SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

IMPROVEMENT : POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PERCEPTIONS

by

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SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

ABSTRACT

School districts continue to struggle to help teachers, individually and collectively in school settings, deal successfully with the rapid pace of change. Districts have the responsibility to assist schools both in response to ongoing change and in line with various mandates that emanate from the Ministry and from district sources. On one hand, most mandated reform, and most school district efforts to promote such reform, is driven by the need for equity and equality of opportunity often formulated upon a paternalistic, instrumental view of teaching. In contrast, school-based change is widely believed to optimally occur when teachers initiate and manage their own learning projects. The end result of these contradictory premises is that school districts struggle to implement mandated reform and to offer support to school-based improvement efforts.

This study attempts to gain a picture of how one school district manages and supports educational change. It is based largely upon interviews with teachers, consultants, school principals and district administrators. Documents regarding policies, procedures, and the structure of district operations were also examined to provide a full picture of the school district's efforts to support elementary school improvement efforts. The basic question asked whether teachers and principals played a significant part in shaping district support activities.

The study showed while district operations mainly involved top-down edicts from the Ministry of Education, teachers, principals and district administrators report that these efforts have little influence upon change at the classroom level. The district remains committed organizationally to mandated reform efforts that often prove to be

ineffective.

The main district emphasis has been to minimize the pressure of unrealistic mandates to allow schools to react autonomously. Despite attempts by the district to involve school personnel in the planning process, many teachers and principals feel disconnected from district operations. This disconnection signals that the district does not currently provide the level of meaningful support and coordination to school and district change efforts that is required.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Problem

School districts in British Columbia are generally struggling to fulfill their unique role in the quest for system-wide educational reform and in the specific task of promoting school improvement. They often fail to successfully negotiate that problematic middle ground between government mandate and classroom practice. Administrative practices intended to direct the operation of schools and shape the professional lives of teachers function within parameters set by the provincial government and the local school board. At the same time, parents, teachers and principals attempt to influence district affairs by communicating their views. Conflicts of values and practices frequently emerge between what the government mandates and what schools say they need. Mediating these antagonistic positions becomes a complex task for school districts that have become overwhelmed by the accelerating pace of change. School districts must become more effective in coordinating and supporting school-based change if meaningful reform is to be sustained. This study, through a description of how one school district tries to deal with such problems, will further our understanding of how a school district deals with change, not just from a technical perspective, but from an ideological viewpoint (Grimmett, 1987).

In this thesis I take the perspective that in supporting change and school improvement school districts must focus more predominantly upon responding to teachers' needs (Fullan with Steigelbauer,1991; and Coleman and LaRocque, 1990). One aspect of the problem is an ideological confrontation between the traditional notion of external, planned, mandated educational change and the contrary view of the teacher as a reflective, collaborative, autonomous professional. Educational policy-makers have typically treated teachers as instruments delivering a package of learning to children, identifying for teachers

what needs to change and why. Others such as Lieberman (1992) contend that educational change is fundamentally the development of generally autonomous individual teachers within a social setting . The problem then is for the district to find ways to support educational reform within the conflicting perspectives that exist.

Janus, a fast-growing school district in the throes of dealing with a Ministry mandate of huge proportions, faces these tensions. To describe the complex processes that support school improvement in Janus school district, I drew upon data from educators at all levels to illustrate issues central to the change process. In conducting the study, I had three purposes with regards to practices, structures, and perceptions:

1. to identify present district practices that connect with and provide support to current school improvement practices. Such practices involve district staff development; resource identification, provision and distribution; school governance; and district decision- making;
2. to identify present district organizational structures that set policy; and coordinate, and monitor practice.
3. to describe people's perceptions of change processes.

These three purposes essentially provide a description that is a basis from which to critique current district action and the research literature. The questions in the study sought to compare and contrast teachers', principals', consultants', and district administrators' views on what happens in the school district to support change. One set of questions deal with people's perceptions of the processes used by individual teachers, schools and the school district to adopt, implement and evaluate change. Other questions speak to how the school and the school district supports and coordinates the individual and collaborative change efforts of teachers.

The data collected from the respondents are intended to reveal the level of complexity of circumstances facing teachers and the school district. The study explores the ideological and technical responses to the mandate (and other forces for change) by all levels of the system. Essentially, it asks:

how central are teachers to the educational change efforts of the school district?

This study can only present a snapshot of one district's approach to change but its circumstances, internal and external, may illustrate situations that can be recognised by others currently working in the field. The experiences and beliefs of the educators interviewed and quoted reinforces the significance of the individuality of the classroom teacher. Educational change involves teachers changing what they do in classrooms for children (Wideen, in press). Our understanding of educational change needs to be rooted in the gritty issues that teachers, principals, consultants and district administrators face each day. But more than this, educational research and educational administration must be referenced predominantly to what teachers do, believe, and value.

The Ideological Dilemma of Educational Change

An educational system both reacts and adapts to past and present social change, as well as assists in developing the future. This evolutionary dynamic of society challenges the stability of its institutions (Marris,1975). Thus, change destabilizes the educational system as it confronts past beliefs and practices. Educational reform efforts are rational attempts to plan for change and are intended to empower people to face the future. Modern social conditions make such reform even more difficult than in the past.

> " A radical increase in the rate of change in the conditions of human life has thrown the problem of direction finding in planning into new perspective...People in a slowly changing culture could validly assume that the ecological contours of their future lives would be substantially similar to those of their past. ... Modern men and women have been betrayed by dependence on tradition for direction. They face both the exhilaration and the terror of an unknown future more directly than their ancestors did." (Benne,1990: 194)

In this study I examine the confrontation between traditional and contemporary theories in educational change. In the chapter to follow I will examine at length the traditional ideology of teaching and learning, established strategies for change, and entrenched organizational practices and contrast them with revised concepts that speak more clearly to present concerns. For the moment, however, let us take a larger theoretical perspective.

Benne (1990) explores the beliefs that underlie traditional reform efforts. He describes an ideal expert-authority -subject relationship:

> "... a triadic relationship among bearer, subject, and field (that) is thus ideally collaborative in some degree, in that it requires a mutual fitting of need to resource. The subject must legitimize the authority of the bearer in controlling and directing the subjects's conduct. After all, it is the subject's need and purpose that ideally is being served through the authority's relation." (Benne, 1990: 81)

Governments and smaller educational administrative groupings such as school districts use experts to formulate plans and policies to deal with confusing issues and crises. Major problems arise, however, because the ideal authority-client relationship has become subverted.

> " The collaboration (between authority and client) becomes minimal if the subject willingly grants to the expert the right to determine the former's need and purpose, or if the expert assumes the right to tell the subject what the latter's need really is, as well as how to behave in meeting it." (Benne, 1990:81)

This aptly describes the traditional relationship between policy-makers and practitioners. As we shall see below, large-scale mandates still attempt to tell teachers what they should believe, and what they should do about that. The traditional bureaucratic organization of a school district which brings a form of limiting authority compounds the loss of teacher self-directedness. Traditional change efforts, based upon top-down strategies

and mechanical organizational structures, often fail because teachers are unwilling or unable to accept those conditions for change. The teacher, as subject of change, should be seen as a more effective participant in the change process. Recent research (Lieberman, 1992) recognises teacher empowerment, where individuals are able to act as self-directed professionals, to be a significant component of successful teaching.

Clearly both the expert policy-maker and the professional teacher presently exist in education; but their views on instituting change may differ significantly. Teachers, principals, and school district administrators who subscribe to the traditional notion of the teacher as a controlled instrument of expert-driven change are likely to respond to mandates in significantly different ways than those educators who believe in teachers as empowered professionals. Probably many educators have not reflected upon their beliefs and may in fact be reacting randomly to each new attempt to change. The rapid increase in proposed change has highlighted the difficulties of the traditional instrumental views of teachers as the system becomes overwhelmed by never-ending demands. The problem of the varied perception of the role of a teacher in change is a system-wide issue that has significant impact upon the types of decisions made at the district level.

Let us look first at the nature of mandates and their implicit assumptions about teachers by reviewing the most recent reform attempt in British Columbia. This description will also provide the context for this case study.

The Role of the Mandate

In the mid - 1980s, a Royal Commission study of public schooling was initiated in British Columbia, the westernmost province of Canada. The terms of reference for the study outlined the sweeping objectives set by the government of the day.

" Broadly defined, these objectives are seen, first, to include
developing a population that is ' well prepared to meet the rapidly
changing challenges of everyday life in the 21st century,' 'highly
motivated to learn and to develop personal skills and creative
potential to the maximum extent possible,' and ' well prepared to
rationally and maturely evaluate options at both the personal and
community levels.' ...the Royal Commission should address
educational issues to do with enhancing the quality of the system,
its mechanisms for accountability, its teaching methods and
curricula, as well as the means available for public, parental and
teacher input." (Sullivan, 1988: 3-4)

The description of the context of the Royal commission (Sullivan, 1988: 4 -
5) identifies a number of significant social changes that have had a recent
impact upon the educational system: changing immigration patterns,
smaller families, more single parents; more working mothers; an aging
population and declining birth rates.   The commission undertook a
comprehensive review of the entire system and prepared a set of
recommendations that suggest: "what is good about the kind of educational
world we have, as well as point the way to the kind of educational world we
wish to create in the years ahead." (Sullivan,1988: 3)

The Sullivan commission made eighty-three recommendations
related to curriculum, teaching, finance, and support systems.   Working
from many of these recommendations, the British Columbia Ministry of
Education (1988) created a program for change described in a policy
document entitled <u>Year 2000 : A Curriculum and Assessment Framework
for the Future</u>. This document details a mission statement and frameworks
for organizing the products and the processes for learning and teaching at
the Primary (Kindergarten - grade 3), Intermediate (grades 4-10) and
Graduation level (grades 11-12).

Unlike past curricular changes in British Columbia, the emphasis is
not upon a change such as replacement of a textbook program, nor the
promotion of a particular organizational method. The changes proposed
require a child-centered philosophy, a risk-taking attitude, new beliefs in

the power of learning as a process (as opposed to learning as a product), and new strategic behaviours in instruction! Administrators and teachers throughout the province's seventy-five school districts are challenged to make the skeletal ideas come to life in ways that most meet the needs of their students and the communities in which they live.[1]

Despite the mandate's representation of itself as a framework, and its challenge to educators to be part of a creative implementation process, it prescribes ways of believing, thinking and behaving that require great changes from many teachers. Fullan with Steigelbauer (1991) state that most curricular guidelines in Canadian provinces provide clear goal-statements and specific references to content and learning outcomes, but are not "implementable" as such. Fullan with Steigelbauer (1991) note that implementation is now often left as a responsibility of the individual school district. The district is thus charged with implementing a curricular reform that is not in an "implementable" form. The intent is to allow community representatives and educators an opportunity to shape the mandate according to local needs. What this means to practice and policy at the district level is problematic. The mandate provides a description of a destination but no directions on how to get there, even if the practitioners want to go there in the first place. This issue will be explored further in the discussion of the school district's role below.

The mandate for change in British Columbia, established by the Sullivan Commission and outlined in a document entitled <u>The Year 2000</u> (1989), is a policy regarding the organization of educational service to students through provincial curriculum and assessment programs. It purports to speak for British Columbians who "called for renewal of purpose for the school system, for redefinition of roles, and above all, for refocus on meeting the needs of learners" (Ministry of Education,1990: 29). In one paragraph, the expert authority of the policy-makers challenges

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[1] At the time of study, the Primary Program hds been adopted and implemented in primary (ages 5-8 years) classrooms throughout the province. Intermediate and Graduate program documents are now scheduled for discussion and optional use in 1993/94.

some fundamental assumptions upon which teachers have based their professional practice. [2]

> "educators (need) to re-examine the priorities and the assumptions, often unstated, that shape programs and influence practice, and to make changes in order to improve learning opportunities for students. For example, we have sometimes acted as if we believed that some students are more capable of learning than others; that it is not possible for all students to succeed; that curriculum material must be covered in a given amount of time and 'slower' learners are therefore a problem; and that structuring learning according to traditionally separate subjects is the best, if not the only way to organize learning experiences in school."
> (Ministry of Education,1990: 29)

I do not intend to debate the merits of the policy directions here, but it must be noted that, despite numerous hours of input and debate in the formation of the program, the Year 2000 mandates are the ongoing subject of criticism by some parent groups and educators. Teachers and parents are wise to be critical of large-scale reform since past mandates have suffered from a lack of resources, or poor implementation processes (Fullan with Steigelbauer, 1991). The Sullivan commission noted the introduction of several significant curricular changes recently in British Columbia but makes no claims for successful implementation (Sullivan, 1988: 78). Mandates, for many reasons, have a poor track record.

The school district is required to implement a mandate that expects teachers and principals to revise their beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour to ensure they meet the standards outlined by the reform. The pervasiveness and strength of the Year 2000 mandate demands a significant response from school districts, schools, and teachers. The

[2.] With its emphasis upon the whole child, the lack of prescribed materials and objective evaluative measures, the Year 2000 more closely resembles the current practice of primary teachers and is far removed from practice at the secondary level.

Ministry acts as though teachers are manipulable instruments of change, and it is this perspective that it passes down to the school board administration. Before we examine how a school and a school district may respond to mandates, let us briefly examine the other perspective - the teacher as an empowered professional and originator of change.

Teacher Initiated Change

We hear about innovative teachers and schools that promote excellence (Wideen, in press). These successful schools are usually at the cutting edge of change, work on the edges of the prevailing educational framework and are constantly developing new ways to help children learn. Innovative teachers are responding to the needs of students and to the experiences of other teachers. Such teacher-initiated change relies upon professional judgment to assess and produce new learning opportunities for students.

The notion of professional action is an important concept in educational change (Grimmett and Erickson, 1988). Schön (1983) proposes that professional activity, in this case teaching, is much more than technical expertise. He believes that professionalism ideally involves "reflective practice", that is, the conscious assessment of personal skills, values and behaviour. Schön also sees problem-setting as well as problem solving as crucial abilities of the professional. Thus, the ability to identify and focus upon specific problems of practice, and then personally frame a course of action, characterizes professional activity.

The potential conflict with the policy-maker's view of educational change becomes apparent. The deductive reasoning of the expert assumes that the mandated rational synthesis, as exemplified by the Year 2000 mandates, can be passed down through the organization to teachers who can redefine and restructure their practice. The policy-maker's typical view of teachers is that of a technical instructional expert, but as Porter

and Brophy point out, rational planning has its limits.

> " ...many enduring problems cannot be solved in any complete or final
> sense; rather the teacher can only make the best decision that
> circumstances permit. These dilemmas usually require professional
> judgment and decision-making..." (Porter and Brophy, 1988: 75)

Porter and Brophy (1988) reject the instrumental view of teachers and support the notion of professional teachers who tend to operate inductively, using a repertoire of skills based upon their philosophy, attitudes, and values forged in the crucible of school-life. Corey (1953) first suggested the concept of "action research" where professionals commit themselves to an individual, open inquiry of their practice. As Hopkins (1987) notes, this type of behaviour has significance for the entire structure of the education system.

