1985), Daresh (1986) and Weindling and Earley (1987) have described the world of the novice principal as one that is filled with considerable anxiety, frustration and professional isolation. Recent North American literature shows that a majority of first year principals are frustrated in their ability to serve as instructional leaders (Parkay and Rhodes, 1989) and tend to seek more precise ethical and professional identities (Curcio and Greene, 1989 and Daresh and Playko, 1989).

Daresh and Playko (1989) asserted that the position of principal is a complex one.
There are countless demands and expectations placed upon the principal depending on the size of the district, the size of the building, the number of staff, the traditional expectations of the community and the demands of the superintendent and Central Office. Other research suggests that to obtain a clearer picture of the role of the principal we should direct our research efforts towards the beginning principal (Ferreira, 1970) and moreover, Jentz (1982) suggested that if beginning principals are to plan their entry into administration effectively they need a clearer picture of the obstacles they will face and of the issues they will be expected to confront.

The new principal is expected to understand the local culture and function as an effective administrator almost immediately. Failure to do so could result in an undermining of the students' education, loss of vital community support and more importantly loss of confidence and professional and personal satisfaction by the new principal.

The Ministry of Education in Western Australia recognizes the importance of this initial stage. Traditionally the new appointments for Class III and Class IV schools are announced in November or December of the previous year. The new appointees are invited to take part in a week-long induction course run by the Ministry of Education. During that week they are presented with forms and procedures associated with their administrative duties. Dean (1988, p. 13) pointed out that preparations of principals for rural community life as well as physical, interpersonal and intellectual isolation requires a special set of skills not able to be addressed adequately during a week long seminar. Class III and Class IV principals have teaching demands as well as administrative duties and many must cope with multi-grade teaching for the first time. Adequate preparation is required for them to perform successfully in the current political, social and economic arenas.
There has been increasing interest in describing the principalship in ways that help to understand the unique features of that role. A number of studies have served to establish that the behaviour of principals might, in fact, be the single most important determinant of school effectiveness (Austin, 1979 and Lipham, 1981). Daresh (1987) added that because of the principal's impact on school effectiveness the role of the principal merits careful planning and continuing analysis.

The issue of training and preparation needs of beginning principals would seem to be one that is viewed as extremely important. However, relatively few studies of this topic have been carried out. Daresh (1987) reported that small scale studies have been conducted in Great Britain by Nockels (1981) and Turner (1981) and in the U.S.A. by Marrion (1983) and Sussman (1985). Common findings in these works, as reported by Daresh, were that the beginning year of the school principalship is typically full of a great amount of frustration and anxiety and that preservice programmes designed to prepare individuals for the role of principal must represent co-operative efforts involving local school systems, professional associations and tertiary institutions. Weindling and Earley (1987) noted in their study that a major problem for principals has been isolation from peers. This view has been supported by Harvey (1988) and Washbourne (1988).

In Australia, there is also the recognition of the implications of political, economic and social change in education and the role of the principal. The Commonwealth Government has the responsibility to ensure that education contributes to economic and social growth and that education systems are responsive to the needs of a changing economy which must operate in an international context of competition (Beare, 1983; Dawkins, 1988 and Washbourne, 1988).

The Class III or Class IV school principalship is seen as the first step in the promotional ladder and failure to provide a system that will adequately meet the unique needs of the newly appointed principal can lead to disillusionment, failure
and a waste of human resources. Harvey (1988, p.132) suggested that special
effort is needed to prepare principals more adequately for the start of principalship.

According to Washbourne (1988, p.53):

...the current approach would appear to be reactive rather than proactive with
a tendency to "satisfice" in terms of local situation [sic] rather than maximize
in the broader context of principalships in a change situation.

Newly appointed Class III or Class IV principals are at a critical stage of their

Regardless of the preparations that have been made in anticipation of the career
transitions, the appointee must learn to practice and to perfect an administrative
style in the context of a particular school.

Given the unique factors associated with small rural communities, beginning
principalship in the rural context may involve special sets of skills.

2.3 The principalship in the rural context

The last decade or so has seen an increased interest in rural education both in
Australia and overseas. In Australia such reports as the 1976 Commission of
Inquiry into Poverty, the 1980 National Inquiry into Teacher Education and the
Schools Commission's Report for the Triennium 1982-1984 highlighted problems
that exist in rural education (Duck, Webb, Cunningham and McSwan, 1988). In
1979 the conference, 'New Directions in Rural Education', was held in Perth. That
conference provided a forum for educators from all over the world with an interest
in rural education.

For the past decade there has been a push from rural pressure groups such as the
Isolated Children's Parents' Association for the government to provide equality of
opportunity and access to rural children. Darnell and Simpson (1981, p.34)
warned that it is a mistake to presume the urban model of education is the one to
which all people aspire. He points out that "there is a universal tendency of
urbanites to ascribe unconsciously a negative value to rural life." (p.34) but rather than stereotyping rural residents and imposing the norms and values of urban contexts, more thought should be given to delivering an education system that responds to the needs of the local community. Bessant (1978) agreed and while acknowledging the differences in attitudes and the way of life between city and country people in Australia, he sees the need to distinguish the real differences from the imagined. This may require some shift in the control of schooling to the local areas, together with appropriate changes in the attitudes and the preparation of teachers and administrators. The realisation that rural schools profit from adaptation of organization and some parts of the curriculum to local conditions is important. (Brown and Maisey, 1980). New principals, trained in the urban setting, must grapple with these notions whilst attempting to relocate in what, usually, is an unfamiliar environment.

Brown and Maisey (1980) reported that the school was an important socialising agent for the community. The school has an important role to play in fostering the community spirit and developing in students a sense of belonging, thus reinforcing community norms, values and expectations. In other words, the school is often the nucleus of the community identity. Brown and Maisey (1980, p. 10) wrote that:

> It is not surprising therefore, to find the school plays a significant part in promoting social and community cohesion and acts as a focal point and as a meeting-place for community members. The school is central to social interaction and communication. Perhaps more importantly, the school is a symbol to the community of its own vitality and identity.

It is permissible, therefore, to deduce that the beginning principal of the small rural school is under community scrutiny in a manner not paralleled in urban centres.

A study of rural principals in Queensland was undertaken by Alexander in 1982. This study would appear to be the only one of its kind in Australia. The author maintained that life as a principal of a small rural school was often a lonely one in a strange environment and that the greatest personal problems to teachers moving to
country areas occurred in the first three months. In the same study, principals' problems are viewed from a number of different perspectives. Of particular interest was the assertion that, because of the lack of research in the area of newly appointed principals in small rural schools, the opportunity to learn from the experiences of predecessors was lost. Another study by Duck et al. (1980) provided an insight into the problems and needs of teachers throughout Queensland with special reference to rural and isolated areas. This report also emphasized the need to view rural schools as being different rather than inferior to urban ones.

Recent responses at the state level reflect national demand for an education system that is responsive to the needs of a changing economy. These are demonstrated in the State Government White Paper, Managing Change in the Public Sector (Burke, 1986) and the Better Schools Programme (Ministry of Education, 1987). Enhancement of the professional development of teachers is a key element underlying this reform in education. Washbourne (1988) maintained that logically, as chief executives of schools, the professional development of principals was fundamental to the programme.

In contextualizing provisions in the areas of leadership, administration and management, it would be a mistake to treat all principals as having the same current competencies and corresponding needs for training. Both Harvey (1988) and Washbourne (1988) agreed that of paramount importance is the development of a system for determining the current competencies and thus needs of beginning principals in the context of their schools.

Lake (1985) investigated the needs of beginning rural teachers. Many of the needs identified in this study are relevant to the Class III and Class IV rural principal. Similarly, Towers (1990) attempted to provide a synthesis of an ideal type of small rural school which would be useful to educational systems, policy makers, teacher training institutions and individual small schools. Both studies examined the
advantages and disadvantages of living and working in isolated, rural areas and have relevance to this study in their identification of many problems encountered by rural teachers. These findings can, to a certain extent, be transposed to the context of a newly appointed Class III or Class IV rural school principal.

In a small rural community the school is under close community scrutiny (Brown & Maisey, 1980). Since the context of the small community and the school are linked so closely it is difficult, on occasions, to delineate between professional and nonprofessional problems encountered by the principal. Unlike their urban counterparts who, by the sheer geographical distance between their workplace and home, experience less impingement of their professional lives upon their personal ones.

The literature tends to suggest that the very nature of life in a rural area encourages a closeness of all people in the area. Alexander (1982, p.77) reported on the roles and pressures of the principal's spouse and children in small country towns. That author maintained that:

> The principal's wife can be a most valuable ambassador for the school through her daily contacts with the community. However it would be very doubtful if all principals would want their wives expressing themselves on school matters unless they were very competent in school affairs and showed excellent discretionary powers.

The same study cited difficulties for the principal's children in terms of their acceptance in the community, their sometimes artificial treatment by staff, children and community members and the lack of leisure activities (for example, ballet and piano) which they had previously in larger communities. Also,

> ...the principal's children are going to hear plenty of school discussion at home, the contents of which must be kept strictly secret. (p.78)

These personal factors can cause stress and pressure on the principal and make it difficult for him/her to settle in to the community and perform the multifaceted role
of principal. A Class III and Class IV rural principal is particularly accountable to the community for two reasons. Firstly, self determining schools demand community participation and secondly, small rural communities demand that the principal take an active role in community affairs which have nothing to do with education as such.

There is a dearth of literature about the coping strategies used by beginning principals in the small school rural setting. Alexander (1982) asserted that because of the inaccessability of resource personnel, the burden lies more heavily on the expertise and interest of the principal who must in some way keep up with what is happening in the cities. The same author also reported that coping strategies vary according to the type of perceived problem, the personal preferences of the principal and the availability of help. Alexander reported also that some principals turn to their peers in neighbouring schools, others to certain community members and others to superintendents and District Offices.

Research has indicated that there is a need to undertake this study. Washbourne (1988) stated the need to develop a system for determining the current competencies and thus needs for beginning principals in the context of their schools. Further, the Ministry of Education has expressed a desire for information on beginning Class III and Class IV rural school principals in the hope that this may aid future appointees in avoiding failure on the first step on the promotional ladder.
2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter reviewed the literature from two aspects, namely, the professional development needs of principals and the principalship in the rural context. Limitations in the scope of literature were acknowledged and works from overseas as well as national and Western Australian examples were cited. It was found that a dearth of literature on beginning principals in the rural context existed and that local research indicated a need to undertake this kind of study.
3.1 **Introduction**

This chapter will establish a clear picture of the nature of the group of beginning principals in this study and the conditions in which they were living and working. It will discuss the principal's knowledge of the appointment. Further chapters give more detailed insight into these aspects. This background knowledge will provide the context for responses. Some situations perceived as problems for some principals may not be perceived as problems for others. Also, it is expected that perceived problems will vary according to a great variety of factors including age, gender, marital status, experience and expectations.

In order to provide this necessary background the chapter will be divided into three sections. First, the selection criteria will be addressed. This will provide information for one of the research questions which was intended to describe background on the principals and their appointments. Second, characteristics of the respondent group will be given to provide further background and insight and thirdly, characteristics of the schools and communities will be reported.

3.2 **Selection Criteria**

The Western Australian Ministry of Education claimed that there were no selection criteria as such involved in the appointments of the beginning principals in this study. (M. Heaven, Manager/Selection Unit, Ministry of Education, personal communication, April 14th, 1992) Rather, members of the Promotions and Review Advisory Board selected people based on written statements by the applicant's superordinates, peers or subordinates. The applicant was also required to submit a 250 word statement along with form E15-50 detailing academic
qualifications and other relevant experience. On the basis of these documents and the applicant meeting the eligibility requirements, selection was made. There were no interviews conducted. Selection criteria are, however to be found in the eligibility requirements for Class III Primary School Principals found listed in the Education Circular, April 1990, (p.65). Applicants were required to:

1. Hold the award of the Teacher's Higher Certificate and have completed four years' satisfactory service with the Ministry.
   OR

2. (i) hold the award of the Teachers Certificate or equivalent three-year teaching qualification approved by the Chief Executive Officer
   AND
   (ii) have completed two years' satisfactory service as a substantive Principal of a Class IV school or of school of superior status, or as a substantive Senior Assistant in a primary school.
   OR

In addition teachers who have completed two years' satisfactory service as acting Principal of a Class III or of a Class IV school will be eligible to apply for promotion to the above position.

This is provided that they have completed four years' service with the Ministry and have attained permanent status at the time of application.

Minimum eligibility requirements for Principal, Class IV Primary School Promotion have also been established. In a later Ministry statement (May, 1990) it was further stated that:

Eligible applicants will be teachers on permanent staff who hold a Teachers' Certificate and who have completed a minimum of three years' service with the Ministry of Education of Western Australia. Applicants must also submit a statement from a superordinate, indicating 'above average' performance in two or more of the following fields:

(i) junior primary education;
(ii) teacher induction;
(iii) curriculum development;
(iv) literacy and oral communication skills;
(v) numeracy skills;
(vi) remedial education; or
(vii) teaching of multiple Year levels.
These applicants were also required to submit the same documentation as those applicants for Principal, Class III Primary School. (The Education Circular, May 1990, p.177)

Some Class IV schools are designated as Remote Community Schools and are regarded as a separate group of schools for promotion. In the case of aboriginal schools, qualified aboriginal applicants or those applicants who had undertaken specific tertiary study in teaching aboriginal people were considered favourably for promotion to these schools.

3.3 Characteristics of the respondent group

Of the fourteen principals in the category of newly appointed to Class III or Class IV remote rural schools, thirteen responded to the questionnaire.

The majority of the principals were in their thirties with ten over 30 years of age, two between 26 and 30 and one principal under 25. This is the norm for all Class III and Class IV rural schools. Before these appointments in small schools became promotional positions, the ages of the principals, formerly designated teachers-in-charge, were more likely to be in the early twenties owing to the fact that it was the Ministry's defacto policy of appointing graduates to these remote locations.

Eight of the principals were male and five were female. Traditionally, in Western Australia, the role of principal has been assigned to the male. Females were less likely to follow the 'promotional trail' because it usually meant country service. Married females have not considered themselves to be the major income earner and as such were less likely to ask their spouses to move to the country with them. The increased number of female principals in Western Australia represents a
marked change and will be discussed later in this thesis. Consideration will also be given to the impact of such principals living in communities which are traditionally male-dominated.

Eight principals indicated that they were married, two that they were single, one was separated or divorced, one indicated that they were in a de facto relationship while one indicated 'other'. The spouses of beginning principals could be expected to be directly affected by the new appointment in terms of moving to the country to live in a remote rural setting. This may be the case whether or not that spouse is living with them. One principal reported that their spouse lived and worked in Perth, over 300 kilometres away, because of lack of employment opportunities in the community. Nine principals indicated that they were living with their spouse or partner, one that they were living with their three year old daughter, one was sharing with a friend and two were living alone.

Six principals indicated that their spouses were teachers. This factor has several implications for this study including the employment and socialization opportunities available for the spouse and also for the type of support that can be offered by the spouse. Subsequent chapters in this study will discuss these factors in more detail and will help clarify the perceived advantages and disadvantages of having a spouse who is a teacher in the remote rural school context.

Nine principals indicated that they had between one and three children and seven reported that their children lived with them on a regular basis. Again, the adjustment of the principal's children to living in a small, isolated rural community may impact heavily on perceived nonprofessional problems for the new principal. This factor has important implications for this study.
Nine principals also indicated that they had a Bachelor of Education Degree while one indicated having a degree plus a Diploma in Education. Only three reported that their education provided them with subjects directly related to administration of schools.

These data indicate that while the principals are generally well qualified in education matters, few have had formal training in education administration. Given that their promotion must therefore have been based on successful classroom practice, this implies the need to 'learn on the job'. This strategy may not be satisfactory to beginning principals in small rural communities where they are expected to demonstrate leadership qualities from the onset.

Nine principals indicated that they had over ten years' teaching experience while four had between four and nine years' experience. This indicates that most of the respondents are highly experienced teachers and it could well be assumed that they would be experienced enough to cope with the multigrade teaching they would probably face in their rural appointment. It should be noted, however, that the two principals with the least experience were working in two of the most isolated areas, one being a remote aboriginal community. All but two respondents listed their previous appointments as either the metropolitan area or a medium to large country town. These two were appointed from small country towns.

While ten principals indicated that they had previous administrative experience, only four principals reported having administrative experience in a school. These data show that in addition to a lack of academic administration background most respondents also lack any previous practical experience in the roles into which they have been appointed.
3.4 Characteristics of the school/community

The school communities in the study were distributed throughout Western Australia from the Kimberley district in the north to the Esperance district in the south. The schools and communities varied in size and type from remote aboriginal communities to the stereotypical small rural communities. Ten principals indicated that the population of the town in which their school was located was less than 200. Three principals worked in towns with populations between 200 and 499 while one reported the town to have a population of between 1 000 and 2 499. All were geographically isolated. Services and facilities in the communities were limited, some schools being situated in locations containing "only a water tank". All schools in this study were the only schools in their specific areas.

The sizes of the schools, in terms of students enrolled, ranged from ten to 115. Six principals reported being the only full-time teacher in their school, three had two or three teachers, three had four or five teachers and one principal had six or seven full-time teachers. All but two schools had between one and four part-time staff. Even though all principals were given administration relief in varying degrees, these data nevertheless give a good indication of the size of the schools and the teaching load expected of the principals.

Seven principals indicated that they had class sizes of between 16 and 20, four had classes of 15 or less while two principals had classes of between 20 and 30 students. Four principals indicated they had more than four year levels in their class, another four indicated having four year levels, another four indicated having three year levels and one principal reported having two year levels. These data show that all appointees were involved with multigrade teaching as well as their administrative duties.
3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided background information about the group of respondents and the schools and communities in which they worked and the principals' prior knowledge of the new appointment. It did not make any speculations or assumptions but merely reported the principals' responses to the relevant items in the questionnaire. The aim of this chapter was to provide a context for the responses.
Chapter 4

Professional Problems

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the perceived professional problems of newly appointed principals. It seeks to identify the major problems encountered and the coping strategies. The chapter will examine the survey responses to professional problems under four categories as follows:

1. Management of human resources
2. Management of physical resources
3. Curriculum and instructional areas
4. Personal development

In each case, a summary of the data will be presented followed by a discussion of the findings. Strategies used by the principals to attempt to cope with their professional problems will be discussed.

Principals were also asked to identify their major professional problem, the extent to which the problem changed during the first three months and the strategies they used to counter the problem. They were also asked to identify unanticipated problems and the coping strategies adopted.

Finally a summary of the chapter will be presented with an overview of the findings.
4.2 Management of human resources

According to Thomas and Muscio (1984) one of the critical stages in principalship is the period when the new principal first takes up duty at the school. This period is one in which new relationships are established, opinions are formed and new administrative styles are put on display for teachers and community to observe and criticise.

During this period, there are three major problem areas for the arriving principal - credibility, rumour and change (Thomas and Muscio, 1984). For a beginning principal, establishing credibility with the staff, students and community as well as coping with rumours and managing change all involve managing human resources. For a beginning rural school principal operating within a small, often close-knit community, this task could be enormous.

Table 4.2: Questionnaire responses - a) Management of Human Resources (Degree of problems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management of human resources</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Slight</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision making and problem solving in SDMG</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team management involving staff and/or community</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance appraisal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership styles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff supervisory and PD support strategies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing change</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self esteem</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness raising/Better Schools/</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry updates</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff induction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiate support groups</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running effective meetings</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the above table the management of human resources including such areas as School Decision Making Groups (SDMG), team management and
leadership styles posed either a slight problem or no problem. Only two principals indicated they had major problems in this general category. The three areas which proved major problems for two of the principals were;

1. Team management, involving staff and/or community
2. Managing change
3. Self esteem

In both cases the principals indicated that managing change and self esteem caused major problems. One of those principals added team management involving staff and/or community.

4.2.1 Team management

One principal found major problems with team management and also expressed the need to know more about "strategies to cope at P & C meetings and how to get staff 'on side' ". The same respondent also found major problems with managing change and later reported that "Staff are all married to locals - very resistant to change."

Establishing credibility with a staff which is resistant to change may be difficult and this principal noted problems with team management. This factor may well pose a problem for a new principal trying to make changes within a rural community. Small rural communities generally display traditional conservatism. Since the staff is also part of the community, members are likely to display these values. It is understandable therefore, that the respondent reported having major problems with self esteem.

