

A Study of the Influences on Middle Years Teachers' Pedagogical Decision Making

by

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Abstract

This study contributes to the understanding of the pedagogical choice of secondary school middle years teachers. The findings support the past research which has reported adolescents having specific pedagogical needs and the difficulty schools have in changing established teaching and learning practices to meet those needs. Exploration of social processes and structural influences from this study reveal previously unacknowledged elements. These elements illuminate the enabling and inhibiting factors of pedagogical change and point to the school structures which can be developed to support successful change processes.

The study is set within two schools in Victoria, Australia, with each school having a different level of engagement with the middle years of schooling. One school has successfully sustained middle years practices for 10 years, while the second school, though supportive of middle years approaches, has struggled to achieve pedagogical change. The experiences of the two schools have been investigated primarily from the teachers' perspective, as the teacher is central to pedagogical change in the classroom. As the study unfolded the perspectives of the principals and students were sought to further understand the complex social interactions that influenced teachers' work and pedagogical choice.

Bourdieu's theory of cultural and social practices combined with Giddens' theory of structuration were drawn upon to inform the development of a theoretical framework used to explore the matrix of social processes and school structures which constitute the school setting. This framework enabled the important effects of teacher professional habitus, teacher knowledgeability and teacher ontological security on pedagogical choice to be uncovered.

The elements that effect pedagogical choice have been drawn together to propose two possible pathways for the evaluation of teaching practices: the evolution of practice pathway and the reproduction of practice pathway. These teaching practice pathways provide a framework within which to explain and understand the elements which influence teachers' pedagogical choice and identify the aspects of school structures that

can be amended or developed to support teacher evaluation of the choices made. Effective evaluation of pedagogy and the choice to use a particular pedagogy is what leads teachers to change classroom practice and increases the responsiveness of schools to the learning and developmental needs of students in the middle years of schooling.

Student Declaration

“I Peter Burridge declare that the PhD thesis entitled *A study of the influences on middle years teachers pedagogical decision making* is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work”.

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Acronym Glossary

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum Assessment & Reporting Authority
ACSA	Australian Curriculum Studies Association
BSCS	Biological Science Curriculum Study
CAER	Centre for Applied Educational Research
CMEC	Council of Ministers Education, Canada
DEECD	Department of Education & Early Childhood Development
DEET	Department Education Employment & Training
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DE&T	Department Education & Training
DET&A-Qld	Department Education Training & Arts – Queensland
DET-ACT	Department of Education & Training - Australian Capital Territory
DETYA	Department Education, Training & Youth Affairs
KLA	Key Learning Area
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training & Youth Affairs
MYRAD	Middle Years Research and Development
MYRP	Middle Years Reform Project
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International and Student Assessment
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
PoLT	Principles of Learning and Teaching
QRSLS	Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study
SAIP	School Achievement Indicators Program
SiAS	Staff in Australian Schools
USA	United States of America
VCAA	Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VELS	Victorian Essential Learning Standards
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VIT	Victorian Institute of Teaching
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter One: Education for Adolescents

Introduction

The 2008 Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training & Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), 2008) encompasses a broad range of skills, knowledge and understandings which students should develop to effectively engage in 21st century Australian society. Australia in the 21st century exhibits many features of post-modern society with an emphasis on individual responsibility (Bauman, 2000). People have to make more decisions and live with the consequences of those decisions as governments deregulate services and support networks which previously assisted and guided many aspects of social life (Bahr & Pendergast, 2007). This move has occurred with the rise of neo-liberal political and economic approaches to social and economic management that have become widespread in western countries since the 1980s (Quiggin, 1999).

Neo-liberalism promotes the use of the market place to deliver goods and services to the community with consumer demand and choice driving efficiency. Schooling has come to be seen as a commodity to access a share of society's assets through the attainment of certificates, rather than a place for young people to learn, develop and mature (Apple, 2005; Marginson, 2006a). Academic results have become the key indicator of education efficiency. As governments have increased parent's ability to choose their children's schools, an educational market place has developed. Parents are evaluating schools based on academic results and schools are competing for the most academically able students (Saltmarsh, 2007). These two aspects in many schools have led to a diminished curriculum and restricted teaching practices which has marginalised some students in particular those going through the adolescent years (Ball, 2003a; Butland, 2008).

Information technology is a characteristic component of what Bauman (2000) calls a time of "liquid modernity" where the understanding of meanings and symbols has become more fluid and less certain. The broad, fast generation and dissemination of knowledge through information technology is a source of this flexibility and change. Students require sophisticated analysis and evaluation skills to navigate this level of

change and uncertainty (Hargreaves, 2000). Employment has changed, with greater flexibility, higher mobility and increased casualisation of work, requiring workers to regularly re-train and re-skill over their working lives as work practices change (Brennan, 2000).

In Australia, children often attend pre-school before commencing compulsory schooling which is from age 6 to age 17 (Education Training Reform Act, 2006). The compulsory school system is commonly divided into two sections, primary schooling from preparatory year to year 6 and secondary schooling from year 7 to year 12. Post secondary school opportunities are provided by universities and technical colleges.

Secondary schools in Victoria have met some of the educational challenges to prepare students for a time of liquid modernity, with reforms to the senior secondary years during the past decade, including an increase in the diversity of curriculum at years 11 and 12, the integration of Vocational Education and Training (VET) from year 10, the development of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and the introduction of school based apprenticeships (Firth, 2008; Leder, 2003; Smith & Wilson, 2002). These initiatives have provided senior secondary school students with a range of educational options to prepare them for the work force, further study and entry into adult society.

It is in the area of junior secondary years where schools are particularly struggling to provide for students' needs (Centre for Applied Educational Research (CAER), 2002; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Department Education Training & Arts – Queensland (DET&A-Qld), 2008; Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006). These studies argue that the needs of students, in years seven to nine, who are at risk of becoming disengaged and uninterested in education have to be addressed. The decline in student academic achievement and the motivation levels of students as they move from primary school to secondary school has been well documented in several studies (Alivernini, Lucidi, Mangaelli, 2008; Hill & Rowe, 1996; Hill & Russell, 1999; Luke, Elkins, Weir, Land, Carrington, Dole, Pendergast, Kapitzke, Van Kraayenord, Moni, McIntosh, Mayer, Bahr, Hunter, Chadbourne, Bean, Alvermann, & Stevens, 2003; Schielack & Seeley, 2010). Dinham and Rowe (2007) summarised many of these findings in their literature review of middle schooling:

During this time some students become disengaged or are alienated from learning, and growth in academic attainment can plateau or even, fall. There are concerns...with continued studies in subjects such as mathematics and science in the senior years and beyond (p. 17).

Poor student engagement and declining achievement could be increasing the risk of students leaving school. Students are making important decisions about school completion by year nine as Lamb, Walstab, Teese, Vickers & Rumberger (2004) found in their study of school retention, “70 per cent of students who indicated in Year nine that they planned to leave school before Year 12 actually did so” (p. 10). With higher levels of educational attainment being directly linked to increased employment opportunities and higher wages, it is essential to ensure the 25 per cent of students (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2007) who leave school early are not doing so because they are, ‘not doing well’, ‘don’t like the teachers’ or have ‘lost motivation’ (Lamb, et al. 2004).

The first three years of secondary school in Australia are years seven to nine and correspond with early adolescence which is a period of human development where the transition from childhood to adulthood occurs. This is a time of physical change and emotional development that has particular needs teachers should take into account when developing teaching and learning strategies (Bahr & Pendergast, 2007). It is the matching of teaching and learning approaches with the developmental needs of adolescents that has been the focus of the middle schooling movement for the last 20 years (Chadbourne, 2001). The middle years approach involves the integration of pedagogy, curriculum and school organisation which allows adolescents to explore their understanding of world through authentic inquiry. This inquiry provides opportunities for adolescent students to trial different ways of operating in the adult world to develop their sense of identity and agency (Erikson, 2007).

The middle years approach is underpinned by respectful relationships where students work collaboratively with teachers and peers around a core curriculum. Learning is based on a constructivist approach where students develop their knowledge and

understanding of the world by building on their current knowledge and experience. Adolescent students should investigate these concepts, issues and problems through the application of knowledge and skills which involves decision making processes with authentic outcomes. Such processes encourage adolescents to explore their potential in the adult world. Middle years practices have been shown to address the concerns about adolescent learning and the development of skills and knowledge for a post-modern world (Pendergast & Bahr, 2005). These middle years practices not only improve the outcomes of all students, but are particularly supportive of students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Caldwell, 1998a; Fullan, 2000; Luke, et al. 2003).

It is teachers choosing to use or not use middle years approaches to the teaching and learning of adolescents which is the focus of this study. Although there is a strong body of evidence supporting the effectiveness of the middle years approaches for adolescent learning, teachers have been slow to take up the pedagogy.

Need for this Study

The teaching and learning practices which have been identified as effective in supporting the learning and development of adolescent students have been collected under the term “middle schooling” (Chadbourne, 2001, p. iii). Middle schooling has been shown to improve the learning outcomes of all students (Carrington, 2006; Downden, 2008). This has been the case regardless of whether the context has been a dedicated middle school, comprising only middle years classes from year six to year nine, or within a general secondary school containing year seven to year twelve. Middle years pedagogy is the technical solution to improving adolescent learning (Dinham & Rowe, 2007; Prosser, McCallum, Milroy, Comber & Nixon, 2008). However, it is the implementation of middle years pedagogy which is problematic, as too often school reform initiatives have achieved structural changes within schools, without a change in classroom teaching and in the learning of adolescents (Hill & Rowe, 1996; Hargreaves, 2009; Lingard, 2006).

Teachers are central to a change in pedagogy, but the stability of teachers’ approaches to teaching and learning in their classrooms continues to frustrate the improvement of adolescent learning (Chadbourne, 2001). Reform programs such as those introduced by

the Department of Education and Training in Victoria which provided guidance, funding and resources to 250 schools over a four-year period, could only achieve minor changes in schools, with no appreciable change to teaching practices (CARE, 2002). It appears that teachers' "taken-for-granted" practices posed the greatest challenge to change (CARE, 2002, p. 5). Lingard (2006) summarises the issue around changes to adolescent teaching and learning:

A very well established body of work describing the characteristics and needs of early adolescents has been transposed on to classroom practice for almost 20 years. Yet, two decades on, we are still struggling to engage students in these years, as well as to improve outcomes and overall quality of provision (p. xi).

The understanding of adolescent pedagogy is available but the stumbling block is secondary school middle years teachers apparent refusal to use this pedagogy. The key question is:

What are the influences on teachers' pedagogical choice?

This research examines this question, focusing on the middle years of secondary school, years seven, eight and nine.

Research Questions

This research acknowledges the primacy of teachers in changing the teaching and learning practices of classrooms to enhance the learning of students. The research seeks to explore the influences behind the pedagogical choices made by secondary school teachers of the middle years and is guided by the following research questions:

- What are the components and processes involved in the pedagogical choices of secondary school middle years teachers?
- How do these components and processes influence teachers of secondary school middle years students to select or discard various classroom teaching and learning activities and approaches?

- How could school structures encourage teachers of secondary school middle years to adopt adolescent appropriate pedagogy, leading to more successful implementation of middle schooling?

These guiding research questions direct the inquiry to the activities of secondary school middle years teachers. The activities of teachers do not occur in isolation but in the social context of the school setting. To examine the interaction of teachers and students with the social processes and school structures the research draws on Pierre Bourdieu's theories of cultural and social practice and Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration. The two theories enable the examination of teacher decision-making and choice as agency, within the social context of the school setting. The theoretical framework drawn from these theories identifies how teachers collaborate and reflect on teaching practices, a process which can be enhanced or inhibited by institutional structures.

Outline of the Thesis

Teachers of secondary school middle years make decisions about pedagogy within the context of the school environment and involving interactions with school policy and curriculum, colleagues, principals and students. This research is set within two schools in Victoria Australia, with each school having a different level of engagement with middle schooling. One school, referred to by the fictitious name Trimble Secondary College has sustained middle years practices for nearly 10 years. The other school known fictitiously as Riverside Secondary College, although supportive of middle schooling has been unsuccessful in achieving pedagogical change. The experiences of the teachers, students and principals at these two schools are compared and contrasted to identify relationships between the school structures and social processes within the schools, which influence teachers' pedagogical choices.

Chapter 2 – Literature Context

The review of literature explores the current national and international research and literature to place this study into context. Schools are social institutions influenced by political and social activities. A review of recent political and social changes examines

how globalisation and the dominance of neo-liberal free market-based economies have shaped education in western countries.

A current understanding of adolescent development, as presented in the literature, is outlined and the discussion aligns the knowledge of adolescent maturation with the recommended teaching and learning practices of middle schooling. The chapter summarises the nature of this connection highlighting how middle schooling approaches support the learning and development of adolescents.

Finally, in chapter 2, the national and international approaches to education reform are explored focusing on key studies and reform efforts that have informed education in Victoria. As the research is set in Victoria, Australia, the middle years reform efforts of the Victorian education department are described in detail. Review of the literature identifies gaps in the current research and situates the need for the new knowledge generated by this research.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework

An important part of this research is to be able to reveal how social processes and institutional structures can mediate the behaviour of people and specifically the pedagogical choice of middle years teachers. This research acknowledges the social nature of schools and the construction of knowledge as a social process. Investigation of social processes requires the use of a research lens which can examine the phenomena of teacher pedagogical choice from a social rather than a deterministic cause and effect perspective.

The theories of Bourdieu and Giddens enable an analysis inclusive of the complex nature of social and structural interactions which occur in schools. The theories allow the relationship of the actions to be teased out without losing the meaning each person brings to the interaction. Bourdieu's theories of cultural and social practice and Giddens' theory of structuration are explained and drawn together into a theoretical framework that guides the data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4 – Research Methods

A constructivist methodology in the form of a naturalistic inquiry paradigm has been selected for the research, as it complements the theoretical framework developed. Naturalistic inquiry requires the research to be conducted in the research setting to ensure that data collected are understood within the time and context of the phenomena being examined. The strengths of the paradigm are explained along with the data collection and analysis processes.

The second phase of the research involving the development of a web-based questionnaire to explore key themes that emerged from the school data is described. Trustworthiness of the data and ethical considerations are outlined along with the limitations of the study.

Chapter 5 – Our School

As the two schools, Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges were purposefully selected for their level of engagement in middle schooling practices, it is important to understand the context of each school setting. Chapter 5 draws on data collected from each school to produce a snapshot of each school from the perspectives of the principal, teachers and students. The chapter provides an entrée for the next two chapters which detail the teaching and learning activities and the various relationships identified between actors and social structures.

Chapter 6 – Teaching and Learning at Trimble and Riverside Colleges

The different aspects of teaching and learning at the two schools are detailed in Chapter 6 which explores the interactions of principal, teachers and students. The interaction of all three groups of actors and the school structures are important in enabling evidence about teachers' pedagogical choice to be revealed. Activities and influences of teaching and learning at both schools are developed into four themes: school perspectives, education philosophy and beliefs, planning for teaching and teaching practices. The elements contained in these themes are not isolated but connect across the themes, highlighting the interrelated nature of the social interaction which occurs in schools.

Chapter 7 – Why Trimble?

This chapter draws on the teaching and learning described in Chapter 6 and applies the theoretical framework developed from the work of Bourdieu and Giddens to identify why Trimble has been able to maintain a higher level of middle years appropriate teaching and learning in comparison to Riverside. Differences between the schools around the development of teaching and learning are identified and discussed. In particular the analysis points to the importance of collaborative reflective discussions in enabling the development of teacher ontological security to support purposeful change in teaching practices. The influences which inhibit the changing of teaching and learning practice are identified as the factors of habitus and routinization that have a stabilising effect on social practice.

Chapter 8 – What is the Situation for Other Teachers?

The two themes of teacher collaboration and the stability of social practices and school structures emerged strongly from the qualitative data analysis. To establish if these themes were unique to the two schools involved in the study or were found in other schools a web-based questionnaire was developed. The web-based questionnaire provided a means to tentatively explore whether the themes of teacher collaboration and stability of social practices and school structures were present in other schools and might provide further support for the qualitative data analysis.

Chapter 9 – Building Reflective Practice to Promote Adolescent Learning

The data reported in the previous four chapters indicate the importance of reflecting on teaching practice as a means to initiate pedagogical change. The findings are drawn together in identifying two possible pathways for the review of teaching practices: the evolution of practice pathway and the reproduction of practice pathway. The elements of the pathways are described in detail. The theoretical framework is applied to explain the relationships between the elements which can support or inhibit the changing of teaching practice.

The role of the reflectively discursive process and power relationships within the school to support the evolution of practice pathway leading to pedagogical change are discussed. This discussion brings together elements of collaboration, trust, expansion of teacher knowledgeability and ontological security.

Chapter 10 –Teaching Practice Pathways

The pathways are summarised and used to address the guiding questions of the research individually. The interaction of the influencing components and processes and the steps schools can take to develop school structures that support pedagogical change are discussed.

This chapter concludes by summarising the findings of the study returning to the literature on middle schooling to indicate how the new knowledge has added to the understanding of school change. Finally, the questions raised by the research for further study are presented.

Chapter Summary

The middle years pedagogy and school reform literature clearly indicates if the developmental needs of adolescents are to be met schools must promote the application of adolescent appropriate pedagogy. This pedagogy is identified in the literature and is supportive of adolescent learning, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. For schools and teachers the difficulty has been the implementation and maintenance of these adolescent appropriate practices collected under the banner of middle schooling.

This study identifies the factors which influence the pedagogical choices of secondary school middle years teachers at a personal, social group and institutional level. It is the complex interaction of social and structural factors which is affecting the implementation of middle years practices in the classroom. Using a theoretical framework developed from social theory, the analysis and discussion in the following chapters explores and identifies these complex interactions developing a new understanding of why some teachers and schools are able to achieve changes to classroom practice, while others are not.

Chapter Two: Literature Context

This chapter examines the current research and literature connected to the teaching and learning of adolescents in the early years of secondary school. In Victoria, Australia, where the research is situated, this phase includes students from 12 to 15 years of age in the school years spanning from year seven through to year nine. Four distinct areas influencing the teaching and learning activities within secondary school classrooms have emerged from the literature.

Political and Social Context

Education and the development of young people do not occur in isolation but are heavily influenced by political and social events that surround the schools and the families of the young people. The social and political changes which have occurred since the 1950s affecting education will be discussed.

Adolescent Development and Learning

Adolescence is an identifiable phase of the life cycle with characteristics and attributes which influence the way young people learn. An understanding of the importance of these influences and the need for adolescent appropriate pedagogies will be examined.

Context of Educational Change in Victoria

The research has been conducted in secondary schools within Victoria, a state that has a particular and active history of educational development. This development has been influenced by national and international events. To help frame the research, an understanding of the Victorian education context is required.

Approaches Used to Initiate Educational Change

Nationally and internationally over the past two decades a range of approaches and programs have been employed to initiate pedagogical change in the teaching and learning experience of adolescents, with varying degrees of success. This national and international activity around pedagogical change has informed the current initiatives occurring in the Victorian education system.

These four aspects are key areas influencing educational change in Victoria which directly affect middle years teachers' use or non-use of adolescent appropriate pedagogy. Identifying the influences on teachers' work is the focus of this research as teachers are the key link in the educational change process. It is teachers who make the ultimate decision regarding the learning activities conducted within classrooms in Victorian schools.

Introduction

The teaching and learning of students in early secondary school require different pedagogies from those of primary and senior secondary school students due to the specific developmental needs of early adolescent students. Implementation and maintenance of adolescent appropriate pedagogies is influenced by a range of factors both current and historical, within and outside the school. From a review of the literature, the influencing factors emerged in four areas:

1. the political and social context in which schools and school communities are situated.
2. the specific learning needs of adolescents which are unique due to the physical, emotional and cognitive changes occurring, requiring a specific pedagogical approach.
3. the development of the Victorian education system as the research is situated in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia.
4. the national and international educational reform initiatives which have influenced the programs and approaches pursued in the Victorian education system.

These four areas highlight the range of influences on teachers' work. Teachers' choice of pedagogy is a decision influenced not only by the needs of the students being taught but is also affected by a range of social factors from within and outside the school.

These four areas place the investigation of middle years teachers' pedagogical choice within layers of influence from the immediate classroom, to the school community, to the broader community and the global community.

Political and Social Context

Teaching and learning activities in schools, as with all social activity, is influenced by the social, economic and political climate. The current climate affecting education has developed through several phases since the end of the Second World War. Political and economic approaches in the immediate post war period were to encourage stable economic growth and the maintenance of full employment (Amoroso, 1998; Harvey,

2005). Governments took an active role in the nation's economy as they sought to achieve economic stability. Australia, as with most developed countries, followed a Keynesian approach to the economy in the 1960s and 1970s, with an emphasis on smoothing out economic ups and downs via government investment, government control of interest rates and government ownership of many key industries, such as power, water supply and telecommunications (Peters, 2001). This active government approach provided a period of steady economic growth and development through the 1960s and 1970s across the developed countries of the world. Education was focused on equality of opportunity so that all students could engage in work and society (Teese, 2005).

On a world scale, economic growth by the mid 1970s started to slow, leading to increasing unemployment and rising inflation rates through the 1980s. These economic pressures prompted the rise of a neo-liberal approach to the politics and management of the economy. This occurred in many of the developed countries across the globe including the United States of America (USA), Britain, New Zealand, Scandinavia and Australia (Quiggin, 1999). Neo-liberalism is based on a 'free market' approach to the economy where the driving assumption is that private ownership and the market's demand for goods and services, if left unimpeded, will provide the most efficient delivery, via a self correcting economy (Lee & McBride, 2007). The state's role, as Harvey (2005) points out, is to support the private sector allowing the market forces to operate freely:

The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defence, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess

enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because of powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias of state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit (p. 2).

This neo-liberal approach to government and the economy continues to influence the direction education is taking. Rather than the education system being managed by government for the general benefit of society, nurturing and developing young people to become useful members of society, education is being viewed more and more as a commodity (Apple, 2005; Marginson, 1993). As a commodity, education benefits the individual and his or her ability to acquire a share of society's assets, which include money, influence on decision-making and access to cultural assets. Placing education in a market allows competition to shape the efficiency of the education system (Teese, 2000; Apple, 2000). This efficiency has a particular focus which is not a focus on student needs, but rather a focus on student performance. As Marginson (2006b) notes the purpose of neo-liberal education is to provide "performance tools that help governments to micromanage schools and systems, and it uses subsidized competition in governed education systems to manage and control parent and professional behaviour" (p. 209). It is student performance that becomes the commodity in the market place with parents as consumers looking to enhance their child's human and cultural capital (Saltmarsh, 2007).

The commodification and marketisation of education is influencing how society views education and the role of schools. As a commodity the credentials of education become a passport to a share of society's assets. With education credentials focused on academic attainment, parents become concerned about academic school performance. This concern increases as government interventions in the market place recede and individuals must self manage the risks of life and life chances (Ball, 2003).