> "It is the liberation of teachers from a system of education that denies
> individual dignity by returning to them some degree of self-worth
> through the exercise of professional judgment. In terms of
> curriculum and teaching, emancipation involves reconceptualizing
> curriculum development as curriculum research and the linking
> of research to the art of teaching." (Hopkins, 1987:113)

Individual and collaborative learning projects require time and resources but many such 'bottom-up' [3] reform efforts fail to produce a supportive response from the organization. The responsive issue here is not a teacher's motivation or resistance to change, but an organization's ability to respond to teacher-initiated learning. The school provides the immediate context to support professional learning activity.

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[3]. The term 'bottom-up' is indicative of the mind-set of most educators. If teachers are as equally important to change as policy-makers, then a more democratic way of viewing change might be 'inside-out' and 'outside- in' .

The School

The school has become recognized as the organizational unit that has the most likelihood of supporting teachers' attempts to change (Goodlad, 1984). Believing the picture of the isolated classroom teacher loosely coupled within the school to be dysfunctional, the notion of the collaborative school has emerged. Many traditional professional development inservice activities were unsatisfying for teachers and policy-makers as they were conducted with little understanding of adult learning, allowed few opportunities for teachers to collaborate in practice, and generally seemed to produce little change. Sirotnik (1989) suggests that staff development presents an opportunity for site-specific groups to collaboratively pursue learning relevant to their assessed needs.

> " Schools must be ...centers of change...(S)chools can serve as centers of inquiry activity...(I)f there is to be any hope for significant and sustained educational change, we must recognize and accept the personal nature of knowledge. We must recognize the need to involve educators at school sites in developing their own understandings if we expect to see awareness translated into action."
> (Sirotnik , 1989: 661-662)

School improvement efforts are now ideally viewed as collaborative attempts to implement change within a supportive school culture. Little (1982) was one of the first researchers to focus upon one of the most valuable forms of support to teachers and to describe what such collaboration looks like.

> " Teachers engage in frequent, continuous and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice... By such talk, teachers build up a shared language adequate to the complexity of teaching, capable of distinguishing one practice and its virtue from another...Teachers and administrators frequently observe each other with useful...evaluations of their teaching. Only such observation and feedback can provide shared referents for the shared language of

teaching...Teachers and administrators plan, design, research, evaluate and prepare teaching materials together...Teachers and administrators teach each other the practice of teaching."
(LIttle ,1982:332-333)

The school site then has the potential to nurture teacher learning, but it is also the focus of public expectations, administrative pressure, and Ministry directives. These demands may be contradictory. The community may be discussing the latest back-to-basics movement while the district administration is embroiled in a dispute with the teachers' union over restructuring grade configurations, and the Ministry is implementing a major curriculum revision. Obviously, the school does not exist in a vacuum. The never-ending stream of demands stretch a school's resources and tax the energy of its personnel. Just as teachers need the supportive context of the school, so the school needs the supportive context of the school district. Fullan with Steigelbauer (1991) note:

"The role of the district is crucial. Individual schools can become highly innovative for short periods of time without the district, but they cannot stay innovative without district action to establish the conditions for continuous and long-term improvement."
(Fullan with Steigelbauer, 1991:209)

In a similar vein, Barth (1990) asserts:

"Schools have the capacity to improve themselves if the conditions are right. A major responsibility of those outside the schools is to help provide these conditions for those inside."
(Barth, 1990 : 45)

It is my experience and observation that school districts consistently fail to establish conditions that promote school improvement. Too often school districts pass down demands without listening and responding to the school's reactions. It is, of course, simplistic to believe that a school district can generate school improvement simply by providing supportive

conditions for teachers. Wideen (in press) describes successful situations that grew mainly out of the individual strengths of the personnel and the specific context. Rather than taking responsibility for directing and shaping the learning of teachers, the school can prepare itself to be able to respond supportively as teachers develop professionally. In the same way, a school district can prepare itself to respond supportively to the learning needs of teachers within schools.

The School District

The local school district is a crucial element in the educational system with the power to shape local practice by articulating the requirements of the Ministry of Education with the needs of its community. The role of the school district in dealing with change has received more attention recently (Blumberg, 1985; Cuban, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989; Coleman and LaRocque, 1990) but much of it has focused ultimately upon superintendent behaviour and beliefs. This study adopts the approach identified by Fullan with Steigelbauer (1991).

> " Instead of considering the roles of chief superintendent separately,
> it is best to examine the district administration as an entity,
> especially with respect to its complex role of managing
> district-school relationships for the purpose of bringing about
> improvements." (Fullan with Steigelbauer, 1991;197)

District administrators face the difficult challenge of balancing conflicting demands. Coleman and LaRocque (1990: 76) note district administrators' managerial difficulties: "they need to satisfy the political imperatives ... while not compromising the administrative imperatives." [4]

[4]   A school district, therefore, has to face two ways at once. The school district in this case study has been called Janus, after the powerful Roman god that faced both ways. This two-faced image can be seen as a flaw, - unable to focus upon one direction, - or as a gift, - the ability to see both where one has been and where one is going. It is also clear that Janus has two perspectives on every issue. Less kindly, it could be said Janus doesn't know which way to go.

In British Columbia, the Board of School Trustees, elected community representatives, are publicly accountable for the operation of the school district. This elected group may exert a restraining or liberating influence upon the behaviours and attitudes of central office administrators. Through this elected body, strong pressure can be exerted to conform educational practice to the public's expectations.

District administrators are not only required to manage the demands of its political masters but also lead and support the people in schools within its jurisdiction. They have the responsibility to implement the sketchily outlined Year 2000 reform as well as supporting the diverse professional activities of schools.

What happens at the district level is intended to influence the school and the classroom. A mandated reform ideally transforms into a process of school improvement as it passes through the school district. The school district is responsible for coordinating and providing staff development activities and resources to improve teacher practice and learning opportunities for children. In my experience, little improvement and change has been seen within classrooms and this is in some measure due to the organizational values and structures of school districts that do not meet the needs of teachers.

This study then examines the ways a school district responds to the dichotomy of prescriptive policy and the needs of autonomous practitioners in its attempt to promote educational change and support school improvement efforts. The results of this study will allow reflection upon the major problem of how a school district can best chart its course through the turbulent waters of reform. To set the scene, the following chapter will discuss some theoretical considerations that underpin educational change efforts.

CHAPTER TWO

The Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I examine the role of pedagogy [5] and andragogy [6] in educational reform in relation to Chin and Benne's (1975) strategies for planned change. I criticize the traditional strategies for change that evolved within the pedagogical tradition and the bureaucratic nature of educational organizations that articulate modern educational reform. I contend that adult-learning theories and the human resources management tradition need to underpin present-day educational organizations. To conclude this chapter, a review of educational research will show that replacing traditional pedagogical and bureaucratic assumptions with andragogical and democratic ideals may solve some problems faced by practising teachers and administrators when instituting change.

In addition to the above, rather than focussing upon a reductive review of the technical considerations involved in teacher development and school improvement, I will examine some fundamental assumptions we make about teaching and learning, and the ways people behave in working organizations. Chin and Benne (1975) have set out three general strategies for change in human systems which provide a context for this study. Their three types of strategies for planned educational change illuminate the current dilemma facing teachers, schools and districts. They state two top-down strategies are commonly used : empirical - rational and power - coercive.

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[5]. Pedagogy , generally related to the education of children, is used here to illustrate a process where the teacher controls the what , when, why, and how of learning.

[6]. Andragogy is a theory that assumes the learner, generally an adult, controls the learning process.

Empirical -Rational and Power - Coercive Strategies

Chin and Benne describe the fundamental assumption underlying empirical-rational strategies.

" Because the person (or group) is assumed to be rational and
moved by self-interest, it is assumed that he (or they) will adopt the
proposed change if it can be rationally justified and if it can be shown
by the proposer(s) that (he)(*sic*) or (they) will gain by the change."
(Chin and Benne,1975:23)

Related to my earlier comments on the emphasis upon deductive logic, Bennis et al (1975) describe empirical-rational strategies as deriving from an engineering model where

" plans are made by experts to meet the needs of people affected
by the plan as the experts interpret these needs, as well as relevant
technical and economic conditions and requirements. After the plan
is made, the consent of those affected to the plan is engineered
by effective means of monologic persuasion." (Bennis, 1975)

Many Ministry decisions about what is important and how that is to be conveyed to students has been made prior to contact with the majority of teachers. The assumption is that the innovation will be an improvement upon current practice and that the logical consistency of the product will persuade the teacher to change. Such Ministry actions fall within the context of Chin and Benne's emprical-rational strategy

When it seems probable classroom teachers will resist implementing innovations, other strategies of change are used to impose upon the teacher's will. Power-coercive strategies revolve around the use of legitimate power or authority to generate "compliance of those with less power to the plans, directions, and leadership of those with greater power" (Chin and Benne, 1975:23). Mandated change efforts have typically been rooted in the empirical-rational and power-coercive modes. In past top -

down educational reform, the role of the didactic teacher has been assumed by the curriculum expert and the passive role of child-like student assigned to the teacher. It is easy to see that the relationship between curriculum producers and teachers has, until recently, followed a traditional pedagogical focus. This has had tremendous implications in the types of "teacher-proof" curriculum that have been prepared, and in the types of implementation activities that have delivered such programs to classroom teachers.

Chin and Benne (1975) contrast top-down strategies with a third type of change strategy based on the assumption that change is a transactional process.

Normative - Reeducative Strategies

Normative -reeducative strategies adopt a different view of human motivation.

> " Change in a pattern of practice or action, ... will occur only as
> the persons involved are brought to change their normative
> patterns and develop commitments to new ones. And changes
> in normative orientations involve changes in attitudes, values,
> skills, and significant relationships, not just changes in
> knowledge, information, or intellectual rationales for action and
> practice." (Chin and Benne,1975: 23)

There is a fundamental difference between the normative-reeducative assumptions and the other two strategies.

> " creative adaptations to changing conditions may arise within
> human systems and do not have to be imported from outside them."
> (Chin and Benne,1975: 37)

This implies those within the system may institute change based on their experience and inductive reasoning. Chin and Benne (1975) describe the two families of approaches to change within the normative-reeducative. The first family involves "improving the problem-solving capabilities of a system " (1975:34) based in large part upon Corey's (1953) view of collaborative action research. The second family involves "releasing and fostering growth in the persons who make up the system to be changed" (1975:36). This therapeutic approach focuses upon personal growth. Both families of approaches

> " are committed to re-education of persons as integral to effective
> change in human systems, both emphasize norms of openness
> of communication, trust between persons, lowering of status barriers
> between parts of the system, and mutuality between parts as
> necessary conditions of the re-educative process."
> (Chin and Benne,1975: 37)

The normative-reeducative philosophy values individualised and small-group initiatives based on individual and site-specific needs. It supposes that individuals and small groups will respond to externally imposed change so as to fashion it and adapt it to their needs.

The two top-down strategies, empirical-rational and power-coercive, are based on a significantly different view of human learning behavior than is the normative-reeducative strategy. School districts receive Ministry mandates that are rooted to some degree in the top-down strategies. Schools and teachers generally are moving toward normative- reeducative strategies at the school site. As a result of these opposing strategies, practical dilemmas as identified by Miles and Huberman (1984) [7] become

7. The problem of meaningful educational reform is not just a technical challenge to find better ways to transmit socially-useful knowledge and socially-acceptable values. Miles and Huberman (1984) have analysed many of the technical factors involved in bringing about change. Their findings were substantial but the six core dilemmas they identified (1984: 278-281): fidelity versus adaptation; centralized versus dispersed influence; coordination versus flexibility; ambitiousness versus practicality; change versus stability; and career development versus local capacity evolve from the paradigmatic clashes that will be noted in this chapter. The solutions to such dilemmas are not technical readjustments.

important issues. For example, fidelity of implementation is important if one operates mainly from an empirical-rational model. By contrast, adaptation is desired if one believes in a normative-reeducative approach. I will examine in this study the contrasting philosophies that underpin school districts' present attempts to change and form some conclusions to illuminate the path that school districts need to take to improve.

Pedagogy and Top-down Change Strategies

It is a large jump to equate Chin and Benne's strategies of change with pedagogical teaching methods but I believe these connections are important to an understanding of the problems of educational reform. The empirical - rational strategy has been the method of choice for many teachers for many years. The basic assumptions are : the credibility of the material to be learned is not to be questioned; the selection of the material to be learned is to be made only by the expert and; if learning does not occur it is probably because the learner is deficient in some respect.

The power - coercive strategies equate to the motivational techniques used to produce results in a traditional classroom and school. The legitimate influence of authority enforces compliance with standards of behaviour and requires production of results. Both power-coercive and empirical-rational change strategies are rooted in the didactic core of pedagogy. The crucial element in the teaching-learning transaction is the disparate status between teacher and learner. The strategies for change and the teaching styles described above derive from a traditional pedagogical view of the learner that (as summarized by Knowles 1990:55-56) assumes passivity, dependency, enforced compliance, and receptivity to learning induced by external motivators. Policy-makers, district and school administrators, curriculum experts and staff developers have often operated within the empirical-rational and power-coercive modes with

disappointing results. Reform efforts introduced by school districts using top-down strategies have not produced satisfying results and have not increased the capacity of schools and teachers to deal with change. In fact, ineffective changes based upon the mandates of short-lived political masters has produced a tremendous sense of cynicism among educators. It is time for a reassessment of such approaches to educational reform.

Andragogy and Teacher Development

Chin and Benne's normative-reeducative type of strategies for change assumes a substantially different view of the learner than that held by didacticists.

> " At the personal level, men (sic) are guided by internalized meanings, habits and values. Changes in patterns of action or practice are, therefore, changes, not alone in the rational informational equipment of men, but at the personal level, changes are alterations in normative structures and in institutionalized roles and relationships, as well as in cognitive and perceptual orientations."
> (Chin and Benne, 1975: 29 -30)

This revised view of the learner has much in common with recent trends in pedagogy that have moved away from didacticism toward approaches such as "learner-centred" or "inquiry" . What remains at issue, however, is the unbalanced power relationship between expert and subject (Benne,1990) that is inherent in mandates. A theory of adult-learning called Andragogy, put forward by Malcolm Knowles, illuminates the fundamental problem of matching mandates, rational planning change strategies, and individual learning.

Andragogy (from the Greek word 'andros' meaning man) is a term coined by Malcolm Knowles (1978) to identify important characteristics of adult learners. The term has become associated with 'professional', 'continuing', and 'lifelong' adult education. Andragogy is described as an

adult-learning theory although some take exception to this. Jarvis (1983:224) contends that andragogy is the progressive humanist curriculum tradition extended to the teaching of adults. Regardless of whether andragogy satisfies as a theory of adult learning, it does have much of value to say about the interaction of teachers to adult learners; and to the interaction of teachers as adult learners.

Knowles (1990: 58-65) assumes several psychological factors significantly affect the adult learner: establishing relevancy for the learner; developing an independent self-concept as a learner; valuing the learner's experience; focusing upon a project or a problem; and appealing to intrinsic motivators. These characteristics present a clear contrast to the traditional pedagogic view of the learner, but have much in common with the emerging view of the child as an active learner. Knowles, in fact, does not see andragogy and pedagogy as antithetical.