4.2.2 Managing change

The arrival of a new principal may well mean that a school must change. Thomas
and Muscio (1984, p. 29) asserted:

The logic that no two administrators are the same is obvious; but even more compelling is the literature on leadership which, in its focus on traits, situations, and contingencies, presents a limitless array of unique administrative styles. Thus an arriving principal and change in the school are synonymous. The changes may be major or minor, simple or complex; they may be perceived by some teachers as progressive and by others as retrogressive. That the new broom sweeps there is no doubt - but it is not necessarily clean.

If managing change is difficult for an experienced administrator then it is expected to be even more difficult in a new professional setting. Thomas and Muscio (p.29) asserted that:

Any change carries with it an implied criticism of what it is designed to replace or of the practice that applied before. If the structure or process to be affected is closely identifiable with the previous principal, the proposed change may also imply criticism of the arriving principal's predecessor.

In a small rural community, this can be a major problem as two new principals have indicated.

As noted above, small rural communities tend to be rather conservative. These communities are used to a high turnover of teachers and principals and are likely to feel reluctant to make changes when they know the next principal may have different ideas. If the previous principal was well respected and popular in the community, Thomas and Muscio (p.29) suggested that the community is likely to have accepted previous methods and be resistant to any deviation. It is not unreasonable to assume that there is a resistance to change by many communities in an effort to provide a feeling of continuity, consistency and stability for their children.

The principal who expressed having problems with team management and managing change had the added problem of a staff all married to local community members. In a traditional small rural community this situation could compound community
resistance to change. Changes suggested by the principal therefore, may well be vetted by staff before they reach the P. & C. meeting. This phenomenon may well exist because the staff are also used to a high turnover of principals and may be reluctant to try new methods only to have them discarded by the next principal. For the sake of consistency and stability the staff may choose to retain the status quo.

The school community is a reflection of the general community norms and values. Brown and Maisey (1980) reported that the school was an important socializing agent for the community in that it has an important role to play in fostering the community spirit and developing in the students a sense of belonging, thus reinforcing community norms, values and expectations. Any likely change to the school community may well be viewed with scepticism by the larger community unless they are compatible with its culture. Schein (1965, p. 101) stated:

Probably the major reason for resistance to change is that the conversion or production parts of any organization are themselves systems - they generate ways of working, stable interpersonal relationships, common norms and values, and techniques of coping and surviving in their own environment.

While Schein's reference was about larger, more complex organisations, this theory may be transposed to the rural community setting where the school is often the focal point in the community. Community links and participation are strong in a small rural school and any proposed changes in its function could be interpreted by community members as a threat to the equilibrium of the community.

The Ministry of Education clearly explains the relationship between the community and the small rural school in the file given to participants in the Band 3 principals' induction course (1990 - 1991):

One of the outstanding features of the small rural school is the particular place of importance it is accorded by the community in which it is situated [sic]. While all schools are important to their local community, nowhere is this more
obvious than in the small rural school. Close community ties do not just happen. It is the principal's task to develop and foster such a relationship. The ideal type of bond between school and community has been so well established in some cases that the school is virtually the community centre.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY TIES WILL GREATLY ENHANCE THE FUNCTIONING OF THE SCHOOL. (Ministry of Education, n.d.)

4.2.3 Self esteem

Self esteem plays an important part in the quality of human interaction. Owens (1987, p.97) related the findings of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Abraham Maslow suggested that the driving force that causes people to join an organization, stay in it, and work towards its goal, is actually a hierarchy of needs.

Without a detailed explanation of this theory suffice it to say that having satisfied the need to belong and be accepted, a person needs to be recognized, to have prestige and status. Principals, like any other professionals are concerned with reaching their full potential. However, the educational theorist Sergiovanni (cited in Owens, 1987, p. 103) found that teachers' greatest motivational need is to achieve feelings of professional self worth, competence and respect. It would not be unrealistic to transpose these findings to young, inexperienced rural school principals who enter their appointment with a desire to be seen as competent and eager to win the respect of students, staff and community.

In the present study the lack of self esteem appears to be linked in both cases to problems with managing change. New principals may feel let down if they are unable to make changes to their new school. Such principals have been promoted as experienced educators. They are likely to have developed philosophies of education and these could be reflected in the management of the school. One may assume that they enter their promotional positions with optimism and a certain sense of direction. Resistance by the community or staff to the direction sought by the principal can occur. As noted by one principal:
Traditions that have been going on for years and don't give room for change, ie. - the way the faction athletics is run is an institution and only a brave man will change its make-up.

Failure of the principal to convince staff or the community that change is necessary could result in feelings of uncertainty or inadequacy and a lowering of self esteem. As mentioned previously, the principal whose entire staff are married to members of the local community has increased pressure in effecting change let alone managing it.

4.3 Management of physical resources
The summary of responses listed in the table below shows that all categories proved to cause moderate to major problems for the principals.

Table 4.3: Questionnaire responses - b) Management of Physical Resources (Degree of problems).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(b) Management of physical resources</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Slight</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial management</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School development planning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting and evaluation of school initiatives</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations including media skills</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative computing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General school management including school climate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration/office procedures</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The management of physical resources posed major problems for nine principals as opposed to only two principals having trouble with the management of human resources. As can be seen in the table above, there were nineteen instances of major problems whereas there were only five instances of major problems in the management of human resources. It would seem apparent that new principals have
more problems coming to terms with physical resource management than human resource management. This could be due to the fact that staff numbers were relatively small and the chances for conflicts were similarly low.

The main areas posing problems, in order of response rate were:

1. Administrative computing - six principals
2. Time management - five principals
3. School development planning - four principals
4. Goal setting and evaluation of school initiatives - one principal
5. Public relations including media skills - one principal
6. General school management including school climate - one principal
7. Administration/office procedures - one principal.

Financial management was the area causing least problems for the principals. Eleven indicated a slight problem or no problem at all. One of the two principals who indicated that they were having moderate problems with financial management did not attend the Ministry-run induction course. This area could be expected to be a problem given any principals' lack of experience. The fact that it has not been a problem area for the respondents may well suggest that when the Ministry of Education addresses a narrow field it achieves success.

4.3.1 Administrative computing

The response to this item would indicate a lack of training or experience in this area and it is not unexpected that six principals indicated they were having major problems with administrative computing. In this computer age it would seem very important for small school rural administrators to be able to utilise this technology for management purposes. Administrative computing has the potential to ease the load of principals and failure to effectively utilise it can lead to frustration.
4.3.2 **Time Management**

Five principals indicated they were having major problems with time management. Again, this reflects the complex task of small rural school principals who have to combine teaching and administrating. Success in both is imperative for a smooth running, efficient school. This problem area will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

4.3.3 **School Development Planning**

Four principals indicated they were having major problems in this area. This is not an unexpected result since school development planning is a relatively new phenomenon introduced to education in Western Australia in 1987 with the Better Schools Report. With little or no previous administrative experience these beginning principals are new to the job of having to initiate and develop such a plan. Most new appointees would have had previous school development planning experience as a teacher in a metropolitan school - a situation not readily able to be transposed to the small rural school.

Another factor which could exacerbate this problem with School Development Planning could be the lack of staff or peers on hand to discuss this with and to provide the necessary feedback. Also, in a few cases, the new principals indicated a lack of documentation from the previous principal. This could create a major problem in attempting to devise a realistic, workable school development plan. It takes time to become attuned to a new culture, and devising an appropriate school development plan without first understanding the needs and wants of the community and the children is impossible. If there is a lack of a school development plan when a new principal takes over, it is understandable that she/he may feel a lack of direction in this new school. Without appropriate support and assistance, school development planning could very well cause a major problem for newly appointed principals.
An unstable school population could also lead to problems with School Development Planning. As one principal reported:

Difficulty in planning activities and school programmes because of varying attendance and enrolments.

4.3.4 Goal setting

The principal who indicated major problems in this area also was experiencing major problems in the areas of school development planning, time management and administrative computing. In this case it was indicated that there was a need for "An understanding of the previous year's programming and student levels of performance." It is not surprising then, to find that this principal has problems with goal setting and evaluation of school initiatives. Before this can be executed it would seem natural to have a starting point.

4.3.5 Public relations

One principal found this a major problem area. This could indicate that this particular school is in a community which is politically controversial and provides a focus for the media. Most new principals are not prepared for placement in a political arena prone to media attention and certainly tertiary courses in the study of teaching provide little background to prepare new principals for this role. While public relations are an important part of being an educator and an administrator, media skills are not considered a prerequisite.

4.3.6 School management

It is interesting to note that the principal who indicated this as a major problem also indicated that the staff were all married to members of the local community. This would indicate the staff turnover to be very low and resistance to change could be very high. Under these circumstances it could be assumed that general school
management including school climate would be difficult to alter. Because of the staff stability, it would stand to reason that the school climate, whether good or bad, is relatively stable and managing the school would be smooth providing changes did not need to be made. This particular principal indicated one of their problems to be "getting staff on side." Unless the staff recognises the authority and power of the principal and a mutual trust and agreement exists, managing a school could be fraught with problems.

4.3.7 Administration/office procedures

The principal who indicated major problems in the area of administration/office procedures also indicated major problems in the area of administrative computing and in general school management including school climate. Again, it would seem that an unwilling staff who was not "on side" would be of little assistance in this area.

4.4 Curriculum and instructional areas

The responses are indicated in the table below.

Table 4.4: Questionnaire responses - c) Curriculum and instructional areas.
(Degree of problems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Slight</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computing in schools</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic counselling</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing student behaviour</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multigrade teaching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early childhood education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues in Aboriginal education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues in multicultural education</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum development and design</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work sampling/comparability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to participate in professional development seminars</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen from the table above most responses indicated principals generally had few if any problems in curriculum and instructional areas. Nine principals reported a total of twelve areas which were causing them major problems. One principal reported three out of eleven areas to be causing major problems. This particular principal reported another three areas to be causing problems of a moderate degree. Overall, the areas which seemed to pose major problems were:

1. Opportunities to participate in professional development seminars
2. Issues in aboriginal education
3. Multigrade teaching

Issues in multicultural education posed neither a moderate nor major problem to any of the principals. However, in three cases, issues in aboriginal education posed a major problem. Two principals indicated the lack of opportunities to participate in professional development seminars as their only major problem with all other areas causing only a slight problem or no problem at all. Two principals indicated that multigrade teaching was causing major problems. One of these respondents also reported major problems in the areas of early childhood education and opportunities to participate in professional development seminars.

4.4.1 Professional development opportunities

Professional development is important for any professional. For the rural school principal it has several advantages. The activity:

(a) allows the principal to keep abreast with updated curriculum material, current teaching trends, new technology, management information systems, management theory, financial management and many other Ministry directives and updates.

(b) provides an opportunity for principals to meet peers and therefore build a support network.
(c) helps break down the feeling of isolation.

(d) provides a forum for principals to discuss problems with peers in a nonthreatening environment.

(e) helps build the feeling of being professional, being a leader and not merely a teacher-in-charge.

Four principals in this study reported that the lack of opportunity to attend professional development seminars posed a major problem for them. For all the above reasons, it is important that these needs are met. In many cases and as one respondent noted, problems can be handled with "experience - time". This, however, could be at the expense of a person's self esteem and happiness and simply waiting for a solution could prove too costly. One principal in a telephone interview stated that it was almost impossible to get to principals' conferences citing problems with huge distances, transport and the availability of relief teachers. The logistics of the exercise proved too costly in terms of time, money and energy, especially when there was the expectation to teach the next day after arriving home at ten o'clock at night after a five hour trip across rough and lonely terrain. This principal expressed concerns with his credibility with fellow principals:

I felt really bad about not being able to attend principals' conferences. I thought they (the other principals) might think that I didn't want to attend.

The Commonwealth Schools Commission (1988) argued that feelings of isolation may be compounded if teachers have to travel long distances to attend courses. It seems not unlikely that this is also the case for beginning principals.

The area of professional development is important especially in the current political and economic climate where each new government brings with it new educational policies and curriculum changes. These constant changes to the educational
framework can cause weakness in the system unless the administrators are in tune with the current policies and demands. Only then can these changes be effected right throughout the system. A small rural school principal, faced with classroom and community demands as well as administrative tasks is hardly likely to be easily swayed to make changes. Professional development opportunities will at least provide relevant information and support strategies to the beginning principal.

4.4.2 Aboriginal education

Three principals indicated that this area caused them major problems. Only one of those principals had a major problem in another area, this being the opportunity to participate in professional development seminars. It is likely that appropriate professional development opportunities would help to alleviate problems with aboriginal education.

Most teachers and principals have had very little training or experience necessary to equip them with the knowledge and understandings of aboriginal culture. It is now accepted that aboriginal education is a specialised area which needs special skills. Learning theories and teaching methods applied in the white Anglo-Saxon context cannot necessarily be transposed to aboriginal education. Therefore, it is not unexpected that new principals sent to remote aboriginal communities have a difficult time not only adjusting to a different lifestyle and culture but also understanding how aborigines react in an educational setting. Values and norms appropriate to the aboriginal culture have to be understood and learned if a new principal hopes to negotiate with them. This takes training and time and in the early stage of a new appointment the task of administrating a school with a lot of aboriginal students can be daunting. This is especially so in remote aboriginal communities where culture and custom are so embedded in the way of life.
4.4.3 Managing student behaviour

Five principals indicated that they had moderate problems with managing student behaviour. It is interesting to note that three of those principals indicated they had a major problem with issues in aboriginal education and one indicated that they had a major problem with multigrade teaching. If a teacher/administrator was having problems in the areas of multigrade teaching or aboriginal education it would be natural to assume that this person was having trouble managing student behaviour.

It should be noted that each of the five principals had at least three different year levels in their class. Due to the nature of multigrade teaching, it is necessary for the students to be rather self disciplined and able to work on their own. This would make the management of student groups vital and it would be necessary for the appointee to have experience and knowledge of appropriate teaching methods. In a normal situation this is difficult and requires a great deal of planning and organisational skills. In a small rural community where the teacher is also the principal, this task is decidedly more difficult.

As mentioned previously students in small rural communities are used to a high turnover of teachers and principals. These students live in relatively stable lifestyles where they base things on the way it has always been done. This could be a way of preserving a sense of continuity in the school setting and new principals coming in with new methods and ideas are bound to be questioned and their credibility tested unless their strategies are in harmony with the students and community. It would not be unlikely for any new, unfamiliar ideas to be rejected by the students with the support of the community.
4.5 Personal Development

Table 4.5: Questionnaire responses - d) Personal development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Slight</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(d) Personal development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal decision making and problem solving</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication techniques (e.g. public speaking, writing)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills (conflict resolution, negotiation)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self motivation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal issues</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the table three areas caused moderate to major problems in this category. One principal indicated two areas - communication techniques (e.g. public speaking, writing) and stress management to be major problems while another one indicated the area of legal issues as causing a major problem. Three principals had moderate problems in the areas of personal decision making and problem solving, stress management, interpersonal skills (conflict resolution, negotiation), self motivation and legal issues. Most principals reported only a slight problem or no problem at all in this area.

The principal who indicated major problems with legal issues also under the previous heading "Management of physical resources" indicated major problems with public relations including media skills and under the heading "Curriculum and instructional areas" indicated major problems with issues in aboriginal education. These results could show that media skills may be necessary because the school community is in a politically sensitive zone. It is
not unexpected that if this is such a state, then knowledge of legal issues is important especially in an area which provokes media focus. Stress management and communication techniques were listed as moderate problem areas for this principal. Again, given the major problems indicated it is not unexpected that these two facets of personal development were shown as such.

It should be noted that the principal whose entire staff is all married to members of the local community and who finds that staff to be continually undermining, indicated two major problem areas, communication techniques and stress management. It is not unexpected that a beginning principal without the support of the staff should have problems in these areas. This principal expressed moderate problems with personal decision making and problem solving. This situation could be a result of an uncooperative, negative staff and/or it could exacerbate the problem. It may well be that with extra effort in the area of communication new inroads to understanding the situation could lead to a solution to the problem. Similarly, with greater emphasis on stress management, the principal may be able to deal more successfully with communication techniques.

4.6 Major professional problems

While most respondents indicated that they experienced little or no problem with the majority of the professional areas identified, several areas posed more problems than others. Time management, administrative computing, school development planning, prioritising Ministry updates, issues in aboriginal education, opportunities to participate in professional development seminars and multigrade teaching were some of the major problems encountered by the respondents.
Principals were asked to indicate the major professional problem they had found as a new principal. The major professional problem was in the area of time management. This is not surprising as Duignan (1987, p.41) stated:

Recently, observational studies of the work of the principal have provided a different picture (O'Dempsey, 1976; Willis, 1980; Thomas, 1981). Most of these studies conclude that the work is characterized by involvement in a great number and variety of tasks of short duration; there is a great deal of interruption in the work and much time is spent in verbal interaction. As result, there is little time for the principal to sit back and meditate and plan.

The responses indicated that the principals found problems with trying to engage in two roles at the same time. Both roles, of teacher and of principal, are multifaceted and unless clear boundaries are set by the principal, it would be easy for one role to impinge on the other. Good organisation skills are necessary in order to maximise efficiency within each role. The principals in the present study expressed their frustration with time management in a variety of ways:

"Time management is the most difficult issue to come to terms with."

"Combining teaching and administrating. It is difficult to do justice to both - you need to be superhuman."


"Keeping up with marking, records and program writing."

"Being required to work excessive hours filling the role of teacher 1-7 and administrator."

"Time management."

"Having a staff allocation of 1.4 with no 0.4 teacher requires me to work long hours."
Three principals indicated that their major problem was living and working with a community/staff unwilling to change. This could make it very difficult for a newly appointed principal who is attempting to move from the teacher culture to the culture of administrator and in doing so sees themself as the leader and facilitator of change. A newly appointed principal is likely to be keen, optimistic and looking forward to exerting their new-found power on the school community. If the staff and/or community is resistant to change frustration would soon become evident and disillusionment is likely to ensue.

Resistance to change was reported by two principals as follows:

Traditions that have been going on for years and don’t give room for change. ie. the way the faction athletics is run is an institution and only a brave man will change its makeup.

Dealing with a community unwilling to relinquish the running of the school.

Some principals indicated that community expectations and resistance to change caused them major problems. In rural schools it is common for relief teachers or even permanent staff members to come from the immediate community. In many country towns new teachers marry local farmers or tradespeople and subsequently settle in to become permanent community members. This phenomenon can cause problems for principals as one expressed the major professional problem to be - "Staff all married to locals - very resistant to change." This could cause difficulties with the principal feeling that they have no-one on staff who could be an impartial listener and provide constructive, unbiased feedback on ideas about policies, organisation or school management. Again, feelings of isolation, frustration and disillusionment with the new administrative role could result.
Another principal had difficulty with staff and community expectations of him. "I was the only new staff member and yet as 'Principal' I was expected to know everything." This could be a burden for a new administrator who has so much to learn not only about the new job but also about the community. In a rural situation the community is closely tied to the school and a thorough understanding of its norms, values and expectations is imperative in order to effectively undertake school development planning, teaching and administrating.

Once a principal is appointed to and undertakes a new position, indications are that there is very little opportunity to be inserviced in specific areas and support or advice is usually not readily available. One principal expressed major problems in this area. "The computing scene - having time to learn more in this area." This could be frustrating for an inexperienced person who has Ministry directives to not only utilise administrative computing but also teach computing to students as dictated by the curriculum.

The state education system in Western Australia has been the subject of many recent changes which place demands for change on the roles of teachers, principals and the community, on the curriculum, on teaching methods and on the ways in which schools are organised and managed. For a beginning principal in a small rural school the task at hand is to understand the present organization and politics of the school. To initiate immediate changes without time to acclimatise and gain the trust of staff and community, is likely to be very difficult. One principal found this to cause a major problem - "Dealing with the enormous amount of new initiatives sent out by Central Office." Obviously, this principal felt overwhelmed by the quantity of demands for change emanating from Central Office and by the lack of assistance in prioritising and effecting directives. Many principals would be likely to question not only the motives for demands for change but also their appropriateness for the rural context. Being deluged with directives from Central Office could possibly add
to the feeling of isolation as one principal reported:

Having to tackle the Ministries [sic] ideas and policies which don’t often take small schools into consideration.

and the “them and us” syndrome as reported by the same principal:

They treat small schools as just a number or a far off dot on the map.

Unless, perhaps, the principal feels that they have been involved in the decision-making and have the necessary support to explain the changes to a sometimes sensitive community and staff. Without this, frustration and disillusionment could easily result for a beginning principal who is keen to succeed in his or her new position and be an efficient, effective manager.