Governments through policy changes, have divested social responsibility to provide equity of access to education. In Australia, this started with increased funding to private schools in the 1980s (Klenowski, 2009). This divesting process has continued with governments removing geographic restrictions on which school a student may attend. Governments have presented this as providing parents with greater choice. In reality the choice of school is now constrained by each person's circumstance, with those

advantaged in society having a greater number of schools from which to choose than do those who have fewer resources (Davies & Bansel, 2007). It has become the parents' responsibility to obtain access to the education that best suits their child's needs and this may be an education they cannot afford.

In this neo-liberal environment parents become consumers, and schools see students as both customer and commodity, as it is the students' performance that will add to or detract from the school's reputation in the marketplace (Ball, 2004). Governments assist this process with national benchmarks and standardised testing of students, enabling schools to be rated. These ratings are made formally available to parents via league tables as in Britain or as in Australia to the publicly accessible My School web-site (Andersen, 2010; Ball, 2003a; Rowe, 2000; Smyth, 2001). In both cases it leads to what Ball (2003a) and others describe as a 'culture of performativity', where teachers are pushed to teach to the test and follow a centrally prescribed curriculum (Bates & Riseborough, 1993; Reid, 2003; Watkins, 1992).

The rise of information technologies has contributed to the culture of performativity, marketisation and the commodification process. Information technologies including the Internet have enabled the easy collection, centralisation and access of information (Menziez, 1998). This allows governments to develop national monitoring systems, such as national standardised tests for students, parent satisfaction surveys, and school expenditure reports (Rowe, 2000). The danger in this monitoring is that all data are reduced to a set of numbers, privileging quantitative data such as academic scores, over the school's social and cultural assets. A focus on academic scores further promotes the notion that schools are places to obtain credentials, rather than places of educational activity where young people develop skills, knowledge and agency to become informed and active members of society (Teese, 2000). This has been the experience in both Britain, USA and now Australia where school choice and the publishing of national test results has become the norm. Schools compete for students, "the evidence is that school competition increases inequality with high and low achieving pupils being more segregated in schools" (Butland, 2008, p.15). The market force approach to school reform has increased the social stratification of schools as economically advantaged students are able to access a wider range of schools, travelling outside their geographic area to access schools of their choice. Schools in poor areas lose the cultural capital of

the economically advantaged students, creating greater inequities (Ball, 2004; Teese, 2006). This movement of students has been exacerbated by national testing as schools work to attract the more academically able students to improve national test scores and ranking. National testing has not become a tool for accountability of teaching or a measure of student improvement, but a measure of a school's ability to attract the most able students (Klenowski, 2009). Recently in Australia this has become a concern with national testing commencing in 2008 and publication of school test scores via the internet on a national website starting in January 2010. Publishing of test scores has resulted in national testing already becoming high-stakes testing, influencing the curricula and pedagogy in schools (Lingard, 2010).

The development of the internet and world wide web has resulted in a more global society with the international exchange of economic, political and social information. Students are entering a social and commercial world of globalisation requiring different skills from those their parents developed at school. The concept of globalisation often focuses on the economic.

Globalisation refers to the process whereby capitalism is increasingly constituted on a transnational basis, not only in trade of goods and services but, even more importantly, in the flow of capital and the trade in currencies and financial instruments...a set of neoliberal economic policies that regard profit maximisation and the free flow of goods and capital with minimal regulation as the cornerstone principles of an efficient and viable economy. Nation states still have an important role to play, but largely to advance the interests of business (McChesney, 1998, p. 2).

Although the economic aspects of globalisation are important the social and political aspects of globalisation are shaping schools, education systems and ultimately the students. Meyer (2007) identifies the importance of global socio-cultural changes with individuals becoming more aware of global interdependence between nations and ultimately people. This is seen in the human rights movement where common understandings around personal freedom and rights are developing across national boundaries. Environmental concerns and agreements are no longer restricted to local areas as people identify that local issues are interconnected with global ones. School

curriculum is being influenced globally by international government organisations, such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which is made up of the world's 30 most economically developed countries. The OECD collects international data on school students through the Programme for International and Student Assessment (PISA) (Spring, 2008). These data are published regularly and are informing the local and international debate on curriculum content and school structures as education departments compare themselves internationally (Angus, 2004; Spring, 2008).

All aspects of social, political and commercial life are being influenced by globalisation. Access to information technology enables access to and sending of information around the world without the constraints of time or place. Society has changed from being dominated by industrial approaches to problem solving to more flexible approaches in finding solutions to complex questions. Bauman (2000) calls the current age 'liquid modernity'. This is in comparison to the industrial age where meanings were very clear and inflexible with a strong sense of order. Now meanings are more fluid. Privatisation and reliance on free market forces requires the individual to manage personal resources. It is this 'individualisation' which "consists of transforming human identity from a 'given' into a 'task' and charging the actors with the responsibility of performing the task and for the consequences (and also side effects) of their performance" (Bauman 2000, pp. 31-32). This is requiring individuals to be more informed. Individuals are no longer able to rely on state institutions for guidance or support in times of difficulty.

Work has become more casualised as companies deal with the volatility of markets. Workers sell their labour rather than develop a lifelong relationship with a company, re-skilling occurs regularly as work practices change and workers move to growth areas in the economy as required (Bauman, 2000). With the greater fluidity of modern times, communities have become more difficult to maintain, with individuals moving in and out of various groups as circumstances change (Bauman, 2000). Virtual communities are becoming the more consistent community as individuals can maintain contact with a group unconstrained by time and space (Hirschkop, 1998).

Globalisation, the rise of neo-liberalism and the compression of space and time by the high speed digital global communications are the characteristics of the socio-economic, political environment schools and their students have to absorb. As young people move into adult society and work, prospective employers will be looking for employees who are flexible, multi-talented, self motivated, with an ability to work in teams as innovative problem solvers (Cheng & Yip, 2006).

In this time of liquid modernity the traditional role of governments in providing public education to promote social equality and inclusion has changed through the influences of neo-liberalism and globalisation (Klenowski, 2009). Education is becoming a commodity which parents have to evaluate. Schooling their children has become a risk management exercise in choosing the school which best suits their child. National testing and publishing of test scores is becoming the key indicator of what constitutes a good school, forcing schools to compete for students in the educational marketplace (Ball, 2004). Governments have passed responsibility onto the consumer while still maintaining control over curriculum. There is an assumption by education departments that “competition between schools and parental pressures will push up standards and strengthen accountabilities” (Lingard, 2010, p. 132).

The neo-liberal market driven economy surrounds schools and influences the work of teachers. It is within this context that middle years teachers are working with adolescent students who are faced with a society that has become more fluid and individualistic requiring more self-management of life and less reliance on government direction and assistance (Boreham, 2004).

Adolescent Development and Learning

Adolescence is not a recognised life stage in all cultures across the globe. In many cultures children move slowly from childhood to adulthood as they taken on more adult responsibilities without a transition period such as adolescence being recognised (Brown, Larson & Saraswathi, 2004). Cultural context is important to the concept of adolescence as young people considered teenagers in Australia maybe seen as adults in another culture. This is the case in India where the marriage rate for girls aged between

15 -19 years is 34%. In India with marriage comes the acknowledgement of adulthood (Brown, Larson & Saraswathi, 2004).

As a social construct adolescence has developed in western societies over the 20th century to identify a period of human development: the second decade of life where the transition from childhood to adulthood occurs. Identification of this period of human development came with an increase in preparation time for adulthood as young people remained longer in formal schooling and adult responsibilities such as marriage occurred later in life (Furlong, 2009). Adolescence is marked by the physical changes of sexual maturity and changes in body shape from child to a more adult physique which is accompanied by a general growth spurt. Combined with physical changes, cognitive and emotional changes appear to be linked with developmental changes in the brain (Bahr & Pendergast, 2007). The change process has been viewed historically as a time fraught with problems and turmoil as set out in the early writings of Plato (437-347 B.C.) and Aristotle (384 – 322 B.C.) and by the founder of adolescent psychology Granville Stanley Hall (1904), who described it as a time of ‘storm and stress’ (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004, p. 1).

It may be the influence of these early works that led to the development of a deficit view of adolescents: young people lacking the abilities of adults and needing to be controlled and guided to develop the necessary skills to function fully in adult society (Lerner & Steinberg 2004; Prosser, et al. 2008; Stevens, Hunter, Pendergast, Carrington, Bahr, Kapizke & Mitchell, 2007). This view of adolescents was dominant through the 1980s research and it is still a common view in society, as exemplified in the mass media’s focus on the deviant behaviour of adolescents. However, in more recent times researchers and people who work closely with young people are developing a more holistic understanding of adolescents and adolescent development (Bahr & Pendergast, 2007; Lerner & Steinberg, 2004; Stevens, et al. 2007).

Adolescence is a time of change and identity formation which can result in young people being more vulnerable to problems, prone to poor decision-making and the development of poor behaviours. But these are not essential characteristics of adolescence (Jaffe, 1998). Many young people navigate their way through adolescence with few problems and transitory issues, to become competent and functioning adults.

The vulnerability of adolescence appears to overshadow the approach of schools, which often results in a restricting of the development of young people rather than being supportive of it. Control, surveillance and ‘protecting adolescents from themselves’ appear to be the approaches taken by adults who fear adolescents will make the wrong decision or take inordinate risks. They are not seen as people developing greater physical and cognitive skills with abilities for analysis and prediction (Adams & Berzonsky, 2007).

Decline in students’ academic achievement, motivation and engagement has been well documented and the focus of many educational reform programs including the Education Queensland’s New Basics (Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006) and the Department of Education in Victoria’s Middle Years Research and Development Program (CAER, 2002). Rather than the physical, cognitive and emotional changes that are occurring during adolescence being responsible for the decline in student achievement, the traditional ‘teacher in control of learning’ approach to early secondary schooling could be a key contributor (Eccles, Midgley, Wigfield, Buchanan, Reuman, Flanagan & McIver, 1993; Hill & Russell, 1999). Transition from primary to secondary school is a significant event which for most students will result in the following significant changes from:

- a small to a large school
- an integrated classroom style to school organised in curriculum areas
- a setting in which they are the oldest students to one in which they are the youngest
- a setting where they have a close relationship with one teacher to one in which they have many teachers but no close relationship with any one of those
- having much responsibility and often a leadership role to having no responsibility or leadership role
- being attached to one classroom to moving between rooms and having to take responsibility for being in the right place at the right time
- interacting with a small group of peers to interacting with a large number of peers
- a teaching and learning environment which required them to have a few organisational skills to one demanding a plethora of these (eg. coordinating the number of assessment tasks demanded by many more teachers)

- a cohesive classroom environment where one subject frequently flows naturally into another and where time to complete activities is provided, to one which is unnaturally fragmented and time for sustained learning may not be available
- particular pedagogical approaches and assessment styles to significantly different ones (DET-ACT, 2005, p. 9-10)

Although significant, the move from primary to secondary school is a welcome challenge for most students, with the change being expected and anticipated. The transition process may be a fundamental issue, as changes from primary to secondary school may not match the needs of the adolescent. As Eccles, et al. (1993) suggest, the decline in students' academic achievement and behaviour seen in early secondary schooling could be due to inappropriate educational environments. Maslow's hierarchy of needs supports this concept. If a student feels unsafe or threatened, it is unlikely they will be able to effectively engage in learning (Maslow, 1968). Fundamentally, "individuals are not likely to do well, or be motivated if they are in social environments that do not meet their psychological needs" (Eccles, et al. 1993, p. 91). This raises the question, what are the needs of adolescents?

Adolescence is a major developmental period not only physically and cognitively, but socially as young people in early adolescence move from primary to secondary school, develop broader friendships and gain greater freedoms. Late adolescence involves considering what to do with one's life as occupational possibilities are considered. As young people develop into late adolescence, changes in cognitive ability occur which enable adolescents to think abstractly at the cognitive level. Piaget identifies this as formal operational thinking (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). This increased cognitive ability allows young people to self evaluate and predict possible outcomes of different types of behaviour in different settings (Jaffe, 1998). Prediction and self-evaluation of the behavioural outcome influence self-esteem and self-efficacy. Coopersmith (1967) defines self-esteem as, "a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in attitudes the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other over expressive behaviours" (p. 5). This is closely linked to self-efficacy, which is the expectation that a person can achieve desired goals in a particular area (Bandura, 1977). Adolescents have the ability to set goals, predict the possible achievement of those goals and the required steps to take in achieving their goals. They are, "self-organising, proactive, self-regulating and

self-reflecting. They are contributors to their life circumstances, not just products of them” (Bandura, 2006, p. 3). These abilities need to be explored and applied if adolescents are to develop personal agency and independence to engage in adult society.

“Personal agency refers to one’s capabilities to originate and direct actions for a given purpose” (Zimmerman & Cleary 2006, p. 45). Influenced by self-efficacy, personal agency gives adolescents control over their actions and allows them to be agents in their own future (Bandura, 1977). Adolescents’ self-efficacy perceptions can be enhanced by the development of self-regulatory processes. This involves setting clear goals that can be used to evaluate progress with personal evaluation leading to adjustment in approaches and strategic planning to achieve the desired goals. Accomplishment of authentic goals, which are not perceived to be easy, gives a sense of mastery which in turn, enhances self-efficacy. Concrete experience is not the only source of enhancement. Feedback from significant others, parents, significant adults and peers, will also influence perceptions of efficacy. Modelling of behaviours such as persistence when obstacles are encountered will provide vicarious experiences which adolescents can draw upon to develop self-efficacy and ultimately personal agency (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006).

Adolescents with a positive sense of agency are more resilient and better able to manage high-risk activities, which include, alcohol and illicit drug use, smoking and early sexual activity (Bandura, 2006). Personal agency according to social cognitive theory can be developed from direct experiences, vicarious experiences, or symbolic sources of information. The information gained from these various sources provides feedback about different types of behaviour and influences the personal behaviour of the individual (Bandura, 1977; Schunk & Meece, 2006). For example, young people may gather information about drinking alcohol from a number of sources: seeing their parents drinking wine over dinner, feeling the effects of drinking too much alcohol at a party, drinking smaller amounts of alcohol at the next party, reading about footballers being thrown out of a night club for being drunk, and discussing binge drinking with their friends. All of these experiences over time will influence the young person’s approach to drinking alcohol. Young people make conscious decisions about their behaviour and as a result are not mere products of the current social environment. Providing adolescents with a range of information, in the form of direct and vicarious

experiences, will help develop their sense of agency. In particular, providing adolescents with mastery experiences where they are able to successfully deal with difficult or troublesome situations in which they are unprepared, will enhance a positive sense of self-efficacy and personal agency (Bandura, 2006).

Exploring one's place in the world is a key activity in adolescence as young people move towards adulthood imagining occupational activities, social involvement and how others perceive them. During adolescence the individual goes through a significant process of identity development. For Erikson (2007) this process is a combination of biological, psychological and social influences and involves the development of personal goals, values and beliefs. The adolescent moves away from the influence of caregivers, to explore ways of operating in the world, managing societal demands and expectations with a personal sense of ownership and authorship (Kroger, 2004). It is the opportunity for exploration and then commitment to a particular way of behaving which appears to be important for identity formation. As Bergh and Frilling (2005) state, "research on identity status has repeatedly shown that persons who have undergone the exploration-commitment process are more relationally competent and mature than those who have not" (p. 379).

The exploration process can be understood using the Markus and Nurius (1986) concept of possible selves. Possible selves are those elements that we could become and include, what we would like to become, or hoped for possible selves and what we are afraid of becoming, or feared possible selves. Adolescents can use possible selves to examine potential roles that are available to them. A group of adolescents may each imagine themselves as a scientist, hairdresser, leader, sportsperson, musician or the life of the party. Imagining one's self in a future role contains personalised meaning and will be influenced by social and cultural factors, past experience and self-efficacy: possible selves do not form in isolation (Erikson, 2007). These influences will also determine the level of an individual's agency in achieving the desired self or avoiding the undesired self. The concept of a possible self can provide motivation, such as imagining oneself as a professional musician can motivate practicing musical skills. Opportunities to perform publicly may enhance the possible self-image of being a musician or provide an experience that changes one's focus. It is the imagining of hoped for and feared possible selves combined with experiences to explore these possibilities, which will help

adolescents, achieve a sense of identity, efficacy and agency. As Cross and Markus (1991) found, “Individuals with a vivid or well elaborated conception of themselves in a future state will have accessible more cues relevant to this future state, and these cues should enhance goal related performance” (pp. 232-233).

Constructivist Theories and Adolescent Learning

A constructivist process of knowledge development is based on the learner’s experiences. It involves interaction with people and the environment in various situations. Rather than a truth being uncovered, an understanding of the world is developed from reflection on personal experience. The understanding each experience brings is built on past experiences which leads to greater comprehension about the world (Palincsar, 1998).

In the extreme form of constructivism, radical constructivists reject the notion of objective knowledge. Knowledge only develops due to dialogue with others, with the persons involved constructing personal understanding from the experience. Less radical constructivism takes into account cultural and social knowledge. Learners are agents of their own learning but use social and cultural tools and understandings to support the construction of personal concepts and understanding about the world (Palincsar, 1998). In a middle school classroom this would be reflected in the learning activities. These activities could include, students researching a topic of interest, teachers presenting a particular social perspective, class discussions around the results of a science experiment, or students evaluating a newspaper article. It is this less radical constructivist approach that is being used in this thesis to inform the approaches to adolescent learning presented.

The process of learning relies on the ability of the individual to store and retrieve information. Learners use symbols and signs to manipulate, store and retrieve information abstractly. In early childhood this is seen in the gestures of children, such as, a swooping action made with a hand along with motor noises to represent an aeroplane. As children mature, language becomes an important symbolic system that aids cognitive development (Miller, 1993). Vygotsky (1962) sees word and thought as intrinsically linked, “the structure of speech does not simply mirror the structure of

thought; that is words cannot be put on by thought as a readymade garment. Thought undergoes many changes as it turns into speech. It does not merely find expression in speech; it finds reality and form” (p. 126). The process of speech is also the process of concept development and of understanding the world, making social interaction a primary mechanism for learning (Bandura, 1986; Vygotsky, 1962).

Learning through social interaction can happen in two broad ways (Bandura, 1986): enactive learning and vicarious learning. Enactive learning involves the consequences of one’s own action and behaviour. It is learning through direct experience where people evaluate the consequences of their behaviour and whether the outcome was desirable or not. Vicarious learning does not require performance and involves learning through observation. This can include, reading books, listening to instructions, watching others and television and computer programs. Vicarious learning can accelerate learning and avoid some of the negative effects of learning from direct experience.

Identification of learning is inferential. For teachers, this involves identifying a change in students’ behaviour that indicates learning has occurred. “Learning is defined as the acquisition of symbolic representations in the form of verbal or visual codes that serve as guidelines for future behaviour” (Gredler, 2009, p. 535). These representations are stored in the memory as concepts in the form of schema (Eysenck & Keane, 2005).

Whether this process has occurred or not is unknown to teachers until demonstrated by the students. Performance is the application of learning and demonstrates if learning has occurred. Time is an important aspect of performance, as a change in students’ behaviour must be sustained well after the learning activity. A behaviour change for only a short duration may indicate mimicry or a stimulus/response reaction rather than learning (Schunk, 2008).

The acquisition of internal symbolic representation is initiated by personal experience whether directly or vicariously. Vygotsky (1962) regards this process as intrinsically linked with social interaction, “verbal thought is not an innate, natural form of behaviour but is determined by historical-cultural process and has specific properties and laws that cannot be found in the natural forms of thought and speech” (p. 51). All concepts that children and adolescents learn will be influenced by the historical – social context and will also be mediated by past learning. Students starting an art class who have families with backgrounds of visiting galleries and participating in local art groups

will start the class with many skills and understandings which can be built upon to develop a more complex understanding of art. It is likely they will highly value art due to past social interactions increasing their engagement in the learning activities.

Piaget and Vygotsky have presented different mechanisms for explaining learning. The Vygotsky construct, the zone of proximal development (ZPD), identifies the difference between a learner's unassisted and assisted performance as essential for learning. Piaget identifies the maintenance of equilibrium between cognitive structures and the environmental stimulus as the key mechanism. The ZPD is identified as the difference between what an individual can achieve unassisted and the performance an individual can achieve with assistance. Assistance is often from a more able peer or adult but could equally be from cultural tools. For learning to occur, the learning activities or problems must be situated within the ZPD. Thinking and acting below the ZPD does not require searching to understand new concepts. But when tasks are set above the students' ZPD the prior knowledge and understanding of the student to engage in the learning activity may be inadequate (Shayer, 2003).

Piaget's concept of equilibration refers to the drive of people to maintain equilibrium between cognitive structures and the environment (Schunk, 2008). People will try to match observations from the environment with their cognitive understanding of the world. When there is a mismatch between observations and cognitive understanding, disequilibrium occurs and the individual will resolve the situation via assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is where the new experience is modified to fit the current cognitive understanding of what has been observed. Accommodation is where the cognitive understanding is modified to fit the new experience (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006).

An example of Piaget's disequilibrium is seen when secondary school students experimenting with the effects of gravity may have an initial understanding that heavy objects will fall faster than light objects. When observing objects of different masses dropped from the same height hitting the ground at the same time, they may justify the observation by suggesting 'the light one was dropped first', assimilation of the observation. As experimenting continues they may start to adjust their understanding, 'the heavy object hits the ground harder but both objects travel at the same speed'. This

is accommodation of the new observation modifying the original understanding of the effects of gravity. Piaget suggests that the process of assimilation and accommodation tend to occur together, new experiences being partially assimilated and accommodated to maintain cognitive equilibrium. Learning will be maximised when the discrepancy between the experience and current understanding is not too large, enabling the new experience to be primarily accommodated. “If reality is too different from a person’s current level of understanding she cannot bridge the gap. There can never be radical departures from the old” (Miller, 1993, p. 69). According to this approach, learning occurs best in small stages that can be accommodated into current cognitive understanding.

People have control over the learning process and can regulate their own behaviours, they can set goals, evaluate their capabilities of attaining those goals and judge progression towards those goals (Schunk, 2008). This personal influence will change over time. Young children have less influence over their learning due to less life experience and cognitive maturity. From Piaget’s work, young children operate at a pre-operational stage and are egocentric, understanding and testing the world in terms of self. This is seen in young children’s speech where they make little effort to tailor their speech to meet the needs of the listener. Adolescents who have reached the formal operation stage of thinking are able to tailor their speech to meet the needs of the listener and are able to predict possible responses from the listener (Miller, 1993). This level of cognitive maturity enables adolescents to actively influence their own learning and motivation to engage in the learning activities.

Motivation is linked to human agency (Giddens, 1984), as human agency is the ability and desire of an individual to take action. For example, taking action could be a student doing revision for an upcoming maths test or deciding to leave school before year 12. Human agency becomes an important factor in learning motivation and has four core features:

1. Intentionality – people form plans and actions, plus strategies for realising those plans.
2. Temporal extension of agency through forethought – people set goals and predict the likely planning outcomes for those goals.