> "The pedagogical model is an ideological model which excludes the andragogical assumptions. The andragogical model is a system of assumptions which includes the pedagogical assumptions."
> (Knowles,1990:64)

I will briefly discuss Knowles' basic assumptions to validate the notion of the teacher as a professional. I will also reflect on the movement away from traditional pedagogical values and a movement toward embracing andragogical ideals in recent curricula in B.C.

Firstly, Knowles assumes that the task to be learned relates to a perceived need and has relevance to the adult learner, mainly because the adult learner has entered the educational activity by choice. Thus motivation, or readiness to learn, Knowles believes is more likely present in adults than in children. Knowles contends that the more intense motivational set brought to the learning experience by an adult lends itself to a higher level of self-directedness, which is his second major assumption. The generalized contrast between an adult's or child's motivation may not

useful nor accurate, but I agree that self-directedness is a significant aspect of adult learning.

Knowles' extrapolates that an inquiry-based or problem-solving type of curriculum best suits motivated, self-directed adult-learners. This represents a lofty ideal that can also be applied to the needs of self-motivated children. This curriculum will not fit all circumstances. One common criticism of progressivist theories is the assumption that the learner always provides a suitable readiness to learn. Not all adult learners are going to be highly motivated to learn even if their involvement is voluntary. Factors such as low self-esteem, poor study skills, and fear of failure might inhibit an adult learner's self-directedness. Knowles recognizes that dependent learners, whether adults or children, may require more didactic approaches. The crucial action is basing the curriculum upon the needs of the learner.

Knowles' third assumption is that adult learners prefer an immediate context for their learning; that is, adult learners are not seen as wanting knowledge for knowledge's sake but are rather after information relevant to a learning project or problem-solving pursuit. This being true, Knowles suggests that a skilled teacher of adults acts primarily as a facilitator of learning rather than as a transmitter of data.

Knowles' fourth and perhaps most significant assumption, and one shared by Mezirow (1971) and Rogers (1969), concerns the role of experience in adult learning. Egan (1979) identifies educationally mature adults as possessing an "ironic" intelligence that enables them to stand above philosophies and ideologies and identify what is valuable for them in many forms of thought. Similarly, Riegel says,

> " The mature person achieves a new apprehension of contradictions. Contradictions are no longer regarded as deficiencies that have to be eliminated at all cost but in a confirmative manner as the basic source for all activities. In particular, they form the basis for any innovative and creative thought." (Riegel,1979:130)

In simple terms, the richness of an adult's past experiences will dictate how new experience is assimilated. The ability to reflect upon the learning in the context of personal and relevant experience is seen as a distinctly adult trait. Knowles affirms how crucial it is to bring the adult's experience into the teaching and learning process.

The concept of hidden curriculum has much to say about the incidental benefits and consequences of unstated and underlying goals and aims. In pedagogy, the hidden curriculum has been commonly identified with socialization. The child has traditionally been exposed to authority, obedience to group rules, and peer competition. Each of the different curriculum theories contain hidden curricula with distinct perspectives on the process of education and the nature of the learner in society: from the classical humanism penchant for ellitism to the radical's social revolutionary.

Andragogy's hidden curriculum in the western world reflects a commitment to freedom, equal participation, and tolerance of the views of others. The teaching strategies recommended mainly involve facilitating the student's learning in ways that attempt to model the values mentioned. A traditional difficulty in adult education is that many adult learners do not easily accept didactic teaching styles no matter the value of the content.

> "... when conventional teaching imposes the traditional dependent
> or teacher-led role on the adult student, she reacts with resentment
> or resistance. It is as if her adulthood is being questioned or
> challenged at a fundamental level." (Squires, 1987: 181)

The traditional pedagogic view of the unenfranchised student has meant that curricula have been, until recently, formulated entirely independently of the views of the major participant - the child. Early adult education programs in London in 1870 (Devereux, 1982) were a mirror representation of the child's curriculum. The adult learner in that social and cultural context was considered to be less than mature, child-like. The

contemporary model of an adult, however, revolves around accepting people ' as they are'. The relativist idea of truth has led to a common view of truth as individual. The andragogical conception of the learner, child or adult, requires a curriculum be entirely referenced to the perceptions, experience, and beliefs of the main participants - the learners and teachers. The ramifications for an adult curriculum is that all purposes for learning may be accepted as equal. Vocational aspirations, thirst for classical knowledge, desire for social reform and fervour for social revolution can all be seen as legitimate reasons for adult education.

Do the choices for educational reform efforts follow these two paths? Are we going to continue to see teachers as 'less than mature' and apply a prescriptive curriculum? ; is the only alternative a laissez-faire approach that validates all individual learning efforts no matter how counter-productive they may seem to be to others? The answer to the last question lies substantially within an interpretation of the value of the individual.

Freire (1976) interprets the nature of andragogy within the socio-cultural milieu of the adult. Education for Freire is part of political action. He suggests that adult learning should lead to active participation in the oppressor's culture. He reaffirms the basis of andragogy supporting experiential learning, respect for humanity, and provision for reflection. For Freire, however, action and reflection comes together in what he terms 'praxis' - man's (sic) ability to process and reflect upon his experiences. Freire identifies a major difference between pedagogy and andragogy. He sees that it is possible to empower the learner, albeit in his political context, to action through education. One can recognise that the adult learner brings the possibility for personal and social action. While the child is traditionally being prepared for future empowerment, the adult learner has that immediate potential.

Andragogy is an attempt to clearly define the crucial elements of adult learning. The traditional pedagogical approaches that allow the student minimal control over curricula and learning processes are seen as

inappropriate for adults in most situations. While we may not easily specify what qualities or degrees of capacities distinguish the adult from the child, there is a stage at which one perceives oneself to be an adult. When learners perceive themselves, and are perceived by others to be adults, they are empowered to choose for themselves the purposes for, and the form of , their learning.

In my opinion, andragogy challenges our traditional notions of education for children. Hostler (1981) identifies autonomy, individuality, and equality as being the three concepts that best delineate the process of adult education. The student in a typical pedagogical setting has been the recipient of a subject-oriented, knowledge-based curriculum with an emphasis upon ' authority, formality, and competition" (Squires, 1987:181) The cause and effect relationship between motivation and self-directedness need not be restricted to adults since many children, despite institutionalized settings, pursue their educational interests in a self-directed way and are encouraged to do so. It should not be assumed today's emancipated children are content to acquire knowledge that is external to their experience and perceived needs, even if extrinsic motivators are provided. The resistance and resentment felt by many young students is predicated by experiences with predominantly autocratic teachers. For children, however, it is not their adulthood but rather their individuality that is being questioned and challenged.

If andragogy expresses a social ideal for the learning and teaching process, then our schools should reflect a progression along a continuum toward autonomy, individuality, and equality. Benne (1990) contends that an education system based upon pedagogical tenets will be insufficient to prepare children for adulthood in an unpredictable future. He attempts to further meld the pedagogical and andragogical views of learning into "anthropogogy" which he describes as:

"a future-oriented process of personal and cultural renewal...The

major learning outcomes are self-knowledge and skills in ongoing
processes of participative and experiential learning and in ways of
transferring these knowledges and skills to other situations..."
(Benne,1990:127-128)

Some of the fundamental didacticist concepts underlie the two top-down
classifications of strategies for planned change as proposed by Chin and
Benne (1975). It is also possible to connect the normative-reeducative type
of change strategies with andragogical concepts such as suggested by
Knowles (1990). We can see that there is a growing interest in normative
reeducative change strategies and that there is a revised conception of
learning that can apply to children and adults.   Ideals similar to those
expressed by Knowles (1990) and Benne (1990) are beginning to influence
the day-to-day operation of schools and school districts; in learner-centred
curricula, strategic instruction, participative staff development and
collaborative governance. [8] The proposition then is that educators and
students working within schools should initiate self-directed changes or
choose to work collaboratively to adopt and adapt external changes.

These become problematic assumptions if the nature of the
educational organization is bureaucratic. The empirical-rational and power-
coercive models for planned change have fit well within formal bureaucratic
organizations that stress divisions of labour and lines of authority and
control.   The types of changes introduced within and through such
organizations are packaged and sanctioned initially by those in power. The
implementation of such innovations become simply technical challenges to
motivate employees and retrain them to successfully use what was
provided for them. The normative-re-educative approaches requires a
restructured organization because the innovations do not necessarily

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[8.]   The philosophy of the new program in B.C. does not assume children to be passive recipients of
knowledge. The learner's individuality and personal experience have become identified as significant
factors in shaping classroom programs and activities.The use of journals, learning logs, and portfolios are
all common attempts to create threads of personalized learning for students to reflect upon.

originate with those in power. It is not simply a matter of people responding to imposed mandates, but instead becomes an interactive process of revaluing and re-educating all involved.

Bureaucratic and Non-Bureaucratic Organizations

Owens (1987) contends that administrators often base their work upon unexamined assumptions.

> " Organizational theory provides a systematic body of knowledge
> upon which we base assumptions about the nature of organizations
> and the behaviour of people in them. .. theory is used constantly by
> administrators - albeit often in an intuitive and unexamined way - as
> a basis for the professional work they do every day."
> (Owens ,1987:50)

This intuitive use of theory as described by Owens is disruptive and unproductive in practice when two ideological paradigms - pedagogy and andragogy - are clashing. The shape of professional responses to emerging needs becomes problematic when fundamentally different assumptions can be made concerning a single change issue. For example, adoption and implementation procedures for a curricular innovation may look very different depending upon an administrator's perspective of teachers as learners. The bureaucratic response to schools relies on the use of authority, the collection of required information to inform decisions, the establishment of written policies and procedures, clearly articulated work schedules and responsibilities, and the provision of expert help to meet emerging needs. Top-down reform efforts are basically framed within those bureaucratic structures. The teacher is generally viewed as an instrument of change.

The movement away from bureaucratic structures is encouraged by the Human Resources Management theory:

" a view that places the teacher foremost in creating instructional change and, therefore, that questions the wisdom of any change strategy that seeks to force change upon the teacher arbitrarily and without his or her participation in the processes of deciding what should be done."   (Owens, 1987: 44)

In contrast to the control emphasis of bureaucratic theory,

"...human resources management emphasizes using the conscious thinking of individual persons about what they are doing as a means of involving their commitment, their abilities, and their energies in achieving the goals for which the organization stands. The central mechanism through which the organization exercises coordination and control is the socialization of participants to the values and goals of the organization, rather than through written rules and close supervision. " (Owens ,1975:44)

A significant problem occurs when the organization does not clearly define its goals and values.   In truth, there may be many possible relevant goals in a multi-dimensional educational organization. The fundamental question becomes who establishes the goals and based on what values. If the decision-making is top-down then the processes related to human resource management becomes only a more sophisticated way to control change. It assumes again the teacher as a recipient, albeit a more active one, of an imposed message. This ignores the andragogical perspective that adults will be self-directed and motivated.   MacGregor (1960) assumes that people at work will exercise initiative and self-control if they are committed to the objectives of the organization. This assumption can be extended. If teachers are viewed as central to the process of education, and central to change by being involved in setting the objectives of the organization, they will be more productive and committed.

Knowles' model for Human Resource Development (1990) identifies five crucial elements of andragogical theory that have an organizational implication. He envisions the adult learner's self-concept being nurtured

through increasing self-directedness within an organizational climate of mutuality, respect, collaboration and informality. He suggests that the learner's experience is a rich resource that is best utilized by mechanisms for mutual planning. It is optimum for the learner to be part of a group self-assessment that determines what is needed to be done. The objectives set need to be group-based and immediately relevant to the present situation. Learning needs to be problem-centered, sequenced, experiential, evolutionary, and assessed by the group.

It is clear that the roles of student, teacher, school-based administrator, and district administrator are being reshaped. The traditional pedagogical view defined those in subservient hierarchical roles as passive, isolated, recipients of instruction and instruments of direction. Those in positions of power exercised authority and control to impose an external wisdom. The more recent andragogical view stresses an active, collaborative learner who adapts knowledge and direction to meet personally relevant needs. Those in power seek to support, coordinate, and facilitate the efforts of those most closely involved with the action.

Owens makes the important point that schools (and school districts) are organizationally complex and cannot be delineated as simply bureaucratic or non-bureaucratic. [9] The bureaucratic organization may be attempting to increase the opportunities for participative decision-making. A non-bureaucratic organization will still have written policies and procedures, particularly for routine, non-discretionary issues e.g. fire drills. At the present time, both viewpoints are strongly influencing how things are done in schools and school districts. In many school districts in British Columbia, participatory methods of decision-making are being negotiated into teacher contracts. This oxymoronic "contractually-negotiated collaboration" symbolizes the tension that exists between bureaucratic

[9.] A bureaucratic organization is functionally specialized, hierarchical with centralized authority and operating upon written rules. A non-bureaucratic organization is collaborative, 'flat' with decentralized decision-making and structurally flexible.

structures and the increasingly prevailing andragogical view of teachers.

The school district in B. C. is in the middle of the contrasting ideologies of change. It is required to deal with the bureaucratically structured demands of the Ministry of Education and the political demands of a locally-elected Board of Trustees. Under its jurisdiction teachers and schools are seeking increasing empowerment and involvement in fundamental issues that shape and direct the educational enterprise. The teachers' unions are a major player in this restructuring.

The conflicting paradigms and philosophies may be summarised in chart form. Figure One outlines traditional top-down reform efforts at the school district level that are bureaucratically adopted and implemented by administrators possessing a pedagogical mind-set based and used to empirical-rational and power-coercive change strategies. This produces a lack of interaction between the bureaucracy and the teachers to the detriment of the change effort.

Figure 1: CONTRASTING VIEWS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE
Traditional Top-Down Reform

KNOWLES (1990)	CHIN AND BENNE (1975)	OWENS (1987)
PEDAGOGY	EMPIRICAL - RATIONAL ------------------ POWER - COERCIVE	BUREAUCRACTIC

Teacher As the Centre of Change

ANDRAGOGY	NORMATIVE - REEDUCATIVE	NON - BUREAUCRATIC

The bureaucratic organization hopes for a prescribed response and is not structured to be interdependent with those in the field. While the teacher and the school are purportedly viewed as the unit or centre of change, a school district's bureaucratic organization typically does little to connect with them.

Figure One also shows how a teacher-centred change effort differs. The district administrator here makes the assumption that teachers are capable of adopting and implementing beneficial changes. Reform efforts are developed by interactive processes throughout the school and he school district. Instead of traditional bureaucratic disposition of resources and long-established allocation of personnel, there needs to exist a flexible organizational structure that reacts appropriately to emerging needs. This requires strong connections between district, school and teacher.

Educational Research

Ideally, educational research provides information and ideas to improve practice. Many of the problems associated with change, such as those identified by Miles and Huberman (1984a) cannot be resolved by technical readjustments because, in some real way, they evolve from the paradigmatic clash of pedagogy and andragogy. Part of the practical failure of educational research to make a difference is that the the clash of pedagogy and andragogy lies within the theoretical underpinnings of research itself.