4.7 Unanticipated problems

Six out of ten respondents had unanticipated problems in the non-professional area while four experienced problems in the professional area. Unanticipated problems in the professional area only will be discussed in this section.

The problems in this area were mainly concerned with aspects of human resource management. One principal found:

Difficulty in planning activities and school programmes because of varying attendance and enrolments. Community conflicts and effect of small place [sic] of rumours.

A situation such as this would seem typical of a remote aboriginal community where customs can result in transient lifestyles. It is not unexpected that this could cause great difficulty for a school administrator who is attempting to make plans, both short and long term. A beginning principal is not likely to have any training or experience to cope with a transient population in a school situation. New enrolments and transfers can involve a lot of administrative time and energy with the necessary paperwork and handling of students’ books, files and records. Other
important administrative tasks may have to be ignored or dealt with at a later date while this very routine but time consuming paperwork is done.

Another result of varying attendance and enrolments is that it would be very difficult for a principal to not only make plans for the school but also for them to gather vital information pertaining to student performance. Without needs analyses a principal may be likely to find it difficult to make goals and to know if and when they have been achieved. In this day of situation and needs analyses and the call for management information systems, data collection provides a direction and sense of purpose as well as the necessary accountability. Without a stable population, data collection would be almost impossible and the principal could very easily become as frustrated as this respondent may be.

Rumour may be related to the size of the school community. Thomas and Muscio (1984, pp. 28 - 29) argued that:

Where there is a smaller population, fewer schools, and a geographical concentration of such, one may well hypothesize that conditions are optimum for the cultivation and contagion of rumour.

One principal never anticipated the extent of rumour in the school community.

I never realized the extent of small town gossip. Who needs a newsletter?

Another principal whose problem became worse found an unanticipated problem in the P. & C.

The unmoving hostile P. & C. who made up their minds before I arrived.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, rural communities become used to experiencing a high turnover of teachers and principals with new or different ideas, interests and teaching methods. In order to retain a sense of stability in the school community it is not surprising that communities tend to cling to traditions that have worked for
them in the past. This could be a reason why they appeared unmoving.

This principal found the P. & C. hostile. There could be many reasons for this and it would seem that it is vital for a beginning principal in a small rural community to have the P. & C. 'on side' in order to establish credibility. It could be expected that one of the first tasks this administrator had would be to find the cause of the hostility. One reason could be its attitude to the past principal. Perhaps the principal was perceived as hostile and unmoving and unwilling to be empathetic with the community. It may well be that the plans and methods suggested by the new principal were too radical or that leaving the town every weekend was perceived by the community as lack of interest in becoming involved in community life. These factors may well exacerbate the problem. It is not the purpose here to discuss the many likely reasons for hostile reactions between principals and communities. These have been documented in other studies. Suffice is to say that there is usually a reason for a 'hostile and unmoving P. & C.' and it would seem a job for a new principal to find out those reasons and take the necessary steps to rectify the problem in order to establish credibility. Once the attitude of the P. & C. changed it may well be that the principal would have a vital source of feedback and support.

The principal who found all the staff married to members of the local community certainly did not expect to have a staff undermine them. This would be a surprise because it would be natural for a principal of a small rural school to expect from the staff constructive advice about the community and for the community to perceive the school staff as being unified. Even if a staff disagreed with the principal on policy matters it is professionally unethical to carry staff disagreement into the community. This could cause a weakened leadership position for a beginning principal who is attempting to become established as a figure of authority. Lack of support from powerful groups such as the school staff and the P. & C. can make administrating and leading extremely difficult for a principal. It is likely that a disproportionate
amount of time could be spent trying to rectify these problems at the expense of other important matters, not to mention the risk of loss of self esteem and confidence in the new role as principal.

Other unanticipated problems included aspects of time management and the attempts to fulfill the multi-faceted roles of teacher and principal. For one principal who attended the Ministry-run induction course the complexity of the job still surprised him. "The diversity of tasks was a problem to come to terms with."

This response indicates that despite forewarning at the induction course detailing the different aspects of the job, there appears a need to be actually in the situation in order to fully understand its true nature. Perhaps this demonstrates the preference for a period spent by the new appointee in the actual school, shadowing the previous principal for a week. It is difficult to offer any other solution for the new appointee to get the feel of the new school, the new community and the new roles. This would be so particularly as this principal is in a remote aboriginal community. Similarly, another principal in a remote aboriginal community indicated that they had major problems with P.R. and media skills. These tasks surely make the role of principal diverse and because of lack of training and experience to cope with the diversity, beginning principals are likely to feel frustrated and inadequate unless they find strategies to handle their problems.

The principal who did not attend the Ministry-run induction course reported several unanticipated problems. These were said to be:

- Having to find my own staff to fill a 0.4 position.
- Having to tackle the Ministries [sic] ideas and policies which don't often take small schools into consideration.
- They treat small schools as just a number or a far off dot on the map.
- School Renewal scare.

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In a telephone interview, one principal expressed surprise that the superintendent paid only one visit during the first year of the new appointment. It was suggested that extremely remote schools such as this one should have extra visits by the superintendent to alleviate the feeling of isolation. This principal said:

I would have liked a visit from the superintendent during the first term. Especially because I was a new principal in an unfamiliar school. They could have told me how I was doing and pointed out any mistakes I was making early in the piece so that I could have had some sort of direction. After a while I starting feeling bad - that nobody was interested in our little school because we have only a handful of kids and we are so far away - that we weren't important. I knew in my heart that this wasn't the case but somehow I felt some sort of outside confirmation would help. (Code 3, personal communication, March 19, 1992)

Playko and Daresh (1989, p.7) described one of the unique needs of beginning principals:

Beginning principals have a special need for frequent, specific, and accurate feedback about their performance. Furthermore, this feedback should be of a highly constructive nature that is made available regularly throughout the school year...not only near the end of a person's first contract year.

Again, this would seem particularly applicable to remote rural school principals who are geographically isolated from other principals, the superintendent and advisors from District Office who would otherwise be in positions to offer regular feedback.

4.8 Coping strategies
Six out of the thirteen respondents indicated there was no change in the severity of their major problem during the first three months of their appointment, three said their problem disappeared or improved while three stated their problem actually became worse.
Two of the principals who indicated that their problems became worse cited unwillingness on the part of staff or community to change. The principal who indicated the major professional problem to be:

Dealing with a community unwilling to relinquish the running of the school. Continued to be unyielding regarding any changes. Community concerned with school related matters and make major issues over minor matters. i.e. bin emptying - travelling by bus - night of the Christmas Concert, etc., etc.

The situations described by these principals appear to reflect communities which are trying to maintain stability at the school despite frequent turnovers of teachers and principals. Communities of this nature would probably remain resistant to change until the new principals established their credibility. Cullen (1985, p.6) supported the notion that even the most conscientious principal cannot afford to misread the politics of the local community. He goes on to warn:

The point is clear, however, that the wise teacher will closely observe how important community matters are resolved. Through such observations, the teacher will become aware of local leaders, the extent of their scope of influence and how certain focal people affect the formulation of various policies in the area. (p.7)

It is likely that unless these principals learn to mesh the interests of the school with those of the community their credibility may continue to suffer and the P. & C. is likely to continue to be hostile and unmoving.

The respondents indicated a variety of ways they attempted to handle their professional problems. Communication appears to be a significant coping strategy utilized by these beginning principals. As one principal reported:

Communication with individuals and community about such things as funerals, etc.

This principal indicated problems with varying attendance and enrolments,
community conflicts and small town rumours. These problems may well be the result of a lack of understanding about the new culture and community and a hesitancy on the part of the local people to trust the new principal. Attempts by the principal to find out more about the local culture and customs would appear to indicate a genuine desire to understand the clientele. It is likely that communication with individuals in the community about important customs such as funerals would only serve to enhance that principal's credibility and remove barriers which cause distrust.

The principal who reported that her staff were all married to members of the local community and were very resistant to change also used communication as a coping strategy.

Tried to befriend, have confronted them regarding the issue and it is improving.

This respondent seemed to be attempting to open up the communication channels with the staff in order to dispel rumours and build trust. Hopefully, this would lead to a more effective working relationship through participative decision making rather than the principal seen purely as the person with the legal authority.

Beginning principals are moving from the teacher culture into a new domain where they are a manager and leader. Establishing that leadership role can sometimes be difficult for new principals. For one principal with an "unmoving, hostile P. & C. who had made up their minds before I arrived" strategies used to cope with the situation were reported as follows:

With courtesy and explanation of what was happening. To promote leadership, demonstrate that role. To encourage.

Again, communication, both verbal and demonstrative, was used by the principal
to cope with the hostile P. & C. Some of the reasons for the problems and the choice of coping strategies could begin to be explained by a further comment of this principal:

I have endeavoured to be unemotive and rational. One group (significant) in the community, however, have appeared to be destructive and negative rather than productive and positive towards me. I have discerned that it is me as the Principal.

Obviously this principal has the difficult task of changing community attitude after a predecessor with a different notion of the role of principal. It is not clear whether the communication was effective in modifying the attitude of the group or whether the coping strategies of being unemotive and rational assisted in any way in improving credibility.

One principal with major problems in the area of time management, stated an improvement in the ability to cope with this aspect. The strategies used were:

Developed my own style and was able to judge the importance of some paperwork. Also received some admin. relief.

Dealing with Ministry directives was noted by a few principals as posing problems because it was not easy to prioritise them. Without an internship situation, it would seem to be difficult for beginning principals to be able to judge the importance and applicability of Ministry documents. Until the principals were actually in the "hot seat" they may be unable to see the relevance of the paperwork partly because more immediate pressures of day to day administration take precedence initially. It would seem that the strategy of developing one's own style and taking the initiative to judge the importance of paperwork is a natural one and proved effective to this principal. Research has shown that there is little likelihood of discovering a set of related concepts that will lead to one best way of organizing, leading, motivating and administrating. Owens (1987, p.31) asserted:
"One of the most powerful emerging ideas in understanding organizations and the
behaviour of people in them is the notion of contingency." To elaborate on this in
an educational setting he adds: "...Organizations that are expected to respond and
adapt to emerging problems in an environment of change can use more effectively
the more flexibly structured organization that emphasizes teamwork, collaboration,
participation, and integrated effort." Similarly, the leadership role in a small rural
school is not easily defined or structured, the tasks are ambiguous and the proper
procedure is problematical. This principal indicated an improvement in the
situation because of developing an individual leadership style based on
professional competencies in a specific context. The importance of paperwork was
judged contingent upon the principal's perception of its contextual relevance.

Experience and time accounted for the improvement of some of the respondents'
professional problems.

"I learnt more about the community."

"The problems reduced in severity after 6 months due to familiarity, learning
to prioritise and recognizing what is necessary and what is not."

"Routines became developed after first term."

"Experience - time."

One principal who reported the major professional problem as being;

"Keeping up with marking, records and program writing."

stated that changes were made to professional problems through:

"Hard work and consistency."

Coping with multigrade teaching and administration, caused problems for some
principals. Their coping strategies varied. Two principals reported using shortcuts
like checklist evaluations and commercial reading packages which provided
supporting activity books and materials. One principal indicated that she used recounts outlines from the news the students told each morning.

Another who reported a clerical assistant who was extremely inefficient, found interesting ways to cope with this problem. In a telephone interview, it was explained how she was instructed to do all her typing on the school computer rather than on the typewriter. This way, it was relatively simple for the principal to make the necessary corrections to her work before it was printed. While this strategy did not completely alleviate the problem, it was obvious that it helped ease the frustration given that another clerical assistant was not easy to find. The principal still had the extra burden of having to check her work, however, after a time it was discovered by the principal that the clerical assistant was surprisingly talented with junior primary reading activities. Her talents were subsequently utilized with the Year One children and their reading programme.

4.9 Chapter summary

This chapter dealt with the perceived professional problems of beginning principals in Class III rural schools. The data were collected from the questionnaire and follow-up telephone interviews.

In the area of management of human resources, the major problems were in team management, managing change and self esteem. In the area of management of physical resources, the three main problem areas reported were administrative computing, time management and school development planning. In the area of curriculum and instruction, the areas that were reported to cause major problems were opportunities to participate in professional development seminars, issues in aboriginal education and multigrade teaching. Communication techniques and stress management were major problem areas in the area of personal development while one principal reported major problems with legal issues.
The overall main professional problem areas reported by the respondents were in time management and managing change in a community resistant to change.

Several principals reported such unanticipated problems as coming to terms with the diversity of tasks expected of the principal. The literature indicates that this also is a problem for many urban principals who may be experienced administrators. Some principals indicated that the community expectations were that they know everything.

The coping strategies adopted by the principals varied. In cases that involved resistance to change by staff or community, some principals reported using the strategy of communication. In most cases this method was successful. Time management issues were resolved in some instances by the principals learning to adopt their own style and to prioritize tasks. Experience and time were seen to be great teachers, however, these are unavailable in the initial stage of the new appointments.
Chapter 5

Nonprofessional Problems

5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the perceived nonprofessional problems of newly appointed principals in Class III and Class IV rural schools. It seeks to identify the major problems in the nonprofessional area and the coping strategies.

This chapter will examine the survey responses to nonprofessional problems under three categories as follows:

1. Community factors
2. Personal factors
3. Family factors

In each case a summary of the data will be presented followed by a discussion of the findings. Strategies used by the respondents to attempt to cope with their nonprofessional problems will be discussed. Principals were also asked to identify the major nonprofessional problem they had faced early in their appointment, the extent to which the problem changed and how they accounted for the change. The principals were also asked to identify any unanticipated problems and describe the strategies they used to help counter the problem. These problems were both professional and nonprofessional, however in this chapter only the latter problems will be reported and discussed.

Finally, a summary of the chapter will be presented with an overview of the findings.
5.2 Community factors

Small rural communities are usually geographically isolated from larger urban communities. Their populations are small and therefore the facilities available in the town are usually limited. One school in this study is described by the Ministry of Education.

... is a small town of approximately 15 houses and one local store. It has a population of 30 and is situated 584 kms from Kalgoorlie and 850 kms from Perth.

There is an oval and a Community hall complex. The town also has a Country Club with tennis courts, 18 hole golf course and bowling rink. ... has its own ambulance Depot and Fire Brigade and garage. There is a local rubbish dump. The store sells petrol, liquor, videos and a limited grocery range. A garage is in the townsite where mechanical work on motor vehicles can take place.

The climate is cool and pleasant. A good rainfall is usual in winter. Some hot days in summer. Always cool in the evening. Very windy.

Recreational and sporting opportunities include netball, golf, tennis, bowls, football, basketball, fishing, cricket and women's hockey.

A local store exists and very good medical facilities are available in Esperance 67 kms away. (Ministry of Education, n.d.)

It appears that the majority of the principals in this study have little or no experience living and/or working in a small rural community. All except one principal in this study responded that they were not, at present, working in a town/district similar to the one in which they spent most of their primary or secondary school years. One principal responded:

"I went to a small school but that was a cattle station."

The degree of isolation of some of these communities is reflected in a description by the Ministry of Education of the special needs of one of the towns in this study:

Due to the poor conditions of the roads we recommend a 4 wheel drive if you intend to drive out here. However one usually finds that the car is not
used often when in town. A standard car is sufficient but could be doubtful in wet season.

The road out of...is a dirt one. It takes between 5 to 6 hours to drive out depending on the road. The last 50 km into...is a very rough, dusty and rocky road. In a standard car one must drive the last 50 kms at very low speeds because of rocks. During the wet weather the road is usually closed.

A standard car can get through without much bother so long as the driver is careful. A 4 wheel drive is a more suitable vehicle. However a vehicle is not used much during the term except to go out to stations 11 km and 30 km approximately, because of the vast amounts of rocks and the distance involved in going anywhere. A motorbike is a very useful machine as it gives one a chance to get out of town quickly and explore the environment at ease.

If you drive out your vehicle needs to be in a sound condition because of the isolated nature of the place. Sufficient water should be brought for car and occupants.

If driving have at least two spare tyres.

Always ring and let someone know where you are going. (Ministry of Education, n.d.)

From the above description, it may be said that the principals in this study would find the living conditions in this type of community vastly different from any they had previously experienced.

All but one principal was located in a community of less than 500 people. Seven responded that their previous appointment was in the metropolitan area, one was in a large country town (for example, the size of Kalgoorlie, Geraldton or Albany), three were in a medium-size country town while only two were in a town with a population less than 1 000.

The principals were asked to indicate the extent to which particular factors posed a problem for them in the early stage of their appointment. The results of this survey are shown in the table below.
Table 5.2: Questionnaire responses (a) Community factors (Degree of problems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Slight</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Services - food, clothing, electricity, banks, postal, etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People - unfriendly, shy, cliquish</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation (personal) - suitability, condition, situation in relation to school</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical - doctor, hospital, dentist, chemist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predecessor's image - communicated to you readily</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General community opinion of principals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/parent support of school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on the school readily available</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table above all the community factors listed indicated that they were posing moderate or major problems for the respondents. Therefore each factor will be discussed in turn.

5.2.1 Services

Principals were asked to indicate the degree of adequacy of the provision of services and facilities in the town in which their school was situated. Their responses are shown in the table below.

Table 5.2.1: Questionnaire responses - Adequacy of services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>No services</th>
<th>Some services</th>
<th>Adequate but limited</th>
<th>Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postal services</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping facilities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation facilities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel/motel facilities</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking facilities</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table above, the majority of responses indicated that all the facilities...
listed were either non existent or existent on a limited basis. Not surprisingly, most of these principals were in one-teacher schools. Some of the respondents indicated they were living and/or working in communities with virtually no services. As one principal reported:

There is no town - just the school and the principal's quarters (single). No wheat bin - nothing other than farms - I live in the nearest town - 30 kms away.

Another community was described by a principal:

The location is an isolated Aboriginal community with a population of about 100. There are virtually no services or facilities except a store, watertank and generator.

Another principal in a town with a few facilities described them as follows:

There is a small community club but no motel accommodation for visitors. Banking - Commonwealth agency at the post office. All my banking is done by phone or mail.

It should be noted that the principal in the town with the largest population indicated that all the services were limited and, in fact, the banking facilities in this town were reported as being poor. The explanation for this response could be the principal's perception of "poor" facilities in relation to those available in the metropolitan area - the place of the last appointment. It may well be the expectations of this beginning principal were relatively high. Notwithstanding expectations, the fact remains this principal perceives the provision of facilities in this community to be inadequate thereby causing a problem.

5.2.2 People

The Commonwealth Schools Commission publication Schooling in Rural Australia (1988) reported some of the characteristics of rural communities. These features include living at a distance from any major centre of population, dependence on agriculture or mining industries and a relative lack of community services.
A number of these common features include attitude and perceptions. For example, as reported by Towers (1990, p. 65):

Many rural people feel distant from political power, involvement in decision-making, cultural activities and specialist diagnostic and treatment services. Linked to this are feelings of "being under threat" and "not being understood by city folk". The resultant outlook of rural people has consequences for how they view available curriculum offerings as well as their attitudes towards teachers from metropolitan areas who take up rural teaching positions. There is a strong sense of community identity and mutual dependence. Teachers who have lived most of their lives in large population centres who take up rural positions can find them oppressive. Finally, many rural residents have a positive view about rural living.

It is not surprising that rural communities, having this mutual dependence and the positive view of rural living, may seem cliquish to an outsider. Two principals reported that they had major problems with the people in the community. One of those respondents found them very cliquish and difficult to deal with. This principal stated:

The people are very negative. They are more interested in personal conflicts than in what's best for their kids. I'm desperate to get out. If the community was more positive, I'd want to stay longer - perhaps another year. I can't talk to anybody about anything. I have to be really guarded. (Code 7, personal communication, March 16, 1992.)

The other principal who indicated having major problems with the people also found them very negative. One of the reasons for this could be that this particular school has had eight principals in ten years. Another reason could be the fact that the principal is female and this role is traditionally male. As mentioned previously, rural communities tend to be rather conservative and a change from a male to a female principal could well meet with resentment.

The above principal said that the community tended to take matters into its own hands. To support her statement she related an incident:

I looked at a previous principal's diary. An entry he made in 1989 during all the industrial strife. He noted that two of the parents entered and conducted classes in his absence when he was attending a union meeting at a nearby town. (Code 14, personal communication, March 18, 1992)
She also added that they were very self-centred in that the P. & C. refused to spend money on library books. However, at the time they were withholding $5,000 to upgrade a tennis court. Apparently the children never used the court but the parents did. Also, this principal and another female principal indicated that they had been verbally abused by male P. & C. members at meetings. This could be because of the male dominated administrative positions in the Ministry of Education and the inability of some members of small rural communities to accept the power and authority of female principals.