3. Self regulated behaviour – people regulate their actions via reflection and setting moral standards.
4. Self examination – people examine the effectiveness of actions and evaluate their self-efficacy (Bandura, 2006, p. 3).

Self-efficacy is an important influence on individual agency, defined as one's perceived belief to be able to achieve desired goals or affect change. Unless people believe they can affect change or achieve goals, they are unlikely to take action or persevere through difficulties. It is self-efficacy beliefs that affect motivation, be it a positive or negative effect (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is domain specific so an adolescent girl for example, may have a high self-efficacy in mathematics ability and expect to do well, but have low self-efficacy in her perceived ability for public speaking. However, self-efficacy is not static and can be improved through performance and social persuasion (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006). The young girl may have developed her high self-efficacy in mathematics due to success in maths throughout primary school. Due to her past success in maths she predicts future success in maths during secondary school. This successful mathematics performance may have been combined with positive feedback and encouragement by teachers and parents, strengthening her self efficacy in maths through social persuasion. In contrast her low self-efficacy in public speaking may have developed through a poor personal experience. Improvement in the public speaking domain could be developed from watching peers being successful in public speaking. The vicarious experience of watching others succeed can provide strategies for future success and a belief in personal improvement. Combining the positive vicarious experiences with genuine encouragement from adult and peers could improve her self-efficacy in public speaking even before having to perform. This improvement of self-efficacy prior to performance can enhance the likelihood of success (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006).

Positive improvements to adolescent self-efficacy can be achieved by setting young people goals and tasks that are difficult but attainable. Success in achieving these goals builds self-efficacy through personal performance. Self-efficacy can also improve when young people observe, hear or read about the successful performance of a person with whom they can identify. These vicarious experiences are most effective when the performance has demonstrated success through persistence, coping strategies and the

ability to work through mistakes (Schunk & Meece, 2006). Personal belief in future success comes from believing, ‘if they can do it, so can I’.

Genuine feedback on adolescent performance from peers and adults will affirm performance and where performance was poor, providing strategies for improvement is more valuable than giving false praise (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006). These types of learning environments, which focus on the mastery of skills, rather than performance, appear to not only increase the value of the activity to the adolescent but also increase self-efficacy and efficacy expectation (Gredler, 2009). High self-efficacy in adolescents can lead to clear goal setting and high efficacy expectation of achieving those goals.

In summary the theories of Piaget, Vygotsky and Bandura indicate that adolescents will learn most effectively when they are actively involved in the learning process and development of the learning tasks. Learning experiences should be difficult enough to cause levels of disequilibrium requiring the individual to compare the learning experience to current concepts and understandings. The learning task will be in the learner’s zone of proximal development (ZPD), achievable with the assistance of cultural tools or more competent peers or adults. Learning will involve social interaction requiring the individual to think abstractly about the new concepts. This will involve working with peers or communicating new understanding to others, as articulating ideas will assist with the understanding and integration of the new concepts. Environments that encourage the mastery of skills and knowledge and the modelling of competency achievement through persistence will increase self-efficacy and future learning.

The role of the teacher is one of a learning manager; ensuring learning tasks promote thinking in the ZPD of every student. Teachers are charged to develop the learning tasks in an appropriate social and cultural context for the students, encouraging social interaction around the activities. Effective models for problem solving will support the student’s learning and encourage positive self-efficacy on the pathway to mastery. This is in stark contrast to the teaching approaches influenced by behaviourism still seen in many classrooms today (Gredler, 2009; Palincsar, 1998; Schunk, 2008). The teaching approach influenced by behaviourism is teacher controlled and coined ‘program learning’ by Skinner. “In such programmed learning, complex material such as mathematics or reading comprehension is broken down into small steps that are easily

achieved, presented to the pupil in an order of increasing difficulty, and rapidly reinforced with feedback” (Richardson, 1998, p. 77). Pace, sequence and content of the lesson are controlled by the teacher, guiding students step by step to develop the skill required. It has been found to be an effective method of teaching factual content and specific skills but there is little evidence to suggest program learning encourages higher order cognitive skills, such as reasoning and problem solving which are essential skills for the 21st century (Palincsar, 1998).

For adolescents to develop the skills and knowledge required to engage in a globalised society, a constructivist approach to learning must be the dominant teaching and learning framework (Bahr & Pendergast, 2007; Slabbert & Hattingh, 2006). Constructivist approaches to teaching and learning acknowledge the learner’s agency providing opportunities to develop the broad and flexible problem solving skills required in an age of liquid modernity.

Middle Schooling: Adolescent Teaching and Learning Approaches

Teaching and learning approaches that have been identified as effective for teaching adolescents are collected under the expression ‘middle schooling’ as they cover the middle years of schooling from upper primary to lower secondary school (Chadbourne, 2001, p. iii). These approaches are founded in constructivist learning and though not exclusive to the middle years of schooling, specifically take into account the development life stage of adolescence. Middle years approaches encourage teachers to take on the role of learning manager as described earlier, putting the theories of Piaget (1972), Vygotsky (1962) and Bandura (1986) into practice.

Middle schooling involves the interaction of pedagogy, curriculum and school organisation to meet the specific needs of early adolescents (Department of Education & Training - Australian Capital Territory (DET-ACT), 2005). Table 1 summarises these key aspects, identifying how these various areas support adolescent learning requirements that have been established from the adolescent learning and development research. The table shows how the three areas of pedagogy, curriculum and school organisation are clearly interwoven to produce a middle schooling environment which has the potential to maximise adolescent students’ learning. Although one or two characteristics may be featured in a school’s approach to adolescent learning, middle

schooling is only effective when all the characteristics are implemented in concert (de Jong & Chadbourne, 2007). When the three areas are present, the learning environment for adolescents will be challenging and caring, providing students with a wide range of learning opportunities. Caring, respectful relationships between students and teachers can be identified by the student having a sense of acceptance and respect, regardless of any particular talents they have (Knowles & Brown, 2000). Respectful relationships underpin the opportunities for social development, students working collaboratively with peers and developing social skills, such as, negotiation, conflict resolution and tolerance (Brennan, 2000). Middle schooling acknowledges the social nature of education with a mastery approach to learning where all students are expected to achieve. This results in providing improved outcomes for all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Caldwell, 1998a; Fullan, 2000; Luke, et al, 2003). Academic and behaviour improvement primarily results from increased levels of student engagement and opportunities to connect with learning in different ways. Often students from disadvantaged backgrounds may not have the same understanding of formal education language or value the education process which can lead to alienation from formal learning (Bernstein, 2003). Opportunities middle schooling provides to learn in different ways and engage with peers can increase the inclusion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds which are not available in teacher centred classrooms (Jackson, 2003).

Middle schooling: Adolescent teaching and learning approaches	Adolescent learning requirement	Reference
Pedagogy		
Constructivist, student focused teaching incorporating student choices.	Build knowledge from personal understanding using higher order thinking. Setting personal goals for understanding.	Bandura, 1986; Beamon, 2001; Newmann & Associates, 1996; Piaget, 1972; Russell, 2002; Vygotsky, 1962, 1987.
Cooperative learning approaches.	Works with peers to test and develop inter-personal skills. Construct knowledge in a social and cultural context.	Beane 1998; Johnson, Johnson & Stanne, 2000; Pearl & Knight 1999.
Skills in organisation, study, research, reporting, and thinking (metacognition) are taught and used in all learning areas.	Develop skills for strategic planning, self-assessment and review. Accurate evaluation of self-efficacy and efficacy potential.	Hochman, 1997; Miller, 1993; Schunk 2008.
Variety of teaching and learning approaches both enactive and vicarious to provide opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate their learning in different ways.	Enable the development of mastery in a range of skill areas. Provide opportunities to apply learning to a range of contexts. Provide a range of models to support students.	Bandura, 1986, 2006; Beamon, 2001; Beane 1980, 1993; Lokan, Hollingsworth & Hackling, 2006; Pokey, 2003.
An expectation that all students meet a high standard in their studies.	Being challenged by the learning tasks, resulting in levels of disequilibrium occurring which will encourage evaluation of current concepts. Learning tasks which align with students' ZPD.	Meece, 2003; Killen, 2000.
Learning tasks with connections to the world beyond the classroom.	Learning tasks should have value beyond the classroom with the potential to engage with real world problems.	Newmann & Wehlage, 1993; Newmann & Associates, 1996.

Table 1: Summary of middle schooling characteristics

Middle schooling: Adolescent teaching and learning approaches	Adolescent learning requirement	Reference
Pedagogy (continued)		
Assessment that promotes learning.	Assessment that focuses on mastery development rather than performance focused and is clearly linked to the skills and knowledge being developed. Encouraging the development of positive self-efficacy.	Knowles & Brown, 2000; Newmann & Wehlage, 1993; Newmann & Associates, 1996; Meece, 2003; Slabbert & Hattingh, 2006.
Provide opportunities to study topics that integrate several learning areas.	Enables exploration of a wider range of areas that may have greater personal meaning and social and cultural relevance.	Boyer & Bishop, 2004; Bragget, 1997; Dowden & Nolan, 2006; Hough, 1994.
Create small learning communities where stable, close mutually respectful relationships with adults and peers support the learning process.	Enables working with more able peers to support leaning in individuals' ZPD. Enables presentation and articulation of new concepts to assist integration of learning. Provide vicarious learning opportunities, peer and adult modelling of problem solving.	Carnegie Council, 1989; Knowles & Brown, 2000; Luke et al. 2002; Strahan, 2008; Stancato, 2003.
Technology infrastructure incorporating Information Technology into good pedagogical practice.	Opportunities to use a wide variety of social and cultural tools.	Beal, Cuper & Dalton, 2005; Lokan, Hollingsworth, & Hackling, 2006.
Curriculum		
Teach a core academic program.	Core skills and knowledge development for future study.	Beane, 1993; Carnegie Council, 1989; Catchpoole, 2003.

Table 1 (continued): Summary of middle schooling characteristics

Middle schooling: Adolescent teaching and learning approaches	Adolescent learning requirement	Reference
Curriculum (continued)		
Community based learning and support that incorporates a vocational dimension.	Opportunities to test out possible selves in different adult environments exploring their place in the world.	Bassett & Kochhar-Bryant, 2006; Caldwell, 1998a; Lloyd & McDonough, 2001; Thwaites, 2008.
Curriculum that incorporates issues and contexts that connects to the student’s world.	Engaging with material that is social and culturally relevant.	Beane, 1993; Knowles & Brown, 2000.
Organisation		
Teachers and students need a home base within the school.	Encourage development of learning communities and a safe environment to support risk taking.	Hochman, 1997; Slabbert & Hattingh, 2006.
Block of time scheduling allows for different learning approaches and opportunities to study concepts in depth.	Opportunities to develop strategic plans and persist at difficult tasks. Allows the integration of several knowledge areas, giving opportunities, to learn in social and cultural context.	DETYA, 2001; Edward, 2003; McCoy, 1998; Thomas & O’Connell, 1997.
Allow teachers to be in control of a group of students, space, the calendar and time.	Enables teachers to identify individual ZPD developing appropriate learning tasks which promote mastery in a broad range of areas.	Burvill-Shaw, 2006; Carnegie Council, 1989; Scash, 2008.
Parent and community involvement in student learning.	Maintain the important connection with parents and carers as adolescents explore their own understanding of the world.	Caldwell, 1998a; Chadbourne, 2001; Connell, Ashenden, Kessler & Dowsett, 1985; Ericson & Ellett, 2002.

Table 1 (continued): Summary of middle schooling characteristics

A challenging curriculum which allows for flexibility and focuses on a core content of the knowledge and skills required for future student learning can guide teachers in the development of an effective middle schooling environment. Integrated approaches to learning will be the norm, rather than having ‘true facts’ preached to students by subject specialists. Learning tasks will require active engagement by students, building on personal knowledge and understanding of the world. The learning tasks should be tailored, where appropriate, to account for individual differences while maintaining an expectation for all students to achieve high levels of competency. A range of teaching and learning approaches will be required for all students to achieve mastery of the skills and knowledge being studied. This diversity of approaches will provide students with a range of contexts to apply their understanding. These contexts will be relevant to the students and connect student learning directly to the community via real world problems or applications.

Assessment of students’ learning has traditionally focused on performance testing, grading work and testing students’ performance of specific skills or regurgitation of specific information (Meece, 2003). This type of assessment does not allow the student to demonstrate knowledge and skill competence leading to a superficial understanding of the topic being studied. As Pokey (2003) states “assessments that move beyond measuring knowledge and skills and begin to measure the disposition of using the knowledge and skills will better meet the needs of learners” (p. 82).

Assessment in the middle school should be outcomes-based, allowing students to demonstrate their understanding and mastery in a given area (Frey & Schmitt, 2007, Hill & Russell, 1999). Assessment tasks should be authentic in nature and have a clear purpose, such as, solving a problem or investigating a current issue or topic (Lombardi, 2008). Students should have opportunities to demonstrate their understanding in a range of ways: orally in conversations or formal presentations, original writing, construction and performance, whether as music, drama, or athletic performance. Wehlage, Newman and Secada (1996) have termed this type of assessment as “authentic achievement” (p. 23). It requires three criteria to be met: construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry and value beyond school; “the term authentic achievement thus stands for intellectual accomplishments that are worthwhile, significant, and meaningful (p. 24)”.

School organisation for teachers and students of the middle years needs to be flexible, allowing teachers to have a level of control over timetabling and resources to develop appropriate learning contexts and opportunities for students. The National Education Commission on Time and Learning (1994) concluded that students and educators are "prisoners of time". They proposed the school day be reclaimed for teaching and that schools be reinvented around learning, not the scheduling of time. Students require longer blocks of time for meaningful learning to occur, through exploring real problems, constructing their own knowledge, formulating and asking questions (Knowles & Brown, 2000). Without flexible scheduling of timetables and the school day, the variety of teaching and learning approaches is limited, being more teacher directed with fewer opportunities for students' reflection and participation in their own learning (Carroll, 1990; Gable & Manning, 1997).

Parents are key partners in a student's education but often find it difficult to maintain a connection with their child's education as their children move from primary to secondary school (Hill & Tyson, 2009). However, it is clear that parents' involvement in their child's secondary school education has positive effects on both student engagement and performance (Mo & Singh, 2008). It is important for parents to have opportunities to engage with the school formally and informally as this involvement provides a link between school and the wider community and demonstrates a valuing of education to their children (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler & Dowsett 1985; Fullan, 2000).

For early adolescence, parental involvement may entail communicating parental expectations for education and value or utility, linking school work to current events, fostering education and occupational aspirations, discussing learning strategies with children and making preparations and plans for the future – that is, academic socialisation (Hill & Tyson, 2009, p 742).

In summary, middle schooling approaches use a social and constructivist approach to learning which places the student as the educational focus rather than the teacher. Students are active participants in the teaching and learning process. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to investigate topics, issues and problems from a range of perspectives. Integrated curriculum and authentic assessment provide

adolescent students with opportunities to work in different social contexts not only engaging with authentic problems but also exploring their own agency and mastery of skills and knowledge. These middle schooling approaches are effective in promoting academic and social achievement with higher levels of student engagement and satisfaction than teacher centred pedagogies (Carrington, 2006; Downden, 2008; Pendergast & Bahr, 2005).

Context of Educational Change in Victoria

Education debate and change has been active around the world with education authorities looking outside their borders for information and inspiration of what appears to be effective. A key factor in driving this search has been the difficulty in maintaining sustained educational change, a condition which has been highlighted by many studies and is echoed in Fullan's (2000) comments on change from the Canadian perspective "reform efforts have not 'gone to scale' and been widely reproduced" (p. 581) (Chadbourne, 2001; Fullan, 1992, 2009; Hargreaves, 2000, 2009; Hill & Crevola, 1999).

Australian educators have searched internationally for effective approaches since the 1950s and 1960s, with the influence of North American educators John Dewey and Edward Thorndike encouraging the move from selective schools to comprehensive schools (Campbell & Sherington, 2006). More recently the experiences of Britain and New Zealand have influenced the creation of self-managed schools in Victoria (Caldwell, 1998a). With these external influences affecting the approaches to education in Australia, it is important to place the context of education in Victoria within the international and national activities around educational change. Internationally, the USA and Britain in particular are of interest due to Australia's historical connection with Britain and the considerable influence of the USA middle school movement. Both countries have moved towards a market driven approach to educational change providing national test data to the public and allowing greater school choice for parents. These moves are being seen in the Australian school system with the increasing influence of neo-liberal ideology on political activities and economic management.

International Examples of Educational Change

Internationally as with the Australian situation, the need for change in education practices or ‘school reform’ has been driven by a concern for economic efficiency and academic standards (Dufour & Eaker, 1998; Philips, 2000; Richard, 1992). A third concern has been the level of student engagement in learning, as Le Metais’ (2003) investigation of school reform has highlighted. The study comprised 18 countries, including seven English-speaking, six European Union member countries, two European countries, and three Asian countries, finding across all of the countries a “considerable disaffection amongst secondary school students, which manifests itself either in truancy or in disengagement in the classroom” (Le Metais, 2003, p. 5). Such concerns have initiated many attempts at school reform with a summary of the activities in Britain and the USA since the 1980s, which have influenced the activities of education reform in Victoria summarised in Table 2.

Year	Event/activity	Reference
United States of America		
1978	Effective schools movement which established school can make a difference no matter what the social background of students.	Edmonds, 1986. Mackenzie, 1983.
1983	A Nation at Risk - The imperative for Educational reform report identifying deficiencies in the US school system particularly high schools.	National Commission of Excellence in Education – U.S. Department of Education, 1983.
1984	Excellence Movement.	
1989	Turning Points: Preparing Youth for the 21st Century.	Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989.
1989	Bush Education summit ‘Goals 2000’ – development of national education goals.	DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Siedman, 1996.
1991	National Education Standards & Improvement Council established – focus on national testing.	DuFour & Eaker, 1998.
1996	Restructuring Movement - schools and states were given more authority over budgeting.	DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Commission on the restructuring of American schools, 1996.
1998	Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) Program – funding of scientifically based school reform for schools.	Borman, 2009.
2001	No Child Left Behind Act – increased funding for CSR.	Borman, 2009.
2004	Educating America.	The White House, 2004.

Table 2: Events associated with educational change in North America and Britain

Year	Event/Activity	Reference
Britain		
1947	Raising of the school leaving age (RoSLA).	O’Keeffe, 1975.
1976	Comprehensive schools – move away from specialised schools and 11+ testing to comprehensive schooling.	Heath & Clifford, 1990. Richard, 1992.
1980	Range of reforms of the Local Education Authorities (LEA) were started – economic efficiency, academic standards, parent involvement. development of middle schools.	Richard, 1992.
1988	Education Reform Act – National curriculum, systematic testing, publication of school national results.	Caldwell, 1998a. Richard, 1992.
1992	Choice and diversity in education paper – schools encouraged to specialise in specific areas. First league tables produced.	Olsen, 2004; Taylor, Fitz & Gorard, 2005.
1998	School Standards Framework Act – continued promotion of school diversity and open access for students.	Taylor, Fitz & Gorard, 2005.
2003	A new specialist system - transforming secondary education.	Taylor, Fitz & Gorard, 2005.
2004	Every Child Matters – Children Act 2004. 14-19 education and skills.	Department for Education and Skills (Britain), 2005.

Table 2 (continued): Events associated with educational change in North America and Britain

The USA, National Commission on Excellence in Education report called *A Nation at Risk* (1983) presented an assessment of the quality of education in American public and private schools, colleges and universities. The report identified a decline in the academic performance of students and highlighted the need for urgent improvement in all areas of the education system. Concerns were raised that students were not developing the skills required to secure gainful employment and manage their own lives. The New York Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development expanded on the *A Nation at Risk* report and examined the need for middle school reform, outlining recommendations in *Turning Points: Preparing Youth for the 21st Century* (1989). These recommendations cut across all areas of education and included the development of meaningful teacher/student relationships, teaching a core academic program, use of flexible instruction techniques to promote critical thinking and the reengagement of families and the wider community with schools (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). These reports became important catalysts for educational review in Australia in the early 1990s.

Although less influential, activities in Britain are informative, as the Australian system reflects structures of the British system, with both systems having a diverse range of schools, faith based, independent and government schools all of which receive government funding. Reform in Britain was initially focused more on improving the economic management of schools and increasing parent choice. This resulted in schools having the option to become self-managed, with control over budgets and expenditure, a feature that was taken on by schools in Victoria in the 1990s (Richards, 1992). The greatest change in Britain came in 1988, with the Education Reform Act. The Act established a national curriculum, national testing of students at ages 7, 11 and 14, and the publishing of school performance league tables (Olsen, 2004). Combined with these changes was the option for parents to choose schools outside their geographic area, opening up education to market forces. These changes are currently on the education agenda in Australia with the development of a national curriculum and national testing (Australian Curriculum Assessment & Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2009; MCEETYA, 2009).

A focus on school diversity is now the foundation of British educational change. “Policies aimed at diversifying secondary education, first introduced during the 1980s and early 1990s by previous Conservative administrations continue today under the control of the New Labour government” (Taylor, Fitz & Gorard, 2005 p. 64). The aim of school diversity is to improve educational outcomes for all students via increased choice and diversity of schools. Market forces combined with the government policy outlined for secondary schools in ‘Every Child Matters’ policy will continue to promote educational change (Taylor, Fitz & Gorard, 2005).

National Examples of Educational Change

In Australia, the Carnegie Council (1989) Turning Points report from the USA, informed a South Australian Government review of junior secondary education in 1992 (Eyers, Cormack & Barrett, 1992). The review came to similar conclusions identifying adolescence as “a period in a person’s life [as] a physical, emotional and cognitive reality, its form and effects ...shaped by the society in which the person lives” (Luke, et al. 2003, p. 18). The report went on to recommend that years six to nine be regarded as middle schooling and that the needs of adolescent learning be taken into account

identifying these years as different from both primary school and the senior years of high school. The South Australian Government review focused national attention on the middle years of schooling, sparking a range of enquires and subsequent actions into adolescent learning and middle schooling (Australian Curriculum Studies Association, 1996; Cumming, 1998; Barratt, 1998; Queensland Board of Teacher Registration, 1996; Schools Council, 1993). A summary of recent activities related to adolescent learning is set out in Table 3.

State or Territory	Activity	Focus	Reference
Victoria	Middle Years Research and Development Project (MYRAD).	Whole school approach to change the middle years of schooling. Focus on pedagogy from P -10.	Department of Education, Employment and Training (Vic), 2005.
	Victorian Essential Learnings Standards.		Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2009.
	Principles of Learning and Teaching.		
Tasmania	Essential Learnings Framework.	Curriculum framework to enhance problem solving and critical thinking. Refinement of Essential Learnings.	Hanlon, 2004.
	Student at the Centre.		Department of Education, Tasmania 2006.
South Australia	South Australian Curriculum Framework.	Curriculum framework and pedagogy guidelines which includes a specific middle school curriculum.	Department of Education and Children's Services, 2004.