The Pedagogical Bias

Educators are often unable to find the help they need from research that is confusing and esoteric. Michael Fullan's work The New Meaning Of Educational Change. (1991) an exhaustive description of factors relating to educational change, illustrates the contradictory paradigms but

does not confront the issues raised. He attempts to meld viewpoints, but this creates contradictions.

Fullan (1991) deals very briefly with the implications of changing from a teacher's traditional passive role to an autonomous professional model. He assesses professionalism as being at a crossroads and uses Cuban's (1988) images of teachers as technical actors versus moral actors.

> "The technocrat or bureaucratic image conceives of teachers as giving knowledge and following and applying rules. The moral actor as artisan and craftsperson sees teaching as transforming students." (Fullan with Steigelbauer,1991:142)

Fullan adopts no strong position but simply states that the teaching profession may end up as either possibility. He also cites Hargreaves and Dawe's (1989) notion of how collaboration can be seen as a sophisticated tool to manipulate acceptance of imposed action, or as a way to enhance teacher empowerment. Fullan's resolution of this dichotomy is to propose a combination of the two.

> "I reject the notion, ...of the passive professional, but I also rule out the isolated, autonomous professional. Interactive professionalism is... teachers and others working in small groups interacting frequently in the course of planning, testing new ideas, attempting to solve different problems, assessing effectiveness, etc. It is interactive in the sense that giving and receiving advice and help would be the natural order of things." (Fullan with Steigelbauer,1991:142)

The tone of these statements would lead one to assume a trust or faith in the ability of teachers. In the next paragraph, however, he states

> " By far, the main problem in teaching is not how to get rid of the deadwood, but rather how to motivate good teachers throughout their careers." (Fullan with Steigelbauer,1991:143)

This rhetorical question derives from a pedagogical mind-set and as such can generate only inappropriate responses. An andragogical perspective reframes the question to read :" What can we do to encourage and support teachers intrinsic motivation to improve?" The reframing changes the question from - "how can we generate the required response from teachers?" to - " how can we respond to teachers' needs?"

I contend that a great deal of educational literature has been wastefully based upon the question of how to generate required responses from teachers, in spite of the overwhelming evidence that many teachers do not easily adopt and implement mandated reform into their classroom practice. Educational research that has extensively studied why mandated reforms have been largely unsuccessful originates from the same paradigm that created the educational mandate - that is, a pedagogical framework underlying the empirical-rational and / or power-coercive strategies. I contend that educational research needs to focus upon how individual teachers learn and how the educational system can best support that learning. Despite intellectual effort to recognize the centrality of the teacher in educational change, too often the overarching concern is for the substance of the innovative reform. I will continue to use the work of Fullan (1991) as an example of this.

"The main reason for failure is simple - developers and decision-makers went through a process of acquiring their meaning of the new curriculum. But when it was presented to teachers, there was no provision for allowing them to work out the meaning of the change for themselves. Innovations that have been succeeding have been doing so because they combine good ideas with good implementation decision and support systems." (Fullan with Steigelbauer, 1991:112)

While this superficially recognises the importance of the teacher, the fundamental message is that the quality of the innovation and the support systems are the crucial factors. It assumes that teachers will accept ownership of an idea as long as its high intrinsic value has been clearly

demonstrated to them and that they will adapt innovations to suit their practice based on their personal interpretation of the innovation. This is a simplistic generalization of teacher adoption practices. Fullan is not unique in this bias; in fact, he is perpetuating a long-standing pedagogical perspective.

Beginning in the 1950s, initial attempts to generate required responses from teachers focussed upon improving the quality of curriculum. These efforts generally failed to 'fix-the -teacher' so two 'fix-the-schools' approaches developed: - the effective schools and school improvement traditions. The difference between the two traditions centered on product versus process.

The effective schools tradition was strongly based in the empirical - rational model, depended upon standardized evaluation of student performance, and produced "list logic" (Barth, 1990:39). Sackney (1986) is an example of this. He describes twelve key characteristics of effective schools. He notes a common mission composed of shared values and beliefs, clear goals, and instructional leadership. There is an emphasis upon learning with an instructional and curriculum focus, teacher collegiality and teacher development, high expectations, and frequent monitoring of student progress. A climate that is conducive to learning that creates student involvement and responsibility, a pleasing physical environment, recognition and incentives, positive student behaviour, and parental and community involvement and support are all important characteristics. Even from a bureaucratic perspective this approach does not satisfy.

"The descriptive work does give us some targets, some rich possibilities from which to formulate hypotheses and develop testable propositions, but given the vast complexities and differences between and within schools, it does not yield clear policy prescriptions." (Rosenholtz,1989:206)

Barth (1990:39) says this research " provides a coherent nucleus around

which to build a conception of an ideal." It certainly does not provide much of use to practising educators. It is a classic example of a wonderful answer to the wrong question. A more useful inquiry focuses upon how individual teachers learn to improve.

The school improvement tradition has greater implications for revisions to current practice than effective schools research. A major goal of the school improvement tradition has been to improve the school's capacity for change by improving the organizational ability to support the work of teachers. Its intent is to provide mechanisms and processes that allow teachers to translate mandated changes into personal learning opportunities. Despite the recognition of the vital role the teacher plays in enacting change, the school improvement tradition has generally articulated pedagogical, top-down concerns. Two definitions of school improvement illustrate the point.

> " School improvement then, is an attempt to identify what
> schoolpeople should know and be able to do and to devise ways to
> get them to know and do it." (Barth, 1990: 39)

and

> "A systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions
> and other related internal conditions in one or more schools, with the
> ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively."
> (van Velzen et al, 1985:48)

The critical questions to be asked are 'who decides what schoolpeople should know and be able to do?' and 'who sets the educational goals?' One can argue that society should set the educational agenda for children. One can also argue that such an agenda must be translated into action by those assigned to the task - the schoolpeople. School improvement efforts are based on processes that allow the articulation of individual concerns within an organizational setting. If the innovation arises externally and does not meet the needs of the adult learners then successes will continue to be hard to come by. Rosenholtz (1989) suggests that school districts

are able to strongly influence school-based improvement efforts. I contend that a school district operating from an andragogical perspective will be more successful in nurturing school improvement efforts.

The Andragogical Bias

Lieberman (1992) identifies two reasons for the revision of educational reform. The first is the failed pedagogical concept of broad-based reform.

> "Research's past attempt to find generic rules for teachers is now in the process of shifting its focus to observing the context of teaching, recognising that diversity rather than uniformity may be the norm." (Lieberman,1992:2)

The second reason is a revised concept of learning.

> "Many teachers involved in restructuring schools recognise the connection between their own development and the development of the students they teach; between their increased role in decision-making and providing more choices for their students. Perhaps this obvious, yet elusive idea, provides the conceptual framework for the current reform movement." (Lieberman, 1992: 8)

An andragogical perspective seeks to use the strengths of the teachers working together to create stronger individual teachers. Grossman (1992) drawing on the work of Shulman (1990) and Little (1982) argues that collegial activity creates a supportive school context which in turn further stimulates teacher learning. It is important at this point not to lose sight of the original goal of individual teacher development.

Little (1992) examines professional community in terms of a teacher's "pervasive and persistent privacy". The negative view of teacher autonomy derives from the pedagogical mind-set :

"freedom from scrutiny directed at classroom practice, apparent relief from defending professional judgment, and the virtual absence of collective responsibility for performance" (Little,1992: 159).

Little goes on to create a positive view of the individual teacher that parallels closely the andragogical view of the adult learner. She cites Hargreaves' two forms of teachers' response to their work.

" strategic individualism applies to the ways in which teachers buffer the complex demands of the work by limiting intrusions. Elective individualism encompasses those individual prerogatives that teachers preserve in an effort to fulfil an ethic of care and responsibility toward children." (Liitle, 1992:160)

These notions suggest teachers' autonomy represents a positive attempt to exercise independent initiative and retain control. In this respect, the nature of teachers' learning is similar to that of students.

"Teachers must be able to situate their new knowledge and understanding within the contexts of their actual classrooms. When teachers acquire new knowledge outside the contexts of teaching, they may find it difficult to bring this knowledge to bear upon actual classroom practices." (Grossman,1992:181)

Teachers have been giving this message to staff developers for many years. The response that an innovation was 'practical' or 'not practical' was simply saying whether the teacher could understand the concepts within the context of their practice. When staff developers ignore the experience and context of the teaching situation, inservice activities are less likely to promote classroom improvement.

To use popular jargon, an andragogical mind-set sees the teacher as the solution not the problem. While this seems an obvious statement, educational research shows that this simple assumption often becomes lost beneath the weight of rationality , traditional views of learners, and the

entrenched habits of bureaucracies.

The Role of The School District

To view the teacher without the school's context omits a significant element from the picture of teacher development. To view the teacher and school without the context of the district is similarly an important omission.

In the efforts to bring about educational change, the school district occupies the middle ground between the political and bureaucratic domain that attempts to impose reform and the classroom teacher who is trying to improve practice. Recent studies of district administration Coleman and LaRocque (1990) and Rosenholtz (1989) have focussed upon how district offices influence schools. As Coleman and LaRocque (1990: 3) state "very little is known about the more general organizational culture or ethos supporting change in school districts." Traditionally, the school district has managed through policy edicts, selection of personnel, allocation of resources, and personnel evaluation but these processes are often not integrated with the beliefs and goals of the system and do not reflect movements like participatory decision-making.

The challenge of restructuring the teachers' workplace is infinitely more difficult if changes occur in isolation from district practice. Coleman and LaRocque (1990), Fullan (1991) and Rosenholtz (1989) agree that the district needs to promote and nurture professional empowerment or autonomy within a monitored set of district norms or expectations. Little (1982) contends that professional norms rather than academic emphases characterize effective educational organizations. The district's organizational structures need to model participatory decision-making, decentralized authority and accountability, and shared goal-setting. It is important to understand how the conflicting pedagogical and andragogical pressures influence the establishment of district norms.

Participatory decision-making, decentralized authority and

accountability noted above seem to be feasible propositions within a school site (although many difficulties may occur). The school district tries to promote such collaborative school cultures by modelling an enabling, rather than autocratic, district culture. At the same time , the district faces the paradoxical task of trying to articulate with a Ministry bureaucracy that autocratically imposes mandates, centrally controls resources, and sets arbitrary timelines.

Rosenholtz (1989) noted that shared goal-setting is a primary outcome of collaborative efforts.

" ...ties between schools and districts indicated strong mutual influence... renewing, revising, and reconstituting goals over time required frequent task-oriented interaction." (Rosenholtz,1989: 173)

A significant quality of collaborative goal-setting is it generates ownership on behalf of those involved, and that the sharing and processes of collaboration have intrinsic worth. Little (1992) notes how rare serious collaboration is in schools but she also notes how valuable the fruits of such labours are. In terms of goal setting, it is a mistake to assume ownership is the major criterion for distinguishing between top-down or collaborative goals. The shared experience of those involved produces goals that are more likely to extend best practice and to integrate within the parameters of the work setting.

District-wide monitoring policies to assess the effectiveness of school practices or new programs seem difficult to institute. More significantly, such data are rarely used purposefully to improve educational programs (Bursteen,1984 and Coleman and LaRocque,1990). How does the school district reconcile the need for data to validate top-down changes and yet nurture self-assessment strategies that reflect unique school goals? The issues of goal-setting and assessment are major challenges in a large school district. Fullan (1991) suggests a school district respond through a "negotiated process" of change.

" What does work is interactive pressure and support, initiative-taking,
and empowerment through coordinated action based on individual
realms of activity."   (Fullan with Steigelbauer1991: 211)

Fullan goes on to state , however, that this process will not be able to meet
the challenges presented.

" The problem, of course, is that the matter of school / district
balance is not solvable, precisely because it represents an inherently
complex dilemma between autonomy and accountability, variation
and consistency, and the like." (Fullan with Steigelbauer, 1991:211)

The dilemma is not ' solvable' because practice is based upon contrasting
ideologies of the teacher as a learner. Fullan's pedagogical viewpoint, and
that of many superintendents, will continue, for example, to promote school
districts that devise different goals and hold different ideals from the people
doing the work! This schizophrenic theme is echoed in the work of
Coleman and LaRocque (1990) who suggest that schools may act
autonomously but within a district framework that closely monitors and
evaluates their results.

Contrary recommendations emerge from researchers who adopt a
more andragogical perspective. The first is summarized by Rosenholtz.

" In moving (successful) districts the teachers are empowered. They
help select key school personnel, they participate in school goal-
setting, the allocation of resources, the selection of teaching
materials and plan for provision of their own inservice."
(Rosenholtz, 1989: 202)

In my opinion, teacher involvement in school-level decisions is only part of
the solution. School goals, inservice planning, and the use of resources
take on a broader meaning when connected to other schools efforts or to
district-wide schemes.   Thus, the second recommendation involves
establishing interactive links between the school and the district. Louis

(1989) characterized successful school districts as having "high engagement" with schools - frequent interaction and communication around coordinated goals and objectives - and managing with " low bureaucracy" - the absence of extensive rules and regulations. The traditional policy-based directives need to be replaced by liaisons that allow the schools autonomy and flexibility to negotiate a school-based response within a district framework.

Four elements of large-scale reform have been examined in this chapter - ideology, change strategy, organizational structure, and teacher action in a school setting. Idealized traditional reform attempts can be represented as follows.

Ideology	Change Strategy	Organizational Structure	Teacher Action
Pedagogy ---	Empirical-Rational Power-Coercive	--- Bureaucratic	--- Prescription

Traditionally, those who initiate and those who receive the mandate operate on the assumption that the teacher is obliged to implement as faithfully as possible a conceptually sound change. Past failures and the emerging view of the teacher as professional have created modifications to the pattern but again with disappointing results.

Ideology	Change Strategy	Organizational Structure	Teacher Action
Pedagogy ---	Normative-Reeducative ---	Non- Bureaucratic or Bureaucratic ---	Adaptation

In this representation, the pedagogical mind-set remains but recognizes the central role of the teacher by instituting collaborative practices during the change process so that the specific social setting of the school can

influence the types of changes initiated and implemented. This model gives rise to the dilemmas identified by Miles and Huberman (1984a: 278-281); for example, fidelity of implementation versus adaptation. Even with collaborative structures in place, the mandate still originates powerfully from a top-down perspective that seeks appropriate responses from teachers. The issue of teacher commitment arises because external people accept some esoteric level of responsibility for what happens in a teacher's classroom. Fullan (1991) notes the antagonistic nature of mandated reform and personal change by advocating "pressure and support".

> "...it is increasingly clear that both pressure and support are necessary for success...Pressure without support leads to resistance and alienation; support without pressure leads to drift or waste of resources." (Fullan with Steigelbauer, 1991: 91)

What is clear is that Fullan, like Huberman and Miles, is operating from a fundamental belief that the external innovation has a higher intrinsic worth than the "drift" of modified professional practice.

A third idealized version of change that offers hope for significant change is represented below.