5.2.3. Accommodation

The Government Employees' Housing Association (GEHA) has the responsibility for providing accommodation for teachers and principals in rural areas of Western Australia.

6.1. Allocation Policy:

A self-contained unit of accommodation, usually a house, is reserved for the positions of District Superintendent, Deputy Principal and Teacher-in-Charge of schools and colleges in the country as a condition of employment. (Ministry of Education, n.d.)

In the same booklet it is noted that, at the beginning of the year, GEHA is involved in a good deal of maintenance work caused by complaints from incoming tenants that attention is required to many items. They advise that immediate consideration of maintenance requirements should prevent a backlog of this work occurring at the beginning of each school year. Unfortunately, maintenance problems are not always reported by the outgoing tenant. One principal said he had major problems with the housing provided by GEHA:

The house had a polluted water supply and the garden had completely disappeared. If there was a garden there before, over the school holidays it had died and there was no semblance of green when we got here. The house was tiny and I feel not at all fit for someone taking up the role of principal. You are supposed to feel you are promoted but the house was terrible. The facilities were primitive - no cupboard space. You couldn't possibly fit in all your belongings from your previous life/residence. Obviously the previous principal didn't mind too much. I got onto GEHA to try and improve things. They don't inform you about your rights. You have to ask. They work on the demand system. In other words they
are not concerned unless you get a GEHA rep. out and write letters demanding things. I now have new stove, carpets, robes fitted, tiling redone and some plumbing. (Code 7, personal communication, March 19, 1992)

Given the small size of some of the communities in this study, it would not be surprising if the accommodation was inadequate. One principal cited accommodation or the lack of it as the major nonprofessional problem:

Housing - present accommodation is reserved for someone else. I have spent 6 months organizing my housing for 1992.

Another principal stated:

My family and I just didn't fit into the GEHA house supplied near the school. We wanted to live in the local community but we couldn't find a house. We had to move to the nearest town, 28km away and I travel to and from work each day. (Code 3, personal communication, March 18, 1992)

This situation could lead to community resentment as the principal may well be perceived as being reluctant to become part of the community. It could impact on a small community as a sign of rejection and lead to problems in other areas such as eliciting community support and parent involvement.

5.2.4 Climate

The schools in this study are scattered all over the state of Western Australia and include the Kimberleys, the wheatbelt and the south-west region. Climate, therefore can vary tremendously and in most cases it is quite different from that experienced in Perth. It is not surprising, then, that seven out of thirteen principals indicated that they experienced either moderate or major problems in this category.

The climate of one community has been described in the staff induction booklet:

Wet season - October to April, with most rain occurring between January and March. High temperatures and humidity can be experienced. Dry season - May to September. Some very cold nights and mornings between June and July, but no rain. Some very dry, windy days. Beautiful southern summer weather most of the time (warm days and evenings).
One respondent expressed problems with the climate.

Getting in and out of the community during the wet season.

This factor may well compound the feelings of isolation for a beginning principal who is unfamiliar with this type of climate.

Another type of climate has been described in an information leaflet about a town.

A very hot, windy summer (highest maximum last summer was 48 degrees) and a dry, cold winter (lowest minimum this winter, 1986, 1 degree). When rain does fall, countryside becomes very muddy and roads are impassable.

House is air-conditioned (2 bedrooms) with reverse cycle. Each room has a ceiling fan. Also an air-conditioner in the lounge-dining room. Extremes of temperature make living conditions fairly trying - although spring and autumn months can be very pleasant.

A continuous year round wind making dust-storms a problem. White clothing is easily damaged by the red dust. Shoes also get very damaged. (Ministry of Education, n.d.)

5.2.5 Medical

Nine of the thirteen respondents were living in these remote communities with their spouses and children. This indicates the need for medical attention may be compounded especially since young children may have difficulty adjusting to extreme climates and rugged terrain. One principal mentioned the presence of snakes as posing a problem. For a young family unused to snakes, this may be a serious problem especially living in constant fear of snakebites and the nearest medical treatment hours away.

As one respondent stated as a major problem:

Getting necessary medical treatment and physiotherapy treatment when the closest is 105 km away!

The medical facilities in one community are described as:

Resident sister. Flying Doctor visits once a month or when required. Dentist
approximately twice a year. The Flying Doctor flight takes approximately 1 hour and ten minutes.

It is not surprising, then, that three of the principals cited lack of medical facilities as causing major problems.

5.2.6 Predecessor's image

It is likely that all new school principals appointed to small rural schools will, like the new doctors or newsagents, be judged in comparison with their predecessors. Alexander (1982, p.35) states that:

In some small communities people can unintentionally upset principals by talking of the good and bad deeds of the previous principals. To a great extent principals must expect this to happen and be patient when it does.

Alexander also discussed the fact that most rural communities do have a stereotyped principal image which they expect principals to live up to:

First and foremost they expect that a principal will produce results with their children either by teaching or through his staff. Then come the other attributes needed - the ability to get along with rural people, high standard of character and behaviour, a liking for children and among others, a partaking in the affairs of the community as much as possible. (p.88)

However beginning principals are likely to have their own ideas about their roles, their administrative styles, their educational priorities and the way in which they want to spend their leisure.

To this end Harvey (1989, p.16) pointed out:

Each appointee brings a preferred administrative style to their initial principalship. This stock of professional knowledge has accumulated as they develop aspirations for a transition from the social world of the teacher to the social world of the administrator.

The previous principal is likely to provide a reference point for a small community and deviations by the new appointee from the administrative style or expected behaviour, both
professional and personal, may well lead to community conflict. Small rural school principals have the added pressure of living and working in the same community and are often judged by their behaviour and perceived acceptance of that community.

The behaviour of new appointees is influenced, however, by their own perceptions of the role, the expectations held for the role by other reference groups and by the appointees' own mental and physical abilities. (Penney, 1984). It is understandable then, that beginning principals are well advised to be patient in building their own credibility in the community.

5.2.7 Community opinion of principals

The community opinion of principals may largely depend on the predecessor's image in that community. If the previous principal was popular, seen to accept the community and conform to their expectations of the role of the principal, it is likely that the community opinion is quite high. If, however, the community recently experienced a negative, inefficient and uncooperative principal, community opinion of principals may be low.

Since rural communities experience a high turnover of teachers and principals, it may well be that the community is positive about a beginning principal. This could be due to a number of factors. Firstly, they realize that this is the first step in the promotional ladder and the new appointee is likely to be keen to make a favourable impression. Secondly, the new appointee has supposedly been promoted because of sound teaching practice and is likely therefore to provide quality education. Thirdly, the new appointees are expected to bring the latest strategies in teaching and learning together with new administrative practices. These factors are seen as positive because they are likely to increase the quality of their children's education. Fourthly, some communities are heavily sports and arts oriented and the arrival of a new principal in some cases, could be seen as a chance to recruit a new sporting, managing, or musically artistic talent. Since a small rural school
principal is expected to contribute to the community outside school hours, a new, enlightened person could be seen as a factor likely to enhance the quality of the local community.

Nevertheless, most communities in remote rural areas realize that for beginning principals this appointment is the first step in the promotional ladder and as such new appointees are likely to remain for only two or three years until their subsequent appointment to a larger school.

It is not surprising that the principal who indicated having a major problem with the general community opinion of principals, also reported living 28 km from the school. This would seem to be a factor leading to a lessening of community opinion of principals.

5.2.8 Community/parent support of school

Community/parent involvement and participation need to be encouraged and fostered (Brown and Maisey, 1980; Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1988). Many problems can be quickly overcome by having parents in the classroom. If managed carefully, these people provide essential help, establish teacher-parent rapport and can quickly disseminate any misinformation about the school that sometimes occurs in small communities. Towers, (1990, p. 113) reported:

In most small schools the school council is generally made up of most if not all the families attending the school. These councils can be of great benefit to the schools in setting policy, fostering positive public relations and raising additional finance. These bodies should be encouraged to help assimilate the new teacher (and principal) into the community (McSwan, 1988). They should help teachers to become acquainted with the people and facilities in the community, explaining local traditions and the local resources.
One principal in the present study reported that he didn't have spontaneous support from the parents or the community:

I have to present my case in a very simplistic step-by-step case. They (the P. & C.) have to be really convinced before they'll agree to anything. For example we decided to cross-set 70 children, streaming them across all levels. We needed money for resources such as reading books. The parents resisted this idea. They weren't at all convinced. They didn't like the idea of children working at year levels different to those they'd normally be in. (Code 12, personal communication, March 19, 1992)

Another principal having problems in this area added:

I'm desperate to get out of this place. All the community wants to do is complain. They are not interested in their kids. They're more interested in personal conflicts. If the community was more positive I'd want to stay. At the P. & C. meetings they want to gun you down. I get no recognition for all the positive things I've done for their kids. I've been really abused by the people, for example the secretary of the P. & C. I've tried to handle her by being nice but last time I got really annoyed, thumped the table and told her to get out. She yelled out that I wasn't headmistress material. But the community at large acknowledges my efficiency. (Code 14, personal communication, March 20, 1992)

While community and parent support is seen as vital to an effective school (Better Schools Report, 1987), the principals in this study reported varying degrees of support. It seems that schools in some regions are fixed in their ideas and are traditionally unsupportive with their main interests lying outside the realm of their children's education.

5.2.9 Availability of information on the school

Harvey (1988) conducted a survey of beginning principals at the end of the first year of appointment.

One factor which handicapped the effectiveness of the newly appointed principal in the early part of the school year was their limited knowledge of the pattern of school operations. Some principals reported that they '...went in cold', relying very heavily on their general knowledge of schools. Further analysis showed that knowledge of one's previous school as it was previous to their departure, was likely to be the reference point from which the new appointee attempted to make the new school 'understandable'. Often new appointees did not appreciate how different from their previous school the new school could be. When this was combined with a shift to a rural community, then some new principals had to undertake a prolonged learning in order to regain their confidence in the school. Many principals designate were very
resourceful in collecting information about the students, staff and community of their next school. Most principals employed a variety of strategies:

* developing an 'open line' communication with the outgoing principal;
* school visits;
* knowledge obtained from an informal network of peers and colleagues who had first-hand experience in the school;
* a 'handover file' containing essential information for the start of the school year;
* country appointees usually took up residence in the town shortly after the new year in order to familiarise themselves with the school and the community.

The appointments of the principals in the present study were not announced until the end of the previous year. As such there was little time beforehand for them to visit or find out about the communities and schools. Six principals reported moderate or major problems concerning availability of information about their new schools. One principal managed to arrange a visit to the new school. He stated:

My shock would have been greater if I hadn't come down here in my own time and at my own expense. I really think the Ministry should support new principals to do that. (Code 5, personal communication, March 19, 1992)

The principals in this study were asked to comment on what other information about the school they needed to enable them to function as an effective principal from the start of the school year. Responses indicated a variety of needs:

"Levels of ability and transcience of population of school children."

"Lots. a) Which files needed to be perused before school started.
   b) Student achievement programmes.
   Spending a week during last term at school as well as induction course would be great."

"Examples of programmes, timetables etc. class records. Previous principal left nothing to indicate what the children had covered."

"Which form to fill out and when. What BMA, PCAP, AST etc. all ment [sic]. Knowledge of job rates - school assistant, RIP aide etc. Bus routes/procedures, more support with K-3, money matters."

"Financial recording. Duty statement - in terms of class sizes, and teacher entitlement."

"An understanding of the previous year's programming and student levels of performance."

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"More info. on how outgoing principal handled his School Devt. Plan."

"Numbers, resource, staff, S.D. Plan, organization details, parent information, prior newsletters."

"More knowledge of the geography and weather conditions."

"1. How to organize swimming lessons.  
2. Strategies to cope at P. & C. meetings  
3. How to get staff 'on side'.".

The principals were also asked how they acquired information about their new school prior to taking up their new appointment. Ten indicated that they discussed the appointment with the outgoing principal, six obtained knowledge from visits to the new school, six obtained knowledge from an informal network of peers and colleagues who had first-hand knowledge of the school and ten used a 'hand-over' file. Therefore, it can be said that the two major sources of information about the school were the outgoing principal and the 'hand-over' file. Some principals, however reported an inadequacy of information about the school.

5.3 Personal Factors

Rural conditions for teachers and principals, although improving, are rarely sufficiently attractive for them to feel as well off as their urban colleagues. Most have been city born and bred and their country experience was limited to an occasional visit. Alexander (1982), in a study a rural school principals in Queensland maintained that life as a principal of a small school is often a lonely one in a strange environment. He stated:

The lack of communication is often a problem, not only in mail, and phone use prohibited by cost, but also in a lack of younger people with similar interests to talk to. There are country based interests in which principals can become involved but this takes time. The greatest personal problems to teachers moving to country areas occur in the first three months.

McSwan (1988) investigated teacher perceptions and community expectations of teachers in rural Queensland. Some of the reasons teachers gave for leaving towns were promotional reasons (approximately eighty percent of the respondents), isolation from family and friends, inability to adjust to country living, difficulty fitting in with the social
life of a rural community, poor accommodation and lack of school support.

Duck et al. (1988) found the most common reasons teachers from Western Queensland gave for wanting to leave their present school were the personal ones. Respondents cited isolation from family and friends, the lack of social, recreational and cultural activities in the district, the desire to live near the coast, and changes to their personal circumstances such as marriage, separation or plans to start a family as reasons to leave the community. Very few teachers listed professional factors as reasons for wishing to leave the community.

Most principals in the present study were male, over 30, married with between one and three children. In the past, these small rural schools were run by a Teacher-in-Charge who was typically male, under 21, single with no children. The fact that Class 3 schools are a promotional appointment, accounts for the personal makeup of the new appointees. All are experienced educators and have had that experience in larger schools, in a more populated community, where they were not one of the foci of the town.

The principals were asked to indicate the extent to which certain personal factors posed a problem for them during the early stage of their appointment. Their responses are shown below.
Table 5.3: Questionnaire responses (b) Personal factors (Degree of problems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(b)</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Slight</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation from family, friends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation, loneliness, lack of social life</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitting into the community</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure, sport and cultural activities</td>
<td>- availability of opportunities, variety</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical help</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own children - opportunities for education, leisure, social</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse - opportunities for leisure, education, employment, social</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above it can be seen that all the personal factors indicated posed either moderate or major problems for the respondents. These factors will be discussed in turn.

5.3.1 Separation from family and friends

At the time the questionnaire was issued, the principals had been in their new positions for six months. It is not unexpected that separation from family and friends would be more acutely felt at this stage.

Since the appointees were mostly in their thirties, it is not surprising that they may have a spouse who is entrenched in a career in a separate location. Moving to a small rural area would impair their career and in fact, may well mean unemployment for them. In this present day, when principals are sent to the country, many spouses choose to stay in the metropolitan area for their own careers, to maintain the family residence or perhaps to allow their own teenage children to continue their schooling in the city. It is not uncommon for spouses to be separated in these circumstances.

The respondent who indicated having a major problem with separation from family and friends, also reported having a spouse living in Perth. At the time of the telephone
interview (March, 20th, 1992) this principal had become used to this situation, had learned that immersion in work eased the problem to a degree and no longer found this factor to cause a major problem.

One respondent who indicated a moderate problem with separation from family and friends reported being a sole parent. It would be understandable that as a full-time professional, the lack of supportive family and friends to help in the raising of the child could cause problems. Since the workloads have been reported as heavy, it is natural to assume that many after-school hours are required to be served to do the job effectively and this principal would need to have reliable babysitters.

Separation from family and friends may cause particular problems for principals of small rural schools. Several principals have reported that their position in the community is such that they need to keep a 'safety zone' between their families and the rest of the community. This is due to a variety of reasons, however, it is obvious that family and friends would be an important source of unbiased communication with which the principal could relate frustrations about the appointment. This source is important because it is unrelated to the community and has no stake in the situation.

Principals who bring their spouses and children to remote rural communities often report the lack of a great many friends in the community and often find themselves relying on themselves for support and entertainment.

5.3.2 Isolation, loneliness, lack of social life

Again, these factors can be problems for principals and their families in remote rural communities. Five principals in this study reported they had moderate or major problems in these areas. In two studies in Queensland (McSwan, 1988 and Duck et al., 1988) isolation, loneliness and lack of social life were some of the factors cited as reasons for young educators wanting to leave their rural school appointments.
In the case of beginning principals in small rural schools these problems are compounded for many because they are married with children and therefore these problems affect the whole family. One principal reported really enjoying the experience of being a principal in the particular school. However, the spouse had major problems with isolation, loneliness and lack of social life and because of this the principal intended to leave the community at the end of this year.

One principal, in an extremely remote community, reported on the isolation and lack of social life factors:

There is nowhere to go even for a picnic. With three children under two and a half the pressure on the family, particularly the wife, is very high. ... there is a need to keep a certain 'safety zone' between others and ourselves so therefore it is difficult for the wife to socialize easily.

One principal commented about these factors:

Small circle of friends in this location. I spend a lot of time working instead of socialising. I spend my spare time with my family. (Code 8, personal communication, March 19, 1992)

A number of principals reported that part of their sense of isolation is not only due to geographic isolation but also social isolation because their professional role surrounded them twenty-four hours a day. One principal reported:

School surrounds you 24 hours a day. Farmers tend to ring you up very early in the morning.

The principal who had a spouse in Perth stated:

I choose not to get involved in most activities. Socialising with locals is work for me so I tend to be very selective.

The social life for one principal was seen to be a problem because the community was apathetic and generally very difficult to enthuse.

The women, in particular were very apathetic. My wife plays bridge once a week and that is the extent of her social life.
This principal was extremely dissatisfied with the lack of social life and indicated that he was intending to leave at the end of the year.

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the personal factors of isolation, loneliness and lack of social life affects not only the principal but also impinges on the family. Most of the families of the principals in this study are young and often the spouses are 'housebound' with few social outlets. Even though the principals may find their jobs fulfilling, these factors must be attended to for the whole family if the principal is to stay in the community and continue to perform effectively.

5.3.3 Fitting into the community

(Alexander, 1982) reported on remote rural school principals. He maintained the very nature of a small rural community encourages a closeness of all the people in the area. Their sphere of operation is smaller, contact is made with a smaller number of people with whom one must interact in many different facets of country life. For example, the same faces are likely to be seen at school meetings, at scouts and guides meetings, at busy bees, at sports meetings, at fetes and other community functions. He discussed the fact that unlike their urban counterparts, small rural school principals cannot drive home and become lost in a maze of people. Other country people are interested in the public and private lives of fellow community members. Alexander (p.42) maintained that:

...the rural principal has to get used to living in a community where this closeness prevails and, as a result, often finds it difficult to make true friends in such a community under twelve months. The principal and his teachers as well, unless they have other property and business in the area, will usually be regarded as outsiders. The friendships just mentioned eventuate only after a careful analysis of the principal by the community over a one or two year period.....But while the principal is undergoing 'initiation' in the community, he in turn is carefully sorting out the peculiar aspects of the community and judging from his point of view how this community measures up to his previous experiences. So the settling period is happening from two approaches:

(a) The community is watching and summing up the principal.

(b) The principal is observing and measuring the community and its needs.
Three principals in this study reported this factor to be causing either major or moderate problems. It is interesting to note that two of these principals were female, one a single mother and the other had her family living 28 km from the school. Both these factors are likely to make initial acceptance by the community difficult. Firstly, the role of principal is traditionally male and a conservative community, which has been noted as being very resistant to change, is likely to demand more than normal from the young female principal in order to establish her credibility. Expectations of the female principal in a community such as this are likely to be high at first.

Secondly, a community is likely to be negative towards a principal who rejects GEHA accommodation which has been provided alongside the school. This could be a sign of rejection to the community members especially if the principal has her child attend another school as this principal has done. Because this principal is not there 24 hours a day to discover the nuances of the community, there is no time and little opportunity for her to establish her credibility and thus become accepted by the community.

As Cullen (1985) reported:

> Each community expects a great deal from 'its teacher'. From the first day in the locality, the teacher is under some sort of scrutiny. It is not heavy scrutiny and is usually focused on how well the children like their teacher; how industrious the teacher is at school; and how well the teacher fits into the existing social structure.

Towers (1991) discussed the findings of The Commonwealth Schools Commission report Schooling in Rural Australia (1988). It identified some of the challenges that rural school teachers face. One challenge is expectations that parents and communities have of them. From a community perspective, teachers should be enthusiastic, well-educated and possess a range of teaching skills. (In the case of principals it is likely that parents expect them to know everything about managing a school as well as knowledge and expertise in the latest educational theories, innovations and technology.) In addition, the teacher should be able to understand and relate to rural life and have the professional expertise to integrate community interests and values and locally relevant materials into their teaching.
According to this report, teachers should live in the community and participate in local organisations and contribute to community life. They should act as role models and maintain appropriate standards of behaviour both professionally and socially.