Table 3: Summary of Australian States and Territories activities that relate to adolescent learning

State or Territory	Activity	Focus	Reference
New South Wales	Inquiry into the provision of public education in NSW.	Recommendations for school renewal.	Luke, et.al, 2003.
	Our Middle years learners – Engaged, resilient, successful.	Whole school approach to years 5-9. Resources and pedagogy.	Department Education & Training (NSW) 2006.
Queensland	New Basics.	Framework for using productive pedagogies and authentic assessment years P-9.	Education Queensland, 2000; Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006.
	P-12 Curriculum Framework.	Expansion of curriculum to include years P-12.	Department of Education, Training and the Arts 2008.
Western Australia	Learning Area Education Planning.	Local groups plan curriculum for individual schools. Focus on standards and pedagogy.	(a) Department of Education and Training (WA), 2003; Department of Education (WA) 2010.
	Independent Public Schools.	Self managed schools.	
Australian Capital Territory	Within Reach of All of Us.	Policy development for individual learning and pedagogy.	Department of Education and Training (ACT), 2005.
	Schools action plan 2002-2004. Every Chance to Learn.	Curriculum framework years P-10 consisting of 25 learning achievements.	Department of Education and Training (ACT), 2007.
Northern Territory	Future Directions for Secondary Education in the Northern Territory.	Recommendations for school reform.	Department of Employment Education and Training (NT), 2003; O’Sullivan 2005; Socom, 2006.
	Development of middle schools.	Purpose built middle schools for students in years 7-9.	

Table 3 (continued): Summary of Australian States and Territories activities that relate to adolescent learning

Nationally, the common focus on educational change has been curriculum development and the associated pedagogical approaches teachers should implement to enhance student learning. This focus was exemplified by one of the largest classroom based research projects undertaken in Australia: the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QRSLS) (Lingard, Ladwig, Mills, Hayes, Luke, Gore, & Christie, 2001). The study expanded the work done by Newmann & Associates (1996) to develop a classroom teaching matrix of 'Productive Pedagogies' which was used to systemically code nearly 1000 lessons across 24 schools in Queensland (Lingard, et al. 2001). The QRSLS data led to the development of a productive pedagogies framework which underpinned the New Basics approach of 2001 and is still present in the current Queensland curriculum, assessment and reporting framework released in 2007 (DET&A-Qld, 2008). Productive pedagogies "has been widely used nationally as a framework for describing classroom practice" (Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006, p. xiii). The framework of productive pedagogies supports the development of teaching and learning practices which are student centred and academically challenging. It proposes that student learning be assessed via tasks and problem solving which connect with students' lives and previous knowledge and apply new knowledge and understanding beyond the context of the classroom.

The productive pedagogies development entails a significant change to content based approaches to teaching and learning, where learning chunks of knowledge was the goal. The drive behind this change in teaching and learning is for students to develop the skills and knowledge required for the 21st century, as summarised by Rod Welford, a Minister for Education and Training in Queensland:

In the 21st century we need learners who actively seek to understand complex issues, critically evaluate and sort information, and are able to creatively apply what they have learned to new situations, build expertise and design solutions. Curiosity about the world and confidence in facing the future will help today's students deal with complex social circumstances and be part of a fast-evolving global economy where digital technologies shape work and private lives (DET&A-Qld, 2008, p. i).

In addition to curriculum and pedagogy change as in Victoria, broader decision-making powers around budgets and staffing have also been decentralised to schools, with the expectation that educational change needs to be driven at a school level. The current situation in Victoria commenced with an approach to changing teaching and learning in the middle years via whole school reform.

Educational Change in Victoria Australia

Education in Victoria is covered by four sectors: pre-school education, school education, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education. Children begin school at age 6 and must attend school, or a combination of recognised education and training options until age 17 (Education Training Reform Act, 2006). The four sectors which make up the Victorian education system overlap, providing a range of educational pathways for students in the later years of secondary education (see Figure 1).

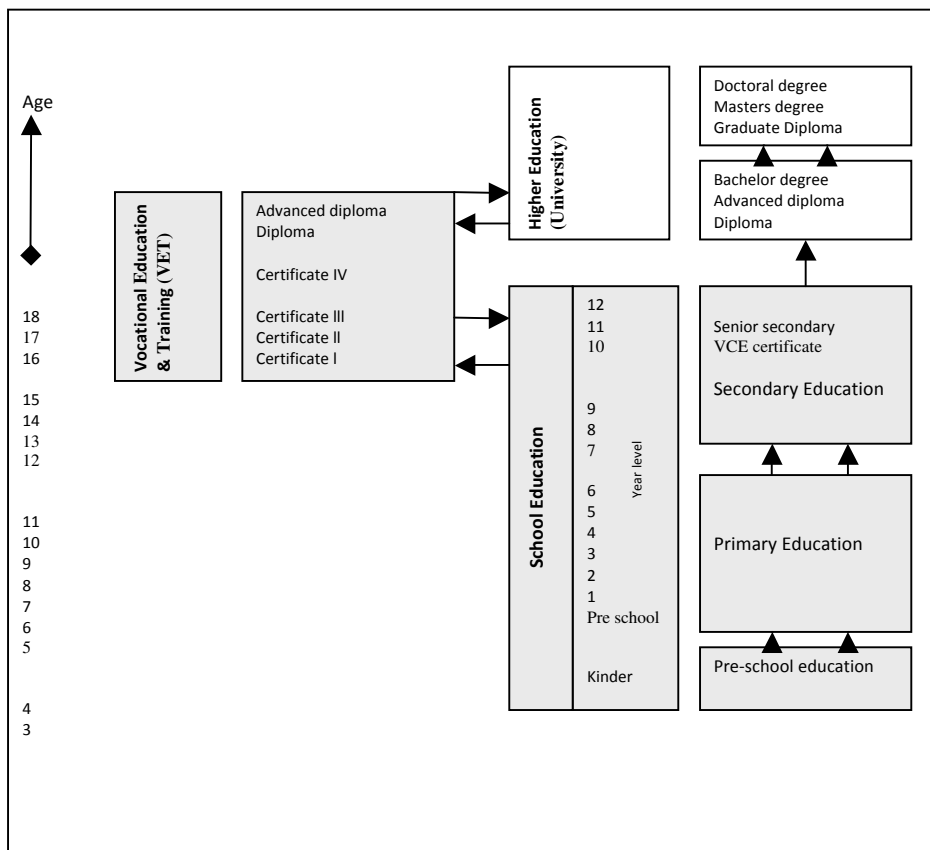


Figure 1: Four educational sectors in Victoria, indicating links and pathways (modified from Auditor General, 2006. p. 32)

A major change to the Victorian education system occurred in the early 1990s, leading to the development of the current system of multiple education pathways. These changes were focused on the later years of secondary school and resulted from the recommendations of the Blackburn Report (Brown & Sutton, 2008). The innovations to the senior secondary years as a result of the Blackburn Report have increased the diversity of curriculum at years 11 and 12, with the integration of Vocational Education and Training (VET) from year 10, the development of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and the introduction of school based apprenticeships (Firth, 2008; Leder, 2003; Smith & Wilson, 2002). This arrangement has provided senior secondary school students with a range of education options to prepare them for the work force, further study and entry into adult society.

However, the changes have not stemmed early school leaving of Victorian students, which is a critical issue as highlighted in the foreword to the How Young People are Faring 2008 report:

Around 200,000 teenagers in any one year are not engaged in full time learning or full time work. The findings in this report of the extent of social and economic disadvantage hindering participation in learning and work are sobering. Federal and state governments speak of an ‘education revolution’. It’s time this idea was given real substance (Lamb & Mason, 2008, p. v).

Currently one in every four students across Australia is not completing year 12. Of those students who leave school early, 35% cite school related reasons, including ‘not doing well’, ‘don’t like the teachers’, ‘lost motivation’, which indicate schools are not meeting the needs of a significant number of young people (Lamb, et al. 2004, pp.13 - 16).

This issue of schools not meeting the needs of young people was highlighted by the Carnegie Council (1989) Turning Points report and subsequent South Australian Government review of junior secondary education in 1992. This was followed by a national study of students in the middle years produced by the Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA, 1996) entitled From Alienation to Engagement. At a state level in Victoria an extensive study, the Victorian Quality Schools Project (1992-1994)

involving over 900 teachers and 13,000 students was conducted (Hill, Rowe, Holmes-Smith, & Russell, 1996). The project confirmed concerns highlighted in the Carnegie Council and ACSA reports about student achievement in the middle years of schooling, identifying stagnation in reading from years 5 to 8 and for less able students a regression in the first year of secondary school (Hill, Rowe, Holmes-Smith & Russell, 1996). This research added impetus to change efforts in the junior years of Victorian secondary schools with the Middle Years Research and Development (MYRAD) project commencing in 1998. The project had a clear focus to research and support change to the middle years of schooling identified as years five to nine (Department Education Employment & Training (DEET), 1999). MYRAD was an attempt to implement substantial reform in adolescent education by providing extensive resources in the form of professional development for teachers, curriculum guidelines, organisational guidelines and funding. “MYRAD ...made a deliberate attempt to transform the whole ecology of schooling” (Department Education & Training (DE&T), 2004, p. 1). MYRAD was an extensive project involving over 36,000 students, 250 schools and 2,100 teachers over a four year period. The focus of the change was a structured three year plan based on a design by Hill and Crevola (see Hill & Crevola, 1997, 1999). This was a whole school approach to initiate action to improve student learning in the middle years through a change to classroom teaching strategies supported by the school organisation and infrastructure (DEET, 1999). The whole school approach centred on the underlying beliefs and understandings that schools can only be changed by addressing the eight key aspects of schooling simultaneously, as summarised in Figure 2.

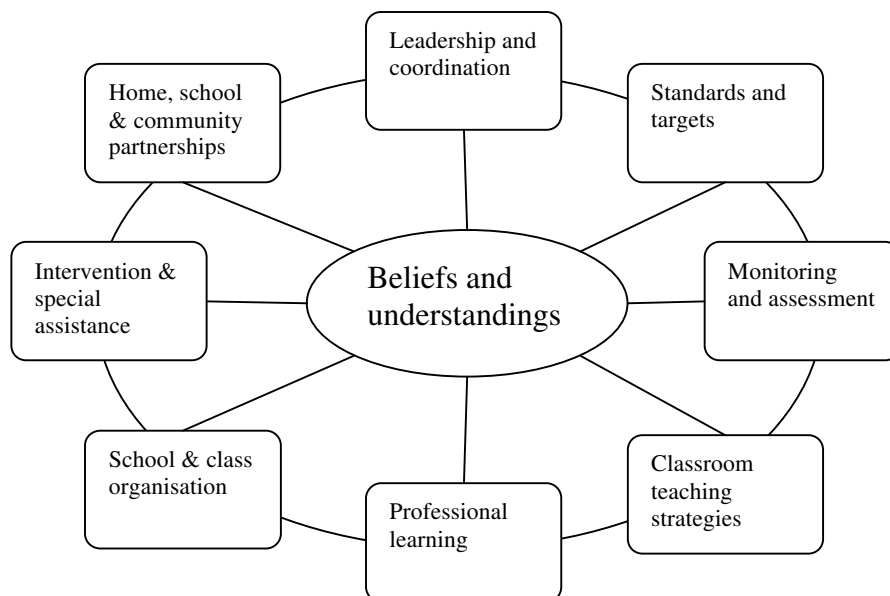


Figure 2: General design for a whole school approach to school improvement (DEET, 1999, p. 20)

The final MYRAD project report identified changing teaching and learning approaches as difficult, with change being more difficult to achieve in secondary schools than in upper primary school (CAER, 2002). The project did make positive improvements in many areas including a significant shift in both teachers’ and school leaders’ assumptions about teaching and learning, with both groups becoming more positive about their capacity to make a difference to students’ learning. There was investment in professional development, increased planning, whole school commitment to middle schooling and an evidence based approach to change. However, only small gains were made to foundational aspects of adolescent teaching and learning including relationships, social learning, appropriate curriculum and variety of teaching and learning approaches, flexible organisational structures and assessment that promoted learning (CAER, 2002). MYRAD also noted that the key to successful and sustained change, is the teacher.

Fundamental change for teachers [is required] and that changing ‘taken-for-granted’ practices not only pose a challenge to the acquisition of new knowledge and skill, but also to one’s understanding of what it means to be a teacher. Changes of this magnitude take time to implement and

require a great deal of targeted professional development to help sustain impetus (CAER, 2002, p. 5).

The Middle Years Reform Project (MYRP) followed the MYRAD project and built on the knowledge and understanding developed from MYRAD. MYRP involved specific funding of all Victorian secondary schools and P – 12 schools with years seven through to nine enrolments from 2001 – 2003. The program provided funding for “additional classroom teachers in the areas of literacy, attendance and ‘thinking curriculum’ in Years 7 – 9” (Elseworth, Klienhenz & Beavis, 2004, p. 1). This project involved over 300 schools across Victoria and appears to have produced similar outcomes to the MYRAD project. Teachers reported general improvements in over 20% of the schools in the areas of improved literacy for students, improved engagement for students and an increased awareness of and/or improvement in teachers’ pedagogy. Improvements reported by teachers were only partially supported by school data with no statistically significant difference seen in literacy scores, absenteeism or retention of students through to year 11 (Elseworth, Klienhenz & Beavis, 2004).

The specific focus on the middle years of schooling as the vehicle for educational reform has changed in Victoria. The current approach is focused on a prep to year 10 pedagogy and curriculum with the introduction of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) which is supported by a pedagogical framework, the Principles of Learning and Teaching (PoLT). VELS was first released in 2005 with schools reporting student performance against VELS standards in Mathematics and English in 2006 with all areas of student performance being reported against the VELS standards by 2008 (Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2007). PoLT was designed to support teachers working with VELS and was informed by the MYRAD and MYRP projects and the Queensland New Basics/productive pedagogies research (DE&T, 2005b; White, Scholtz & Williams, 2006).

PoLT is made up of six principles (see Table 4), which are applied to all year levels from Prep to year 12. The principles although not explicitly stated, encourage a student centred, social constructivist approach to learning, which is appropriate for adolescent learning. Since 2009 PoLT has been supported with the addition of the e5 instructional model based on the Biological Science Curriculum Study (BSCS) model (Department

of Education & Early Childhood Development (DEECD), 2010a). This is a model (see Table 5) that encourages the development of teaching practices which focus on student learning and understanding. However, the PoLT and the e5 model do not differentiate between the needs of early primary, upper primary, middle secondary or senior secondary students. Implicitly they require teachers to use their professional judgment and knowledge to apply the principles and e5 appropriately.

Principles of learning and teaching

Students learn best when:

1. The learning environment is supportive and productive
2. The learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and self-motivation
3. Students' needs, backgrounds and interests are reflected in the learning program
4. Students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application
5. Assessment practices are an integral part of learning and teaching
6. Learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom

Table 4: Victorian DEECD principles of learning and teaching (DE&T, 2005a, p. 9)

The e5 instructional model

1. Engage – The teacher fosters positive relationships, stimulates student interest and expectations for learning.
 2. Explore – The teacher presents challenging tasks to the student, supports development of questions and investigations. The teacher assists students to expand and reflect on their understanding.
 3. Explain – The teacher provides opportunities for the student to demonstrate current understanding. Skills and knowledge are explicitly taught to enable students to connect new learning with current understanding
-

Table 5: e5 Instructional model (DEECD, 2010b)

The e5 instructional model

4. Elaborate – The teacher engages the students in dialogue to extend and refine students’ understanding
 5. Evaluate – The teacher improves student understanding through assessment, supporting students to reflect on their learning.
-

Table 5 (continued): e5 Instructional model (DEECD, 2010b)

The structure of VELS promotes a more integrated approach to learning with knowledge, skills and behaviour of students identified in three interrelated strands of Physical, Personal and Social Learning, Discipline-based Learning and Interdisciplinary Learning. Each strand is broken into a number of domains, and dimensions against which a student’s level of achievement is measured (VCAA, 2004). There are six levels, which indicate the progression of student learning across years Prep – year 10. The levels are divided into three stages of learning as set out in Table 6.

Stages of learning

- *Prep to Year 4, Laying the Foundation*, where the students develop the fundamental knowledge, skills and behaviours in literacy and numeracy, and the basic physical and social capacities that underpin all future learning.
 - *Years 5 to 8, Building Breadth and Depth*, where the students progress beyond the foundations to where their literacy and numeracy become more sophisticated, and important interdisciplinary capacities are progressively developed.
 - *Years 9 and 10, Developing Pathways*, which constitute a bridge to the post-compulsory years and where the students begin to focus more clearly on areas of particular interest related to their future schooling and intended pathways beyond school.
-

Table 6: VELS stages of learning (DE&T, 2005a, p. 6)

Adolescence crosses the last two stages of learning and requires teachers to again apply professional judgment and knowledge to cater for adolescent needs, a factor Tytler (2005) highlights in discussing the quality of teaching:

No set of pedagogical principles can claim to be the final, or complete word on quality teaching and learning. Teaching is a combination of art and science, and the nature of effective teaching and learning is dependent on context. The purposes as defined by the educational setting, teachers' beliefs and experience and particular strengths, the students' backgrounds and expectations and commitments, and the school ethos all play a role in framing what might be considered effective practice (p. 8).

Approaches used to Initiate Educational Change

It is clear in the literature that changes are required to classroom pedagogy if schools are to better serve the developing needs of adolescents and prepare young people for the diverse and changing economic and social environment of the 21st century (Chadbourne, 2001; Luke, et al. 2003). Research has also identified the appropriate pedagogy for adolescents' learning and development (Beane, 1993; Bragget, 1998 Cumming, 1998). Nationally and internationally governments have identified and attempted to implement educational change (see tables 2 & 3 pp. 36, 39). The change processes attempted, although multifaceted, can be categorised by the key focus that underpins the approach:

School structures and organisation – focus on school structures and decision-making processes

Curriculum – focus on curriculum

Student learning – focus on learning outcomes of the students

Teachers' pedagogy – focus on the teaching and learning activities used

All four categories emphasise the changing of current teaching and learning approaches in junior secondary school classrooms to a middle years approach to teaching and learning as set out in Table 1, p. 30. Each category uses the key focus to effect change but will incorporate aspects of the other three categories. It should be noted that all four

categories have a technical ‘cause and effect’ approach to the production of changed practices. Each category attempts to change an aspect of school organisation or educational demands to affect a change of teachers’ work in the classroom. All the change processes have been applied in a range of settings around the world but to date no approach has achieved sustained changes to the classroom practices in junior secondary school classrooms (Elsworth, Kleinhenz & Beavis, 2005; Fullan, 2000; Fullan, 2009).

School Structures and Organisation

Schools have been described as ‘egg-crate-like structures’ with teachers looking after students grouped by age in a classroom, isolated from their colleagues and the rest of the school (Hargreaves, 2000). In secondary schools the egg-crate analogy is doubly evident with knowledge broken up into various key learning areas taught by specialist teachers in discrete blocks of time. The nature of this organisation impedes the development of middle years approaches (McEwin, Dickinson & Jenkins, 1996). In contrast school structures, such as teaching teams, block scheduling and integrated curriculum support the development of teacher collaboration and adolescent appropriate pedagogy (Carrington, 2006).

Teaching teams involve a group of teachers working together with a specific cohort of students. The team designs and teaches the curriculum working with the students and their families and taking responsibility for all discipline issues and pastoral duties (Knowles & Brown, 2000). Teaching teams work collaboratively on curriculum across several learning areas with each teacher taking a class of students for more than one subject. Individual team members spend more time with each student than in the traditional secondary school structure, providing opportunities to develop strong professional relationships with students and to better understand students’ learning needs (Strahan, 2008; Ward- Beamon, 2001).

Block scheduling allows for subjects to be taught in longer blocks of time compared to the usual 40-50 minute time periods found in most secondary schools. Teachers with longer blocks of time can more easily use teaching and learning approaches which incorporate co-operative learning, problem solving and the integration of a number of knowledge areas. This enables students to study topics or issues in greater depth and

take an inquiry approach to their learning (DiBiase & Queen, 1999). Integrated curriculum is used to enhance student learning by placing an issue or question at the centre of the learning and using the knowledge and skills appropriate to explore that issue or question (Beane, 1993). This approach requires the use of knowledge from a range of learning areas often involving deep investigation and the use of problem solving skills (Vars & Beane, 2001).

Teaching in teams and block scheduling can provide opportunities for a different approach to teaching and learning, but organisational change on its own is not enough. As Fullan (1993) points out, “to restructure is not to re-culture” (p. 43). Changing formal structures is not the same as changing teachers’ approaches to teaching and learning. Restructuring does have its effects as Lipsitz and Mizell (1997) found in schools that had taken on organisation change, “these schools have established a safer and healthier environment for emotional and social growth, laying the foundation for serious academic engagement” (p. 534). The organisational change had improved the learning environment but pedagogical change had not occurred to improve the academic achievement of the students.

Dedicated middle schools take organisation restructuring a step further and there are a number of middle schools across Australia. Recent examples include the Northern Territory Government opening several new middle schools in 2008 (Scrymgour, 2008; Socom, 2006). Middle schools are a transition between primary school and senior secondary school and have been a characteristic of the USA education system since the early 1900s. These schools are purpose built for middle years students and are not influenced by the needs of primary or senior secondary students (Styron & Nyman, 2008). Middle schools have successfully created a supportive student centred environment, implementing many middle years practices (Lipsitz, 1997). In the USA the focus has been around the social inclusion of students but has not included the implementation of curriculum and pedagogy which promote high academic expectation, in depth inquiry and authentic assessment (Mizzel, 2002; Styron & Nyman, 2008). Student achievement has improved in mathematics and science but no gain has been achieved in reading ability (McEwin, Dickinson & Jenkins 1996; Yecke, 2005). Overall students in dedicated middle schools are socially supported but the academic gains hoped for are yet to be achieved.

Decentralisation of authority from central bureaucracies to the local level enabling decisions to be made by people working within the school has been another approach to school restructuring (Caldwell, 1998a). The aim of the decentralisation is for schools to be self-managed and to be able to shape the teaching and learning approaches which will be most effective for the students from that community. To enhance the process, participatory decision-making should be developed, breaking down the normal school hierarchy giving both voice and power to teachers, students and parents (King, Louis, Marks & Peterson, 1996).

Self-managed schools have been developed in Britain, New Zealand, Sweden, USA and Australia over the past 10 years (Caldwell, 1998b). In Australia and elsewhere in the world, the benefits have primarily been economic and organisational in nature. There have been little or no gains in the quality of student learning (Caldwell, 1998a). Dufour and Eaker (1998) found that in the USA after 10 years of school control over decision making, there appeared to be no change in the way teachers approached their work. This conclusion reflects Murphy, Everston and Radnofsky's (1991) concerns about teachers' perceptions of school organisation some seven years earlier:

The current system-organisational norms and structures-is so deeply entrenched that it is often difficult for them (teachers) to think beyond it. And when they are able to, they express a nagging fear that the current system may be immutable (p. 146).