Ideology	Change Strategy	Organizational Structure	Teacher Action
Andragogy ---	Normative-Reeducative ---	Non- Bureaucratic ---	Initiation

This model is based upon Knowles' (1990) conceptions of self-directed adult learners , and Benne's (1990) notion of a subject controlled expert-subject relationship, working within a responsive, democratic organization. The teacher becomes the initiator and arbiter of classroom and school change and a participant in the organizational decision-making process. While I endorse this third model, on ethical as well as practical

grounds, it creates problems with issues such as system-wide equity and public accountability. It is against the background of this theoretical framework that the policies, practices and perceptions within Janus school district will be assessed.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and Context

This chapter will briefly outline my view of qualitative research and describe my methods of collecting, analysing and displaying data. Janus school district will also be described in general terms to provide an overview of the context of the study sites.

Limitations of the Methodology

Since I cannot accept the proposition that human experience can be meaningfully described quantitatively, I find myself up to my knees in the quicksand of relativism. Knowledge is, I believe, contextual and generalisable to the same extent that individual human experience is shared and generalisable to the larger social experience. Inquiry in educational research thus needs to be based on critical reflection upon practice and supporting values and beliefs. I believe that the collection, reduction, analysis and display of data should happen in ways that are comprehensible and to some degree replicable. I have been strongly influenced by the methodological strategies suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984b) . I may also be described as a " soft-nosed positivist" (Miles and Huberman,1984b: 23) not so much because I believe such strategies best describe reality, but because my version of the reality studied is thus more clearly comprehensible to others. I agree with Smith (1987: 175):

> "objectivity is an illusion: the subject's intentions, beliefs, views of the researcher, and interests must be considered."

This researcher has been actively involved as a teacher representative in the organization of professional development. I

believe that change occurs most successfully when people are involved in making decisions about their own learning. I have a strong bias toward a democratized workplace and empowered professionals working collaboratively. I have also been a school-based principal who has felt the demands placed upon a school from many equally important sources. The issue of balancing school autonomy with appropriate commitment to a district mission is contentious and not easily put into practice.

The attempt to create relevant data was founded on a careful selection of a school district that was experiencing tremendous change. There was a random selection of respondents from many work sites within the district to ensure a district, rather than school-specific perspective. While the questions were open-ended, there was a strong effort for consistency and accuracy within the interview process. A significant amount of data was generated from the interviews and from district documentation. Verification of data and tentative conclusions was sought from those interviewed. Data were reduced, categorised and displayed in chart form according to strategies suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984). Disconfirming evidence was sought and noted.

Effort was made to triangulate data for accuracy by seeking feedback to the first draft of the thesis. Three Janus educators who were not part of the original respondent group , a teacher, a school principal, and a central office administrator, were asked for reaction to the draft document. I will now describe those interviewed and the method of data collection and data analysis used in this study.

Sources of Data

To assess how a district deals with change, I selected one of the five fastest growing districts, according to Ministry statistics, in the province. Written approval to conduct the study within the school district was received. From within the district, I selected ten of the fastest-growing

schools. I asked one person from each of the schools to be interviewed. They were chosen from the teacher seniority list published by the school district and were required to have worked for a minimum of five years within the district to ensure opportunity of familiarity with the district and its operations. Eight teachers, (two female primary classroom teachers; one female librarian / primary department head; two female student support teachers, primary and intermediate; one male intermediate classroom teacher / department head; two male intermediate classroom teachers), agreed to participate in the study following telephone and written contact. Three administrators, two from the ten school sites, were also interviewed about their school experiences. In addition, an influential teacher union representative, two people from the Teacher Support Team and two district administrators with considerable experience and responsibility for school operations were interviewed.

District documents were studied to provide confirmatory evidence, and a variety of meetings involving administrators were attended. It can be seen that the data upon which this study is based were collected from a variety of sources.

Collection of Data

Audiotaped interviews were conducted in the late spring of 1992. Most of the respondents preferred to be interviewed at their worksite, but five chose off-site locations. Approximately one to two weeks prior to the interviews, the respondents received an identical print copy of the questions. The taped interviews were transcribed with some minor editing over the summer and verbatim transcripts were sent to the respondents in September of 1992. The respondents verified the accuracy of the comments. In two instances some revisions were made. Following the preliminary drafting of Chapter Four, the findings of the study, respondents were asked in the Spring of 1993 to review the data displays and tentative

conclusions for further input.

Copies of district documents, extending back over the last two years, relating to school programs, staff development, the District Review process, and any policies and procedures relating to communication, school governance, or budgetary items were collected. Employee union contracts were available for reference.

Analyzing the data

In an attempt to reduce researcher bias in selecting relevant data, each response in the verbatim transcripts was analyzed and framed as phrases that indicated the main ideas e.g. consultants' workshops- helpful: materials- plenty: principal- supportive. A chart was created for each respondent that displayed the main ideas for each question. Direct quotes were signalled and marked for future reference in many cases. Categories of responses from the teacher respondents, school administrator respondents and district administrator respondents that showed strong identification of major issues became clear. Categories representing less widespread agreement were noted and single outliers and contradictory beliefs were recorded.

The categories of comments for the different levels of responsibilities were noted and comparisons made across levels. Similar responses were counted for frequency of distribution. At this point the transcripts were reread for further insight and culling of appropriate illustrative quotes. Mind-mapping webs were created to look for connections and obvious gaps in the data.

Matrices displaying the data across all levels were constructed to show the major areas identified. While the evidence was weighted primarily on frequency, in one or two instances, the depth of thought and understanding of the issues displayed by the respondents lent more importance to their comments.

In this study I consider an educational practice to be successful if teachers, principals, consultants and district administrators all indicate their general support. Areas of organizational weakness or ideological disagreement become clear as disparities in opinions emerge.

Data obtained from interviews with district level personnel, and examination of documents, provide a picture of actual district operations. Data obtained from people at other levels of the system illustrate how clear an understanding of district operations they possess. This information allows me to assess the type of organizational structure - bureaucratic or non-bureaucratic- that is in place in Janus. School-people's descriptions of school operations is compared with that provided by district-level staff. I assume a strong, coherent, efficient organization exists in Janus if most people at all levels have a shared understanding of operations within classrooms, schools and the district office. I conversely assume organizational weakness, that is, an unwanted separation between levels, if there are major discrepancies in peoples' understandings of how schools and the district operate.

Interview data also provide a broad picture of the level of approval for the types of organizational support provided for teacher development and school improvement. The suggestions for future practice elicited in the interviews show if a shared vision exists of what needs to improve and how improvement is to be made.

Janus School District

Janus is a large urban school district in the province of British Columbia, Canada with over 20 000 students enrolled in 59 schools, 46 elementary and 13 secondary. The district is the largest employer in a community with a broad socioeconomic mix within an increasingly ethnically diverse area. In the next ten years, the area will grow rapidly, expanding by

approximately thirty percent.

Prior to 1980, Janus school district experienced slow growth. During a period of growth and upheaval coinciding with the economic boom of the early 1980s a new superintendent brought with him a new set of attitudes that emphasised consultation, participatory decision-making and involvement of "stakeholder groups". The elected Board of Trustees became increasingly influential in day-to-day business operations. The new superintendent's "modus operandi" involved an increasing number of written policies, procedures and regulations and a plethora of representative committees. This superintendent guided the district through a period of great change in the political scene provincially and through the onset of teacher unionization. During the course of this study this superintendent voluntarily left and following a nation-wide search, a relatively young man assumed the position.

For such a large district, Janus has a small administrative workforce. In provincial ranking, it is in the bottom 10% of per capita administrative spending. Its educational organization consists of a superintendent, three assistant superintendents, three directors and four district principals. The financial aspect of the operation is overseen by the superintendent, secretary-treasurer, a facilities manager and three assistant managers. This group oversees an operational budget of over one hundred and forty million dollars annually.

District Ethos

A visiting Californian consultant remarked that Janus had been described to her as *"the best district around"* , an assessment shared by many of its employees. A representative committee of administration, teaching, and non-teaching personnel recently wrote this opening paragraph in a district discussion paper on participatory decision-making.

"We believe that we are starting from a position of strength.
This district and its employee groups have a history of working
cooperatively within a progressive education system. As a
result, our district's schools have been effective places in which
to work and learn for children and adults."

An interview with the Teachers Association president elicited this comment:

"In our district, there has been fairly harmonious relations between
teachers and principals, and teachers and senior management and
the board of trustees".

While those interviewed in the study expressed some dissatisfactions, the
prevailing attitude toward the school district was one of pride, ownership
and respect.

Governance

Janus has over 100 committees that operate within either an
educational or managerial frame of reference. Four Advisory committees
that report to the Superintendent, have trustee membership, and deal with
board policy issues, oversee the entire operation. The Coordinating
Council oversees the educational operation of the district and filters input
from four representative committees that develop long and short term
priorities for programs, facilities, communications, and personnel. Eleven
working review committees monitor programs and program
implementation. Over twenty-five Action committees address projects
such as Sexual Abuse Prevention Training, Intermediate Novel Study,
Science, and Emergency Preparedness. The duration of the review and
action committees depends upon their assigned task.

About one-half of the district's committees fall under the District's
Operations Structure and have managerial tasks. Twenty district
management committees report to the Superintendent and oversee
components of the day-to-day operation of the school district such as

agenda committees, contract negotiations, and budget review. There are twelve contractual committees that are representative of employee groups and administration and deal with matters coming out of employee/employer contracts and board policy. Topics include grievances, teacher superannuation, union classifications, and short-listing. Fifteen liaison committees have internal and external members and deal with local issues. Topics include crime prevention, interministerial protocols, suicide prevention, and traffic safety.

Janus school district has recommended all schools form a representative Planning Group intended to facilitate collaborative decision-making. The school planning process usually involves school assessment, goal-setting and staff development activities. All schools have a Professional Development Committee and a Professional Development Contact who acts as a liaison with the Teacher Support Team.

In the late 1980s the school district undertook a strategic planning initiative. A representative central coordinating committee oversaw four working committees - programs, personnel, management and facilities. These committees were broadly representative and sought consensus on vision and mission statements in their areas and developed specific recommendations for future action. A summary document was produced and several operational structures within the school district quickly changed.

They recommended that the age-groupings of district schools be reorganized to meet more closely the developmental needs of children. Due to the growth in enrolment and the need for, and prospect of, new facilities, preparation for a restructuring of grade configurations became an immediate concern. The Teacher Support Team produced a document that matched the developmental stages and developmental needs of children with possible instructional programs and strategies. It presently is seeking to describe the salient philosophical and programmatic features of the reconfigured schools.

School Support Organization

Staff development and curriculum implementation are dealt with separately as budget line items and are administered by two different central office administrators but there is a consistent effort to connect the two areas wherever possible. Tangible district support is provided to schools by the Teacher Support Team. The Consultant Centre is supervised by a site-based administrator who answers directly to central office administration. There is the equivalent of 14 FTE consultants who have subject area responsibilities such as Fine Arts, or program responsibilities such as the Primary program. District staff development initiatives and mandated curriculum implementations are coordinated and delivered primarily through the efforts of the Teacher Support Team and its administration. The Consultant Centre also provides centralized resource support services such as audio-visual loans and training, a district professional library, district equipment distribution and provision of meeting areas.

Summary

Janus School District is a large bureaucratic enterprise that has a solid educational reputation within its employee groups and throughout the educational community generally. It is implementing substantial changes as a result of a long-term strategic planning exercise in conjunction with the extensive provincially-mandated changes.

The following chapter displays the data collected in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings of the Study

This section focuses upon contextual data regarding classroom, school-based, and external support; and district administrative practices, policies and perceptions. This is not a precise and singularly focused study because it attempts to deal with many significant variables. To reduce researcher bias, the questions asked were broad-based and free form. This led the respondents in a number of surprising, but profitable directions. Some responses did not focus upon the same issues, thus creating gaps in the data base.

Some issues are recognised only by teachers, school-based staff, or district staff. The narrowness of the sample and the nature of interviews might explain why some issues were not identified by some groups. This chapter contains data concerning six main issues: recent changes in the workplace; teacher, school and district adoption processes; teacher, school and district implementation processes; resource allocation; communication; and teacher, school and district evaluation processes.

Changes

Question: What are your recent experiences with educational change and changes in your work environment?

This question focuses the respondents upon the variety of workplace changes, rather than targeting experiences with a specific innovation. Are experiences with change similar across levels of responsibilty?; if not, where are the discrepancies?

Findings. The figure below shows the issues identified by the different groups of respondents.

Figure 2 (a)   Recent Significant Changes

Strong Identification = 80% or more of respondents;   Identification = 50% - 80%;
Weak Identification = Less than 50%, but more than one respondent.

	Curricular Changes	Teacher Interaction	District Review	Integration of Children with Special Needs	Parental Involvement and Demands
Elementary Teachers	Strong Identification	Strong Identification	Strong Identification	Strong Identification	Identification
Principals	Strong Identification	Strong Identification	Strong Identification	Identification	Identification
District Administrators	Identification	Strong Identification	Strong Identification	No Identification	Identification

Figure 2 (b)   Recent Significant Changes

	Teacher Mobility	Pace of Change	Student Reporting	Multi-age Grouping	Unionization
Elementary Teachers	Identification	Identification	Identification	Weak Identification	Weak Identification
Principals	No Identification	Identification	No Identification	No Identification	Identification
District Administrators	No Identification	Identification	Identification	No Identification	No Identification

As shown above, curricular changes, teacher interaction time, the district review process, increased parental involvement, and the faster pace of change are identified by all groups to some degree as representing the most significant recent changes. The following section will highlight the main features of these changes.

People from all levels comment on the extent and pace of change.

Teacher: "The amount of educational change is a change itself. The pace of change is increasing and people are feeling stressed."

Principal: "Education has really changed . Teachers cannot control or even get a handle on many of these changes."

District Administrator: " I'm not sure a lot of teachers have grasped how big a change they are undergoing or that they are part of. In the past we changed content in a curriculum but now we look at beliefs, changes in philosophy, changes in methods of delivery and classroom organisation, pedagogical approaches, also changes in outcomes. We focus now equally on emotional and social attributes as well as intellectual. This type of change is tremendous and not something easily arrived at."

Curricular Change.   All groups agree that curricular innovations, many related specifically to the Ministry's Year 2000 initiative and the new Primary and Intermediate programs, are having a major impact upon classrooms, schools and district operations. A district administrator commented "The rate of change recently in this province is unprecedented". The classroom teachers' data focus upon experiences with a variety of curricular innovations while principals focus upon descriptions of successful and unsuccessful implementations in their schools. Janus district-based staff talk about the difficulties coordinating and supporting school-based efforts.

Collaboration.   Those interviewed note that more time is being

spent by teachers collaborating on educational and governance matters. The question of collaboration with teachers and with parents is strongly identified by school-based administrators.

> "A significant change is the movement toward collaborative decision-making and the time and effort, rethinking and restructuring the way you're going to implement actions in your school and your community."

A number of concerns are expressed: "Working collaboratively is a real struggle. People defend their own territory." District administrators comment upon the large amount of time collaborating with representative committees and school-based administrators. Collaboration -

> "promotes understanding, but the overlap of responsibilities can be dysfunctional if there is lack of cooperation."