The findings of the Commonwealth Schools Commission suggested the teacher or principal must behave in a manner predetermined by the community. It is not surprising then that some of the principals in this study whose lifestyles were not the norm were not at first accepted by the community. As one principal reported:

Not totally welcomed into the community because I do not have children.

This community obviously favoured a family man to be principal because the children are likely to 'anchor' the principal and the family to the community. The single principal would tend to leave the community on weekends, as this respondent indicated, to seek sporting, recreational or cultural activities not available in the community. Again, this could be construed by some community members as rejection of the community.

5.3.4 Leisure, sport and cultural opportunities

The change in lifestyle for a teacher or principal brought up in an urban environment can be a major challenge. Further, the transition from leading an anonymous life and having access to a wide variety of recreational, sporting and cultural activities to a climate that is particularly extreme and perceived as isolated can be daunting. (Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1988)

Seven principals in this study indicated that the lack of leisure, sport and cultural activities posed a problem for them. Again, because most of these principals had a spouse and children, the lack of these opportunities also affected them. For the single principals, the lack of these opportunities may cause serious problems. As one principal reported:

Closest facility for my major sport is 1 hour away, (Albany).
Another principal added:

Travelling huge distances for the other interests in my life. Football - Merredin 90 km away; Karate - Perth 360 km away.

5.3.5 Practical help

In a small rural school, the principal is often responsible for electrical, plumbing and other building and grounds maintenance factors. It can be hard to locate people to help or advise in these matters.

One principal related this situation:

When I got to the school there was no power in the office. Not being much of a handyman, I didn't know what was wrong. The cleaner and the secretary couldn't fix the problem. Another local (who I thought would know what to do) couldn't work out what was wrong. Then I rang up the BMA who told me that they'd have to send someone out. All it was - the trip switch - the whole exercise cost the BMA $1200 - all because the principal didn't know the practicalities such as how a powerboard functions. (Code 4, personal communication, March 18, 1992)

This caused the principal much frustration because of the time, effort and obvious waste of money. He maintained the induction course should have more practical suggestions for beginning principals in remote communities like:

What do I do on the first day to survive and then who do I contact to find out about funding, etc.

5.3.6 Own children - education, leisure and social opportunities

When the community becomes very small, the children are living in a more deprived environment viewed from the angles of social interaction, extra-curricular and leisure activities. This is not to argue that country living is without benefits for children because there are many advantages for young children in a small community. It seems reasonable to suggest that without extensive travel to larger areas, the children in remote areas are definitely disadvantaged because of the lack of facilities, and competition.
Four principals indicated this category to cause a major problem for them. The lack of facilities in most of these small communities has already been described and it has been suggested that this fact affects the entire family and can consequently cause dissatisfaction for the principal. This, then, has been cited as reasons to leave the town. One principal reported problems for his own children:

Our two young boys get very lonely. They would love to go to sporting events or scouts and things like that. We live right next to the school and after the school bus leaves at the end of each school day, they're left without any other kids to play with. Sometimes we have a child stay and play with them but not too often - too many complications. (Code 2, personal communication, March 20, 1992)

5.3.7 Spouse - education, leisure and social opportunities

As mentioned previously the spouse's dissatisfaction with the above factors impacts heavily on the principal. Of the nine married principals in this study, eight indicated that they had major or moderate problems in the above category. One principal who had a major problem in this area had a spouse who lived in Perth because there were no employment opportunities in the community. Another principal indicated that it was necessary for his family to maintain a certain 'safety zone' between his family and the rest of the community. Therefore it was difficult for the wife to socialize. He stated:

It is particularly difficult for a nonteaching wife especially when it is too far to travel to another town/community for a break from the house.

Another principal found problems with this category:

It makes life very lonely. Children and spouse also suffer. You are obliged to get out as soon as is possible. There is no incentive to stay.

One principal found the local community very apathetic, especially the women and reported that the extent of leisure activities for his wife was a game of bridge once a week. He stated:

Lack of social activities leads to depression or a general boredom.
One principal found it necessary to live in a town 28 km from the school community. Moving to a larger centre still did not provide employment for one spouse and the principal commented:

My spouse is unemployed and therefore takes on the role of homemaker. He does the job very well but it still affects him. He reacts to it because it is not an inbred role for him. (Code 3, personal communication, March 19, 1992)

It is reasonable to assume that a remote rural school appointment is more suitable for young families where the spouses have no immediate career aspirations of their own. Lack of employment and social opportunities for the spouses would soon have repercussions for spouses without children. The principals in this study who indicated they had children, indicated in a number of cases that their spouses were depressed by the lack of social opportunities.

5.3.8 Privacy

Seven of the respondents indicated they had either moderate or major problems with privacy (or lack of it). Many small rural school principals live in GEHA accommodation adjoining or close to the school. They are available to the public by visits or telephone 24 hours a day. Some communities may develop a sense of ownership over new principals and their families and at times it may well feel like living in a goldfish bowl.

One principal reported:

Never having time to myself to do my own things without demands being placed on me by school and community."

Another stated:

School surrounds you 24 hours a day. Farmers tend to ring you up very early in the morning.

One principal had problems with the children in the community:

The children want to be with me all the time.
Another respondent indicated problems with the community unable to define the boundaries between the principal's professional and private lives:

The feeling that the community was continually making demands on my time and skills.

One principal felt 'put upon' by the community. He cited problems with lack of privacy. In a telephone interview he reported:

I get phone calls all hours of the night and day. I find it difficult to escape the 'bush telegraph' system. There is an inability to escape. (Code 7, personal communication, March 20, 1992)

5.4 Family Factors

Within this category principals were asked to indicate the extent to which the following factors posed a problem for them in the first three months of their appointment.

(a) spouse's acceptance of the appointment
(b) spouse's acceptance into the community
(c) children's acceptance of the appointment
(d) children's acceptance into the community

Only one principal indicated moderate problems in all four areas. The twelve other respondents indicated that these areas caused no problems or only slight problems.

This is not a surprising result since rural communities are generally family oriented and are likely to welcome new playmates for their own children and in the cases where the spouses are women, the other community women would tend to welcome principals' wives as a new source of friendship and communion. Many principals' wives bring new ideas into the community as stated by two respondents in this study:

My wife is appreciated in the community. There are a lot of small children in the area and my wife started up a playgroup. It's going really well and the women get a chance to get together as well. Things really picked up socially for my wife after she started a playgroup.
These statements emphasize the fact that the principal's wife can be a most valuable ambassador for the school through her daily contacts with people. However, it would be doubtful whether all principals would want their wives expressing themselves on school matters unless they were competent in school affairs and showed excellent discretionary powers.

Alexander (1982), in his study of beginning principals in remote Queensland schools reported that wives of principals in small rural schools were generally well accepted into the communities but went through a period of 'initiation' of approximately a year before being reasonably sure of their ground before making good friends.

In the cases where the spouses are also teachers who are working in the school their acceptance by the community is likely to be automatic. In the present study one principal's wife indicated that she was a teacher and even though she had three young children to care for, she was occasionally called upon by her husband to work in a relief capacity. She reported:

I do occasional relief work when my husband can't get anyone else in from the community. They are first priority. I must admit I really enjoy the occasional bit of work. It keeps me in touch with what's going on, it gives me a break from the house and it also helps me to become accepted into the community. (Code 12, personal communication, March 22, 1992)

The principal who indicated problems in these areas reported being in a community where there were no services at all and that the closest ones are 105 km away. He reported:

It makes life very lonely. Children and spouse also suffer. You are obliged to get out as soon as possible. There is no incentive to stay.

He also described his reaction to the appointment as:

Dissatisfied. It was the last choice of my listed schools - some 94.
The principal described his living conditions as being "primitive" and resented being 'put upon' by the community with:

Phone calls all hours of the day and night. This bush telegraph system is amazing. There is an inability to escape.

The reaction described and the nature of the school community seem plausible explanations for the spouse having problems with acceptance of the appointment. This negative reaction is likely to impact on the acceptance on the spouse and children into the community especially if there are visible displays of dissatisfaction. A number of the respondents in this study have reported an acceptance into the community:

You need to accept the community as they are and they accept you.

If you're honest with them they'll be honest with you.

Life in this community is what you make it. It's up to you to make your friends and your good times.

Boredom and depression can be a fact of life for young principals' wives, who are home with young children, who are in an isolated community with very few or no facilities and very few places to go. For spouses this isolation may be compounded by the fact that, in some cases, there needs to be a certain 'safety zone' from the rest of the community. They can be brought into the internal problems of the school by unthinking parents and it would seem that it would take time for the spouse and community to develop an appropriate communication and relationship. As one spouse indicated:

Life is what you make it really. We are in a small community and there aren't many facilities. We have three children under five years of age and they go to playgroup and to four years old group at school. We play lots of sport including tennis, golf and I've just started with netball and we get along really well with the rest of the community. I joined the CWA. I don't get much done with three young children but I joined to meet other women in the community. You never need babysitters. Wherever you go to socialize, the kids go with you. All the kids look after each other while the parents relax. Even though we don't consider ourselves separate from the others you still have to be careful what you say. We don't bring school problems with us into our social life. That is our policy. (Code 2, personal communication, March 28, 1992)
It appears that negative attitudes by the principal and/or the spouse may have a detrimental effect on acceptance into the community and if the spouse is willing to join in with the lifestyle offered in the community and perhaps add some more, the positive feelings generated would tend to make life more enjoyable for the principal's spouse and children.

The acceptance of the children of the principal into the school and community is generally automatic. These children may be regarded, at first, as special cases with connections to the school which other children don't have. Like all new arrivals into a small community, the principal's children are likely to be scrutinized by the community, especially other children. They have problems of discretion similar to the principal's spouse. They are likely to hear confidential school matters discussed at home and they may hear comments at school about their own father or mother which they may not wish to divulge at home.

In Alexander (1982, p. 78) one principal maintained:

Consciously or unconsciously teachers never regard my children the same as the others. Looking back over the many teachers they have had, I would say the teachers have been either too hard or too easy on them. Sometimes this has meant that they are in trouble much of the time. Particularly I worry when I have to reprimand a teacher who has my child in her class. The fact that I am frequently transferred does not help the situation. The children have to get used to new staff as well as new children and environment. And when the principal lives in the official school residence, his own children get no real change of environment when they go home. In smaller schools where the principal teaches his own children they get even less variety because their teacher lives in the same home.

One principal in this present study indicated his two young sons were feeling lonely. This principal resided in the house adjoining the school and after the school bus left at the end of the day, the boys were reported as feeling slightly abandoned.

5.5 Major nonprofessional problems

A surprisingly large number of principals in this study reported have either moderate or major problems in the nonprofessional side of their appointments. There are a number of reasons for this, however, it must be pointed out that most of the principals in this study have a spouse and children to consider. It follows that problems the family has adapting
to a new and perhaps foreign environment will have a great impact on the principals and their perception of the new appointment and their success in the community. It appears that the principals who had the least nonprofessional problems had adopted an attitude of 'life is what you make it' along with positive attitudes of their spouses and a shared willingness to become actively involved in community activities. Two principals indicated in telephone interviews that they, personally, were enjoying their jobs, however, because of the lack of activities for their spouses, they were planning to transfer out of the community at the end of the year. One principal said:

I enjoy the job. There's plenty of challenge in it for me. The community, especially the women, are extremely apathetic. There's nothing here for my wife. I would not put her through a third year. I couldn't do that to her. (Code 3, personal communication, March 20, 1992)

The major problem areas for these principals were:

1. Lack of leisure, education, employment and social activities for the spouse,
2. Lack of education, leisure and social activities for the principal's children,
3. Lack of opportunities for leisure, sport and cultural activities,
4. Isolation, loneliness, lack of social life,
5. Lack of medical facilities,
6. Lack of privacy and
7. Climate.

These areas and the responses have been addressed in sections 5.2 and 5.3.

The principals were asked to indicate their major nonprofessional problem that they had faced as a new principal. The responses varied a great deal, however, most had themes associated with the isolation factor or the lack of privacy including excessive community demands.

There is nowhere to go even for a picnic. With 3 children under two and a half the pressure on the family, particularly the wife is very high. Also, being the only non-railways family in town, there is a need to keep a certain 'safety zone' between others and ourselves so therefore it is difficult for the wife to socialize easily.

Being 3 hours away from my husband, home and friends.

Lack of peers, social life, interaction.
Lack of social opportunities for spouse.

Travelling huge distances for the other interests in my life. Football - Merredin 90 kms away, karate, Perth 360 kms. Not totally welcomed into the community because I do not have children.

Getting necessary medical treatment and physiotherapy treatment when the closest is 105 km away.

1. Closest facility for my major sport is 1 hour away. (Albany)
2. Hitting kangaroos
3. School surrounds you 24 hours a day.
4. Farmers tend to ring you up very early in the morning.

Time to myself to do my own things without demands being placed on me by school and the community.

Children wanting to be with you all the time.

Housing - present accommodation is reserved for someone else. I have spent six months organizing my housing for 1992.

Finding time to see friends during term.

Being a woman (separated).

Snakes!!

It is clear from the above responses that the respondents have nonprofessional problems which may greatly affect the quality of life for them and their families. The importance of the spouses' satisfaction with the new appointments cannot be stressed enough. If there is little in the way of social, leisure or employment opportunities, the spouses' dissatisfaction is likely to impact on the principals' satisfaction with their job. Because the community is so tightly linked to the school in small remote situations, principals' nonprofessional problems affect their professional lives far more than that of their urban counterparts. The urban principals are likely to be able to drive away from their school community at the end of each day and enter into an entirely different community where no special community expectations are placed on them and they are not a focal point. Urban principals have a great variety of leisure, social, employment and educational opportunities available for themselves and their spouses and children. This is not so in remote rural communities where there are limited or no choices and where there often may seem to be no escape because personal and professional lives can be so tightly interwoven.
5.6 Unanticipated Problems

Six out of ten respondents had unanticipated problems in the nonprofessional area while four experienced problems in the professional area. Unanticipated problems in the nonprofessional area only will be discussed in this section.

One principal summed up his new appointment as:

Nothing could prepare me for the complete change in environment.

Even though the new principals may have been aware of problems they were likely to face in a small rural community due to the close relationship between the school and the community, some expressed surprise at the degree of community demands placed upon them. One principal reported as an unanticipated problem:

The feeling that the community was continually making demands on your time and skills.

Another principal stated:

We receive phone calls all hours of the day and night....There's an inability to escape.

This is not surprising as some principals' homes either have the same telephone number as the school or have the school telephone switched over to their home number after hours.

One principal expressed his feelings about the new appointment as follows:

Getting used to being isolated was the main problem. With professional things I could always pick up a phone and ask someone. I have enough experience and peers to be able to do this quite easily. Nothing could prepare me for the complete change in environment. Being here in a totally different environment - well, it's such a major adjustment.
You tend to be 'put on' by the community. They expect you to be the expert and know all the answers. I get phone calls all hours of the day and night. It's a bush telegraph system. There's an inability to escape. I'll give you an example. The other day I took my family out for the day. We went driving to another town. They must watch our house because the moment we arrived home I received several calls from community members enquiring about one thing or the other to do with school. There's no privacy. It's like being in a goldfish bowl. I never realised it would be this bad.

The accommodation was a big shock to me. The house has a polluted water supply and there's no garden. Everything is brown. It was allowed to die in the holidays. The house is tiny. No cupboard space. We can't fit our belongings into the house.

My shock would have been greater if I hadn't come down here in my own time and of my own expense in the last week of the previous school year. I really think the Ministry should support that. (Code 8, personal communication, March 20, 1992)

Since some of the principals have no previous knowledge of or experience with the particular terrain or climate of their new environment, the harshness of these factors came as a surprise to some. One principal reported:

...and the climate. It's hot. I'm in a 21 year old house and it is one degree below the recommended temperature so I'm ineligible for an air conditioner. There's no sea breeze. It's too hot to relax or sleep in thirty degree heat. (Code 4, personal communication, March 21, 1992)

Other respondents indicated problems with:

Getting in and out of the community during the wet season;

and

The roads out of the community are so rough and rocky, you need a four-wheel-drive.

One principal found the new appointment to be quite a culture shock. He stated:

There are very few people of our own culture. There are only 6 white people in the community (including the two of us). We can't get away on weekends. The nearest place is 300 km by a four-wheel-drive. As far as privacy goes - well, there's virtually none. The entire community is on four acres of land. We can be called on any time of the day or night - kids knocking on the door. (Code 10, personal communication, March 21, 1992)
Five principals out of thirteen respondents in this study were female. Three indicated they were having unanticipated problems because they were female in traditionally conservative communities where the principal is usually a male. One principal reported:

I find problems with being a female principal. Male is very much the vogue here. A female principal is not a typical image in rural Australia. It's more of a macho image. It's really difficult coping with a staff all married to locals and who are all used to a male principal. (Code 14, personal communication, March 20, 1992)

This reaction may stem from the perceived traditional values of many rural communities. It may often be said that the image portrayed by rural Australia is one where men are typically the leaders and decision makers whilst the women fill supportive roles, attending to housekeeping duties, taking care of the children, and tending to any jobs which the husband may delegate. Therefore, as many of the new 'breed' of principals are women, married or single, and with or without children, who are seeking careers just as their male counterparts, their roles are perceived by the community as incongruous with the image of women teachers who have preceded them. That is, in the past, most female teachers in small rural schools were young graduates and usually single. A number of them curtailed their careers as educators after they met and married local community members. In the case of the principal in this study whose staff are all married to local community members, it may be said that their resistance to her could, in fact, be simply because she is female. She reported an unanticipated problem for her was the: "Undermining by teaching staff." While there may be a number of reasons for this, it was the perception of this principal that the resistance was because she was female.

She later explained:

I could talk to them face to face but behind your back they were very negative. (Code 14, personal communication, March 21, 1992)

One explanation that could be drawn from the respondent's comments is that particular staff are ingrained with the traditional male-dominated community sentiment and resent a
fellow female issuing orders. From the comments, another explanation could be that some of the staff may feel slight jealousy of a fellow female who is seen to be successfully pursuing a career and being rewarded through promotion. These staff members may feel resentful because they had to surrender their chances of advancement in their careers because they married into the community. On the other hand it must not be dismissed that a personality conflict between the female principal and the staff could be responsible for ill feelings and had little or nothing to do with the fact the principal was female.

Another female principal found an unanticipated problem caused by the lack of employment opportunities for her spouse. She explained that he stayed at home and tended the house and looked after their child's needs while she worked. This role reversal may be more commonplace in urban environments however, in rural communities it is likely to cause conflict. The community perception of a man taking on the homemaker role is likely to cause negative reactions which are likely to affect a man's self esteem. In the case of the principal in this study, she reported:

He reacts to it because it is not an inbred role.

One female principal indicated that female principals may well need a different set of skills than men. The Ministry of Education, in its induction package makes no special provisions for female principals and treats all principals as likely to have similar needs. Perhaps with the increase of women in administrative positions, a closer look at their special needs is warranted, especially those women who are appointed as principals in small rural communities.

5.7 Coping strategies

Twelve out of thirteen respondents indicated no change or a worsening of their major nonprofessional problem during the first three months of their appointment. Three principals reported their problems as becoming worse while nine reported no change in their problem.
One principal reported an improvement with her problem. She cited as her major nonprofessional problem:

Children wanting to be with you all the time.

This problem does not seem surprising considering the small size of some of the communities with the additional problem for the principal of living in the official school residence often adjoining the school. Also there is an expectation in some communities for school staff to be involved with the students on a regular basis outside school hours.

Teaching staff are requested to recognise that their own involvement must extend beyond school hours in this environment. The school does not expect unreasonable commitment, but staff must be prepared to accept responsibility outside of actual school hours. Teaching staff not prepared to do this should not accept appointment to this school.

Each Thursday evening we screen a movie at the school to raise funds......All staff must ensure that Thursday evenings are reserved to assist. (Staff Induction and Information Booklet, n.d.)

It is not surprising that children in the community who are used to being with the principal after school hours should develop a familiarity and sense of closeness to the principal.

The coping strategy adopted in this case was reported as:

Set rules for children about when they can come to school and when they are not allowed to.