Although learning outcomes for students have not improved under self-managed schools, principals in both Australia and Britain are overwhelmingly in favour of working under the self-management structure. Principals have identified that their work was more satisfying even though it involved an increase in workload and bureaucratic interference (Caldwell & Hayward, 1998). Interference is a problem, as Caldwell (1998) found that while principals are "concerned about overall levels of resources and matters related to selection of staff, it is evident that significant benefits have been achieved in respect to resource management. The over-arching importance, however, is the way these gains have been translated into improvement in learning outcomes for students" (p. 450). If principals find they only have control over resource allocation and no bureaucratic control over staffing, curriculum and assessment, the self managed school

reform may not have led to “a devolution of decision-making but a displacement of blame” (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 7).

At a school level the purpose of participatory decision-making is to decentralise the decision-making process within the school, bringing teachers and at times parents and students into the decision-making processes. The understanding is that those people working most closely with students are better placed to make decisions, increasing opportunities for teaching innovation (King, Louis, Marks & Peterson, 1996). Strahan (2003) in his study of three elementary schools found that successful reform started with teachers and administrators working together to identify priorities for school improvement. The opportunity to identify and solve problems together can help build a sense of community, leading to greater potential for innovation (Goldring, 2002). Although these are positive aspects of participatory decision making, there is little evidence to indicate a link between participatory decision-making and enhanced teaching and learning (King, Louis, Marks & Peterson, 1996).

Curriculum

Centralised curriculum frameworks are common around the world and in Australia, with education authorities setting the minimum requirements that need to be taught and the expected levels of student attainment (Metais, 2003). Centralised curriculum is often associated with centralised testing as in Britain and now in Australia where national testing at years three, seven and nine was introduced in 2008. This process started in Victorian primary schools in the early 1990s and is now a national program in all primary and secondary schools (MCEETYA, 2009; Silis & Izard, 2002). The danger of centralised curriculum and testing is that it can be very prescriptive, narrowing learning and forcing teachers to teach to the test, inhibiting teachers’ choice of pedagogy and use of middle years teaching and learning strategies (Hargreaves, 1992).

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) attempts to avoid this curriculum prescription, with the standards providing “a broad framework of 'essential learning' for all Victorian students” (VCAA, 2004, p. 2). A broad framework should allow teachers the flexibility to teach with a constructivist approach, integrating a range of knowledge areas and encouraging an inquiry approach to learning as outlined in middle years practices (Hattam & Prosser, 2008). Change in curriculum, as Anderson (1996) found in

his investigation into curriculum reform in USA, is not a 'silver bullet'. "Achieving desired reforms demands great effort and commitment expended over a substantial period of time" (Anderson, 1996, p. 58). This is supported by Lee and Douglas (2009) in a more recent review of curriculum reform. They stated that the "curriculum standards movement may have affirmed rather than transformed educational practices" (p. 139). Many authors have identified teachers' knowledge or lack of knowledge around middle years approaches as a key barrier to change (Anderson, 1996; Carrington, 2006; Fullan, 1993; Hargreaves, 2000; Kalin, 2007; Newmann & Clune, 1992). It is one thing to change the curriculum focus but this has to be supported with teacher professional development and resources in schools (Ball, 1994; Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006; Kalin, 2007). In Victoria a pedagogical framework, the principles of learning and teaching (PoLT), were developed to address the issue of teacher pedagogical knowledge. Early indications of PoLT have been positive, with the process establishing a productive pedagogies discourse in schools (Tytler, 2005). The challenge for PoLT lies in the extent to which clusters, regional collections of schools, can move from the first step of pedagogical discourse to changes in pedagogical practices within the classroom (Tytler, 2005). The implementation of PoLT is a process which is being encouraged with the introduction of the e5 instructional model in 2009. The e5 instructional model provides an explicit framework for teachers to plan their classroom teaching and learning activities (DEECD, 2010a).

Student Learning

Students will influence any educational change process being applied as each student will bring particular knowledge, interests, resources and background to the classroom. Rothman and McMillan's (2003) investigation into student influences on literacy and numeracy achievement clearly supports findings of other investigations, of non-school factors which influence learning, including, socio-economic status (SES), ethnicity and student attitude and aspirations. SES clearly affects student learning with student achievement correlating strongly with parent education levels and job type (Coley, 2002; Hill, Holmes-Smith & Rowe, 1993; Rothman, 2002; Masters & Forester, 1997). The higher the parent education levels the higher the student achievement; the more professional a parent's job, the higher the student achievement (Rothman, 2002).

Students are proactive self-regulating causal agents in their own learning and capable of enhancing or undermining teachers' attempts to use middle years approaches (Bandura, 2006; Ericson & Ellett, 2002). Those students who are succeeding in the current system may "resist changing from a predictable process in which they know how to succeed to one which fosters intellectual development in a context of some uncertainty" (Anderson, 1996, p. 9). With more students remaining at school a greater range of student motivation may be found. Some students may not be motivated to stay at school for academic improvement but may be avoiding unemployment, staying close to friends or fulfilling family expectations. Parents may be encouraging their children to complete secondary education as it is becoming an important influence on life chances and opportunities. Other students will stay at school because of the career to which they aspire, while only a few students will be there for the joy of learning (Atkinson, 2000; Ericson & Ellett, 2002).

Focusing on the learning outcomes of students concentrates the teacher's attention on the student rather than the curriculum content. Focusing on the student learning can initiate approaches that include assessing the students' current understanding which encourage constructivist approaches and identification of students' ZPD. It can provide opportunities for adolescents to explore personal identity and their place in the world (Alvarez, 2002; Barratt, 1998; Killen, 2000). A greater understanding of student needs, abilities and motivation can enable teachers to assist students to be more reflective and to take an active role in their own education (Dinham & Rowe, 2008).

Killen (2000) identifies this focus on student learning as outcomes-based education (OBE). OBE places student outcomes at the centre of all school activities. "In outcomes-based education ...you develop the curriculum from the outcomes you want students to demonstrate, rather than writing objectives for the curriculum you already have" (Spady, 1998, p. 6). OBE also contains two other important premises. First, there is an expectation that all students will be successful and secondly, teachers will provide expanded opportunities for all learners. This may mean providing a range of different learning opportunities at different times, to suit different students. Pokey (2003) supports the provision of different learning opportunities with the application of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences to account for different student abilities and learning styles.

Newmann and Wehlage's (1993) authentic pedagogical approach is a framework that places student learning at the centre of curriculum development. Authentic achievement can be defined by three criteria:

- construction of knowledge
- disciplined inquiry
- value and achievement beyond school

These three criteria encourage the use of different approaches to teaching, with a focus on the construction of knowledge which requires students to acknowledge what they already know and to use higher order thinking skills of synthesising, generalising and explaining. Disciplined inquiry must explore a topic in enough depth to identify connections and relationships between the various concepts and knowledge being explored. Value and achievement beyond school require students' work to have meaning or value for the student beyond achieving success at school (Newmann & Associates, 1996).

Authentic achievement is a mastery approach to learning, encouraging students to improve skills and delve deeper into subject matter, demonstrating learning, knowledge and skill attainment in situ or in response to real issues, problems and questions. This is in contrast to a performance approach, more commonly used by teachers who focus on subject content and who emphasise the memorisation of facts and processes. Student ability is rated via performance based tests, rather than demonstration of competence via the application of knowledge and skill to authentic problems. Performance motivated learning tends to encourage surface learning rather than the deeper understanding required by a mastery approach (Meece, 2003).

If student learning is placed at the forefront of teachers' planning, a change in pedagogy can occur as the students' needs, abilities, interest and cultural background all have to be taken into account. When these aspects are taken into account, no single pedagogical approach fits all students, encouraging the teacher to use a wider range of approaches (Mercer & Lane, 1996; Wlodkowski, 1999).

Schraw and Olafson's (2002) examination of teachers' epistemological beliefs and educational practices found that most teachers supported a constructivist approach to

learning, which is defined as a belief that learners construct and share knowledge in supportive social contexts, where the teacher acts as a facilitator. This constructivist belief is in contrast to the directed and teacher controlled instructional practices the same teachers often used in their classrooms. One explanation of this contradiction between belief and practice, lies in teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), the pedagogical understanding teachers have about their learning area (Shulman, 1986). If teachers do not develop a broad PCK understanding during their pre-service teacher education and ongoing professional development, they are likely to use techniques and approaches they were exposed to in their own learning which has usually been teacher centred (Harris, Mishra & Koehler, 2009; Meredith, 1995). The nature of school structures, imposed curriculum, time constraints, and standardised testing all contribute to the inconsistency between teacher beliefs and practice (Schraw & Olafson, 2002). As Yates and Holt (2009) found in their study of a ‘middle years’ year nine program, when placed under pressure, teachers reverted to teacher centred approaches.

Teacher Pedagogy

In Hattie’s (2003) New Zealand investigation of the practices that influence student achievement, he found that teacher influence accounted for 30 per cent variance of student achievement as summarised in Table 7. This finding supports Hill, Holmes-Smith & Rowe’s (1993) earlier finding that 26 to 44 percent variance in student achievement, could be attributed to the classroom teacher.

Source of variance	Variance in student achievement
Student	50%
Home	5 – 10%
Schools	5 – 10%
Peer effects	5 – 10%
Teachers	30%

Table 7: Summary of sources of variance in student achievement (Hattie, 2003)

What the teacher does in the classroom, the pedagogy chosen, the classroom culture developed and the relationship teachers have with students will have a significant influence on student learning. Curriculum guidelines and school policy may guide

teachers’ decisions but the closed door of the classroom “can provide freedom for teachers to make decisions independent of administrators and colleagues” (Gratch, 2000, p. 47). This independence and isolation gives teachers a sense of autonomy in the classroom that many teachers value highly, but it also means teachers having to rely on their past experiences and orthodox doctrines to develop their teaching styles and strategies (Hargreaves, 2000).

The development of professional learning communities (PLCs) can be an effective way to break down the isolation of classroom teaching in egg crate styled secondary schools and can expose teachers to a broader range of pedagogy via collaboration (Bumphers Huffman & Hipp Kiefer, 2003; Carrington & Elkins, 2002; Goldring, 2002; Strahan, 2003). The aim is to build a sense of community in the school which produces a shared purpose to bring a collaborative approach and a collective responsibility to the challenges facing teachers in their classrooms (Bumphers Huffman & Hipp Kiefer, 2003). Dufour and Eaker (1998) identified six characteristics of learning communities, summarised in Table 8. When a school community exhibits all these characteristics, it will be a responsive and inquiring community that will be able to assess and respond to the changes and needs of the school community. PLCs do not respond to change in an ad hoc or knee jerk manner; rather a collective inquiry approach is taken with data collected, ideas tested and collective decisions on the action taken. This is a continuous process rather than a ‘reform – teaching as usual – reform’ cycle that, until now, has dominated the education renewal process.

Characteristic	Description
Shared mission.	A shared vision across the school.
Collective inquiry.	All members of the community question and seek to test and improve what they are doing and how they are doing it.
Collaborative teams.	Members work in collaborative teams with a shared purpose, working towards it and learning from one another.

Table 8: Summary of the characteristics of professional learning communities (Dufour & Eaker, 1998)

Characteristic	Description
Action orientation and experimentation.	Members are action orientated, and seek to turn vision into reality.
Continuous improvement.	There is a constant search by members to find more effective ways of doing their work.
Results oriented.	Members want results from their actions and develop assessment criteria to test their work.

Table 8 (continued): Summary of the characteristics of professional learning communities (Dufour & Eaker, 1998)

Fullan (1993) is a supporter of collaboration, noting “there is a ceiling effect on how much you can learn on your own” (p. 17). However, he is cautious about the pitfalls of collaboration. If all members of the group do not have equal power, more powerful members will push individuals into conformity, rather than work for a conciliation of purpose. Teachers have always valued their independence, “the power to make judgment, to exercise personal discretion, initiative and creativity through their work” (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 178). This may be why many teachers prefer to work alone and avoid collaboration (Fullan, 1993). Feelings of independence and a sense of working on one’s own as more efficient, plus the autonomy of the classroom, may be some of the reasons why PLCs have not flourished (Bumphers Huffman & Hipp Kiefer, 2003).

Teacher professional development has been a long-standing approach to the improvement of teaching and learning in the classroom, working directly with teachers, informing them of new teaching ideas, methods and philosophies (Fullan, 1992). However, to effect sustained change in the teachers’ practices, the National Commission on Time and Learning (1994) found that 50 hours of professional development is required before a teacher will become comfortable with a new technique. This amount of training is in contrast to the standard approach to professional development, consisting of short intensive professional development lasting a day or several short sessions after school (Butt, Raymond, McCue & Yamagishi, 1992). Even with large amounts of training, teachers will still modify the technique or programs to suit their needs and perceptions of ‘good teaching’, which may result in key aspects of the professional development program being discarded (Benveniste & McEwan, 2000; Winther, Volk, & Shrock, 2002).

For professional development to be effective it must be well planned and connected to the schools' overall vision. Professional development should have clear goals that are important to the teachers and supported after the initial training process (Winther, Volk, & Shrock, 2002). The amount of cognitive effort teachers have to put into the professional development process appears to affect the transfer of practices to the classroom. The more cognitive effort the professional development requires, the more likely these new ideas will persist and be manifest in ongoing changes in classroom teaching (Winther, Volk, & Shrock, 2002).

The various approaches taken to effect educational change discussed in the literature have resulted in limited success. All of the approaches have focused on changing teaching practices by using different levers including, change to school structure, changing the curriculum requirements, setting student outcomes or implementing a new pedagogy. Each lever has acted as an external force which it is hoped, will influence the individual teachers' actions in the classroom. It appears that these external forces applied to school change still leave the teachers isolated in their classrooms, in effect, autonomous in their own domains and to an extent able to ignore the levers of change being applied (Gratch, 2000). The literature clearly identifies that while change directions may be well defined, attempts to change are not always successful.

If change is going to occur, the teacher isolating nature of secondary school structures has to be opened up. Teachers require opportunities to work collaboratively and to discuss sharing teaching philosophies, techniques and approaches, with the aim to better understand every students' needs. To achieve reform to the middle years of secondary schools, it is critical to understand the influences which inhibit and support the process of pedagogical review.

Chapter Summary

Major social change has occurred since the 1950s, leading to a social and political environment described, as 'liquid modernity'. Society is more flexible compared with the industrial age, requiring individuals to take greater control and be less reliant on the government support provided in past decades. Space and time have been compressed by digital global communications. The speed of information flow and the influence of

global events on local issues require individuals to be informed and innovative problem solvers and managing their lives in the 21st century. The role of the education system is to assist young people in developing the skills required to enjoy the opportunities presented by this flexible and changing social world.

In adolescence, a pivotal time in human development, young people explore their identity on the way to adulthood. Adolescents are capable, they are able to set goals and can evaluate strategies to achieve those goals and monitor progress. They are developing cognitively, emotionally and physically and require opportunities to develop the skills of agency, including decision-making, planning and evaluation. The traditional teacher centred approaches of secondary schools do not provide these opportunities. Research from the 1980s and 1990s confirmed the inappropriateness of teacher centred learning for adolescents. This research sparked a range of education reform efforts including the middle schools movement.

To achieve educational change four broad approaches have been attempted, focusing on school organisation, curriculum, student learning and teacher pedagogy. These approaches have ranged from targeted programs of organisation change or teacher professional development, to whole school approaches, as illustrated by the MYRAD project in Victoria. Achievement of change to date has been disappointing, with no evidence of system-wide change being achieved at a classroom level in any education system across the globe.

The review of literature has highlighted both the need for reform in the middle years of schooling and the failure of that reform. These reform cycles have been occurring since the 1960s and have occurred in Australia and around the globe in many western countries including the USA and Britain with little success. The nature of social structures including school organisation structures, education departments and teacher preparation courses appears to be very stable and influences the pedagogical choice of teachers. Even when clear and careful reform strategies have been put in place and supported, as in the case of MYRAD or purpose built middle schools, classroom practices remain largely unchanged. If change levers of this type cannot create significant change to classroom practice the issue must be explored beyond the technical 'cause and effect' paradigm.

The exchanges which occur in the classroom between the students and between the teacher and the students are the core of education. This social process starts before the classroom interaction as the teacher prepares the learning activities for students, considering what pedagogical approach will best support the students' learning. Understanding the social aspects of teaching and learning from the teachers' perspective is required if the resistance of schools to educational changes is to be understood.

The work of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and Anthony Giddens (1984) has been drawn upon to develop a theoretical framework to examine the resistance of teachers and schools to implement middle schooling practices. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, Bourdieu's theory of social practices provides insights into why social practices and social stratification is maintained while Giddens' theory of structuration provides an understanding of the interaction between human agency and social structure. This framework provides a new perspective to examine the social, political and organisational influences on the choices and actions of middle years teachers, which more mechanistic examinations of school reform have been unable to achieve.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework used to explore the complex network of social interactions that make up schools. Understanding the social interactions enables the exploration of the pedagogical choice of middle years teachers from a social perspective. Such an exploration will provide new insights into the nature of school structures and social practices and will identify the enabling and inhibiting aspects of schools as social institutions.

This chapter places into context the epistemological perspectives of the researcher in understanding the nature of social institutions. Although schools are recognisable physical structures made up of classrooms, gymnasiums and administration buildings it is not these physical structures which constitute the school but the social interactions of the people within these buildings.

Social interactions within schools are mediated by many influences as the review of literature in Chapter 2 reported. The neo-liberal marketisation influences on schools have changed the way the community interacts with schools. Parents view schooling as a commodity, and schools compete for students in the market place with governments enacting accountability measures to measure school performance. This has changed the nature of schooling and who attends which school, with students from disadvantaged backgrounds having less choice compared to those from advantaged backgrounds.

Understanding of adolescent development has identified the need to apply different teaching and learning approaches in middle years classrooms to support adolescent learning and growth. The approaches have been collected under the banner of middle schooling which places the student at the centre of the learning and acknowledges the student's agency in the learning process. Middle schooling is quite different to the traditional teacher led learning where the teacher controls both the content and pace of instruction. The student/teacher interactions of middle schooling approaches are more dynamic and equitable and promote the development of the flexible, innovative problem solving skills required by students engaging in a society at a time of liquid modernity.

Social structures and social interaction have emerged from the literature as important influences on the pedagogical choice of secondary school middle years teachers but how the factors mediate teachers' choice and action is unclear. As the literature has highlighted, change to middle schooling practices is difficult to realise but clearly required. To date the approaches taken have been disappointing and a new understanding around pedagogical change is required. The social nature of schools and education clearly outlined in the literature indicates an examination of the social structures and practices within schools will provide a new perspective on the pedagogical choice of secondary school middle years teachers and an understanding as to why schools find it difficult to take on and maintain middle schooling practices.

Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and Anthony Giddens (1984) a theoretical framework using a constructivist perspective has been developed to explore the social structures and practices of schools. Bourdieu's theory of cultural and social practices provides an insight into the behaviour of social groups and how social background shapes individual perspectives and behaviour. Giddens' theory of structuration provides understanding of social structures and the agency of human actors. Bourdieu's theory of cultural and social practices is first outlined in an attempt to identify the influences individuals bring with them to the social setting, what Bourdieu terms 'habitus'. Giddens' theory of structuration is then discussed and used to provide a framework to explore the result of peoples' actions on the institutional structures of the school and the affect of those same structures on the behaviour of people.

Finally, the two theories are brought together to explore the process of change. The knowledgeable ability of actors is connected with agency. Personal agency can enable a person to take action overcoming the constraints of their background or habitus. This personal action has the potential to affect institutional structures and the practices of the people who create and maintain those structures, initiating change.

Introduction

In Victoria, as around the nation and the world for the past 20 years, education authorities have been actively pursuing a change to the way adolescents are taught. As identified in Chapter 2, adolescent students' learning and development will benefit from middle schooling approaches to teaching and learning which place the students at the centre of the learning process. Extensive research has outlined the teaching and learning practices which make up effective middle schooling (Bean, 1993; Carrington, 2006; Chadbourne, 2001; Hill & Russell, 1999). Various government education departments have provided clear direction, financial support, expertise and implementation strategies for the introduction of middle schooling. But in the vast majority of early secondary school classrooms, teaching and learning practices have remained largely unchanged. Many researchers have identified the difficulty in changing teachers' classroom practice (Caldwell, 1998a; Fullan, 2000; Hill & Crevola, 1999; Lipsitz & Mizell, 1997; Prosser, et al. 2008). Carrington (2006) summarises these findings stating:

A very well established body of work describing the characteristics and needs of early adolescence has been transposed on to classroom practice for almost 20 years. Yet, two decades on we are still struggling to engage students in these years, as well as to improve outcomes and overall quality of provision (Carrington, 2006, p. xi).

The task of changing classroom practice, even when good intentions are present and funding is available, seems akin to finding the end of the rainbow, 'often in sight, but never achieved'.

Classroom teachers are the essential link to the learning activities students engage with in the classroom. It is the classroom teacher who takes the decision to use or not to use a particular activity or approach in exploring a concept or topic. It is the pedagogical choice of secondary school middle years teachers which ultimately decides if middle schooling practices will be applied in a classroom. Understanding the factors that influence the decisions made by teachers will provide an insight into why implementing middle schooling has been difficult to sustain.

Classrooms of adolescents are complex environments, containing up to 30 young people of both sexes from a range of social and cultural backgrounds, overseen by one adult teacher. The complexity continues, as the classroom is one of many within the schooling's hierarchical organisational structure, which manages the needs of students, parents, teachers, administrators and government departments. A school's complexity however, is not only due to its organisational structure, but more importantly to the vast array of social relationships and interactions that occur in the normal *durée* of the school day. It is these social relationships and interactions which are in essence, 'the school', not the buildings or the grounds where these interactions occur. Knowledge of how and why a school functions in a particular way is to be discovered by unravelling the meanings contained within these interactions in an attempt to bring a new understanding of middle years classroom practices. Why does a teacher decide to use or not use a particular teaching and learning approach? Why do adolescent students react to or engage in learning activities in a particular way?

The theoretical framework developed in this research has enabled an examination of the social relationships and interactions which are the essence of schools. It has allowed the research to approach the issue of teachers' pedagogical decision-making from a social perspective. A social perspective requires a theoretical lens that enables the complexity of human interactions and the development of social structures to be examined without losing connection with the people who created those interactions and social structures. The work of Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens has provided the theoretical foundation for the framework.