District Review. The Janus District Review Process was identified by virtually all respondents as an ongoing focus for change within the schools and with district operations. It represents for teachers a source of discomfort with the unknown, although many interviewed believe the participatory processes to be exemplary. School-based administrators show less patience with the process and feel that district communication is not regular or definite enough to relieve site-based anxieties. District administrators are positive about the process but recognise that it adds significantly to their workload and is competing for the little time that is available for other concerns.

Parental involvement. Parental demands are seen as having recently increased. The teachers identified a more questioning attitude on the part of parents and less willingness to trust the teacher. It was indicated that the well-publicised intentions of the Year 2000 document raise many concerns and expectations in the public's mind. The duty to educate

parents to the mandated changes has fallen mainly to the schools with assistance from district consultants. This is time-consuming and difficult to do in an honest fashion , as so many teachers are at different stages of adopting and implementing changes.

Children with special-needs. This change was identified solely by school-based personnel. All classroom teachers are concerned about the integration of children with special-needs into their classes. These concerns are based on a number of factors: lack of personal experience and fear of the unknown, disagreement with the premise of integration, experience with, or awareness of, a negative situation where the integration of a child with special-needs seemed unsuccessful, and a sense of outrage that sufficent resources may not be available to help. School-based administrators are concerned mostly about the disruption to staff morale, and dealing with the issue with the parent community.

Miscellaneous. Teachers identified teacher mobility, (teachers moving from school-to-school according to a voluntary transfer process), as representing significant change, . Technological innovations, multi-age grouping issues and physical facility changes were also mentioned solely by teacher respondents. Changes in reporting student progress were noted by both teachers and district administrators.

School principals alone in this study indicate that the unionization of teachers presents new challenges in the day-to-day operation of schools.

" The removal of administrators from the bargaining unit and the
responsibility of administering collective agreements are
big changes."

Adoption Processes

Question: How are decisions made to choose new innovations for your classroom; the school; and the district?

This question sought to describe the various processes and influences used by practitioners to make adoption decisions; compare perceptions; discover what people value about current practice; and gather opinions on what is needed to improve these processes.

Personal Adoption.

All respondent groups identified a teacher's personal choice as the fundamental factor at the classroom level (Figure 3). Personal choice was either displayed by teachers like a badge of honor, or like the last and only effective line of defence.

> "There are some things that we have a right to personalize, to disagree with, to refine, to change. We don't have to take things holus bolus and put it into practice."

This perspective seems a reaction to the extent and pace of change.

The chance of an innovation being used by a Janus teacher increases dramatically if the children respond positively and if the teacher believes it shows promise to assist student learning.

> " The philosophical fit has to be there, when the guru, ministry whatever, suggests something new: there has to be a fit between something they're thinking about, something they're not happy about in the classroom... How quickly, or enthusiastically (they embrace it) is based on whether they think they can handle it!"

The teacher must believe in the power of the change to make a positive difference for children. This belief seemed more likely to exist if the

mandated change closely ressembled recent practice. One respondent stated that she found the jump to multi-age classes easy because she had taught a first and second year primary class the year previously. She felt she had made significant progress with the students and was looking forward to having many of those same children in her new multi-age grouping. The energy she was spending dealing with the change was balanced by the excitement generated by the change's possible results.

District administrators and principals acknowledge that mandates play a role in teacher decision-making (Figure 3), but believe that personal preference is the crucial factor in the adoption of innovations at the classroom level. Figure 3 outlines what teachers, principals, and district administrators believe to be the important factors influencing a teacher to adopt an innovation.

<u>Figure 3 : Teacher Adoption Factors</u>

Strong Identification = 80% or more of respondents; Identification = 50% - 80%; Weak Identification = Less than 50%, but more than one respondent.

	Personal Choice	Word of Mouth Influence	Mandated	School-based Process	Workshops	Principal Support
Elementary Teachers	Strong Identification	Strong Identification	Identification	Weak Identification	Weak Identification	Weak Identification
Principals	Identification	Identification	Weak	No Identification	Weak Identification	Identification
District Administrators	Strong Identification	No Identification	Weak Identification	No Identification	No Identification	No Identification

Teacher Interaction.   In the figure above, teachers and principals identify visible, successful practice and the power of word-of-mouth references by colleagues as the most influential factor in teacher adoption of innovations.   Some respondents identified internal consultants' workshops as being significant contributors to personal change. Teachers generally did not talk about their personal choice to adopt an innovation or not in the context of their school or staff.   One respondent comments, however;   " I never make decisions by myself. We make decisions as a staff."

All Janus educators recognise the autonomy of the classroom teacher to adopt or reject innovations.   School-based personnel were insistent about the powerful influence of teachers choosing to interact with successful colleagues.   This interaction was described most often as teacher observation, or team-teaching activities.   Ministry mandates, district workshops, and formal school processes seem to create a context for change, but the overwhelming picture is of teacher autonomy.

School Adoption

All respondents describe a representative school-based committee that oversees participatory needs- assessment and goal-setting activities. The elaborateness of the school-based processes and the involvement of school principals seems to vary, but most respondents are satisfied with the structure and processes in place.

> " Lots of decisions are made by the staff but the time consumption
> is great. We have had to work through a dynamic process to
> make decisions. If we are small groups, we come to consensus;
> if we are a staff we look at a majority vote."

Four influences upon school adoption were identified (Figure 4): school autonomy, administrative support, mandates, and district goals.

Figure 4: School Adoption Factors

Strong Identification = 80% or more of respondents;   Identification = 50% - 80%;
Weak Identification = Less than 50%, but more than one respondent.

	Administrative Support	Ministry Mandates	District Goals	School Autonomy
Elementary Teachers	Strong Identification	Identification	No Identification	Strong Identification
Principals	No Identification	No Identification	Weak Identification	Strong Identification
District Administrators	Strong Identification	Identification	Weak Identification	Strong Identification

All groups strongly identified school autonomy as a major factor in adoption processes and as a significant feature of the culture of Janus school district. Teachers strongly identified with administrative support, noted the existence of Ministry mandates, and strongly affirmed the school's autonomy.

" I get the impression that there are very few things that are laid on
to schools. If they are, they do not filter down to my classroom.
If I want to do cooperative learning, I will. If I don't, I don't have to.
I do not see it as a laid-on process. It would be foolish to do
that because teachers would not be happy...They would probably
do it while being observed and then shut the door and go
with something else."

School principals downplayed the significance of their role in deference to the participatory processes.   Principals did not   mention

Ministry mandates but further contextual data make it seem likely that this is recognised by them as a factor.

District administrators identified Ministry mandates and less strongly district goals as important factors (Figure 4), yet expected teachers and schools to act autonomously with school-based principals providing pressure and support in a collegial and collaborative setting.

District Adoption

District and school administrators in Janus demonstrated a shared understanding of district adoption processes. Teachers (Figure 5) mostly do not know how these types of decisions are made at the district level.

Figure 5: District Adoption - Decision-Makers

Strong Identification = 80% or more of respondents;   Identification = 50% - 80%; Weak Identification = Less than 50%, but more than one respondent.

	Do not know who makes decisions	Ministry	Consultants	Central Office	Planning Committees	Autonomous Schools	School Board
Elementary Teachers	Identification	Weak Ident.	Weak Ident.	No Ident.	No Ident.	No Ident.	No Ident.
Principals	No Identification	Identification	No Identification	Identification	Identification	No Ident.	No Ident
District Admin.	No Identification	Identification	No Ident.	No Ident	Strong Ident.	Identification	Weak Ident.

One or two of the teacher respondents became quite upset and apologised to the interviewer for what they saw as their inadequacy.

Decision-Makers. All groups of respondents (Figure 5) agree on the role Ministry mandates play in the adoption of innovations at the district level. District and school administrators describe Ministry mandates and school board initiatives being processed through the district representative planning committees. Principals see district administrators as having significant veto power over this process. Teachers are generally unaware of these district processes although some believe that consultants decide district priorities. (Consultants indicate a sense of powerlessness in this regard - "responsibility without power".)

District Goals. District curriculum goals and district staff development goals are the responsibility of central office staff. Input is sought from district staff and members of the Teacher Support Team. Draft goals are written, revised in committee and then sent to the Coordinating Council for approval and feedback. The Coordinating Council oversees the compilation of goals from all areas of the district's operation and formats them as District goals. When final administrative approval is received from the Superintendent's Committee, political approval is sought from the elected Board of Trustees.

Janus's district goal-setting process was described as an "uninspired paper exercise" . Changes are suggested and required by the committees , but the changes are more cosmetic than substantial. The work of the Coordinating Council was described more than once as a rubber-stamping activity.

> " There is no process. The goals used to be written by district consultants. Now the bureaucracy has increased. It's not even the people who are facilitating the implementation who are setting the goals. It is really a bureaucratic exercise that has nothing to do with reality."

The focus of the exercise is to produce broad-based goals for public consumption and to facilitate resource allocation. This produces, according to one description, "...too many unfocussed motherhood goals". Thus, little formal direction is given to schools or teachers regarding curriculum and instruction from district goal-setting. One district administrator noted:

> " I don't think as a district that we focus. As a result I don't think we do as good a job at anything as we could."

Relatively few people are a part of the process and few school-based personnel develop any sense of ownership concerning the goals. At the time of research it is clear that Janus uses a goal-setting practice that is limited in scope of collaboration and relatively informal. Concern was expressed by a majority of administrative respondents about the current format and at the time of writing there is a revised goal-setting process proposed for discussion and adoption.

Factors for District Adoption. Eleven factors (Figure 6) were identified as influencing adoption processes in the district although many teachers admitted they were not confident of the accuracy of their comments. Figure Five shows that Ministry mandates, lobby groups, and consultants were the only three influences agreed upon by all respondents. Some school-based personnel, but not district staff, identified the union as a factor.

Principals and district administrators recognised the influential roles of district committees and district administrators. Principals placed more emphasis upon the decision-making role played by district administrators, and were generally uncomplimentary toward the structure and role of the district committees.

District administrators strongly identified Ministry mandates, district

goals and district committees as major factors in the district adoption of innovations.

" Trying to figure out what a change means, to sift through what that change really entails is the main effort (of) the district committees."

Most teachers seemed unaware of the existence or role of these district committees and could not identify any district goals. District staff again noted the participation of the Board of Trustees in the process.

Figure 6: District Adoption Factors

	District Goals	School Board	District Admin.	District Committees	Consultants	Union
Elementary Teachers	No Identification	No Identification	No Identification	No Identification	Identification	Weak Identification
Principals	No Identification	No Identification	Strong Identification	Identification	Identification	Weak Identification
District Administrators	Strong Identification	Identification	Identification	Strong Identification	Identification	No Identification

	Ministry Mandates	District Review	Educational Research	Teacher Input	Pressure Groups	
Elementary Teachers	Weak Identification	Weak Identification	Weak Identification	Weak Identification	Weak Identification	
Principals	Weak Identification	No Identification	No Identification	No Identification	Identification	
District Administrators	Strong Identification	No Identification	Weak Identification	Weak Identification	Identification	

Some teachers and district administrators commented on the value of teacher input into the decision-making process. District administrator: "We would like to develop a format for more direct input from teachers." The teachers believed their comments were being listened to, although they thought that this was occurring informally. While some district administrators commented that they would like to see more teacher input, others are less enthusiastic about this prospect.

> " The truth of the matter is when I see the extent to which the central
> office goes for feedback and input, the amount of collaboration,
> at least the intent to collaborate on decision-making in this district,
> almost grinds work to a halt sometimes; there's so many people
> providing input and yet the impression at the grass roots is that it's
> entirely hierarchical, and entirely autocratic."

District adoption decisions seem influenced by a number of factors - Ministry mandates, educational research, school trustees , lobby groups, district committees, other district administrators, consultants and informal teacher requests. These factors are processed through committees into district goals but it is clear from Figures 5 and 6 that teachers do not know who makes district adoption decisions, how the decision-making process works and what influences decisions. Nor do they perceive having much impact upon the choices the district makes.

Implementation

Question: How are innovations implemented in the classroom / the school / the district ?

This question seeks to identify what factors, contextual conditions, beliefs and attitudes in implementing changes are seen as significant by

people throughout the system. Three categories of responses emerge. Firstly, implementation factors are identified in general. Secondly, perceptions on how district implementation decisions are made are identified. Thirdly, views on the main influences upon district decision-making are explained.

Classroom and School Implementation Findings.

There is general agreement on the factors that contribute to successful classroom and school implementation (Figure 7). Most strongly identified is the need for teachers to work in a collaborative context as they try to make sense of "huge changes". Teachers do not accept changes unthinkingly. One teacher said:

> " Over the years I have learned that I don't try a whole bunch of things at once. I take it very slowly so that I can adapt to it. This means I wil probably not do it the way it may have been laid out in a certain program . I do it to fit me."

Figure 7: Classroom / School Implementation Factors

	Personalize and Adapt	Teacher Interaction	Principal Support	Consultants' Workshops	Match between Mandate and Teacher Belief
Elementary Teachers	Identification	Strong Identification	Strong Identification	Identification	Identification
Principals	Strong Identification	Strong Identification	Identification	No Identification	Identification
District Administrators	Identification	Identification	No Identification	No Identification	Identification

Strong teacher belief in the change, philosophically and practically, increases the likelihood for implementation of the innovation.

"Curriculum change is most effectively implemented by a credible teacher on staff who is very knowledgeable in a new teaching strategy, or new curriculum; who is using it in their classroom; is excited about their students and how they are enjoying it, and sees a tremendous benefit to their constituent students. That excitement and that benefit gets talked about in the staffroom, gets visited by other teachers and they buy into it very easily because its real, it's working,it's operating."

The chart shows some teachers recognise the importance of administrative support and identify consultants' support as valuable. Teachers and administrators seem generally confident of success if the teachers receive support from administration, other teachers, and consultants when implementing an innovation that they personally believe in.

District Implementation

The question generated two categories of data regarding decision-makers and influential factors.

Decision-Makers. District administrators clearly identify the school as the place where all significant implementation decisions are made in the district. This basic belief was epitomised by the comment. " We should not tell schools what they ought to do!"

This is not the perception of school-based personnel. Principals strongly identify ministry mandates, district administrators and district committees as decision-making bodies. Some are frustrated by their inability to influence district decision-makers.

" Why aren't they responsive to our input? The hierarchy, the empire building, is interfering with listening and communicating!"

and

> " Most recently, implementation has been directed by resource
> allocation and ministry mandates. There hasn't been strong
> intervention at the district level for a number of years now."

District administrators deal with the problem of trying to be "the world to everybody." They value collaboration but " direct input is hard to schedule when time is short and people are busy." District administrators mention the Ministry has abrogated all rights to control implementation activities other than through the allocation of targeted resources. Frustration with the Ministry seems high.

> " Each program was developed almost in isolation of the other
> Ministry branches - the structure of the Ministry was built in such a
> way that there wasn't an opportunity for meaningful interaction and
> articulation across the program levels, as well as with program
> teams, curriculum assessment etc."