This principal found it necessary to make these rules because of the small size of the community and the proximity of her house to the school. She explained in a telephone interview (March 28th, 1992) that she talked with the children and their parents, explaining the need for time alone with her family. For the most part they were supportive of her wishes, however, for those who ignored the new ruling, privileges such as being allowed to go on swimming excursions to the gorge, were cancelled.
The two principals whose problems became worse reported those problems as being:

Time to myself to do my own things without demands placed on me by the community.

and

There is nowhere to go even for a picnic. With three children under two and a half the pressure on the family, particularly the wife is very high. Also...there is a need to keep a certain 'safety zone' between others and ourselves so therefore it is difficult for the wife to socialize easily.

This principal reported the reason for this problem becoming worse:

We had a third child.

However, this principal reported that the problem was lessening due to the fact that:

My wife started a playgroup then things picked up socially. Also the induction course warned us to be cautious socially and I think that was good advice. It's better not to make specific friends. Like we couldn't invite a specific family home for a barbecue. It's better to invite the whole town. (Code 4, personal communication, March 20, 1992)

This principal reported the need to keep a certain 'safety zone' between his family and the rest of the community. Another principal, however, indicated the opposite approach helped him and his family to be accepted into the community. He stated:

There's no need to keep a safety zone. My biggest strength is familiarity with the children and the rest of the community. They know me and I know them. I like to encourage the community to be close. I get right into the community. I socialize with everyone. I like the country. I'll stay at least three years. (Code 2, personal communication, March 21, 1992)

For one principal who reported the accommodation as the major nonprofessional problem:

Housing - present accommodation is reserved for someone else. I have spent six months organizing my housing for 1992.
GEHA and the Ministry took a long while to get things moving. 
(Code 3, personal communication, March 21, 1992)

She explained that because of the housing problem she and her family were forced to live out of the community in a house 28 km away. This situation caused many problems for her and she was transferring out of the school at the end of the year.

One principal who reported living in a community where he always had the feeling the community was making demands on your time and skills decided to cope with problem by: "Reduced external commitments".

This principal reported that he tailor-made his leisure activities to suit the community environment. He now plays tennis and golf, two sports which are available in most small rural communities.

One principal's wife reported that:

It's a very small community but we believe life is what you make it. We have three small children and we're the kind to 'get out and do it'. This afternoon he's out playing golf and I'm pottering around the garden with the kids. My husband and I are pretty social people. You still have to be careful though. We make it a policy not to bring school matters into our social life. In the holidays we like to spend some of the time in the community but it's nice to go away and visit our families. (Code 2, personal communication, March 26, 1992)

From the above it would seem that one way of coping with community pressures may be to change one's own lifestyle to fit into the community rather than remain negative, aloof and resistant.

This, however, was not the way one principal coped with problems of community demands on her personal time. She claimed:

Socializing is work for me. I choose not to get involved in too many community activities. I'm selective.
This principal reported living apart from her spouse who has employment in Perth. She indicated one way of coping with this separation was to use the time to "get on top of the job". Becoming immersed in the professional side of the appointment appears to be one coping strategy used successfully by a number of principals. This may be used to counteract feelings of isolation, lack of activities or separation from family and friends.

One principal, a single male stated:

I don't have time to go looking for a social life. All my energies are channelled into school. (Code 6, personal communication, March 21, 1992)

It may be said that this particular coping strategy is not a balanced one and is effective only in the short term. Ignoring the need for a satisfying social life is likely to cause problems for principals in small rural communities. It seems appropriate to suggest some sort of compromise is made other than total immersion in the professional side.

One principal reported on the way he coped with the feelings of isolation sometimes felt by himself and his spouse:

We encourage visits from family and friends from Perth. We always seem to be having people stay with us. This is one of our ways to cope with the loneliness.

The same principal was asked to comment on other coping strategies. He suggested:

Creating hobbies, making good use of holidays, studying, exchange with other schools in the area (for sports and social events) and for teachers - parties and get-togethers for teachers in the region. (Code 10, personal communication, March 29, 1992)

It seems almost imperative in these small communities that to really cope the principal must be flexible and accepting of the community and to be able to join in with community activities since all other leisure and social activities are great distances away.

A large number of small rural communities are heavily sports oriented. The principals who reported enjoying country life, for the most part, tended to be those who actively
look part in the sporting activities offered by the community. This does not necessarily mean, however, that a principal needs to be sporty to be accepted into the community. A principal may be an excellent administrator and greatly respected by the community because of the fine qualities exhibited without that principal being particularly sporty. One principal reported:

You need to accept the community as they are and they accept you.

Another principal who had not anticipated the extent of small town gossip handled this problem by:

Smiles, diplomacy, honesty, effort and commitment. This has won them over.

The principal who reported as an unanticipated problem:

Getting in and out of the community during the wet season.

explained the coping strategy used:

One time it was really bad. I'd gone on an expedition to get supplies for myself and the school when there was a flash flood. The river rose and there was no way I was going to risk driving through it to get back to school. I called the Ministry and told them that I couldn't get back to school and that I'd wait for 24 hours to see if the river dropped. If it didn't within that time I'd need a helicopter to lift us out. They were very supportive and issued me an order number. Luckily the water level dropped and we didn't need a helicopter. I was very pleased with the supportive attitude of the transport people in the Ministry. They were prepared to pay $800 for a 20 minute trip to get me back to the school community. I had my baby son with me at the time and was not about to risk his life. (Code 8, personal communication, March 28, 1992)

5.8 Chapter summary

This chapter dealt with the beginning principals' major non professional problems. Major problems were reported in all the factors listed for the community and personal categories in the questionnaire therefore all factors were discussed. The category, Family Factors was discussed generally as there were no major problems reported in this area.
The major nonprofessional problems were then discussed. The data indicated that the main areas of concern were:

1. Lack of leisure, education, employment and social activities for the spouse,
2. Lack of education, leisure and social activities for the principal's children,
3. Lack of opportunities for leisure, sport and cultural activities,
4. Isolation, loneliness, lack of social life,
5. Lack of medical facilities,
6. Lack of privacy and
7. Climate.

Next, unanticipated problems were discussed. These included such matters as the complete shock of the new environment, the community constantly making demands on principals' time and skills, the lack of privacy and problems associated with being a female principal in a male dominated culture.

Lastly, principals coping strategies were reported. These included opening channels of communications within the community, becoming more involved in community activities, looking for alternative accommodation, becoming immersed in the professional side of the appointment, changing lifestyle and sporting interests, encouraging visits from family and friends and generally accepting the community rather than being negative and resistant.
6.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the types of support, as perceived by the respondents, which were available to assist them with their new roles. Principals, especially new appointees, require a network of support for the various new responsibilities which they undertake in their new roles. One author claimed that:

The role of the school principal is, as previously noted, complex and is subject to conflicting expectations. These expectations for the role often constitute an amorphous mass of duties and obligations and principals find great difficulty in coming to grips with these. They are expected to provide clear direction to the educational enterprise they head but they themselves have few clear indications of what constitutes both the boundaries and content of their work. They seem to be acquiring new functions and tasks at an alarming rate, e.g. acting as counsellors and welfare agents, without having fully delineated their existing duties and responsibilities. Is it any wonder, therefore, that the role is riddled with ambiguity? Is it any wonder that many analysts including principals themselves, find comfort in vague metaphors, such as 'The Captain of the Ship' or the 'Meat in the Sandwich'? (Duignan, 1987, p. 41.)

The plethora of demands and the nature of these demands would seem to test the tolerance and patience of even the most accomplished principal. The fragmentary nature of the work and the fact that principals must be 'infinitely interruptible' call for special personal and professional qualities that few people possess. (Duignan, 1987, pp.51 - 52)

Beginning principals in remote rural schools have additional pressure attempting to come to terms with what is quite often an alien environment. This study indicates that many of the major problems for such principals are concerned with the isolated lifestyle and the close relationship that the community has with the school. Several have indicated that they needed support to help them survive the initial stage of their appointments. They reported also on the quality and usefulness of the support which was available to them.

102
Table 6.1: Questionnaire responses to the value of types of support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No value</th>
<th>Little value</th>
<th>Some value</th>
<th>Great value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School induction package</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry induction programme</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in new school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District office</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outgoing principal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inservice activities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community social groups</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community clubs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local individuals and families</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P &amp; C</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and friends</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome activities arranged by the town</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above, it can be seen that the support received by peers was perceived as the most valuable source of support for the respondents. This is not surprising as an objective of the induction course is to build up peer networks. The Ministry of Education has viewed this to be a most valuable source of support for the new appointees. District Office support and that given by local individuals and families rated as the second and third most valuable. Again this is a predictable result given the isolated nature of the communities. It would seem likely that over time these two sources would refine the type of support offered beginning principals to be more applicable to the local situation.

A further factor associated with the varying needs for support was the wide diversity in the type of communities to which the principals were appointed. Communities differ in their ethnic makeup, degree of isolation, climate, location, population, facilities and the general attitude of the people to schools. Some communities were perceived to be traditional and conservative with a strong educational bias while others were younger, more accepting of change. Still others in remote aboriginal communities were seen to have unique sets of conditions.
As Harvey (1990, p.1) suggested:

Although new principals are experienced educators they enter the school as outsiders or 'aliens'. They lack awareness and understanding of the customized patterns of on-going school operations and the pre-existing social worlds of school participants. However, they are expected to provide leadership and to give purpose to school activities. Under these circumstances their entry to the school becomes problematic.

The remainder of this chapter will be divided into three parts. Firstly, it will deal with support in terms of professional development, focusing on the professional needs of the respondents. In the next section the induction undertaken by the principals will be discussed together with their comments regarding the effectiveness of the exercise in terms of providing them with coping strategies to solve any problems they may have encountered. Thirdly, the support available to help the beginning principals cope with nonprofessional issues and their personal coping strategies will be reported.

6.2 Professional development

6.2.1 Definition:
Professional development is a learning process. Its primary role is either to bring about a modification of attitudes, skills and/or behaviours or reinforce desirable attitudes and/or behaviours. Professional development is a subtle and complex process in which inservice courses can make a worthwhile contribution. The real development, however, takes place in the action arena of a school. The implication from this is that professional development should not be considered as a discrete task or specific programme in which the professional is expected to participate once or twice a year. Rather, it should be regarded as a fundamental and ongoing process which is part of the everyday professional life for the person involved. This means that professional development must be planned as a continuing series of
coordinated and related experiences occurring throughout a principal's career. As such, induction is usually the first and most immediate type of support beginning principals receive. This is supported by Playko and Daresh (1989, pp. 10-11) who maintained that:

...it is our strong view that entry year programs and mentoring should not be seen as distinct and isolated efforts that are used with novice administrators and then dropped. Rather, we believe that they should serve as devices that will be used as the opening round of a much more complete and extended approach to professional growth and development that is available in school systems. In our view there are three distinct phases in a comprehensive program of professional development. These are preservice preparation, induction, and ongoing inservice education.

Washbourne (1988) further reported that at the international, national and local levels there is complete acceptance of the crucial role that the school principal must play in effecting educational change. It follows from this position that the training and development of school principals must be based on a set of competencies that are consistent with the demands of the current situation. The same author stated that:

After Darwin (1988), competence is considered to include knowledge, skill and attitude components. Specifically, competence includes; What managers must know, what they must do, and the attitudes and beliefs they must hold.... That present indications of provision for training and development of school principals and others within schools in W.A. is reactive rather than proactive, based more upon perceptions of the needs of practitioners by providers, which includes the potential for 'wants' more than upon administrative needs derived from the logic of the situation.

Washbourne concluded that the pressing need in the Western Australian situation was for research on foci and modes of professional development programmes that were context related and principal centred.

This notion of professional development needing to be context related is not new. Bessant (1978) maintained that little has been done in teacher training institutions to prepare trainee teachers for life in the rural areas, beyond instruction in the organisational aspects of controlling a small rural school. Motivation to investigate local conditions and to link school work with local needs and aspirations is lacking
because they see themselves as transitory - waiting for the opportunity to return to the urban area. Bessant (1978, p. 126) cited a recent report on Poverty and Education which claimed that:

A major problem for schools in remote and isolated districts is that teachers almost invariably come into the community from outside with little understanding of the lifestyle or of existing relationships...their training has been city based and their move to a country school has generally involved little choice. For experienced teachers such a move tends to be associated with promotion rather than a particular desire to work in rural areas. Academically trained, city bred, many find it impossible to adjust to rural life.

This can easily be said of beginning principals in small rural schools. They often find themselves in a foreign environment which is like no other and professional development needs may vary widely from one context to another. In a study of principals in a change situation in Victoria, Chapman (1988) observed that they were placed in a situation wherein the demand was to work with new sets of values, decision-makers, decision areas and management responsibilities. She reported that principals cited the changed nature of power and authority relationships as the most critical factor that affected their roles.

6.2.2 Types of professional development available

In Western Australia the administrative demands of schools are changing so rapidly that learning experiences must be available on a continuing basis. Beginning principals in particular, need to survive and, ultimately, become as effective as possible. While this thesis is concerned mainly with the first stages of the appointments it is important to consider the claim made by Playko and Daresh (1989, p.12) that:

The key to assisting beginners is to establish a pattern of continuous learning, growth, and professional development over an entire career.

Recent initiatives to be implemented in Western Australian primary schools include an updated Mathematics syllabus, the First Steps Programme, the Stepping Out Programme, outcome statements for Language and Mathematics, Monitoring
Standards tests, Social Justice, new syllabi including Handwriting and Art/Craft, merit promotion, new job selection skills and computer technology. Even though urban principals are faced with the same responsibilities, it seems particularly important that beginning principals in isolated rural communities have professional development opportunities available to them since they lack the physical proximity to experts who can provide them with continuing advice and feedback.

The main source of professional development available to beginning rural principals stems from the district level. These take the form of principals' conferences when principals from a particular district meet at a designated location to discuss current issues. Another form of professional development is generated from the District Office which reacts towards single principals or small groups who are encountering similar problems. However some principals in the study indicated that the District Office, for the most part operated in a reactive rather than proactive way and thus it was seen to be necessary to understand how to obtain the specific support required. One new principal expressed a degree of uncertainty about how to approach the District Office for help in the early stages of his appointment. He indicated that:

I didn't realize how the District Office worked. I guess I waited for help to be forthcoming but after a while I found out that you need to ask for specific help from District Office.

Another principal also indicated a lack of awareness of the role and procedures of District Office:

I wasn't aware of the role of the E.O. and other District Office personnel and I didn't know how or when to ask for advice. I didn't want to make a fool of myself.

Most respondents reported that they received considerable help from the District Office personnel. This included information on financial management and new education initiatives such as the First Steps Programme. Some, however, expressed a slight reluctance to call the District Office at first for reasons mainly to do with not wanting to appear too ignorant and not being aware of the protocol and functions of
the District Office. They did acknowledge, however, that over time a rapport was built up as they became more familiar with procedures and personnel. Visits by District Office personnel were generally looked on favourably although one principal reported that a request to see someone from the District Office always involved two people because of the remoteness of the location and the huge travel distance over very rugged terrain. Sometimes he felt awkward as if he almost was wasting the time of the second person. This factor added to a reluctance to call on District Office for face-to-face help. Another principal conceded that:

The District Office has been OK for help - there for support but face-to-face is much better than telephone. With budget cuts to schools, schools need to pay for support personnel.

It is important that professional development opportunities must give consideration to the local context. Sometimes, professional development offered from the central source can be inappropriate at a particular time and may result in a waste of resources and perhaps exacerbate feelings of professional and personal isolation. One principal reported feeling that Central Office was insensitive to their situation:

I'm completely on my own at school. Central Office personnel lob in when I'm teaching with no thought for me and my timetable. They are out of touch with the situation.
(Code 11, personal communication, March 21, 1992)

On the same theme another principal reported that:

At P & C meetings they want to gun you down. I need PD on how to run a P & C meeting and I need practical hands-on experience. I need principals' conferences to feel confident. I've had no opportunities to attend PD meetings where I can meet other principals to give me encouragement.
(Code 14, personal communication, March 16, 1992)

6.2.3 Effectiveness of professional development

The most extensive professional development available to the new appointees in the early stages of their appointments was the induction package. The effectiveness of the induction programme will be discussed in a later section on induction. It seems appropriate, however, to draw attention to the comments of one principal about a
professional development experience in the early stage of the appointment. That principal stated that:

The whole induction on multi-grade teaching was a waste of time. The PD session on Social Justice was a waste of time. We need hands-on sessions. One PD unit did a course on interviewing for temporary relief promotional positions. We did role playing for a day. It was great. (Code 7, personal communication, March 22, 1992)

A common theme to emerge from interviews with the principals was that they needed problem solving strategies rather than knowledge of subject content. As one principal claimed:

You can pick up a phone to find out the answers to factual problems.

6.2.4 Desired changes to professional development

The principals indicated that the enhancement of professional development could be achieved with greater time and financial resources. Many complained that the workload limited time available to attend professional development opportunities even when they were offered. Playko and Daresh (1989) conceded that:

Entry year problems of administrators are minimized in school systems where there has been conscious effort to structure beginners' workloads so that they would have sufficient time to work in their buildings to develop productive working relationships with staff, students, and parents. School districts should take care not to immerse newly-hired principals in the same bewildering array of special district projects and committees that are part of the workload of more experienced administrators.

While these comments refer to the North American context, they have relevance to the Western Australian situation. Beginning principals in remote rural schools admittedly do not have the number of students and staff as larger urban school principals. They do, however, deal with the same Ministry 'officialdom', with the same legal responsibilities as their urban counterparts. They do so without the physical availability of support personnel. They inevitably are required to interact with the local community. This requires special skills and knowledge. They do so without the peer support available to their urban counterparts.
It would appear that the types of professional development available in the initial stages of a beginning rural principal's appointment is not the issue. The main suggestions from the principals as far as support opportunities was the time factor. One principal was refused permission to attend a conference in Perth. That principal cited the reason for refusal as the superintendent's perception that there had been enough interruption to the school programme. This refusal resulted in feelings of disillusionment and frustration for this principal who firmly believed many problems could be addressed and perhaps solved by attendance.

A further principal, however, reported having a superintendent who was extremely supportive and never refused permission for attendance at PD opportunities. That principal claimed that:

"There's no set allowance for PD days. I go when I want to. The super doesn't mind about attending PD sessions. (Code 5, personal communication, March 22, 1992)"

It would appear then, that there is a disparity among principals' perceptions and superintendents' attitudes concerning professional development opportunities for beginning principals. The difficulties arising from this disparity suggest that there needs to be consistency in policy about opportunities to attend professional development programmes. This would alleviate some feelings of injustice, unfairness, and confusion that principals may experience.

Given the perceived problems of some of the female principals in this study, it can be assumed that the appointment of women to these administrative roles will be taken into consideration in the induction courses. Community expectations need to be addressed. While the Ministry's role may not be to change social policy it needs to address the issue of females in promotional positions and the particular demands they are likely to face in a small rural community.
6.3 Induction

6.3.1 Definition
In the foregoing considerable mention was made of the place induction plays in the overall professional development of a beginning rural principal. For the purpose of this study 'induction' is taken to mean:

....the process by which new school principals make the transition from theoretical leadership to operational leadership. Andrews (1989, p.3)

This study has indicated that the beginning rural principals find that, once they take up their new appointments, the job is much more complex than anticipated. They are suddenly faced with the myth that leaders are supposed to know all the answers at a time when they really need help in the socialisation process and in learning new technical routines. As one principal reported:

You tend to be 'put on' by the community. They expect you to be the expert and know all the answers. (Code 4, personal communication, March 20, 1992)

This supports the position adopted by Harvey (1990) who stated that:

The appointment of promising educators to their first principalship, or to a school of greater complexity, is a demanding career transition. The status passage is a moment of risk to not only the career of the new principal but also to the stability and the continuity of the pattern of organization of the host school. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many principals do not experience success during their first year. Induction programmes typically focus on 'information giving' about current education system priorities. There is usually little treatment of the strategy whereby the new principal will enter the school and establish a presence which has potential for leadership. Recognition of the culture of the school provides new opportunities for understanding the experiences and the actions of new principals during the first year of appointment.

6.3.2 Induction undertaken
The induction undertaken by all but one of the beginning principals was the Ministry of Education Induction Program, Band 3, 1990 -1991. In the light of the
position of Harvey (1990), it is of interest to note the objectives of the programme as:

By the end of the course participants will have:

- Met senior officers of the Ministry.
- Established informal collegial networks with peers, and with experienced Principals from similar schools.
- Related the induction experiences to observations of their new school situation.
- Decided on how they will manage the delivery of the curriculum in their school.
- Noted procedures associated with the management of the operations of the school such as community relations, school finance, curriculum resources, building maintenance, administration of school buses, etc.
- Noted procedures associated with the management of the staff of the school including policy related to staff welfare, non-teaching staff, occupational health and safety, equal employment opportunity and salaries.
- Developed skills and knowledge in the area of school development planning and the Ministry's position on related policy issues.