Bourdieu's (1984) theory of cultural and social practices examines social division and social reproduction. His theories enable an exploration of the social interactions which lead to social groups competing for social space and power. The breadth of Bourdieu's theories enables an understanding of the social interactions occurring in schools to be achieved. This is a different focus to the understanding of education developed from the theories of Basil Bernstein (1975) who like Bourdieu examines the influence of social class on communication, but Bernstein is unable to establish clear relationships between social factors and the influence on structures, stating that "the relationship between codes, ideologies and economic structures is hardly worked out" (Bernstein, 2003, p. 26).

The enlightening theory of John Dewey (1916) focuses on student learning with an educational philosophy based on experiential learning, where education is the “reconstruction or reorganisation of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experience” (p. 134). Paulo Freire’s (1994) and Henry Giroux’s (1988) work around critical pedagogy agrees with Dewey that learning is more than a “banking concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filling and storing deposits” (Freire, 1994, p. 53). Knowledge is created by learners as they engage and evaluate concepts and information from their social and historical perspectives (Freire, 1994; Giroux, 1988).

Giroux (1988) notes that “schools are not merely instructional sites but also sites where the culture of the dominant society is learned and where students experience the difference between those status and class distinctions that exist in the larger society” (p.5). Critical pedagogy acknowledges the importance of the political and social influences on curriculum and the dehumanising effect this can have on students particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Freire, 1973; Giroux, 1988). It provides teachers with a pedagogy to question the power associated with privileging aspects of the curriculum (Freire, 1973; Giroux, 1988). Teachers are encourage to pose questions to their students that are thought provoking and relevant to students’ lives that ask students to question knowledge and become agents in their own learning potentially liberating them from some of the dehumanising aspects of schooling (Shor, 1992). “All the work described as critical pedagogy shares a stance of critique and an interpretation of pedagogy in a wider sense, as including curriculum, social relationships in the classroom and the ways in which the classroom reflects the larger social context” (Weiler, 1992, p.3). Critical pedagogy is focused on the teaching and learning process and the ability of pedagogy to create social change. It does not provide the lens required for this research to examine the work of teachers and the broad social relationships and influences which affect teachers’ pedagogical choice.

Bourdieu’s theories of social and cultural practice unlike Bernstein’s, Dewey’s, Friere’s and Giroux’s theories are able to encompass the social aspects of teachers’ pedagogical choice. This was a point made by Grenfell and James (2004) in their discussion on educational research, stating that Bourdieu’s theories provide “a very open ended

approach to research: it is guided by a particular philosophical stance but is not methodologically prescriptive” (p. 157). This attribute provides the flexibility required for the research and is why Bourdieu’s theories have informed the theoretical framework rather than these other key educational theorists.

Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration enables the interrogation of the social aspects of pedagogical change, linking human actors with social structures, identifying that actors’ behaviour in schooling will be influenced by school structures and actors’ behaviour will in turn influence the school structure. It is the duality of Giddens’ structuration theory which provides the lens to examine human agency in conjunction with the influences of social structures, an aspect which Bernstein’s theories are unable to achieve (Shilling, 1992). The work of both Foucault and Habermas are been drawn upon in Chapter 9 to explain power relationships within school structures but it is the work of Giddens which provides the understanding of human agency within social structures that informs the theoretical framework. As Shilling (1992) summarises, “structuration theory does provide a new way of looking at the relationship between social interaction in schools and the reproduction of the major structural principles which characterise society” (p. 84).

The work of Bourdieu enables the theoretical framework to reveal the importance of social stratification and the power various social groups may exercise within social structures. Giddens’ work provides understanding of the interaction of individuals with social structures which lead to structural change or structural maintenance. Developing the theoretical framework from these two bodies of work has enabled the research to examine social interaction at a individual, group and organisation level and to uncover the range of factors which influence the pedagogical choices of secondary school middle years teachers.

Bourdieu’s theories will be briefly outlined first before connecting the key concepts of the theory with Giddens’ structuration theory. The theoretical framework will be used to inform the research and analyse the data collected providing a social and structural lens with the potential for new explanations of the pedagogical choice of middle years secondary school teacher.

Pierre Bourdieu - Theories of Cultural and Social Practice

Schools are organisations made up of groups of people drawn from a cross-section of society for the purpose of teaching and learning. Bourdieu's theories on cultural and social practice provide a framework to examine how the various values, meanings and social understandings different groups bring to the education system influence the practices within schools. Bourdieu's theories examine social life through the dynamics of social groups and how a person's 'social group' or class will determine the way people may behave, communicate, develop aspirations and generally view their place in the world; what Bourdieu (1984) refers to as practices (pp. 100-101).

Peoples' practices will be modified by a combination of habitus and capital as applied to a social context (Bourdieu, 1984). Habitus is a system of schemas of perception and discrimination people use to navigate their way through the social world. These schema are developed over the course of life but with the experiences of childhood and the formative years of adolescence being significant (Nash, 1999). A person will inherit capital from their parents and in effect the inheritance of membership to their parent's social class. Capital is cultural, social, economic, real and symbolic. Cultural capital includes language, cultural taste, social values, ethics and access to cultural assets such as art, literature and education. Economic capital is financial worth and access to money. Social capital is the social connection a person has with other people. It provides social support and potential decision-making power. Symbolic capital includes the social regard others have for the person or person's social class, prestige, honour, or recognition of authority. Inherited capital thus underpins the development of one's habitus. Habitus will moderate practices and together these will identify a person's position or class within society. For example the way a person speaks, the taste they have in food or clothing, will indicate their class (Bourdieu, 1984, pp.126-131; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 115; Siisiäinen, 2000).

People who inherit similar capital will tend to develop habitus that expresses similar tastes, values and behaviours and the inhabiting of a similar social space. People who inhabit social spaces, which are very close, more easily communicate as meanings and understandings will be the same or very similar (Bourdieu, 1984). Practices reflect the social space people share and the social space in turn will moderate practices. For

example parents with a trade background (carpenters, electricians, motor mechanics) may have completed secondary school to year 10 and a trade apprenticeship. Through work and apprenticeship training, it is likely that social connections and friendships will develop with other people who have trade backgrounds. Their cultural interests due to their economic and cultural capital may be similar and found in the attendance of sporting events, local movies, and in beach holidays. The group will share a similar social space and reaffirm the cultural interests and values they share. It is likely their children will develop the same tastes and interests of the group, aspiring to take on a trade skill similar to their social group. In part this will be due to the social group's appreciation and intimate understanding of apprenticeships and trade skills. To go outside the apprenticeship training system to higher education would involve the unknown, engaging with new social structures and people with different habitus and capital. The unknown for many people may be enough to inhibit seeing higher education as an option.

Social space is more than a class association. It “tends to function as a symbolic space, a space of lifestyle and status groups characterised by different lifestyles” (Bourdieu 1989, p. 20). The interaction of capital, habitus and practice has the reproductive effect to maintaining the social space which groups of people inhabit (see Figure 3). There are a myriad of symbolic social spaces depending on the combination of capital, habitus and practices. This is seen within the concept of class in the broad sense of working class, middle class or upper class containing many smaller social spaces within the broad class group. These social spaces have some attributes linking to the broad class concept, but also contain differences which the people who make up the social space recognise as unique. For example a group of people in Australia may perceive themselves as middle class as they have similar levels of capital, interests and values to other middle class people, but they may also be connected by their Chinese heritage. Their Chinese heritage will produce practices differently from those of non-Chinese middle class Australians.

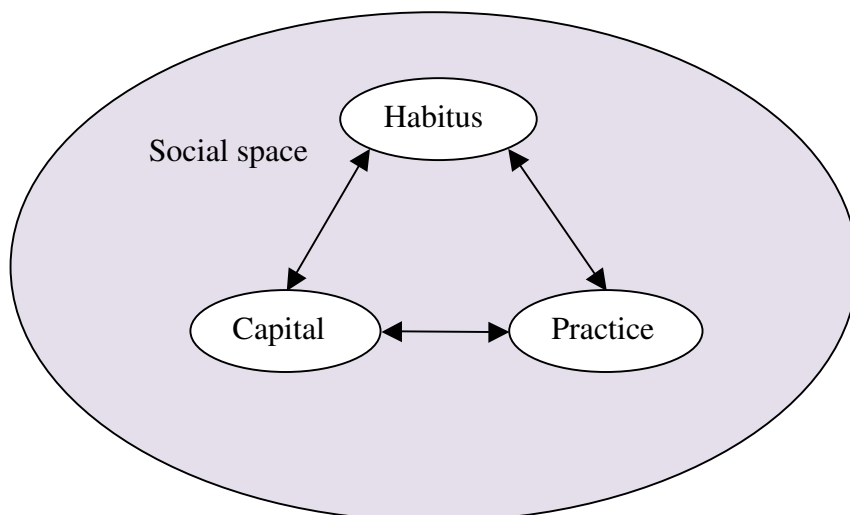


Figure 3: The interaction of capital, habitus and practices

Social spaces are also seen in schools. On the macro level, schools have a connection with the geographical location (suburb or town) which reflects a broad social space due to factors including the cost of housing, history of the area and access to employment. These factors tend to draw people of similar habitus to the area, as seen in many cities with various suburbs acknowledged by the city dwellers, as working class, professional, elite and the like. At a micro level people within the geographical location are much more diverse with a broad range of capital/habitus combinations leading to a variety of smaller social spaces. This range of social spaces in the community is reflected in classrooms, with groups of students reflecting the social space they are connected to outside school. Each group of students brings with them practices developed in their social space to the classroom. Just as teachers bring social practices to the classroom, students also tend to form groupings in the classroom reflecting their capital and habitus, the academic student group, the means to an end student group, the not interested in school student group (Ericson & Ellett, 2002).

The connection to a social group as signified by social space is an important contributor to the amount of influence an individual or group may exert in society. It is the competition for control or power that drives many individual and social practices (Anheier, 1995).

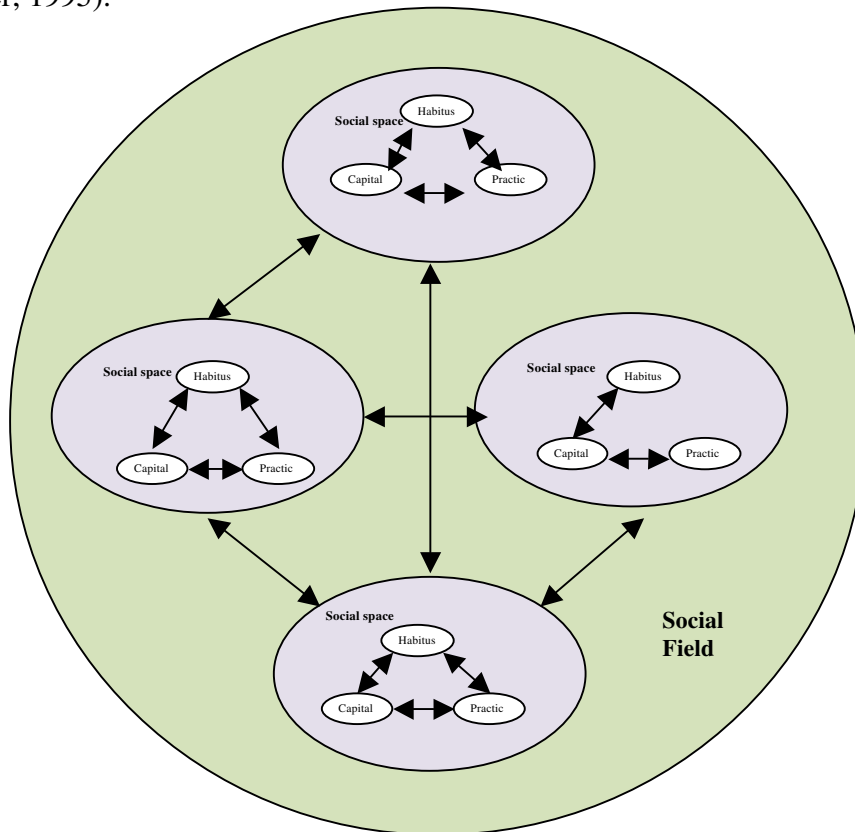


Figure 4: Groups competing within the social field

Practices occur in social fields. Fields are characterised by the power relationships between groups, individuals and/or organisations, with the field extending as far as power or influence can be wielded (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008). When examining individual and social practices the field must first be identified, such as, a classroom, school or education system. Once identified the various social spaces with which actors are associated can be determined and the extent of the power relations examined. Competition between the groups will occur, each trying to gain control over the social field. The degree of control gained will be affected by the amount of real and symbolic capital the group can muster. Figure 4 is a representation of how groups represented by their social space will actively compete with each other for dominance within a social field.

Success of a group's power within a social field will be seen in the meanings and values attributed to various artefacts and symbols of the field. For example in the Australian education system, university entrance is dominated by an applicant's year 12 academic results (Edwards, 2008). Entry is based on using year 12 results to rank students by academic achievement. This ranking is used to offer applicants places at the university. Debate around the effectiveness and equity of this process has occurred regularly but the process remains largely unchanged (Edwards, 2008; McNamara, 1998; Murphy, Papanicolau & McDowell, 2001; Temmerman, 2008). The question remains as to which group or groups in the Australian education system have the power to maintain year 12 academic results as the main selection criteria for university entrance. Is it the universities, the schools, the government, the parents or even the students? Using Bourdieu's theory it could be one or several explanations as, "practices flow from the intersections of habitus with capital and field positions" (Swartz, 2008, p. 48). In this example the value attributed to artefacts, such as high academic scores in year 12, will affect all practices within the field. The single aspect of year 12 scores being the selection criteria for university entrance could constrain teachers to 'teach to the test' not only in year 12 subjects but also in junior levels rather than to pursue the development of student skills for adult life. Parents may choose schools based on a school's year 12 results rather than whether the school is socially and educationally a good fit for their child. School administration and policy direction may be overshadowed by the desire to achieve high year 12 results rather than an education which is appropriate for all students.

Herein lie the strengths of Bourdieu's theory of social practice as a framework to examine school organisation and social practices. The theory encourages the examination of the complex links that exist between social groups. It is possible that one group will strategically or inadvertently maintain power over other groups, through the dominance of social practices.

Even though Bourdieu's theory provides a framework to investigate this level of complexity it does not address the personal. As Nash (1990) clearly states, "Despite its apparent complexity the theory allows no recognition of self, choice or action. Working at the level of structure and practice Bourdieu recognises the strategic behaviour of groups but not individuals" (p. 434). This lack of personal agency in the theory has led many critics (DiMaggio, 1979, pp. 1467-8; Alexander 1995, pp. 130-6) to see the theory

as an “overly deterministic rendering of human experience and behaviour” (Throop & Murphy, 2002, p. 198). Potter (2000) in his examination of Jeffery Alexander’s criticisms of Bourdieu argues that Bourdieu is examining social action and agency from a position of possibilities where individual actions will be acted upon by the surrounding social forces. He suggests that:

To come to an understanding of the perplexing problematic of agency, social action and social structure, requires analyses which possess not only epistemological sophistications but also ontological depth. Social structure cannot be understood merely by a generalised analysis of the conditions of discrete actions which attempts to render them understandable through abstraction. Social structures really exist (p. 243).

Potter is correct to highlight the importance of social structure’s influence on individual actions. Bourdieu does provide possible motivations for such action, via the social position of actors and the struggle for control over the social field, but the role of the individual upon social structures is still unclear. How do an individual’s actions contribute to the social structures? How do structures enable or constrict agency? Anthony Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration provides an insight into individual action and the development of social structures. The understanding Giddens’ theory brings to the relationship between agents and social structures is why structuration theory has been used to inform the theoretical framework over the work of Foucault and Habermas whose theories are drawn upon in Chapter 9. Foucault’s (1977, 1983) work analyses many aspects of human behaviour and the influence of social power on the individual, but Foucault does not directly attempt to theorise society although “there are a series of related references which point towards this kind of analysis” (Smart, 2002, p. 135). Foucault’s analysis of institutional power is particularly useful when examining social relationships within schools but the analysis does not encourage a broader view of power and agency (Alvelino & Rotmans, 2009). Habermas’ (1984) theory of communicative action provides insights into the importance of communication and power relationships but “is unable to locate concrete social agents for the process of enlightenment and social transformation” (Livesay, 1985, p. 68). Giddens’ structuration theory connects social structures with human agency and the potential to change social systems.

Anthony Giddens – Theory of Structuration

The theory of structuration intrinsically links the actions of human actors with social structures, as it is the actor's actions and practices which create social structures and these same structures will moderate the actions of actors. Giddens (1984) emphasizes this duality of structure:

The constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality. According to the notion of duality of structure, the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise (p. 25).

These structures only exist due to human activity. Structures form when a particular set of social relations and practices have been maintained across space and time (Giddens, 1984). Due to longevity, the practices are regarded as cultural norms, customs, rules or laws. Greetings such as a handshake in Australia or kissing of cheeks in France are examples of social structures developed over time to become social norms.

The social structure of 'greeting' regulates the behaviour of actors. As people meet there is an 'automatic tendency' to extend a hand in Australia ready for a handshake or a cheek ready for a kiss in France. These norms are developed within the social context, with children taking on the practice as they grow up to maintain the greeting norm.

The social structure and context provide the conditions of action for the actors, with the actions of the actors maintaining the social practice.

This simple example of greeting traditions highlights the duality of structuration where structures and human activity are intrinsically linked. It is this duality that allows the examination of social interaction without losing complexity through the isolation of human action from the social system.

Figure 5 identifies the three major components of structuration: actors, structures and time and space. Actors have one lifetime where their actions may interact with the social milieu, whereas structures may exist before one's birth and can be maintained via social practices well after one's death.

Time and space provide the cultural and historical context for social action. The history of past actions is reflected in the social structures that have been maintained and will influence the future actions of actors. This does not mean structures are unchanging or that actors' actions are moulded or determined by social structures. Actors are knowledgeable and reflexive and they monitor their own actions and those of others. This knowledge is primarily carried in the practical consciousness, which, "consists of all things which actors know tacitly about how to 'go on' in the contexts of social life," (Giddens, 1984, p. xxiii). It enables actors to deal with day-to-day activities and routines without having to closely examine every aspect of life, as tacit understanding enables one to predict the actions of others in various situations to the point where some actions may appear automatic. This is in contrast to when agents use discursive consciousness which results in actions that have been considered and whose justification can be clearly articulated (Giddens, 1984). With both practical and discursive consciousness, agents are aware of their actions. Practical consciousness allows for what Giddens (1984) calls, 'routinization':

The concept of *routinization*, as grounded in practical consciousness, is vital to the theory of structuration. Routine is integral both in continuity of the personality of the agent, as he or she moves along the paths of daily activities, and to the institutions of society, which *are* such only through their continued reproduction (p. 60).

Routinization provides ontological security through agents being able to predict or trust that regular events will occur. This predictability provides a sense of control and autonomy over one's life and daily activity which is the essence of ontological security.

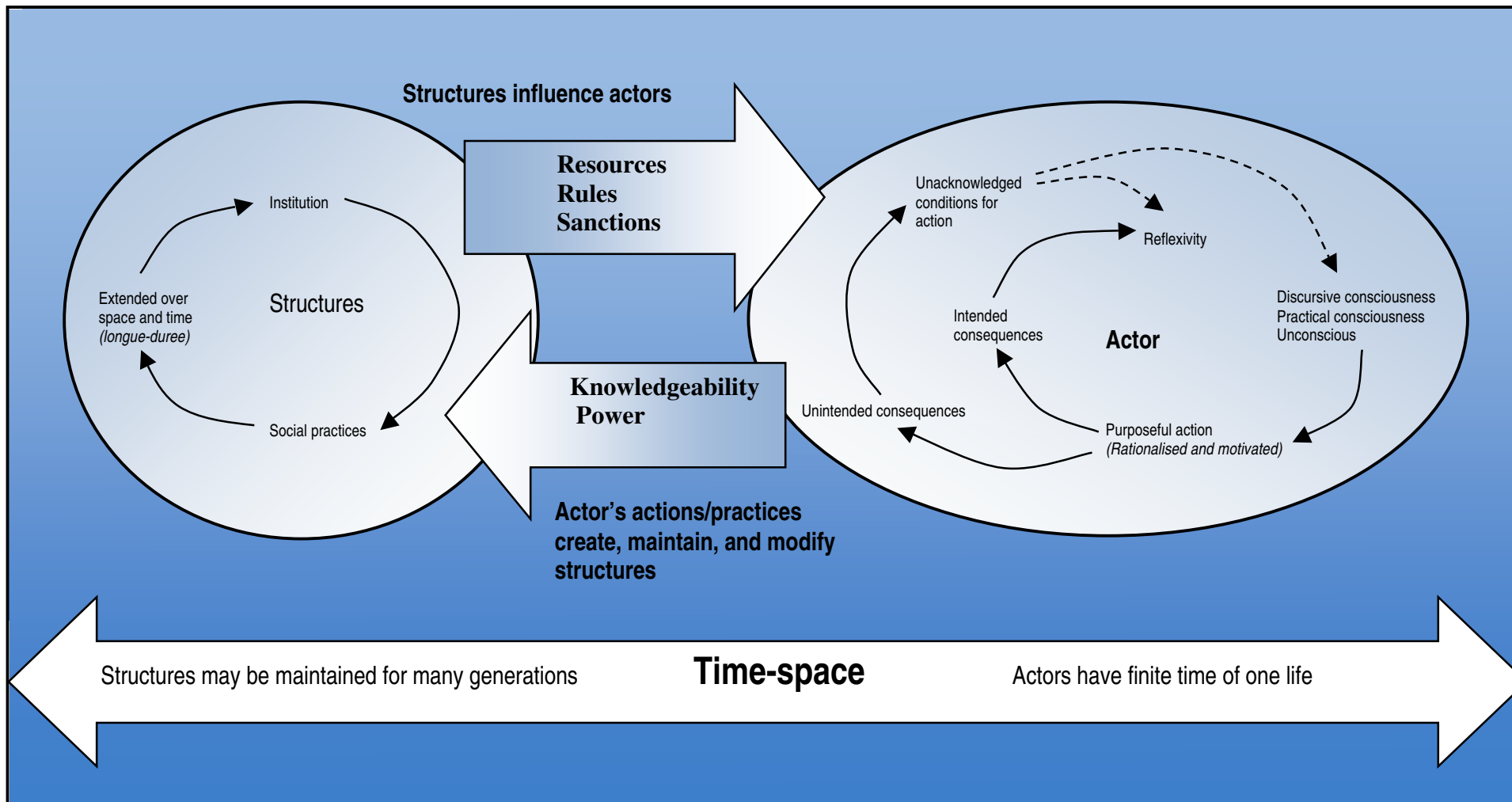


Figure 5: The dynamics and duality of structuration theory

Ontological security develops through experience as people interact with the world around them. Predictable routines are recognised such as sunrise and sunset, the human response to a smile or the trust a child has in their parents. These routines and responses not only confirm one's own and other peoples reality and identity but provide a capacity to predict the responses of others (Laing, 1960). It is this ability to predict possible outcomes either tacitly in the practical conscious or explicitly in the discursive conscious which manages anxiety. Being able to manage anxiety provides feelings of control and ontological security (Giddens, 1984).