<u>Figure 8: District Implementation : Decision - Makers</u>

	Ministry Mandates	Consultants	Central Office	District Committees	No Decisions	School-based Decisions
Elementary Teachers	Identification	Identification	No Identification	Weak Identification	Weak Identification	No Identification
Principals	Strong Identification	No Identification	Identification	Identification	No Identification	No Identification
District Administrators	No Identification	No Identification	No Identification	No Identification	No Identification	Strong Identification

Teachers again are unsure of district roles and processes. They identify ministry mandates but believe that consultants are the main players in district decisions regarding implementation.

School-based personnel, particularly principals, seem sensitive to the pressure and direction provided by mandates, district administrators, and district committees. There is little two-way communication between the district decision-making structures and the schools. District administrators promote the autonomous teacher and autonomous school.

> "The most effective level of implementation is at the school level; at the same time, we struggle with the role of the district. We have to look at incremental, planned change."

District administration is frustrated by the Ministry's decisions. Parallelling the schools' concerns , school districts seem to have minimal input into the Ministry's decision-making processes.

Factors for District Implementation. District administrators identify Ministry mandates and resource allocations as well as input from district committees, consultants, school goals, and teachers as the main factors influencing district implementation decisions (Figure Eight). The school has site-based resources to act upon its own decisions. The Consultant Centre provides leadership and expertise to help school-based efforts.

District Staff Development. There were mixed reactions to the role of the Teacher Support Team and to the types of support required by schools. A number of teachers identified recent past practice of the teacher-consultants as positively supporting teacher and school change efforts. Some expressed approval of the after-school awareness and skill-developing sessions held at the Consultant Centre. Contradictory comments indicated that the sessions were often one-shot with no follow-up, often focussed upon bandwagons, and too similar due to the styles of

long-established consultants.

The minimal connection between consultant activities and school efforts was criticized by school-based personnel.

> " I hear consultants thinking they can generate goals that have nothing to do with what the needs of teachers are. Some exciting idea from outside excites them but I wonder if they have a handle on where our teachers are in that area?"

Several respondents noted that no major district initiatives were initiated, promoted and delivered by the Teacher Support Team mainly due to the district policy of placing as many resources as possible, fiscal and otherwise, into the schools. The limited amount of funding available to the Teacher Support Team restricts the number and magnitude of the consultants' projects.

A number of Janus teachers believe that the teacher-consultants are either the main players in district adoption and implementation decision-making, or that they are very influential in those areas. Data from other sources indicate that, in most situations, consultants are involved in decision-making only to the extent that they provide input when requested. Teachers and principals note most of the factors identified by district administrators.

School-based personnel do not see school goals as influencing district implementation decisions (this was confirmed by consultant data). Teachers also believe that the union has an influence upon district activities. There are no formal methods for schools to provide input into implementation decisions at the district level perhaps because district administrators feel that with most resources going directly to schools, the crucial implementation decisions are made at the school site.

Figure 9: District Implementation Factors

Strong Identification = 80% or more of respondents;   Identification = 50% - 80%;
Weak Identification = Less than 50%, but more than one respondent.

	Teacher Input	Teacher Risk-taking	Ministry Mandates	Union Voice for Teachers	Consultants' Workshops Positive (Negative)	School Autonomy
Elementary Teachers	Identification	Identification	Identification	Identification	Strong Identification (Weak Identification)	Weak Identification
Principals	Identification	Identification	Identification	No Identification	Weak Identification (Identification)	Identification
District Administrators	Identification	Identification	Identification	No Identification	Identification (No Identification)	Identification

	Central Office	School-based Pro D. Budgets	District Committees	District Review	Resource Allocation	School Goals
Elementary Teachers	No Identification	Weak Identification	Weak Identification	Weak Identification	Identiification	No Identification
Principals	No Identification	Identification	Identification	No Identification	Identification	No Identification
District Administrators	No Identification	Identification	Identification	No Identification	Identification	Identification

The district uses collaborative representative processes to filter and coordinate demands upon schools and thus shelter schools from an overload of pressure to change. A district administrator notes:

> " For example, we are looking at tremendous change in the type of curriculum support materials, all of the recommended materials that schools have to sift through...there is a need to try to pull all of that together in some sort of framework so we can prioritize, know the parameters..."

There are few strong district statements of direction and few resources to initiate district-wide change. District goals are vague and are not based on meaningful school-based input. School goals are not used to formulate district implementation activities. Schools and the Consultant Centre are not connected in a formal way at the moment. Resources are given to schools to direct their own change efforts. Eighty-five to ninety percent of interaction funds go to schools. This policy has left the Consultant Centre in limbo, unable to initiate projects and experiencing difficulty responding to schools.

Resources

Question: What resources are available to support instructional improvement / school improvement?

Findings. The three groups identify nine major resources for classroom and school improvement (Figure 10). Three resources are unanimously recognised as important: - teacher interaction time, principal support and professional development funding. Teachers identify special education resources, learning materials, technology, audio-visual aids, and personal professional development as important supports to change. Teachers and principals both identify resource people as important.

Figure 10: Classroom / School Resources

Strong Identification = 80% or more of respondents;   Identification = 50% - 80%;
Weak Identification = Less than 50%, but more than one respondent.

	Learning Materials	Teacher Interaction Time	Principal Support	Pro D. Funds
Elementary Teachers	Identification	Strong Identification	Strong Identification	Identification
Principals	No Identification	Identification	Identification	Identification
District Administrators	No Identification	Identification	Identification	Identification

The list of valued resources displayed in Figure 10 supports data gathered in the previous sections. Administrative support, teacher interaction time, resource people and the provision of professional development funding matches the findings found in the adoption and implementation sections. The discrepancy between teachers' concerns regarding the integration of special-needs students and district administrators lack of awareness is again emphasised.

Resource Allocation

Question: How are support resources identified and allocated at the school
level / district level?

Findings. Figure 11 shows that the use and distribution of district resources is of greater concern to administrators than teachers.

Figure 11:   District Resources Needed

	School Time For Decisions	District Diagnosis of School Needs	District Coordination	Teacher Input	Revised Timelines
Elementary Teachers	No Identification	No Identification	No Identification	Identification	No Identification
Principals	Identification	Identification	Identification	Identification	No Identification
District Administrators	Identification	No Identification	Identification	No Identification	Identification

School-based and district administrators both identify the need for the district to coordinate resource allocation and to provide more resources and time for schools to make school-based decisions.

> " Time is what is short. In our school the newness, the numbers of new teachers because we're a growth area means that there is not that familiarity with colleagues, and it takes time to build understanding and trust and be open to sharing and being collegial."

District administrators all identify the need for revised timelines, initially from the Ministry and then from the district, to allow schools more time to plan effectively. Teachers and principals would like more teacher input into district decisions about resource allocation. Principals would like to see more extensive diagnosis of school resource needs. Apart from the access to consultants noted in Figure 10, teachers feel there is little else needed from the district. Several Janus teachers identify that they would like to be more informed about potential district resources.

Decision-Makers. Teacher respondents (Figure 12) identify they are unclear on how resource allocation decisions are made at the district level

but there is strong belief that teacher consultants make the decisions.

Figure 12: District Resource Allocation - Decision-Makers

	Don't Know Who Makes Decisions	Consultants	District Administrators	District Committees	School-based Decisions	Ministry
Elementary Teachers	Identification	Strong Identification	Identification	No Identification	Identification	Identification
Principals	No Identification	No Identification	Identification	Identification	Identification	Identification
District Administrators	No Identification	No Identification	No Identification	Identification	Strong Identification	Strong Identification

While both teachers and principals feel that district administrators play a key role , principals and district administrators identify district planning committees as major decision-making bodies. District administrators (Figure 12) recognise the importance of school-based decision-making.

> "We have very little money at the Board for district-wide initiatives and that is important because the school is where the most lasting change will take place."

District administrators make it clear that the Ministry's budget timelines and allocations dictate district responses.

> "Timelines are wrong in terms of planning with the budget. The Ministry sets the budget at the end of April. The district learns of allocations at the end of May and has to go through its own process to allocate funds equitably and make sure internal needs are addressed. So it's the end of June before the schools know what is happening for next year."

Resources in Janus are distributed as equitably as possible among schools, on a formula of baseline amount plus per capita allocation. The needs and goals of individual schools are not usually taken into account. While school-based personnel in Janus schools would like more involvement in the allocation of such resources at the district level, inadequate resources are not a concern except when integrating children with special needs. One respondent made pointed comments about the lack of sufficient computer technology in his school but, overall, lack of resources to support change does not seem to be a contentious issue.

Communication

Question: How do teachers and schools pass on their views to the school district and how does the school district communicate to its staff?

Findings: Those interviewed identified communication to parents; the District Review process; the role of school principals; the role of the union; the role of district committees and the size of the district; and the role of the school-planning committee as important elements in district communication.

Respondents at all levels recognise the importance of communicating to parents. Some are optimistic that schools are " getting better at communicating our changes". One teacher felt he needed

> "help from the district to get the message to parents. The classroom
> is the best way to do this, but I'm running and running and still not
> catching up."

Members of the Teacher Support Team have taken on further responsibility as communicators of change with the public.

There is general approval of the types of collaborative communication

used in the District Review process. A number of teachers comment on the opportunities that they have had to offer input and to discuss issues arising from the Review.

Communication between schools and the district staff happens primarily through school principals. Some school-based people express concerns about the ability of principals to accurately communicate teachers' views. Some teachers feel there are no mechanisms in place for teachers to provide feedback to district staff. Some teachers feel that they have personal connections that allow them free access to district staff .

All respondent groups recognise that the teacher union speaks for teachers on political issues . Some concern is noted by school-based administrators that the Teachers' Union is also acting as teacher representation on educational matters. They feel that district administrators listen to the union views more than school views expressed through the principals.

Very few of the teachers seem aware of district committees or of the function of these committees in district governance. Those who are familiar with the committee structure have mixed opinions about it in terms of its communicative function. Communication with such a large group of teachers is difficult. District administrator:

> " In some ways you have to keep communicating the same thing
> regularly because of the changes and growth."

Representation provides needed teacher input into the decision-making process but it was noted that representation cannot speak accurately for all teachers owing to the politicised nature of the committees, and sometimes due to the specialist representation needed. One opinion expressed that while representation on district committees may seem collaborative to district staff, the decisions made still feel top-down -"entirely hierarchical and entirely autocratic"- to the vast majority of teachers who are not only uninvolved in the process but also unaware that any process

even exists.

School-based and district administrators generally approve of the existence of school operating councils although these seem to have many formats and terms of references . These councils contribute to improved in-school communication. A principal noted:

> " The whole process of communication within the school building is also undergoing transition. It is no longer the case of the building administrator saying in a staff meeting ' we are going to be doing this in our school.' It involves a good deal of discussion, representation, feedback and when we are done with that at our level, we have yet to effectively involve parents in that process when we have a new procedure or policy in place."

No communication links exist between school operating councils and district planning committees.

> Principal: " I think school planning committees in whatever form they take need a direct pipeline to the higher ups."

Most of the respondents define communication as a two-way process. Few of them mention the paper trail of memos, event calendars, and the district newsletter. Janus school district uses a variety of means to communicate with its personnel: several written formats, meetings with department heads, principal meetings, and Teacher Support Team workshops.

The quality of interactive communication between district administrators and the school sites seems poor. The problem of district size is recognised as a major challenge. A teacher suggested:

> " More visiting by superintendents on an informal basis would help communicate concerns. A higher profile. I think there should be more in-school visits on an unscheduled non-judgmental , friendly basis, but I don't know if there is time for that."

It is probable the vast majority of teachers have little awareness of the district's decision-making processes and little input into how decisions are made. The school district often seeks representative input when examining issues and when making recommendations to the Superintendent and the School Board. Its District Review process has been exemplary in terms of seeking participation and feedback from all groups involved. There are few opportunities, however, for most teachers to communicate formally or informally with district staff.

Evaluation

Question: How are innovations evaluated by the teacher / the school / the district?

While this question focuses specifically upon a program-level evaluation of innovations, it was expanded by the respondents, especially the teachers, to deal with an ongoing assessment of current practice as well. Several respondents talk about student performance assessment as if that were the only level of valid evaluation.

Findings

The strong consensus of opinion is that no formal measures generating "validating data" are being used in classrooms, schools, or at the district level. Figure 13 shows that only three types of assessment are mentioned.

Figure 13: Classroom Evaluation Methods

	Informal Personal Assessment	Parent Acceptance	Student-led Conferences
Elementary Teachers	Identification	Strong Identification	Identification
Principals	Identification	Identification	No Identification
District Administrators	Identification	Identification	Identification

Teachers generally agree that they rely upon their personal assessment of whether an innovation represents a benefit to students. Parental acceptance of innovations also seems to be important. Curriculum-based assessment, student portfolios and student-led conferences are seen by some teachers and district administrators as providing authentic assessment tools. In general, a positive learning experience for the child represents an acceptable form of accountability.

Several respondents indicate there is little reflection upon current practice or innovations. A consultant believes:

"More than we would care to admit to our parent community, we are operating at a gut-level, intuitive type of level."

A number of conflicting views of district evaluation methods emerge. In particular, there is some discrepancy between schoolpeople's view of assessment data and the district staff's perspective. Schoolpeople want data that will shape future practice and validate past efforts. Teachers

recognise valid evaluative devices are lacking but make no suggestions for what is needed. Standardized testing is specifically repudiated by a few respondents. A teacher stated, however:

> " Teachers do need data once in a while. Data is (sic) a good way of validating perceptions. Evaluation with some validation makes people more ready to change. It helps you choose from among all the choices."

Significantly, district administrators believe no useful external measures exist to assist school improvement and that school-based assessment, particularly reflective self-assessment, is a particularly valid and useful form of evaluation. They believe provincial data such as the Provincial Learning Assessment Program that provides general assessment in specific areas every few years, Ministry student drop-out rate data, and informal , intuitive appraisal based on experience, can be melded to create a fairly accurate picture of present practice. Teacher feedback to district staff is seen as important, but as happening informally and incidentally. Teachers believe that consultants provide valuable evaluative data to the district staff but this is not indicated by principals or district staff. Several respondents suggest no assessment or evaluation of district implementation projects by consultants or district staff exists and that the consultants are inadequately informed about the readiness state of many schools prior to and during implementation phases.

School principals and district administrators agree that the district monitors schools through informal visits and an annual inspection. The inspection is a collaborative discussion of school-based problems and strengths, reviewing personnel and programs, discussing projections, school goals and principal goals. The district administrator sets a personal agenda when reviewing the school. One principal commented."I don't think our district has a process about accountability for goals that are set." Figure 14 displays the variety of data gathered.

Figure 14: District Evaluation Methods

Strong Identification = 80% or more of respondents;   Identification = 50% - 80%;
Weak Identification = Less than 50%, but more than one respondent.

	No Measures	Teacher Feedback	Experience and Intuition	Consultants' Feedback	District Monitoring	Measures Not Useful
Elementary Teachers	Strong Identification	Identification	Weak Identification	Identification	No Identification	No Identification
Principals	Strong Identification	No Identification	No Identification	No Identification	Identification	No Identification
District Administrators	Strong Identification	Identification	Identification	No Identification	Identification	Strong Identification

District administrators believe no useful formal measures of standardized student testing exists and that school-based criterion-based assessment in conjunction with Ministry data can be used by reflective practitioners to inform practice. The unique context of the classroom and school is seen as an important factor in rejecting formalized district-wide evaluation methods.