(Ministry of Education Induction Program, Band 3, 1990 -1991 file.)

6.3.3 Effectiveness of induction

It is not the purpose of this study to analyse the effectiveness of the Ministry-run induction programme, however, some discussion, in terms of the principals' perceptions of its ability to provide them with coping strategies in the early stage of their appointment is warranted. Induction, as stated, is the first and most immediate form of professional development undertaken by the new appointees and it is reasonable to assume that they would have expectations that the course would equip them with pertinent knowledge and skills to enable them to successfully take up their new positions.
Principals in this study do not fully support the effectiveness of the induction programme. Two reported that they found the programme 'extremely worthwhile', eight found it 'very useful' while one principal reported the programme to be 'not at all worthwhile'. The latter principal stated that:

The induction course was a waste of time. It was superficial and did not and could not prepare for all the different environments we would be experiencing. One or two people made sense. (Code 3, personal communication, March 22, 1992)

Principals were asked to list the three most useful things they learnt from the induction experience. In resume it was claimed that the following benefits were derived from the induction course:

- Contact persons in the Ministry.
- Who to contact for specifics.
- Met one person who ran the course who has continued to be a help.

In terms of establishing informal collegial networks with peers some principals reported acquiring:

- Network of peers.
- Network of peers in same boat.
- The network of principals on my level - comradery.[sic]
- A sense of comradeship.
- Contacts with colleagues.

In terms of school management procedures others stated acquiring information on:

- Financial bookkeeping.
- Dealing with Ministerial 'officialdom'.
- Strategies for utilizing staff allocation.
- Financial management, Development Plan methods for schools.
- Some tasks we'd need to know how to do.
Other useful aspects of the induction programme were noted. While these were not necessarily planned objectives, they were perceived by the respondents to be some of the most useful things learnt.

Some found the induction experience helpful in initiating their mindset from the teacher culture to that of the administrator. One principal commented that:

It helped me feel I was a principal not a promoted teacher. (There's a difference.)

With a similar thought about the induction course another principal stated that:

There was lots of bonding at the induction course - and networking. Even though I felt we needed more practical pointers from previous principals, I got a sense of 'I'm a principal'. Also it was good to have the opportunity to match yourself up with others in the same boat and to develop personal links with Ministry personnel. (Code 7, personal communication, March 21, 1992)

Other principals appreciated being forewarned about the workload. When asked to list the most useful things learnt from the induction programme some of the comments were:

Amount of responsibility of the job.
A lot of hard work was ahead.
It's not going to be easy...take your time...don't panic!

More general comments about the value of the induction course were that principals were told:

Always wear a smile.
Don't forget your family.
Some general background knowledge. It gave me 'some' idea of how to get going.
At the induction course we were warned to be cautious socially. This was good advice.
The author of the last mentioned comment further maintained that:

We tried to be involved in whole group activities but we felt a lot of pressure. We felt like we couldn't invite specific families home for a barbecue. You really need to invite the whole town. You can't afford to make specific friends. There's not a lot to talk about. The conversation tends to always be about school. You can't talk to people about other people's kids. We keep to ourselves. We keep a safety zone. (Code 4, personal communication, March 16, 1992)

Disappointment was, however, registered on the effectiveness of the induction course to prepare one principal for the new appointment. He stated that:

I picked up a few things in the induction course but generally I felt that a lot of it was directed towards wheatbelt appointments. There was very little about aboriginal communities which is the information I needed. (Code 10, personal communication, March 21, 1992)

Similarly, it was further claimed that:

The induction course was useless. It was good for networking. The file was useless. Although there was a very strong financial package. (Code 12, personal communication, March 22, 1992)

and yet another reported dissatisfaction with the induction course:

At the induction course we weren't given the systems and skills required to deal with towns. I hadn't realized how much the staff are shielded from parents. Negotiation skills, conflict resolution - I skilled myself. Women need different skills than men. We needed to talk informally with previous principals about the town, school and community. (Code 3, personal communication, March 21, 1992)

One principal suggested:

As far as the induction course goes, I would like to spend time talking informally with the new appointees at the induction course. At my induction course some principals did come and speak but they were dressed in suits and ties and with superintendents. They couldn't speak openly. I'd like to talk with them [the previous principals] over a beer and tell them about a few shortcuts. A superintendent's presence can be intimidating. (Code 8, personal communication, March 21, 1992)

This view was also reflected by another respondent who indicated:

At the induction course you get the impression that everyone is doing a good job and doing it very well. (Code 7, personal communication, March 22, 1992)
Further suggestions to improve the induction course were made by another principal:

The induction course was good but I found it quite frustrating at times because the group I was in wanted to find out all about funding and where and how to get money for this and that. I feel I needed more information about what to do on the first day to survive and then who do I contact about funding etc. Personally I'd be more inclined to tell principals about the practical things and about socializing in the community. But also tell people that the District Office is there to use and that there's no need to be embarrassed about making use of it. (Code 4, personal communication, March 21, 1992)

From the above comments it is clear that the induction course was perceived differently by the beginning principals. Some, less experienced principals tended to want more information about the practicalities of living and working in an isolated community while others wanted more specific information relating to their unique type of community, for example, remote aboriginal communities. Some found the networking aspect very worthwhile as they were able to build up contacts to call upon for support, advice and encouragement in the early stages of their appointments. Indications are that this peer network is an extremely valuable form of support because often peers represent no threat, therefore, principals are more likely to admit their weaknesses to those with the same problems. Others found value in the induction course as a vehicle to help convey them from the teacher mindset to that of the principal.

6.3.4 Desired changes to induction

Principals were asked to reflect and comment on further information about the school which was needed to enable them to function as an effective principal from the start of the school year. Only two indicated that there was no other information required. While their responses indicated varying needs it appeared that the majority of those needs could possibly have been met in an induction course, particularly if time was spent with the outgoing principal.
Meetings with outgoing principals were perceived to be of great value and likely to provide new appointees with the following:

Levels of ability and transience of school population.

Which files needed to be perused before school started, student achievement programs. (Spending a week during last term at the school as well as the induction course would be great.)

Examples of programmes, timetables etc. Class records. Previous principal left nothing to indicate what the children had covered.

An understanding of the previous year's programming and student levels of performance.

More information on how the outgoing principal handled his School Development Plan.

Numbers, resource, staff, S.D. Plan organization details, parent information, prior newsletters.

More knowledge of geography and weather conditions.

Some respondents indicated that they needed more information in the areas of:

Financial recording. Duty statement - in terms of class sizes and teacher entitlement.

How to organize swimming lessons, strategies to cope at P. & C. meetings, how to get staff 'on side'.

It is of interest to note the comments by the principal who was unable to attend the induction course. That principal sought more information on:

Which form to fill out and when. What BMA, PCAP, AST etc. all [sic]. Knowledge of job rates - school assistant, RIP aide etc, bus routes/procedures, more support with K-3, money matters.

Much of this information requested was available in the Ministry of Education, Induction Program, Band 3, 1990 - 1991 file, issued to participants of the induction course. This suggests that the principal's concern was a result of his own actions. It must be noted, however, that:
The induction course was in the last week of school and I already had commitments at my school. I got really short notice about my appointment and the course. The way I found out about my appointment was amazing - some fellow rang me up and said there was an induction course in a few days' time for new principals and asked me if I was going. This was the first I knew of my appointment. I explained because it was such late notice that I'd already made commitments at my school and would find it impossible to attend for the whole week but asked if I could possibly attend a couple of days. I was told that I either did the whole course or nothing and when I asked what other alternatives I had the reply was; 'Learn on the job.'  
(Code 5, personal communication, March 21, 1992)

This principal indicated that in retrospect, he solved the problems himself and stated:

For me, learning on the job was the best thing.

The comments of many of the principals almost a year after their appointments indicated that most have certainly 'learned on the job'. The principals in this study were asked to comment on what support could have been provided to make the first three months more rewarding. One principal reported:

I think to a large extent the task becomes easier with time. Trial and error appears to be the way to sort things out.

Another principal also reported in this theme:

I'm not sure - I think it's something you just experience.

While time and experience are likely to solve some difficulties, this does not help those beginning principals in the early phase of their appointments when they are expected by the community to be expert in all administrative matters.

There seems to be a consistent set of themes that have obvious implications for the ways in which beginning principals might be better prepared to take on their leadership roles. Playko and Daresh (1989) supported the idea that principals should receive a good deal of 'hands on' learning of administrative tasks and responsibilities before they ever get to their first jobs. They maintained that
induction programmes need to stress the development of strong norms of collegiality within those who are taking their first administrative jobs so that there can be a realization that a school administrator is not necessarily paid to know all the answers and will rarely be effective by trying to independent.

A lesson that needs to be learned early in a person's career (if not before that career actually begins) is that success as a school administrator is often based on the ability to seek support from many different people in the organization. (Playko and Daresh, 1989, pp. 4-5.)

One principal reported that his school budgets for the new principal and the spouse to be flown to visit the school before taking up the appointment. He felt this concept to be particularly worthwhile and stressed the importance of the spouse attending part of or the whole induction course. This idea may have merits in the light of the findings of this study, namely, that a large proportion of major problems for the beginning principals lay with the spouses and their lack of social, leisure and employment opportunities. It would seem a positive move to include spouses in the induction programme because their acceptance of the appointment may affect the amount of support they provide for the principals. It could be claimed that adjusting to a totally new environment and different lifestyle impacts just as heavily on the principal's family and subsequently is likely to affect his professional life.

The perceived benefits from spouses attending induction courses were seen to be in providing an opportunity for spouses to create a support network of their own. While the importance of a peer network for principals is acknowledged, far less credence has been placed on the importance of a similar system for spouses. This aspect of support warrants further investigation.

Several principals reported that it would have been helpful if the outgoing principals were able to attend part of the induction course. They stressed the benefit of meeting these principals in an informal, non-threatening atmosphere. In this type of
setting, it was purported, a more honest, frank exchange of perceptions and suggestions could occur. Principals could reveal community idiosyncracies and insights into who constitutes the power bases and provide a general overview of the culture of the school and the community. This approach was seen to give principals a sense of the culture they were about to enter and would provide pertinent information for each appointee. This was preferable to the visit by past principals (accompanied by a superintendent) at the last induction course where one principal described:

I got the impression that everyone is doing a good job and doing it well.

Devolution has involved three major changes to the role of the school principal; managing the school grant, school development planning and school decision-making groups (SDMG). With the increased responsibility of the community to take an active, constructive part in school affairs some members have unrealistic ideas about the role of the principal. One principal in this study suggested participation in the induction course by a SDMG representative. He suggested this to be a positive move designed to educate the community about the role of the principal while, at the same time, allowing the community representative to be heard. This may also serve to give the community some responsibility for making a beginning principal's entry into a new role in a foreign environment less traumatic. In a small rural community, it would seem that this concept may alleviate many of the misunderstandings between the principal and the community.

6.4 Personal support
The results of this study show that nonprofessional factors were the source of the most major problems for the beginning principals. Despite this fact it was noted that there were few, if any, formal support mechanisms in place to support the principals in this area. There were specific opportunities for support in handling professional problems such as induction programmes, Ministry personnel, District Office
personnel and professional development opportunities. Principals were, however, required to form their own support networks and strategies to help them cope with problems in nonprofessional areas. This is particularly vital since the principals live and work in the same small communities and there is nearly always an overlap between their professional and personal lives. Separating these two areas becomes difficult in the rural context where the principal is an integral part of the community.

The principals in this study used a variety of strategies to obtain support to help them cope with nonprofessional problems. Most of the married principals reported that they confided in their spouses and claimed this as an important source of support because their spouse was not part of the community and provided immediate, usually unbiased feedback.

Others reported the 'school gardener' or 'registrar' as being helpful in giving useful insight into the community. Such people are usually long-standing members of the community and as such have an insight into community nuances and idiosyncrasies. They are also, in many cases, long-standing employees who may be used to a high turnover of principals and teachers and can be sensitive to their roles and likely problems. If a good relationship is fostered between principals and other trustworthy school personnel, it seems likely that early insights into potential problem areas can be shared and costly mistakes avoided.

Some principals used personnel in the District Office to help them adjust to their perceived nonprofessional problems. One principal reported receiving a lot of help from the psychologist at the District Office. If the psychologist is experienced with the problems associated with being a principal of a small rural school, then support can be invaluable. There may be a danger, however, in assuming that all District Office psychologists are sensitive to the unique situations of small rural communities. The cohesion of small communities and the power they can exert
cannot afford to be underestimated and this may happen with personnel not experienced with the nuances of rural life.

Some principals reported that they had an informal and highly valuable liaison with neighbouring principals. One principal reported that:

My major support was another principal just down the road.  
(Code 8, personal communication, March 21, 1992)

These relationships, however, take time to develop and may not provide immediate sources of support for beginning principals in the first three months of their appointment.

The induction course provided an opportunity for the new appointees to build a peer network. Some of the principals reported that they had taken advantage of this and often called these colleagues for advice. Given that a peer network exists, it is acknowledged by the principals that each community is unique and provides different perceived problems for different people.

An important source of support for all perceived problems, professional and nonprofessional may be staff. These people can be particularly helpful if they have been in the school for any length of time. Not only will they be aware of likely professional pitfalls, but having to live and work in the community, it is likely they will have faced many of the nonprofessional problems or be aware of the coping strategies of the previous principal. If a positive relationship with open channels of communication is built, the beginning principal may be able to utilize this valuable source of support. One principal in this study reported that one of the teachers on staff was the acting principal in the previous year and was very useful in providing support in professional areas and in problems related to the community.

It is not to be assumed that all staff who have been at the school for some time will be valuable sources of support. Personality conflicts or negative staff attitudes
towards the incoming principal caused by a variety of factors is to be expected. As one principal reported:

> Half the staff hated each other and wouldn't speak to each other. It was totally unworkable. I tried talking to them. That was OK face-to-face but behind my back they were extremely negative. They were continually trying to undermine me. (Code 14, personal communication, March 16, 1992)

Coming to terms with the new environment may take some time and even so, it is not wrong to say that things are constantly changing including the principal’s maturity and experience in the administrative role and assimilation into the community. It would seem reasonable to assume that the beginning principals, in the initial stages of their appointments, as they make the transition from ‘the teacher culture’ to the ‘principal culture’ (Harvey, 1990) will turn to those in the immediate proximity for support; namely gardeners, registrars, cleaners and spouses. These people are likely to be sympathetic and provide impartial support and feedback for teachers beginning their first administrative role.

6.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed relevant literature on support required for beginning principals, in particular those in remote rural communities. The introduction reviewed the notion of support in general and acknowledged the varying needs of principals and the differing types of communities to which they were appointed.

The results of a question about principals' perceptions of the value of support from varied sources indicated that support received by peers to be the most valuable. Support received from the District Office and local individuals and families was perceived as the second and third most valuable sources.

The second part of the chapter examined professional development and reviewed relevant literature. Professional development was defined and the types of PD
available to the new appointees was discussed together with the principals' perceptions of their effectiveness. In addition, suggestions for future PD opportunities were made by the respondents and the author in the light of the findings of this research and current literature.

Induction was acknowledged as the most immediate form of professional development available to the new appointees therefore, the third part of the chapter was devoted to this professional development opportunity. Relevant literature on induction was reviewed and the induction undertaken by the beginning principals was examined. Principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the induction exercise were noted together with suggestions for future induction designs.

Finally, the chapter examined the sources of personal support as reported by the respondents. These sources were used to cope with nonprofessional problems and it was found that principals had varying degrees of needs for support in this area as well as different strategies.
7.1 Introduction

This chapter will report the major conclusions. It will include discussion on both the professional and the nonprofessional problems encountered by the subjects and the coping strategies used. Later, the implications of the study will be addressed and finally, several recommendations will be offered for further research.

7.2 Conclusions

This study aimed to examine the perceived major professional and nonprofessional problems of beginning principals in Class III and Class IV rural schools and the coping strategies used by these principals.

7.2.1 Professional problems

The findings of the study indicated that the major professional problems centred on time management and managing change in communities perceived to be resistant to change. Time management problems resulted from the principals attempting to fulfil two roles - teacher and administrator. Time management coping strategies included learning to prioritise the administrative tasks and using instructional strategies in multigrade teaching, such as peer tutoring, checklist evaluation procedures and prepublished materials that supplied appropriate activities and support material.

While some of the literature revealed the need for time management to be included in the professional development of principals (Harvey 1988 and Washbourne 1988), some, (Alexander 1988 and Dean 1988) addressed the problems facing beginning principals who are also involved in multigrade teaching. Multigrade teaching may be considered complex in itself. Coupled with this, the principals had
to take on the role of principal with, in most cases, no previous experience. Several principals revealed a need for inservice training on managing several year levels and one respondent in a remote aboriginal community indicated the need for special help devising contextual curriculum materials for that situation.

Recognition has been given to the unique characteristics of small rural communities, the close relationship between the community and the school and the potentially difficult roles of principals in these types of schools (Bessant 1978, Brown and Maisey 1980 and Dean 1988). Each of these studies reflected one of the idiosyncrasies of small rural communities as being that they may be resistant to change. They further conceded that these communities were used to a high turnover of teaching staff and were perceived to be reluctant to make changes on the whim of each new principal knowing that the following principal may think differently.

Resistance to change may be exacerbated in cases where the beginning principal is female. The literature described small rural communities as being typically conservative (Bessant 1978, Brown and Maisey 1980 and Cullen 1985). A feature of this conservatism may be a male dominated culture where the notion of a female in a position of power and authority is one that is alien. One of the female respondents in this study found the staff, as well as the community, to be resistant and undermining. This caused extreme problems and was compounded by the fact that all other staff were married to members of the local community. While this was perceived to be gender related some caution must be exercised, however, in accepting this as the sole or major factor leading to the difficulty described. It is, nonetheless, worthy of future consideration. In some cases P & C meetings were reported to become forums for open aggression and direct confrontation by the community towards the new principal. Two principals expressed the need to be better trained in running P & C meetings, however, no significant coping strategies
in dealing with abusive participants in P & C meetings were offered by principals. It is apparent that this problem may well be one which must be endured until credibility and trust is established on both sides - the principal and the community.

In the time frame of this study, that is the start-up phase of the school year, the new appointees were attempting to establish a presence and some credibility with the staff and community. At the same time, they were trying to negotiate the culture of the school and community while trying to make sense of their new situation and learn how to efficiently manage the role of teacher and administrator. Nine principals in the study stated that major frustrations lay with the administrative demands placed upon them. Most said that, initially, they felt inadequate in coping with the new skills required as an administrator in addition to their teaching duties and community liaison role. This result supports the claims made by Dean (1988) and Cullen (1985). However, these feelings of inadequacy reveal a paradox since the principals were promoted by merit, that is, for being more than adequate educational practitioners.

Much of the literature cautions that the start-up phase of the school year is critical in the life of a beginning principal (Alexander 1983, Harvey 1988, Washbourne 1988). This is supported by comments of some of the respondents who felt unable to cope with the demands of their new roles in a community which are negative and apathetic. Three of these principals reported that their disillusionment led to decisions to transfer out of the community.

7.2.2 Coping strategies for professional problems

In general, the coping strategies attempted by the principals to overcome perceived professional problems, as identified in Chapter 4, centred on efforts to communicate more effectively and to prioritise the diverse administrative tasks. Many equated asking for assistance as an admission of incompetence and preferred
to try to manage alone. Those who sought help usually turned to staff who had been at the school for some time or principals who were either part of their peer network established at the induction course or, in some cases, their past principals. Some respondents reported that as soon as they decided to develop their own leadership style rather than working 'by the book', they found they coped better.

Unfortunately most of the coping strategies take time and experience to be thoroughly effective. Forewarning of likely professional problems and suggestions for coping strategies may well assist in alleviating some of the early frustrations of principals.

7.2.3 Nonprofessional problems
The findings of this study revealed that the major perceived nonprofessional problems for the beginning principals were the lack of leisure activities, education and employment opportunities and social activities for the spouse and children.

The latter finding is of particular importance. Most of the principals in this study were male and married with young children. Because of the isolated nature of the communities, the availability of services and facilities were generally reported as being inadequate. Some respondents indicated that they were not prepared to endure their positions for three years. The dissatisfaction of the spouse affected the degree of satisfaction the beginning principals felt about their new appointments. Despite the fact that they reported feeling satisfied about their professional life, indications were that this was a secondary consideration compared with the dissatisfaction in their personal lives.