Maintenance of ontological security is one of the motivating forces for abiding by social practices and the reproduction of structures. Tacitly knowing how people will respond to a particular action builds trust and a sense of safety (Giddens, 1991). To take action which is different from established practices and structures will require a person to manage the anxiety produced by the potential of unknown or unexpected outcomes. The level of anxiety produced for some people may lead to an avoidance of taking action. For other people the prospect of the unknown may seem challenging and something to be embraced (Kirby, 2004). These different responses are an expression of a person's ability to manage anxiety with people who have strong levels of ontological security being better able to manage higher levels of anxiety which support agency (Spitzer, 1978).

Underlying the discursive and practical consciousness is knowledge contained in the unconscious. This is knowledge that agents are unable to articulate and has been formed from past experiences and develop the foundation of beliefs and concepts which regulate behaviour. Many of these experiences will be from early childhood, such as the sense of trust developed from parents and family providing personal feelings of security and identity (Giddens, 1991).

The three levels of consciousness (unconscious, practical and discursive) will guide the purposeful action of the agent. At times actions will seem almost automatic, with agents responding with tacit knowledge and the underlying unconscious. On other occasions actions will be carefully thought out via discursive consciousness with likely scenarios of actions examined. In all cases, actions will have intended and unintended consequences on both structures and actors. The intentionality of action and the

accompanying unintentional consequences are key aspects in the reproduction or modification of structures.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus blurs the boundary between the Giddens' unconscious and practical consciousness with habitus being a cognitive process but strongly influenced by social experience. "Habitus, as a system of schemes of perceptions and appreciations of practices, cognitive and evaluative structures which are acquired through lasting experience of social position" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 19). The developmental connection of the unconscious with social position may be an unrecognised motivating factor behind individual action, stemming from the practical conscious to maintain ontological security.

Structure is defined as the rules and resources which are both enabling and constricting of human actors actions (Giddens, 1984, pp. 17-18). Structures develop from social practices that are maintained over extended periods of time. Some practices due to reproduction over extended space and time periods become recognised as institutions and include political systems, legal systems, language systems, schools and monetary systems. These institutions become features of society with established norms, rules, regulations and laws collectively known as 'institutional orders' (Giddens, 1984, p. 329).

Schools are institutions with institutional orders that are both enabling and constricting to the learning of students. For example, in western countries, education and learning in schools is dominated by a scientific rationalist worldview (Lyotard, 1988). Scientific rationalism is enabling to students' learning when they use logical reasoning to gain a greater understanding of the world but it is also constricting, as the dominance of scientific rationalism diminished opportunities to use other approaches to problem solving and understanding.

Institutional influence can be life affecting. In 21st century Australia, the attainment of education certificates provides access to well paid jobs, understanding and influence of the political system and access to cultural and social assets (Lamb, et al, 2004). Attainment of education certificates can be an enabling process for those who achieve and limiting on those who do not. Failure to achieve in the education system can restrict

job opportunities, influence and access to cultural assets, unless a person acts with the level of agency required to overcome the constraints of the system.

All actors are said to have agency, as agency “refers not to the intentions of people have of doing things but their capability of doing those things in the first place” (Giddens, 1984, p. 9). Action occurs when and agent acts with intention to “make a difference” by exercising power (Giddens, 1984, p. 14). Kathy Lette, Australian author who published her first book, *Puberty Blues* at 21 years of age and multi-millionaire business man Tom Potter who from nothing has opened 200 franchise stores across Australia, are examples of people who achieved success without their year 12 certificate. They were able to exert enough personal agency to overcome the usual societal requirement of a formal education (Schmidt, 2007). However, this is the exception with the majority of early school leavers experiencing long periods of unemployment and earning up to \$500,000 less compared to those students who complete year 12 (Hodgson, 2007). Most early school leavers over a lifetime do not have the personal power to take action and overcome the disadvantages of not attaining education credentials.

The action people can take is mediated by the power they can exercise which will be determined by their knowledgeability of structural rules and the ability to assemble resources. Kathy Lette, Tom Potter are people who were able to develop an understanding of business rules and assemble the resources required to exert power and take action. The ability to develop knowledge of structural rules is influenced by actors’ time-space position, which is reflective of their social and life cycle position (Giddens, 1984). A child is likely to have less knowledgeability of business structures than an adult, and Tom Potter’s delivery drivers are likely to have less knowledge of market forces on business development than Mr Potter due to their social position.

Understanding the duality of structure and formation of institutional orders develops and expands Bourdieu’s concepts of social space and social field. Within any social field there will be a dominant social group; the group gives meaning to symbols. For example, “a credential such as a school diploma is a piece of universally recognized and guaranteed symbolic capital, good on all markets” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21). The recognition of school credentials over practical experience is due to the dominant social group giving legitimacy to the symbol and the process by which the symbol is obtained

(Bourdieu, 1989). People within or close to the dominant group's social space will have greater potential for influence over the social field than people distant to the social space, due to knowledgeability via habitus. From Bourdieu's theories it appears that social position will be a key factor in an individual's agency within a social field due to the knowledgeability that intrinsically comes from habitus.

To overcome the constraints of habitus and increase the potential for agency individuals must actively extend the boundaries of their knowledgeability. Giddens (1984) clearly recognises that, "the knowledgeability of human actors is always bounded on the one hand by the unconscious and the other hand by unacknowledged conditions/unintended consequences of action" (Giddens, 1984, p. 282). Within these boundaries are 'frames of meaning', the rules and understandings actors bring to a social context enabling the actor to ask the question "what is going on here?" (Giddens, 1984, p. 87). These frames of meaning develop via experience as habitus develops, with most frames being accessed from the practical consciousness. It is possible that some actions will be not be motivated from tacit knowledge in the practical consciousness but motivated by the unconscious, prompting action from 'gut instinct' where the actor is unable to articulate their motivations, other than 'it felt right'. To expand an actor's knowledgeability there must be an increased awareness of one or both areas of :

1. Unacknowledged conditions and or unintended consequences of action
2. Unconscious motivations of action

An increase in the actor's reflexivity is likely to improve these areas and knowledgeability. If an actor's knowledge of structural rules and resources/institutional orders increases so will the potential for reflexivity through an ability to predict possible outcomes of actions and to decrease the number of unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences of action. Reflection on personal practices can also increase knowledgeability (Giddens, 1996). Questioning the reason why a person took a particular course of action or reacted in a particular way to an incident can illuminate previously unacknowledged motives. An increase in the understanding of structural rules and resources and/or an increase in understanding personal motivation will expand the boundary of knowledgeability.

The process by which this expansion can occur is through discursive and reflective activity is summarised in Figure 6. Interaction with others in a reflectively discursive environment can uncover new areas of understanding as Burrige, Carpenter, Cherednichenko and Kruger, (2010) found in their investigation of pre-service teachers:

Developing discursive consciousness through the facilitation of a reflective discursive environment is a vital process in order to maximise the potential for increased agency and change within the institutions of schools and universities. The process of reflection on the social interactions followed by interactive discussion can empower the actors as the discursive environment generates the knowledge and language to describe why they do what they do (p. 36).

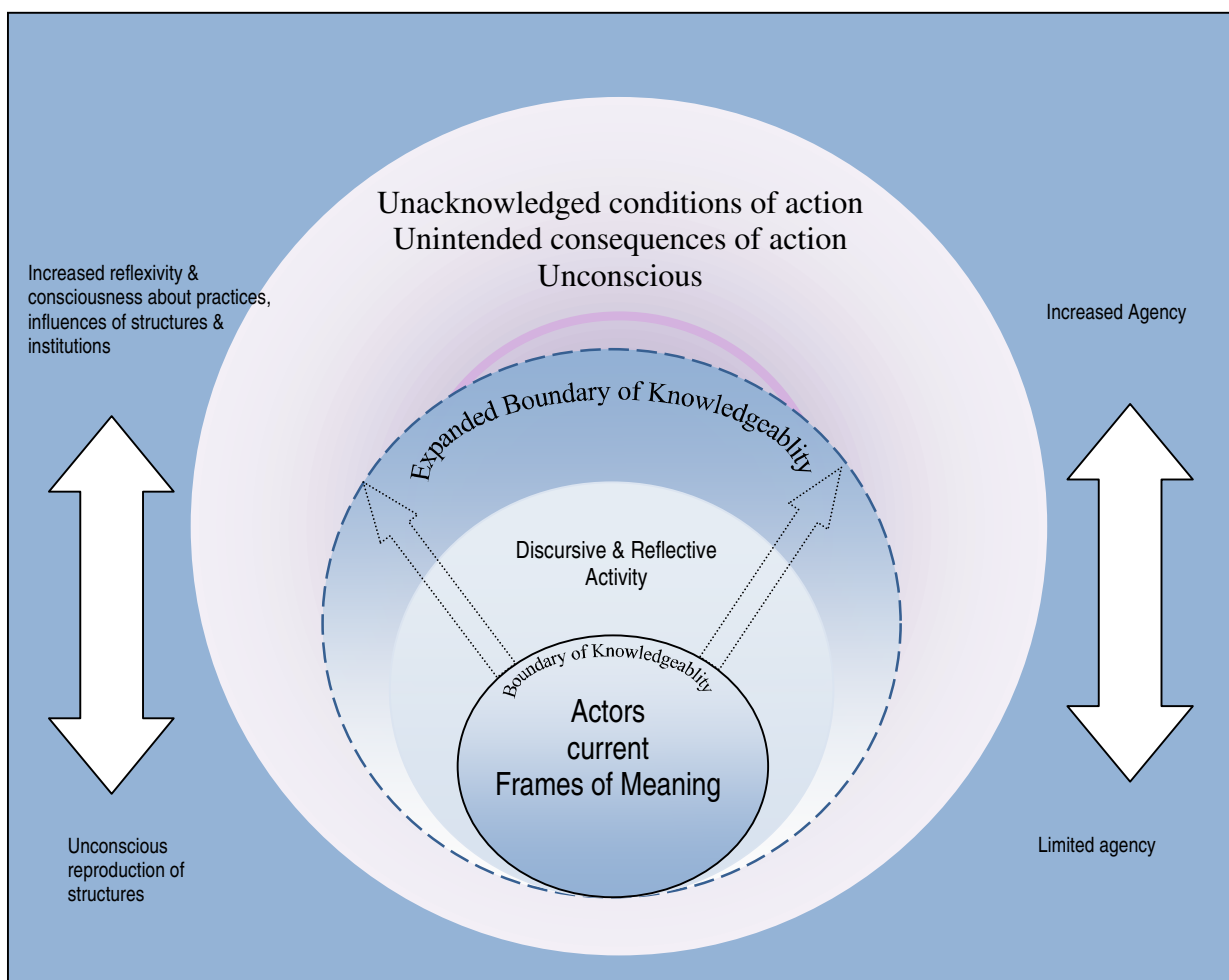


Figure 6: Expanding the Boundary of Knowledgeability

Personal reflection via an ‘internal conversation’ is also effective in making explicit the unacknowledged motivation or strategies which may have formed along with habitus but are restrictive in a particular situation or in dealing with particular institutions or structures (Archer, 2003). Personal goals that are connected to structural change may initiate this internal discussion as Mutch (2004) suggests, “it is the pursuit of personal projects that leads them (actors) to a particular engagement with society, an engagement that is reflected on in the internal conversation” (p. 434). Recognition of such motives can enable the actor to choose a different course of action, increasing personal agency.

By combining the work of Bourdieu and Giddens enables a broader range of social influences on the structure agency relationships can be examined. Willmott (1999) is critical of structuration theory as it “is unable to account for how certain rules and resources are more enduring than others and why some rules are easier to change than others” (p. 10). The role of habitus in maintaining the power of the dominant social group, in Bourdieu’s theory of social and cultural practices combined with peoples’ need to maintain ontological security as explained by Giddens, provide potential explanations for the enduring nature of some social practices over others.

Acknowledgement of social groups as outlined by Bourdieu increases the understanding of Giddens’ concepts of individual action and agency as the various social groups which make up society have their own social meanings and social structures which will mediate the action of individuals. The power of social groups will affect individual action and ultimately social structures. Although all people have agency and the ability to act to change social structures, it does not mean they will act, “if a great many people may act in certain ways because of something they believe to be true, then it is part of their social structure, whether or not that belief is true” (Bailyn, 2002, p. 323). To act contrary to a social group’s beliefs may require a high levels level of ontological security and agency that many people may not have.

Together Bourdieu’s and Giddens’ theories allow social practices to be examined on a number of levels from the effects of social groups and social structures to the action of individuals. Combining the two theories rather than applying each in isolation strengthens investigation of the complex interaction of social relationships. As summarised by Morrison (2005):

Structuration theory and habitus, as theories of reproduction, can provide a fitting explanation for reproduction of practice. Structuration theory and habitus can give an account of change; they can also give an account of inertia, stability and reproduction, albeit in part derived from agency (p. 320).

Chapter Summary

Accessing the work of Bourdieu and Giddens provides a theoretical framework which enables education to be examined at a system level, examining the role of government authorities and the role of schooling in general down to the individual actions of the students and teachers in the classroom. The framework provides a means of investigating the social nature of schools and the impact of neo-liberal policy, school marketisation and the individualisation of society on relationships between the actors who constitute school communities. Actors are not divorced from their social/cultural background as if the school's institutional orders will control practices. On the contrary it is the cultural rules, norms, biases, expectations – habitus actors bring with them to the school that will be also be influential on the school and the institutional orders.

The concept of habitus does not pre-determine actors on a particular life course but it will affect agency in different social fields, including classrooms, staff meetings and even casual social interactions. Individual agency is not only an issue for teachers or students or principals but for all actors within the school. Student agency is as important as teacher agency, or principal agency in understanding school structures. The actions of all actors whether intended or unintended will influence the school structure's reproduction or change.

Knowledgeability is a key aspect in understanding structural rules and assembling resources needed for strategic action. Knowledgeability is not dependent on inherited social capital and habitus but can be expanded through reflective discussions. Social structures can be both enabling and restricting in the development of actors' ability to be reflective and to articulate issues and practices. According to the duality of structure

the actions of actors will also influence the social structures which mediate the reflective discussions.

The theoretical framework adapted in this research provides an explanation for why schools are resistant to changing pedagogical practices for adolescents in the face of overwhelming research. The theoretical framework highlights the role of human agents in the creation and reproduction of structures. Also highlighted are actors' potential to act knowledgeably and intentionally. However, such action is taken within a social context where different social groups compete for power and control within the social field. This competition is reflected in government policy, currently driven by a neo-liberal agenda where education has become a commodity underpinned by accountability via national curriculum and national testing which are having a substantial affect on school decisions. These social influences flow on to teachers' work and the secondary school middle years teachers' choice of pedagogy and how adolescent students are able to engage in learning.

The theoretical framework developed from the work of Bourdieu and Giddens will not only guide the analysis of the data collected but point to the type of data required to unravel the matrix of social relationships, process and structures which influence teacher pedagogical choice. Data collected from the teacher's perspective is critical as it is the teacher who makes the final decision of what learning activities are undertaken in the classroom. As highlighted in the literature and the theoretical framework, the activities of education including decisions about pedagogy are essentially social and must take into account community, national and global factors. To accommodate this level of complexity, the data collected must be rich in detail and must take into account the social context in which the data was collected indicating the need for a qualitative approach to data collection.

Chapter 4 outlines the constructivist research approach of the naturalistic inquiry paradigm selected for the research. A naturalistic inquiry paradigm enables the collection of rich qualitative data to occur without losing the context of social setting. As highlighted by Lincoln and Guba (1985), "no phenomena can be understood out of relationship to the time and context that spawned, harboured and supported it" (p. 189). The chapter details the naturalistic inquiry paradigm, data collection methods used and

data analysis processes. Trustworthiness of the data, ethical consideration and the limitations of the study are also outlined.

Chapter Four: Research Methods

The previous chapter drew together Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) theory of social and cultural practices and Anthony Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration to develop a theoretical framework with which to explore the range of social relationships, practices and structures that constitute the factors affecting secondary school middle years teachers pedagogical choices.

The source of these factors are not only focused on providing the requirements to support adolescent students' development and learning. The more fluid, changing and global nature of society demands new skills and new ways of understanding. Government policy has placed more responsibility on the individual, with education becoming a commodity to enhance personal opportunity, rather than a means to promote social equity and inclusion. These factors are social in nature and are affecting the decision-making in schools, influencing the development of school structures, curriculum, pedagogy and the ways in which adolescent students engage in their learning.

To explore the interaction of these social factors the collection of rich qualitative data is required. This data must not only capture the perceptions of the participants, but must maintain the context of the social and institutional conditions of the school in which the data were collected.

This chapter discusses in detail the selection of a naturalistic enquiry paradigm as the essential tool applied in this research to explore the way in which human/social structure interaction affects teacher pedagogical choice in the classrooms of students in year seven to year nine in secondary schools. A detailed description of how the data were collected and analysed is provided. Analysis of the qualitative data led to the development of a web based questionnaire. The questionnaire emerged from the themes that resulted from the qualitative data analysis. The process for checking the data for trustworthiness is explained in detail ensuring data authenticity. The chapter is presented in four sections:

Section One: Naturalistic Inquiry Paradigm

This section addresses the selection of the naturalistic inquiry paradigm, justifying why this paradigm is appropriate for the exploration of the complex human/structure interactions seen in the school setting. The naturalistic enquiry approach is explained in detail, including application of the hermeneutic circle to the gaining of insights into how specific social interaction links with the overall phenomena being studied. How the paradigm complements the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3 is outlined.

Section Two: Scope of the Research Project

This section outlines the scope of the research project, including the school data collection and analysis.

Section Three: Web-based Questionnaire

This section discusses the development of a web-based questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed from the themes which emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data collected from the two schools involved with the research.

Section Four: Ethical Consideration

Finally the validation process which identify the trustworthiness of the data is outlined and the ethical considerations are explained.

Introduction

This research seeks to explain how the conditions of action framing the practices of secondary school middle teachers affects their pedagogical choices. The research has focused on the teachers' perspectives and has been guided by the following research questions:

- What are the components and processes involved in the pedagogical choice of secondary school middle years teachers?
- How do these components and processes influence teachers of secondary school middle years students to select or discard various classroom teaching and learning activities and approaches?
- How could school structures encourage teachers of secondary school middle years to adopt adolescent appropriate pedagogy, leading to more successful implementation of middle schooling practices?

These guiding research questions direct the inquiry to the activities of teachers of secondary school middle years students but, as highlighted by the literature review, the activities of teachers do not occur in isolation but within the social matrix of the school. The theoretical framework developed from the work of Bourdieu and Giddens, outlined in Chapter 3, provides a lens with which to examine this social matrix and the complex interactions of the people who, by their actions create and maintain the school structures.

Decisions about pedagogy that secondary school middle years teachers make are not a matter of a simple transaction between teachers and students but involve interaction with students, colleagues, principals and school structures. Within social institutions such as schools, “different realities have been constructed by the various groups and individuals in the organisation and formed the boundaries of their understandings of the organisation and provided a framework for the way they behave in it” (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993, p. 12). To present an understanding of these multiple

realities, the research has drawn upon the paradigm of naturalistic inquiry (Charmaz, 2000; Green, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

“A paradigm embodies the particular conceptual framework through which the community of researchers operates and in terms of which a particular interpretation of ‘reality’ is generated” (Carr & Kemmis, 1983, p. 72). The paradigm will guide the sense making of the phenomena being investigated and the understanding generated. It will have an impact on what are seen as acceptable forms of knowledge and the use to which the knowledge may be applied (Kuhn, 1977). To this end much educational research has been guided by positivism and what Kuhn (1977) describes as “normal science”, an approach involving scientific method which maintains the researcher as an objective observer of the phenomena (p. 270). The aim of normal science is to uncover causal links between observable events with the aim of developing laws which will guide reality. This positivist approach does not take into account people’s “unique ability to interpret our experiences and represent them to ourselves. We can and do construct theories about ourselves and our world; moreover we act on these theories” (Cohen, Mainion & Morrison, 2007, p. 18).

The epistemological position of the scientific paradigm is objectivism, where universal laws governing behaviour only need to be discovered. This is in contrast to the constructivist epistemological position of subjectivism which is aligned to the naturalist paradigm where observation is directly related to the individual’s interpretation of the experience, and so can vary between individuals (O’Hara, 2004). The positivist view maintains that it is “possible to distinguish between facts and values, and maintain that values should be kept out of science” (Oldroyd, 1986, p. 169). This distancing of values from the research process privileges the development of technical knowledge as a means to expand understanding, leading to greater power and control over people and the environment. With this approach people lack agency and are regarded as pawns controlled by external impersonal laws of nature, rather than as the creators of social structures and organisation (Carr & Kemmis, 1983).

The influence of a person’s perception of reality on social phenomena, such as choice of pedagogy, is a crucial aspect which the research must address, making the choice of a positivist scientific paradigm inappropriate. The positivist approach requires a

preconception or hypothesis to guide the investigation, leading to an examination of technical action of the teacher and the inference of causal relationships but removing the motivations of individual teachers from the teaching process (Carr & Kemmis, 1983). Without an understanding of the intentions and motivations, the actions of actors lack meaning, for example “raising one’s hand can be variously interpreted as voting, hailing a taxi, or asking for permission to speak, depending on the context and intentions of the actor” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 191). The contexts of the phenomena being observed, the motivation and intentions of the people involved are crucial to understanding social phenomena as Giddens (1993) summarises:

The failure of Anglo-American philosophy of action to develop a concern with institutional analysis is reflected in an overconcentration upon purposive conduct. Thus many authors have been inclined to assimilate ‘action’ with ‘intended action’, and ‘meaningful act’ with ‘intended outcome’; and they have not been much interested in analysing the origins of the purposes that actors endeavour to realise, which are assumed as given, or the unintended consequences that courses of purposive action serve to bring about (p. 164).

The naturalistic inquiry paradigm approaches inquiry from within the context of the research setting taking a constructivist epistemological position. Combined with the theoretical framework, the naturalistic paradigm provides a research approach capable of supporting the exploration of social practices and structures within a school setting and the relationships between teacher agency and school structures.

Section 1:

Naturalistic Inquiry Paradigm

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed the naturalistic inquiry paradigm as an alternative to the conventional inquiry paradigm of positivism which as outlined, has limitations in complex social context (Bowen, 2008; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). Naturalistic inquiry falls into the “constructivist camp” as there is no hypothesis for the investigation and “a goodly portion of social phenomena consists of meaning making

activities of groups and individuals around those phenomena” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 167). The focus of naturalistic inquiry is the understanding of the social interactions and outcomes of action from the actors’ perspective and generally addresses three broad questions:

What are the characteristics of a social phenomenon?

What are the causes of the social phenomenon?

What are the consequences of the social phenomenon? (Cohen, Mainion & Morrison, 2007, p. 169).