Several of the teachers feel that lack of district evaluative methods indicates a lack of teacher accountability. This signals to some that the district is unconcerned about the quality of teaching and programming in schools. A significant omission in the data is any mention of school principal evaluation and supervision of teachers. Schools are not held accountable for goals and activities beyond an annual collaborative review by a district administrator.

The final chapter will discuss these findings and interpretations to draw some conclusions about how a school district in British Columbia

works within the restraints provided by top-down pressure to support the individual efforts of teachers in schools to change.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions

In this chapter I draw some conclusions about how Janus school district supports school improvement efforts and educational change. Two questions emerge as important foci. The first question, posed in the initial chapter, deals with the substance and perception of change in the district. Are teachers in the classroom concerned about the same change issues as administrators and consultants? The second question asked in the first chapter examines the types of existing organizational structures that support and coordinate adoption, implementation and evaluation of change.

I will interpret the data generated by these questions within the frameworks set out at the conclusion of chapter two. These frameworks describe ideological approaches to change, the types of strategies used to produce change, the type of organizational structures that articulate mandates and practice, and the teacher's role in such change.

In the final section I will comment upon a number of issues raised in the opening chapters: the role of the mandate; teacher-initiated change; the role of the school; and the role of the school district.

Changes. Are teachers in the classroom concerned about the same change issues as those in administrative and supportive roles?

It can be concluded that Janus has a problem initiating and sustaining interactive communication. Teachers, principals and district personnel in this study are generally aware of the mandated frameworks for changes. The lack of significance, however, attributed to the issue of the integration of special-needs children by district administrators contrasted noticeably with the unanimous concerns raised by classroom teachers. Top-down

mandates have been clearly articulated but minimal opportunity exists for the average teacher to communicate concerns to the district level.

District-level decisions in a hierarchical organization can have a potentially significant impact upon school operations. Janus' district review process provides a good example of this. The size of Janus school district, however, makes collaborative decision-making and communication problematic. Despite the district administrators' desire for collaboration, few mechanisms involve teachers and schools in a meaningful way at the district level. The representational nature of district committees has signalled a movement away from autocratic decision-making. The intent of these committees, however, is not to involve or inform schoolpeople of the processes and issues but to arrive at decisions that are more likely to reflect the concerns of schools and teachers. Despite teacher representation however, these decisions usually feel no less autocratic to the majority of teachers than if they had been decided by a single administrator. Bureaucratic structures such as representational district committees provide some input but do not make schools and teachers accountable for the decisions. Few teachers know who makes district decisions and how they are made. School principals are relied upon to act as conduits of information and act as representatives for both levels with the other. This process has many limitations, not the least being that many principals are unclear on the issues being dealt with by the one hundred or so district committees. The attempt to create a participative culture is thus somewhat thwarted. [10]

The representational structures designed to increase collaboration at the district level do not mitigate the fact that the demands for significant change identified in this study originated externally to the teacher and to the

[10] At the same time, there is considerable frustration at the administrative level at the high costs of collaboration. " It is so time consuming and people who get together to make a decision have to educate each other to such a degree that the decisions just never get made."

school. They derived from the Ministry in the case of curricular reform: from the district in the case of the District Review process: and from parental or social pressure in the case of integrating children with special-needs. Each of these large changes involved a number of smaller changes. The curricular changes proposed in the Year 2000 document include substantial revision of student assessment and class organization as well as instructional changes. The district review process includes revision of school-based and district-wide governance in addition to having a strong influence upon collective bargaining. The integration of special-needs children involves debate over the distribution of resources as well as pedagogical responsibilities for these children. These changes were described as "huge" by teachers, principals and district administrators.

Despite extensive collaborative processes being used in both the provincial Royal Commission and in the district review, several teachers interviewed felt no ownership or involvement in these movements toward change. Thus to some teachers, these changes represent a traditional reform effort - the main areas of change are identified for them and they are expected to change their practice because of an external mandate. Their experience still closely matches the traditional model of change as shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Traditional Model of Change.

Ideology	Change Strategy		Organizational Structure		Teacher Action
Pedagogy ---	Empirical-Rational Power-Coercive	---	Bureaucratic	---	Prescription

Many teachers will thus struggle with their personal implementation of mandated changes. Let's now examine school and district organizational structures to see how they attempt to provide relevant support.

Organizational Support for Change. What types of organizational structures exist within schools and the district to support and coordinate adoption, implementation and evaluation of change?

Janus school district faces the challenge of responding to multiple demands, providing leadership and establishing vision, fostering a positive ethos, and supplying tangible and intangible support to schools and teachers. Much of the district's focus is upon making imposed mandates manageable for its schools and teachers. The extent and pace of change is too much for teachers to deal with personally; for schools to implement effectively; and for districts to cope with organizationally.

Janus has moved away from district-wide, district-driven change and identified the autonomous school as the locus and focus of change. The district successfully attempts to empower schools by decentralizing allocation of resources and establishing collaborative decision-making processes in each school. These non-bureaucratic processes enable each school to respond to mandates autonomously and further coordinate and filter the demands upon it to meet the needs of the site-specific context. School-based needs-assessment and goal-setting activities create one or two areas of focus and legitimize the lack of attention paid to other issues. School autonomy is maintained by the lack of formal district monitoring and evaluation procedures. Teachers are able to adapt their practice based on their needs without being accountable to the district for their activities, objectives and 'product'. They may feel the proposed changes are a natural outgrowth of their current personal attempts to adapt their practice. Figure 16 outlines the change process for many teachers in Janus.

Figure 16:   Traditional / Adaptative Model of Change.

Ideology	Change Strategy	Organizational Structure	Teacher Action
Pedagogy ---	Normative-Reeducative ---	Non- Bureaucratic --- or Bureaucratic	Adaptation

The school processes enable teachers to connect personal goals and share learning experiences. Collaborative needs-assessment and goal-setting activities promote teacher reflection and filter change at a school site.

There are, however, no mechanisms for the schools to share their goals with other schools or with district decision-makers in any organized, collaborative format. The district adoption processes in Janus thus retain a top-down impetus. The district receives demands from its environment that it passes on to the schools in a diluted form. District administrators create enabling district goals to accommodate these pressures for change. If school-based data were used to set district direction rather than vague and enabling district policy statements, perhaps many of the committees that shape district responses to mandates could be eliminated.

The schools presently receive mandated curricular demands, district goals, policy and procedural statements, collective bargaining agreements, and ongoing dialogue with employee and parent groups over current issues. The school is expected to recognize these concerns although few of them may relate to their perceived needs of the students in the school. A teacher may thus choose to ignore all demands. Teachers in this study adopt and adapt educational practices based on personal beliefs. This happens partly because they lack access to data that evaluates their educational programs. Data in this study show standardized tests have little appeal for most teachers; there are few Ministry evaluative methods and no district evaluation. Teachers rely upon their experience and their intuition to evaluate what they do, and what and when to change. The lack of validating data has allowed self-evaluative procedures to become an increasingly accepted coin of the realm with students, teachers, and administrators. The lack of objective assessment data poses a problem for communication between levels. The district administrators and Teacher Support Team have no school-based data to use as benchmarks to inform

future program planning and inservice for teachers.

While Janus seeks to support teachers' attempts to change it can be concluded that it wishes to do so at arm's length. The district faces a paradox when planning change. Few people are available to follow through with district goals and the recommendations of the district review process and the district representational committees. Much of the responsibility falls upon the Teacher Support Team. Competing with district imperatives is the recognition by district administration that the school is the locus of change. To this end, the bulk of implementation resources have been allocated to the schools. The Teacher Support Team is left with minimal resources to implement district initiatives and to provide support to schools. The consultants' support- to-schools role conflicts significantly with their role as mandate implementers since few schools are following district initiatives in a coordinated fashion[11] In many respects, consultants find themselves working at cross purposes. The district cannot, and seemingly does not wish to, dictate implementation activities to the schools and uses no formal measures to create accountability among schools or teachers. The schools are not able to communicate their needs to the Teacher Support Team to facilitate the types of support required by teachers. District administrators aptly describe the situation of school implementation as proceeding on a " broken front".

The Role of the Mandate. It can be concluded that the actions, timelines, and planning of the Ministry presents major difficulties to the district. The Ministry takes little account of school district readiness, needs, or operational requirements. Change depends to a large degree upon the

[11] Despite the presence of a sweeping restructuring of the language arts curriculum, it was noted by the consultants that no school had allotted any of its school-based professional days to innovative areas within that curriculum. The consultants were obligated to promote the mandated changes despite the fact that schools were focussing upon other issues. The Teacher Support Team expressed responsibility without power to nurture district goals or mandated changes. Schools bemoaned the inability of the consultants to provide adequate support to teachers.

coincidental match of the bureaucratically imposed mandate with the beliefs and experiences of individual classroom teachers. The data in this study regarding the implementation of the mandated Year 2000 program illustrate this point. Some teachers were supportive of the classroom innovations that derived from the implementation activities of the mandate. Other teachers questioned the relevance of the entire program. It is clear that teachers, principals, and district administrators recognize the expectations for change that emerge from a mandate but the intensity of response seems to decrease significantly the further down the hierarchy one is positioned. District administrators are required to articulate the demands through allocation of personnel and resources, as well as through creation of educational policy. Principals are expected to articulate mandated demands through school-based collaborative processes but teachers are free to pay token service to the changes if they wish. In sum, mandates in British Columbia provide a climate and rationale for change but their translation into actual change for students is haphazard at best.

Teacher-Initiated Change. The data from this study shows that Knowles andragogical theory, as explained in Chapter two, adequately describes what classroom teachers describe as important in their adoption and implementation decisions. Teachers see themselves as self-directed learners who pursue areas of interest and concern in personally relevant ways. Principals, and perhaps surprisingly, district administrators also share this view of teachers. Porter and Brophy's (1988) notion of professional judgment and decision-making seems to be widely held among these practitioners although there was no mention in the study of anyone conceptualising professional judgment as conscious research into the art of teaching as proposed by Hopkins (1987).

The Role of the School. Only two of the teachers interviewed described collaborative efforts to change involving a significant number of teachers

on staff, although all of the teachers interviewed seemed to feel that they were making substantial changes in the ways they taught. Principals and district administrators talked almost exclusively of the personal autonomy of the teacher to make change although all interviewed recognized the power of teacher interaction. Little's (1982) description of collegial interaction seems pertinent to how change happens although it must be noted that the role of the principal in initiating or promoting change was not a strong theme in the data. Principal approval of teachers' efforts and relevant allocation of resources seemed to be the two elements strongly associated with principal support for change.

Schools are the centre of change but perhaps not in the positive way one might expect. Surprisingly, the collaborative decision-making processes in Janus schools seemed to receive support mainly from the viewpoint that it allowed individual teachers and the school itself to adopt change autonomously from the district and the prevailing mandate. Fullan's (1990) and Barth's (1990) assertion that schools cannot sustain improvement without district support seems at first glance to run contrary to the data. The disconnection between district direction and teacher and school adoption processes is a valued part of the way Janus functions. Even district administrators stress the importance of teacher and school autonomy in the change process since they recognize the immensity of change that is expected. Thus, ironically, the most valued form of district support is a "functional disconnectedness" between district and school operations.

Within the context of Janus district, Coleman and LaRocque's (1990) notion of 'supportive-enforcement' represents a narrow view of how to promote school improvement. There are no mechanisms in place in Janus to measure progress, nor to enforce district goals or Ministry mandates but this should not be interpreted as weakness on behalf of the organizational structure of Janus. The ideological beliefs of the district administrators interviewed supported andragogical ideals and normative-reeducative

strategies for change, and not the pedagogical ideals and power-coercive strategy that Coleman and LaRocque's conclusions seem based upon.

The Role of the School District. Despite the conclusion drawn in the previous section that Janus acts strongly as a buffer to change for schools and teachers, it would be simplistic to suggest that this is the extent of the contemporary role of a school district in supporting change . Of Chin and Benne's (1975) strategies for planned change, no-one in the study suggested that the use of legitimate authority (power-coercive strategy) was effective in promoting change. The data suggest that because teachers adopt and adapt change based on individual perspectives empirical-rational strategies of change will also be hit and miss affairs. The third set of strategies, normative-reeducative, allow for personal and group redefinition of change and seem closer to the values held by those in the system. Collaborative strategies seem successfully implemented in most Janus schools but it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of normative-reeducative strategies within Janus since these strategies are used in isolation at the school sites and contrast with the bureaucratic procedures used at the district level to promote the pedagogically formatted , top-down programs required by the Ministry and district political forces.

The process of educational change in Janus schools is close to the elements shown in Figure 17 below. It has moved away from a pedagogical model that assumes its teachers to be passive recipients of mandates. Implicit in the intent to collaborate at the school level, the encouragement of representation at the district level, the decentralized resources, and lack of centralized monitoring and evaluation policies is an awareness of the teacher as a professional adult learner. The element missing is the recognition that teachers' decisions about what they are to learn should be a major influence upon district support efforts. Figure 17 reintroduces the main elements of teacher-centered change.

Figure 17:   Teacher-Centered Change:

Ideology	Change Strategy	Organizational Structure	Teacher Action
Andragogy ---	Normative-Reeducative ---	Non- Bureaucratic ---	Initiation

At this point, the district seems frozen, or stuck in neutral.   Instead of developing a coherent way of operating based on one view of change, the district struggles to coordinate, balance, and adjudicate two competing paradigms of educational change. It has created a "functional disconnectedness" that allows both sets of operations - the school site and the district office - to operate autonomously. A favourable interpretation presents a picture of a district sheltering its schools from the excesses of multiple mandated demands. The creation of many representational committees provides a form of collaboration that produces little to restrict schools' operations.   A less favourable interpretation suggests that the district retains "power through deadlock". The creation of representational committees rather than task forces, the disconnection between school and district goals, the limited opportunities for two-way communication, allow two agendas, the school's and the district's , to exist simultaneously.

I contend that to bring about and sustain change, a more teacher-centered, interdependent stance is required from the district. Teachers in schools are learning to be more responsive to the needs of the students and their colleagues. They are struggling with the skills needed to be collaborative and collegial.   School principals are facing a changed order in schools where collaborative decisions with teachers, students and parents are the norm. Just as students learn these skills better within the modelling of democratic classrooms; just as teachers learn to work together within schools that value collaboration; so schools will learn to act collaboratively within school districts that support and respond to their efforts. District administrators need to create organizational structures that match their stated andragogical beliefs and provide support that responds to the specific needs identified at school sites.

Wideen (in press) informs us that educational change is fundamentally about what teachers do. No matter what is promulgated by the Ministry, district direction needs to be shaped by regularly listening to teachers express their concerns, needs and ambitions. The trial and error of teacher practice can produce no less meaningful change than that created by the disappointing impact of bureaucratically imposed mandates. For a large organization such as Janus, the challenge to become responsive to teachers and schools is daunting. To ignore the challenge, however, is to continue with methods of educational reform that consistently fall short of the mark .

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