A number of principals reported feeling a sense of isolation professionally, geographically and socially. Professional isolation was a result of the perceived lack of direct exposure to peers and professional development opportunities. Adapting
to the geographic isolation was reported to arise from physical factors such as rough and rugged terrain or flashfloods which made travelling in and out of the community very difficult. Some principals reported feeling socially isolated because their professional role surrounded them 24 hours a day. This, in turn, reportedly lead to problems with lack of privacy and some expressed the feeling that the community was continually making demands on their time and skills.

Two of the female principals reported having problems of not fitting into the community. One was a single mother who reported having a negative staff, all married to members of the local community and one chose to live 28 kilometres from the school and reported that the community was negative about this. One female principal reported having a spouse who lived and worked in Perth. This respondent indicated that she chose deliberately not to take part in community activities and compensated for this by working long hours and concentrating on the professional side of her life. Three female principals reported having unanticipated problems because they were female in traditionally conservative communities where the principals were usually male.

The fact that nothing could have prepared some of the principals for the complete change of environment was reported as being an unanticipated problem. This included not only the physical environment but also the degree of closeness between the school and the community. Some principals expressed surprise at the amount of community demands upon them including the fact that members expected the principals to be expert and know all the answers.

7.2.4 Coping strategies for nonprofessional problems

The study found that twelve out of thirteen respondents indicated no change or a worsening of their major nonprofessional problems during the first three months of their appointment.
Some of the coping strategies included communication with the community about the need for privacy, spouses starting up playgroups in order to socialize with other community members and maintaining a certain 'safety zone' between themselves and the rest of the community. Other principals reported no need to keep a 'safety zone' but rather the way they and their spouses coped was to participate actively in community activities. This was identified as a strength in that it helped to build a familiarity both with the children and the rest of the community.

Reducing external commitments was reported as a strategy to cope with a feeling that the community was making continual demands on principals' time and skills. In other words, some principals indicated that to be accepted by a community meant that one had to accept it the way it was. Adapting to activities in the community was one way of coping. Rather than travelling extended distances to participate in particular sports, alternatives such as tennis or golf were found to be preferable because most small communities offered such activities. The results indicated that one way of coping with community pressures may be to change one's lifestyle to fit into the community rather than remaining negative and aloof.

Becoming immersed in the professional side of the appointment appears to be a coping strategy used by some principals. This was used to counteract feelings of isolation, lack of activities, separation from family and friends or a nonaccepting community. Specific mention was mentioned of this by two female principals who may well be attempting to overcompensate in order to establish their credibility in a conservative, male dominated community. Other coping strategies to overcome feelings of isolation and lack of stimulation included encouraging visits from friends or relatives, creating hobbies, making good use of holidays, studying, exchange with other schools in the area (for sports and social events), parties and get-togethers for teachers in the region.
7.2.5 **Support**

The results of the question about principals' perceptions of the value of support from varied sources indicated that support received from peers to be the most valuable. Support received from the District Office personnel, local individuals and families were perceived as the second and third most valuable sources. Some principals, however, reported being unfamiliar with the function of the District Office, who to contact for help, what type of support was available and lastly, the procedure to obtain the appropriate support.

The Ministry-run induction course was deemed to have provided an opportunity for the new appointees to build up a peer network. Some principals utilised this source of support because they did not seem to mind admitting their weaknesses to peers. Unwillingness to appear ignorant prevented some principals from seeking help initially. Support from principals 'down the road' was reported as another valuable source. Other principals reported relying on school personnel such as gardeners, registrars and local individuals such as their child's babysitter to provide advice for them in the initial stage of their appointments.

The results indicated that the most immediate type of support available to married principals was their spouses. This source represented an honest, unbiased type of feedback. For some principals, staff who had been at the school for a length of time provided another valuable form of support. The advantage of this type of support rests in that it was usually a source with first-hand experience of both the professional and nonprofessional problems likely to be encountered by the new principal.

7.3 **Implications of the study**

Despite the limitations of this study, it is clear that beginning principals in Class III and Class IV rural schools experience varying types and degrees of problems in the
initial stage of their new appointments. These problems were encountered in both their professional and nonprofessional lives.

The location of the appointments in small, remote and isolated rural communities is problematic in itself. While it can be said that there is an existing power structure in all communities, it is most noticeable in those communities that are more isolated. The perceptions of the local power patterns greatly affect the educational impact that new principals have on such a community. How well they can identify persons and groups that exert influence on others in the community can be crucial for the smooth entry of the beginning principal into the school.

The coping strategies used by principals are varied but a common theme to emerge was that many beginning principals have difficulty coming to terms with the diversity of tasks and the complexity and ambiguity of their new role in a community which may focus on the school. Most of the principals were city born and educated, with little or no experience of rural life.

Caution needs to be applied in generalising the conclusions of this study to all beginning principals. It is specific in its context of time, place and subjects. However, it is clear that some of the principals in this study were ill-prepared to face their new appointments and lacked the problem solving capabilities and interpersonal skills necessary to liaise with small, close-knit communities.

It has been possible to highlight areas of skill development that may assist teachers in achieving a less traumatic transition from the teacher culture to that of administrator. These findings are as follows:

(a) development of interpersonal skills such as stress management, conflict resolution, effective communication and negotiation, developing problem solving abilities, and developing positive school-community relationships.
(b) development of procedural skills such as running effective P & C meetings, school development planning and making the best use of support groups such as District Office.

(c) development of administrative skills such as administrative computing and prioritising tasks.

(d) establishment of networks of support and feedback early in the appointment.

This study has further implications, namely that:

1. females appointed into principalship, in particular those in small rural schools, require special skills,

2. spouses are an important factor in the principals' satisfaction with the new appointment,

3. the community should undertake more responsibility for the acceptance of a principal into the community thereby affording a smoother transition,

4. outgoing principals should accept more responsibility for inducting the new principal and providing a source of support.

7.3.1 Female principals

While most principals in Western Australia are male there has been recent focus and encouragement for women to apply for promotional positions. The principals in this study included five females and eight males. Most of the male principals were over thirty years of age, married with a spouse and young children, that is, they had their whole family, intact, living with them. Not one of the five female principals, who were all over thirty, indicated that they were living with their spouse and children in the school community. They were either separated, divorced or living in defacto relationships and the principal who indicated she was married reported having a spouse who lived and worked more than 300 kilometres away, in Perth.
Two of the females were single mothers and reported this as being an extra role they had to undertake. They indicated the added burdens of having to find suitable babysitters and, when they arrived home they immediately had to undertake the role of parent without the support of a spouse to recall the problems and events of the day. Immediate support and feedback were unavailable to these female principals. Reports were made by the females in particular of problems of acceptance by the staff and the community and they acknowledged that part of their problems were because they were female.

Male married principals reported that their spouses were valuable sources of support. The females in this study, however, lacked that form of assistance. One of the female principals who lived in a de facto relationship reported the inability of her partner to find employment and the subsequent strain because it became necessary for him to fulfill a role reversal in a male-dominated community.

Females are traditionally more likely to follow their husbands' careers and most of the males in this study reflect the situation where the wives are the homemakers and they are the breadwinners. This is more likely to be acceptable to a small rural community which probably sees this as the norm. Lack of precedence for female principals may reinforce the community's negative attitudes and beliefs about female administrators and may mean that the female principal has to work harder than her male counterparts in establishing credibility and acceptance into the community. Some of the female principals reported that they tended to overcompensate by immersing themselves in the professional side of their appointments and often worked long hours avoiding socializing with community members. Therefore, it is a contention of this study that the female principals in isolated rural schools may have problems compounded because of their gender and as such are disadvantaged.
7.3.2 Spouses

The findings of this study indicated that lack of employment, social and leisure activities for spouses was a major problem for the respondents. Individuals' dissatisfaction with their personal lives impacted greatly on the degree of satisfaction of their spouses. In small communities, little can be done to provide these opportunities and it could well be that if the spouses were made aware of the facilities in the community and had an opportunity to visit or stay in the community for a short time beforehand they may have been reluctant for their spouses to take up the new appointments.

Nine spouses had very young children and were housebound much of the time. Two principals, however, reported that they looked upon the period of time when their family was young as being a good time to do their rural service in a promotional capacity. They may see this as the time that causes the least disruption to the spouse's career or their children's schooling. Major problems may be caused, however, when spouses lack friends in the community or a peer network for support such as that proposed for the principals. Friendships with community members were reported to be guarded as most principals' wives were conscious of the tact and diplomacy required of their positions. This added extra strain for some of the spouses. It is the contention of this study that if spouses were included in the induction programme, they would be provided with the opportunity to build a peer network of support to assist them in coping with problems of isolation and loneliness.

7.3.3 The community

While there is attention to the professional development needs of newly appointed principals to cope with the recent changes in education, little has been done to provide the community with the same knowledge and skills required of them. Devolution has resulted in 'self-determining' schools where the community has the
capacity to become involved in policy making at the school level. Several principals in this study reported having problems with managing change in communities resistant to change. Perhaps part of that resistance comes from the community's ignorance about their role in decision-making. Some community members may feel they have more than their legitimate power and use that belief to undermine the principal and threaten their credibility and power.

A more thorough understanding by the community about their role in school affairs, the role of the principal and the current changes that are being made in education could have a two-fold advantage. It could not only serve to enhance the relationship between the principal and the community but also help to smooth the transition for the new appointee from the teacher culture to the principal culture.

It is the contention of this study that if community representatives were included in the induction programme, they would have the opportunity to obtain a clear picture of roles and an understanding of the nature and problems of new principalship.

7.3.4 Outgoing principals
Findings from the study indicate that in many cases, outgoing principals left few records for the new appointee. In some cases there was not even a handover file available, even though this is regarded as mandatory by the Western Australian Ministry of Education. This factor caused major problems for some new principals who reported not having programmes, student records or other vital information about the school to guide them in their new jobs.

The outgoing principal may well be one of the most valuable sources of support for the incoming principal. Immediate information, both written and verbal could be given from an experienced person who is likely to be aware of all the likely problems and possible pitfalls of the new appointee. Many wasted hours and
possible periods of uncertainty and frustration could be alleviated if this source of support was readily available in the form of a comprehensive handover file outlining the 'who's who' of the community as well as official school matters.

It is the contention of this author that outgoing principals should take more responsibility for the induction of incoming principals. Again, inclusion in the induction programme may facilitate this or the provision by the Ministry of resources which would enable the new appointee and their family, where appropriate, to visit the school during the last few weeks of the school year.

7.4 Recommendations for further research

The findings of this study have consolidated the previously documented literature on beginning principals and have added to the limited amount of literature on beginning principals in Class III and IV rural schools in Western Australia.

Avenues for further research have emerged from several of the issues. In particular, the special problems of female principals specifically those appointed to isolated rural communities requires further exploration. For example, specific focus might be directed at community perceptions of female principals and the impact of these perceptions on the appointee's ability to execute the role.

Professional development requirements for Class III and IV principals would provide a sound arena for further research. While Harvey (1988) and Washbourne (1988) have researched professional development needs of newly appointed principals, there is a need to focus on the rural context, which is often the appropriate one for new administrators. Much has been written about the crucial nature of the initial stages of principalship however, little has been researched about the problems they encounter in small rural communities. This study has found that further research into community relationships is warranted as this caused major problems, both professional and nonprofessional.
Evaluation of current induction programmes could be made in the light of the findings of this study. Consideration could be made of the inclusion of spouses, outgoing principals and community representatives to assist the new appointee in successfully undertaking the role for the first time. Furthermore, the content of the induction courses could be evaluated to ensure it is appropriate to the actual situation in which the beginning principals find themselves. The programmes should be examined for their ability to equip the new appointees with the appropriate knowledge, skills and problem solving strategies to enable them to cope effectively.

Further study is warranted into the journey from the teacher culture, that is, how the appointees start to move from the teaching situation and begin to see the school more from the point of view of an administrator. Such a study might examine the method by which individuals cut themselves free of the teacher perspective of how things are done and how they increasingly start to view the school, the parents and the curriculum from the point of view of the person who is answerable for what goes on in the school.

A final suggestion for further research studies involves analysing the selection criteria for administrative appointments in isolated rural schools. These studies may be directed at determining the types of characteristics exhibited by successful principals in these appointments and thus aid the successful entry of teachers into the principalship.

7.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided a review of the background to the study followed by the conclusions. The findings of the study indicated that the major professional problems centred on time management and managing change in communities perceived to be resistant to change. The major nonprofessional problems were the
lack of leisure activities, education and employment opportunities and social activities for the spouse and children. Coping strategies for both categories of problems were discussed and were found to vary although the most common theme to emerge was that one should accept the community as it was and try to adapt oneself to the lifestyle. Principals' perceptions of the value of the support offered indicated that peer support was the most valuable. Finally, recommendations were offered for further research including suggestions for evaluation of present induction programmes. Caution must be exercised, however, in making generalizations from this study considering the small size of the sample, which comprised the whole population of beginning principals and numbered only fourteen.
REFERENCES


W.A. Education Department, (1960). *Education Act Regulations*. Education Department of Western Australia, Perth, Western Australia.


Dear Principal,

As part of my Honours course in Educational Administration at the Edith Cowan University I have chosen as my thesis topic -

The strategies used by beginning Class III and IV rural school principals in dealing with problems encountered in the initial stages of their appointments.

In order to gain the most accurate data on this topic I would appreciate your cooperation in completing the enclosed questionnaire. It should take approximately 30 minutes of your time. I have sent a copy of the questionnaire to thirteen other principals. Hopefully, the data collected will be useful to the Ministry of Education in the development of appropriate induction courses and for future beginning principals in preparing them for their new role.

Please feel free to contact me at home, or at work if you have any questions. Strict confidentiality and anonymity will be observed at all times.

It is important that the questionnaire be returned by Tuesday October 29th. A stamped addressed envelope is enclosed.

Thankyou for your cooperation,

Yours sincerely

GAIL MCLAY

Encl. Principals' questionnaire
Stamped addressed envelope
Class 111 and Class 1 V Principals' Questionnaire

Please place a tick (✓) in the box beside your response, or write in an answer/response if required.

Part A - Your present employment situation

1. Are you at present working in a town/district similar to the one in which you spent most of your primary or secondary school years?
   - Yes
   - No

2. How many full time teachers including yourself are at your present school?
   - 1
   - 2-3
   - 4-5
   - 6-7

3. What is the approximate size of the class/es you teach?
   - 15 or less
   - 16-20
   - 21-25
   - 26-30
   - Over 30

4. How many year levels are in the class in which you spend most of your time?
   - one year level
   - two year levels
   - three year levels
   - four year levels
   - more than four

5. What is the population of the town in which your school is located?
   - 0-199
   - 200-499
   - 500-999
   - 1000-2499
   - 2500-5000
   - Over 5000
6. How adequate is the provision of the following services and facilities in the town in which your school is situated?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>No services</th>
<th>Some services but limited</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postal services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel/motel facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. If any of the above services are inadequate what have you done about it?

8. How adequate is the provision of the following activities in the town in which your school is situated?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>No group in town</th>
<th>Some activities but limited</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service clubs (ie. Apex, Lions, Rotary, etc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting clubs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobby clubs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. If the lack of any of the above services provides a problem for you, what have you done about it?
10. How frequently do you participate in the following groups?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>No group</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service clubs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting clubs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobby clubs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. If you indicated the lack of a particular group or that you never participate do you perceive this as a problem?

- Yes
- No

12. If your response to 11 was 'Yes', please comment:

13. Part B - Professional Education

What educational qualifications do you hold? (Tick more than one if necessary.)

- Teachers' Certificate
- Higher Certificate
- Diploma of Teaching
- Bachelor of Education
- Degree plus Dip. Ed
- Graduate Dip. Teach.
- Other (please specify)

14. Did your education provide you with any subjects directly related to administration of schools?

- Yes
- No
15. How many years of experience do you have as a teacher?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience Range</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9 years</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 years or more</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Did you have any administrative experience prior to your present appointment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. If your response to 16 was 'Yes' please indicate the type, amount and place of experience.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Part C - Appointment

18. Where was your previous appointment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a metropolitan area</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a large country town (e.g. Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Bunbury, Albany)</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a medium-size country town</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a small country town (population less than 1,000)</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On an isolated farm or station</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

__________________________________________________________________________

19. What was your first reaction when you received your current appointment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaction</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. If your answer to 19 was 'Dissatisfied' please state why.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

21. How did you acquire information about your present school prior to taking up the appointment?
   - Discussed appointment with the outgoing principal
   - School visits
   - Knowledge obtained from an informal network of peers and colleagues who had first-hand knowledge in the school
   - A handover file containing essential information for the start of the school year
   - No information acquired
   - Other (please specify)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Part D - Induction

22. Did you participate in any principal induction programme prior to you taking up your current appointment?
   - Yes
   - No

23. Generally, how worthwhile do you perceive the programme to have been?
   - Not at all
   - Very
   - Extremely

24. If your response to 22 was ‘Yes’ what were the three (3) most useful things that you learnt from this experience?
   1. ____________________________________________________________
   2. ____________________________________________________________
   3. ____________________________________________________________
25. If your response to 22 was 'Yes' please indicate the type/s of programme/s and the institution/s offering it/them.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

26. Looking back, what other information about the school was needed to enable you to function as an effective principal from the start of the school year?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

27. Looking back, what other information about the community was needed to enable you to function as an effective principal from the start of the school year?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Part E - Current situation (professional)

28. Please indicate the extent to which each of these categories has posed a problem for you this year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Slight</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management of human resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making and problem solving in SDMG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team management involving staff and/or community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance appraisal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership styles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff supervisory and PD support strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self esteem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness raising/Better Schools/Ministry updates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff induction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiate support groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running effective meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Management of physical resources**                                     |      |        |          |       |
| Financial management                                                     |      |        |          |       |
| School development planning                                              |      |        |          |       |
| Time management                                                          |      |        |          |       |
| Goal setting and evaluation of school initiatives                        |      |        |          |       |
| Public relations including media skills                                  |      |        |          |       |
| Administrative computing                                                 |      |        |          |       |
| General school management including school climate                       |      |        |          |       |
| Administration/office procedures                                         |      |        |          |       |
| Other (please specify)                                                   |      |        |          |       |
29. What was the major professional problem you have found as a new in this school?
30. To what extent did this problem change within the first 3 months of your appointment?

- No change □
- Problem disappeared □
- Problem became worse □

31. If there was some change how do you account for it?

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Part F - Current situation (nonprofessional)

32. Please indicate the extent to which the following factors have posed a problem for you this year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Slight</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services - food, clothing, electricity, banks, postal, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People - unfriendly, shy, cliquish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation (personal) - suitability, condition, situation in relation to school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical - doctor, hospital, dentist, chemist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predecessor's image - communicated to you readily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General community opinion of principals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/parent support of school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on the school readily available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________
33. What was the major nonprofessional problem you have faced as a new principal this year?
34. To what extent did this problem change within the first 3 months of your appointment?

- No change
- Problem disappeared
- Problem became worse

35. If there was some change how do you account for it?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

36. Please indicate how valuable you found support received from the following sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>No value</th>
<th>Little value</th>
<th>Some value</th>
<th>Great value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School induction package</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry induction programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in new school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outgoing principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inservice activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community social groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community clubs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local individuals and families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P &amp; C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome activities arranged by the town</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37. What unanticipated problems did you encounter as a new principal?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
38. How did you attempt to handle them?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

39. What support could have been provided and by whom, to make your first 3 months as a new principal in this school more rewarding?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

40. Generally, to what extent do you feel satisfied in your new position?

   None of the time □
   Some of the time □
   Most of the time □
   All of the time □

Part 6 - Personal Details

It is understandable that some people may object to answering the following questions. They are asked however, because they are considered to be important and your response would be appreciated.

41. What is your sex? Male □
    Female □

42. What is your age? 20-25 □
    26-30 □
    Over 30 □

43. What is your marital status? Married □
    Single □
    Separated/Divorced □
    Other □
44. Are you currently living -

- Alone (in flat or house) ☐
- Sharing with friends ☐
- With spouse or partner ☐
- Other (please specify) ☐

45. Is your spouse/partner a teacher?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- Not applicable ☐

46. How many children do you have?

- No children ☐
- 1 - 3 children ☐
- More than 3 children ☐

47. If you have children are all your children living with you on a regular basis?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐

Thankyou for your help. Please feel free to add any additional comments on the bottom or back of this page.