The characteristics of naturalistic inquiry are set out in Table 9. These characteristics frame the investigation of these broad questions into social phenomena. Conducting research in the natural setting could be seen as the hallmark characteristic of the naturalistic inquiry process as “no phenomena can be understood out of relationship to the time and context that spawned, harboured and supported it” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 189). Research conducted in complex natural settings requires a collection instrument that can adapt and change with the different circumstances encountered. This complexity requires the researcher to be the main data collecting instrument as humans are flexible and responsive and applying tacit knowledge to navigate the complexities of the research setting. As the main data collection instrument it is important that the researcher imposes no pre-supposition on the research setting and is aware of his or her own values and biases (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993).

Characteristic	Description
Natural setting	The inquiry is carried out in the natural setting of the entity being studied. This is because the entity cannot be understood in isolation and must be studied in context. The phenomenon must be studied as a whole if it is to be understood.
Human instrument	The researcher or the researcher with other humans are the primary data collecting instruments, as humans are adaptable enough to understand and adjust where needed in collecting the data in a complex setting.

Table 9: Characteristics of Naturalistic Inquiry (adapted, Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 39 – 40)

Characteristic	Description
Utilisation of tacit knowledge	Legitimate to use tacit knowledge in addition to propositional knowledge, as there is interaction between the researcher and the respondent or object that will be value laden.
Qualitative methods	Primarily but not exclusively used because they are adaptable to dealing with multiple realities and the notion of human-as-instrument.
Purposive sampling	Purposive or theoretical sampling is used as it increases the scope and range of the data to include deviant cases. Can also take into account local conditions and values.
Inductive data analysis	Inductive analysis is used to make more explicit the interactions and shaping influences that may help identify the full range of factors at work in the setting.
Grounded theory	That substantive theory emerges from the data, so that the researcher enters the research setting as neutral an observer as possible.
Emergent design	Research design is allowed to unfold to take into account the multiple realities that are potentially present in the setting.
Negotiated outcomes	Meanings and interpretations must be negotiated with the respondents as it is their reality that is being examined and thus the respondents must confirm the researcher's observations.
Case study reporting mode	Case study reporting mode is likely to be preferred as it is more adapted to a description of multiple realities encountered in the setting. Can take into account the researcher's bias.
Idiographic interpretation	Conclusions are drawn in terms of a particular case rather than in generalisations, as the setting is likely to have different values and realities to another setting.
Tentative application	Tentative broad conclusions will be made as the realities will be different from setting to setting and even the interaction between respondent and researcher may make reproducing the investigation difficult.
Focus determined boundaries	Boundaries of the inquiry are set on an emergent basis to account for the multiple realities.
Trustworthiness	Is established by thick and rich description, multiple sources and a persistence of data collection in the research setting.


Table 9 (continued): Characteristics of Naturalistic Inquiry (adapted, Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 39 – 40)

Data in naturalistic inquiry are collected using primarily qualitative methods as these produce rich accounts, containing thick descriptions which may include individual or focus group interviews, field observations, personal narratives and written documentation. Quantitative methods such as questionnaires or psychometric instruments may also be used but the aim of all methods is to understand the multiple realities of the setting, a task which requires prolonged engagement in the research setting (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). From the analysis of the collected data, relationships will emerge which may indicate that additional data collection or an adjustment of the research approach are required. This process will continue until understanding of the phenomena emerges. This understanding requires examining the detail of specific interactions and then comparing the interactions with the overall phenomena, a process Geertz (1979) describes as the hermeneutic circle:

A continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail and then most global of global structure in such a way as to bring both into view simultaneously...Hopping back and forth between the whole conceived through the parts that actualise it and the parts conceived through the whole which motivates them, we seek to turn them, by a sort of intellectual perpetual motion into explications of one another (p. 239).

Giddens (1984) extends the concept of the hermeneutic circle to be a double hermeneutic as the inquiry requires the researcher to find out what the actors in the study already know, even though it may only be known tacitly and must be articulated for the researcher. The double hermeneutic occurs as the articulation of tacit knowledge can provide insight into the actor's own practice, which may lead to a change of practice.

To gain a full appreciation of the social phenomena being investigated, Giddens (1984) identifies four levels of inquiry which support the naturalistic inquiry process,

- 
1. Hermeneutic elucidation of frames of meaning
 2. Investigation of context and form of practical consciousness
 3. Identification of bounds of knowledgeability
 4. Specification of institutional orders (p. 327)

These four levels are interrelated as considerable knowledge of 1, 2 and 4 are required to investigate 3, the bounds of knowledgeability which will allow understanding of what is intended or unintended in the context of action taken. Revealing the unacknowledged conditions of action and unintended consequences of action potentially leads to an understanding of the phenomena being observed as identification of the unintended can often clarify the relationships between the intended actions, motivations, values and outcomes.

This clarification of the relationships can prompt what Charmaz (2000) calls a “constructivist grounded theory” (p. 510). It is a constant process, as the data are coded as they are collected, allowing concepts and relationships to emerge. Additional data collection and purposeful sampling is conducted as indicated by the emerging relationships of the data until a “conceptual rendering and ordering of the data that explains the studied phenomena” occur (Charmaz, 2000, p. 511).

Following a naturalistic inquiry approach where the researcher is cognisant of the double hermeneutic nature of the research, illumination of the unacknowledged conditions of action and unintended consequences of action can be achieved. This can lead to a deep understanding of the social phenomena being investigated as the multiple realities and intentions of the actors are understood within the wider context of the social setting (Giddens, 1984). Conceptual understanding of the process can occur with the emergence of a constructivist grounded theory which can only be tentatively applied to investigate similar social settings as no social setting will match the setting in which the research was undertaken (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Section 2:

Scope of the Research Project

Although educational departments, school policies, parent expectations, student aspirations and even politicians may affect the content of the school curriculum, what happens in the classroom is finally in the hands of the classroom teacher. This research recognises the primacy of the classroom teacher in the achievement of pedagogical

change and it is the classroom teacher within the school setting who has been the focus of this research (Fullan, 1993; Gratch, 2000).

A naturalistic inquiry paradigm guides this research due to the complexity of schools and of teachers' work. Schools contain various groups who have different perspectives, motivations and intentions which relate to both the school as an organisation and the teaching and learning of students. To understand these multiple realities the collection of rich data from a range of sources is required to explore relationships between the intentions, motivations, unacknowledged conditions of action and unintended consequences of action of the various actors and structures within schools in the effort to unravel why sustained pedagogical change is so difficult to achieve (Fontana & Frey, 2003).

Figure 7 provides an overview of the data collection and analysis process. Although it is a continuous process within the naturalist inquiry paradigm, this research involved two phases of data collection and analysis. Phase one involved the collection of rich data from two schools using qualitative methods over an extended period of two years, with data being collecting in cycles as analysis indicated the direction for the next data collection cycle. Four data cycles occurred during phase one which commenced conducting interviews with teachers and Principals. The second cycle focused on teachers and their work in curriculum planning and lesson delivery. These two cycles informed the need for a third cycle. This cycle was require to explore how teacher's planning was implemented in the classroom. It concentrating on students' responses to lesson planning and delivery by observing teaching practices in the classroom and interviewing students. The final data collection returned the focus back to the teachers, questioning teachers about their practice in relation to the classroom observations and students' perspective. These four data cycles of phase one enabled the themes and identified relationships between the data developed to be check and trustworthiness of the data and interpretations to be established.

Phase two involved the construction of a web-based questionnaire to ascertain if the themes and relationships identified from the qualitative data collected during phase one were experienced by teachers in other schools. The questionnaire data were analysed

separately. The results of this analysis were then applied to the final analysis process and understanding of the phenomena of teacher pedagogical choice.

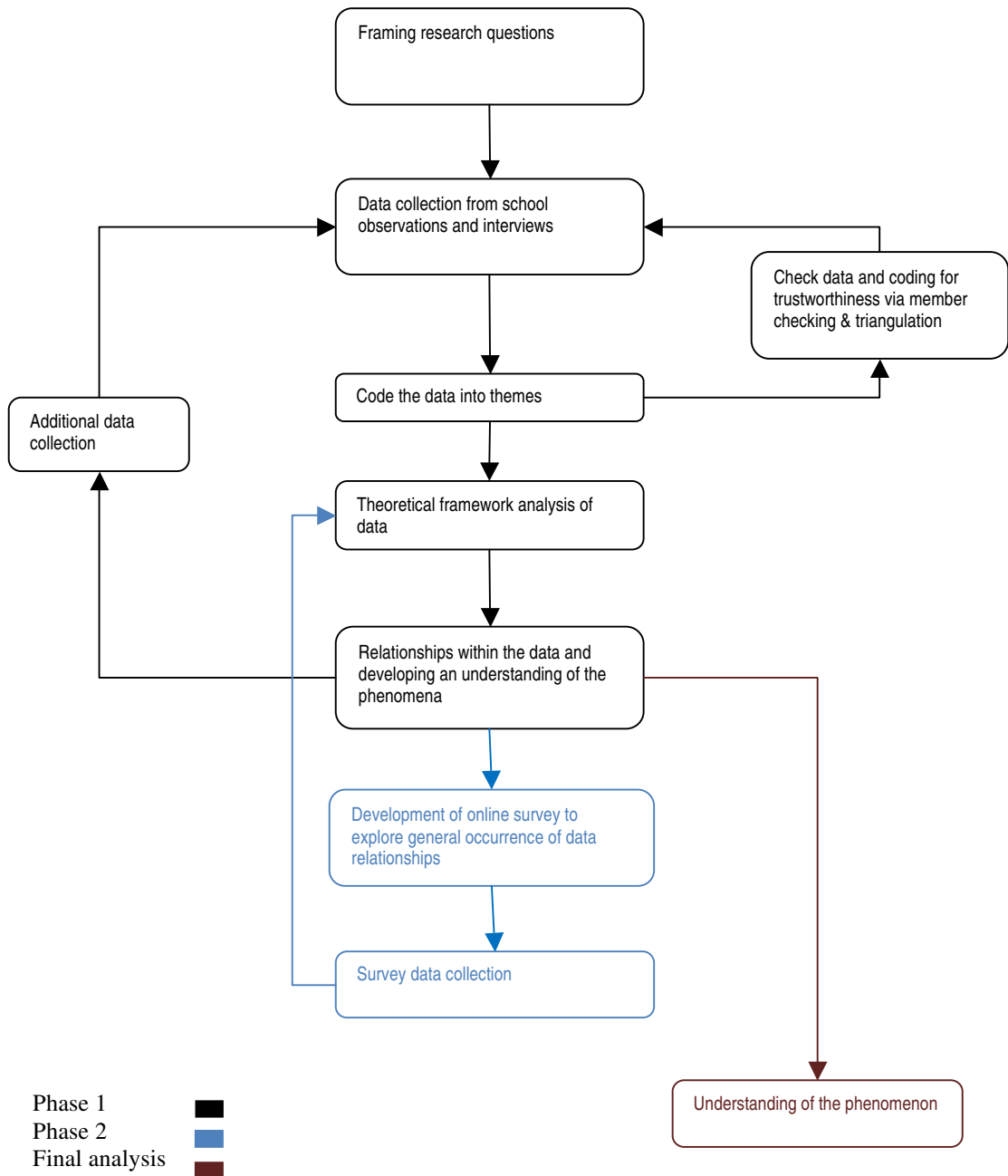


Figure 7: Data collection and analysis process

Selection of the schools and participants

For the phase one data collection, two school settings were purposefully selected for the research. The first was a school regarded as having sustained a level of middle schooling pedagogical change for a period of 10 years, and the second school which although supportive of middle years approaches had been unable to sustain a change to pedagogy in middle years classrooms. Data from field observations and interviews with teachers, students and principals were collected over a period of two years from the schools.

Schools

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) was contacted to identify schools which were considered by the department to be actively engaged in middle schooling. After contacting a number of the schools on the list, a school clearly engaged in middle years pedagogy was selected. To maintain confidentiality, this school is referred to by the fictitious name Trimble Secondary College. The second school which took part in the study, referred to by the fictitious name Riverside Secondary College, was not on the DEECD list of schools actively engaged in middle schooling. The Principal at Riverside agreed to the school participating in the research but acknowledged that although supportive of middle schooling, the school had been unsuccessful in achieving pedagogical change in middle years classrooms. The communities of Riverside and Trimble had many similarities as both schools were situated in regional areas. Both serviced small towns and surrounding rural communities, where buses were provided to students from outlying areas. The social demographics of the areas were similar with the Trimble community having higher unemployment rates, lower post school education completion and a lower average annual income than the Riverside community (ABS, 2006).

The selection of the two schools for the research has been a combination of convenience through the principals being supportive of the research and purposeful by the schools' level of engagement with middle schooling being self identified by the school and externally acknowledged by DEECD. The two contrasting levels of engagement of the

schools with middle schooling and the similarities of social and geographical context of the surrounding school communities provided opportunities to compare the structures, processes and activities of the schools including those related to adolescent pedagogy.

Participants

School participants for the research included three groups: principals, teachers and students. Principals from both schools gave consent for the school to participate in the research. The principals at both schools and the assistant principal at Trimble also consented to be interviewed to discuss school structures, curriculum and pedagogical approaches around classroom pedagogy.

All teachers at the two schools were provided with an overview of the research through a short presentation by the researcher at a school staff meeting. Teachers with more than 50 percent of teaching responsibilities connected to year levels seven through to nine were invited to participate in the research. Five teachers across the two schools consented to participate with one teacher having to decline due to other commitments, leaving two teachers at each school participating in the research.

Student participants became involved in the research after one year of data collection. This participation became apparent as the analysis of the teacher data indicated the importance of the students' perspective in unravelling the influences on teachers' pedagogical choice. The development of the data collection during the research is characteristic of a naturalistic inquiry approach and the application of a hermeneutic cycle in data analysis, responding to the needs of the inquiry rather than following a fixed research proposition or hypothesis (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993).

Students from a range of year levels from year seven to year nine were invited to participate in group interviews with information on the research being sent home to parents as part of the consent processes. Students and their parents or guardians consenting to the group interviews came from a cross section of classes with some students being taught by the teachers participating in the research. A total of 12 students, six from each school, participated in a total of four group interviews.

Data Collection and Analysis

A range of approaches were taken in the phase one data collection of the research. Multiple data procedures increased the accuracy and trustworthiness of the data and subsequent interpretations and analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The approaches included participant interviews with teachers and principals, classroom observations, student group interviews and field observations.

Data Collection and Analysis Cycles

The data collection occurred in cycles, which were guided by the analysis of the data and the emerging themes (see Appendix 1 for an overview of the data collection cycles). The first cycle commenced with audio-recorded semi-structured teacher interviews (see Appendix 2) which focused on the teachers' backgrounds in teaching, personal educational philosophy and general history with the school. These initial interviews also covered teachers' thoughts on the general impressions of the school held by the wider community and students. The initial teacher interviews were focused on gaining a perspective of the school from the teachers and on developing researcher-participant rapport, the achievement of which enhances the research process, as the researcher is more easily able to understand the participant's point of view if a trusting relationship is developed (Fontana & Frey, 2003). Semi-structured interviews with principals (see Appendix 3) were also part of the first cycle in gaining the principals' perspective of the school and wider school community. The combination of these initial interviews provided an overview of the school culture and the community which the school serves.

The second cycle focused on audio-recorded semi-structured interviews with teachers and explored their planning and teaching practices within the context of the school (see Appendix 4). This second interview investigated the different ways teachers went about planning for immediate daily requirements, short term or weekly requirements and long term or semester requirements of teaching. These interviews highlighted aspects of the teacher's education philosophy and the practical activities they were engaged in to plan and implement classroom pedagogy.

Classroom observations of a variety of classes (12 across the two schools over a school term) taught by the teachers were conducted to examine how the teachers' planning

translated into classroom practices. These observations were conducted after the second interview data had been coded and analysed enabling the development of a classroom observation checklist (see Appendix 5). Classroom observations were recorded at convenient times during and directly after the class to keep the influence of the researcher's presence in the classroom to a minimum.

The need for students' perspectives within the research was highlighted by the data analysis leading to the third cycle of data collection. This required the seeking of further ethics clearance for the inclusion of group interviews with the students. Audio-recorded semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 6), conducted with students in groups of three, explored their perspectives about the school and their thoughts about the teaching and learning activities which occurred in their classrooms. Group interviews were chosen to provide peer support for students, making the interview process less formal for the young people involved (Fontana & Frey, 1998). However, it was important to be aware of 'group think' occurring within the group where one or a few voices can be dominant throughout the interview (Fontana & Frey, 1998). These issues were generally avoided due to the small number of participants in each group, allowing opportunities for all students to voice their opinions.

The fourth and final data collection cycle involved interviewing the teachers once the student data and observation data had been coded and analysed. This final audio-recorded semi-structured interview allowed checking of themes which had emerged across the data collection cycles (see Appendix 7 for themes).

Field Observations and Informal Interviews

Field observations and informal interviews occurred throughout all of the data collection cycles adding another layer of information to support the formal data collection process (Fontana & Frey, 2003). People who work in school environments are very mobile, moving between classrooms, staff rooms and offices as they attend to the different activities of teaching, preparation and administration. This movement provides many opportunities for discussions around school structures and teaching practices to occur informally in hallways, staffrooms and shared offices as teachers 'run into' each other in the course of their daily activities. Observations of these discussions were recorded in a research diary, as were informal interviews between participating

teachers and principals with the researcher, which occurred while moving between classrooms or over a cup of tea at recess or lunch.

Data Analysis Process

Formal semi-structured interviews conducted with teachers, principals and students were digitally audio-recorded and then directly transcribed via computer as Word files. Classroom observations, field observations and informal interviews were recorded as hand written notes in a research diary. The notes from the diary were also transcribed via computer as Word files. All of the transcribed interviews and diary note Word files were loaded into the computer data organisational tool NVivo for coding and analysis (Richards & Morse, 2007). NVivo was used over the course of the research to manage the data, coding the data into nodes which were developed into themes as the data collection progressed.

The coding of data occurred towards the end of each data collection cycle as the themes emerging from the data were used to inform the next collection cycle (see appendix 7 for the themes which emerged). This collection-analysis-collection process allowed the researcher to examine specific activities such as teachers' planning conversations and then to view these activities in the broader context of the whole school structures following Geertz's (as cited in Schwandt, 2000) hermeneutic circle of local detail to global context to local detail, developing an understanding of the whole phenomena being investigated. This was an important aspect of the data analysis as the research was focused on understanding the influences on the teachers' pedagogical decision making, an activity embedded within the school structures (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Reading each line of the transcripts and identifying key ideas as themes achieved coding of the data. As themes emerged, meaning behind the actions of individuals and groups became apparent which could be explored through the next data collection cycle, building a picture of the social interaction and the outcomes of actors' actions (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Memos were written as connections between the data were identified with the links to the memos being maintained in the NVivo program, allowing these reflections to be easily reviewed and modified as the data collection cycles and coding progressed. Missing data such as the students' perspectives were identified during the

data analysis and were then included. This process allowed concepts to be explored fully and ensured all aspects of the phenomena could be considered (Charmaz, 2000). Constant comparison of the data throughout the research was informed by the theoretical framework developed from the work of Bourdieu (1984) and Giddens (1984, 1991). The comparison led to the identification of relationships between the themes leading to the development of the final themes which appear central in teacher choice of pedagogy in the schools being investigated.

Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Data and Research

As with any research, it is important that the reader feels that the data presented are valid and that the arguments mounted to explain the phenomena are worthy of consideration (Adler & Adler, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Without trustworthy and credible data the understanding drawn from the data would lack validity and have little value in assisting in understanding the activities observed in other similar contexts or settings. In naturalistic inquiry, trustworthiness of the research relates to how accurately the participants' realities have been represented and to the rigour of interpretations of the social phenomena being investigated (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The trustworthiness and credibility of the research can be supported by a series of strategies as outlined in Table 10. These strategies are focused on ensuring the authentic and accurate representation and interpretation of actors' realities of the social phenomena being investigated (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Strategy to ensure trustworthiness	Summary of strategy
Prolonged engagement	The researcher must spend enough time within the setting to overcome distortions due to his or her presence, his or her biases and effect of seasonal events.
Persistent observations	Continued observations to develop thick description of the setting and social interaction to identify relationships between events, persons and social contexts.

Table 10: Summary of trustworthiness strategies (adapted from Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993, pp. 30-31)

Strategy to ensure trustworthiness	Summary of strategy
Triangulation	Data should be collected from a range of perspectives, as every social context will be made up of multiple realities. It is important to seek out negative case perspectives to ensure all perspectives are examined.
Referential adequacy of material	Material and data must be collected to give a holistic view of the context being studied.
Peer debriefing	The researcher should step out of the context being studied and review the perceptions and insights being studied with professionals outside the context.
Member checking	Because interpretations are developed from a range of individual accounts and observations, it is important to verify both data and interpretations with the individuals of the study.

Table 10 (continued): Summary of trustworthiness strategies (adapted from Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993, pp. 30-31)

This study engaged with the research context for a prolonged period, underpinning the trustworthiness and credibility of the research. The data collection cycles occurred over a period of two years at each school, enabling a deep understanding of the different school settings. Developing an understanding of the research context is important, as “the researcher must take the role of the respondent and attempt to see the situation from their point of view” (Fontana & Frey, 2003, p. 78). Understanding the respondents was also enhanced by the two year time frame, allowing rapport and trust to develop between the researcher and participants.

Collecting the data in a series of four cycles allowed many opportunities to check participants’ statements and research interpretations of field and class observations. The double hermeneutic circle which Giddens (1984) identifies as occurring with activities such as data checking did not appear to alter practices but did appear to raise the teacher participants’ awareness of their own pedagogical practices and school structures. This awareness was seen over the period of the research, as teacher participants over time seemed to provide greater insights into school structures and the outcomes of classroom teaching and learning activities (Research diary, 2007).

The research settings of the two schools were complex, presenting a wide range of individuals and groups who had different perspectives on the school processes and structures. To gain a sense of these multiple realities, it was important for the researcher to collect data from a range of sources, a process referred to as triangulation (Cohen, Mainion & Morrison, 2007). Field and class observations were combined with teacher, principal and student interviews presenting multiple perspectives on the broad context of the schools involved.

The researcher as the main data collecting agent provided the level of flexibility required for the data collection process and was enhanced by the tacit knowledge of the researcher derived from 15 years teaching experience in secondary schools. However, it was important for the researcher to be aware of personal bias and influence on the research setting, leading to the recording of reflections in the research diary to monitor personal feelings, as some personal responses may have influenced the data collection (Brymer, 2002). This reflective process was extended to the data analysis through discussions of the development of themes with university colleagues, a process referred to by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as “peer debriefing” at regular intervals through the data collection cycles (p. 308). Peer debriefing assists the researcher to review and question the themes and relationships being drawn, looking for possible bias or inconsistencies.

The prolonged engagement in the two school settings, developing trusted and respectful relationships with the participants, continuous comparison of data identifying missing data, looking for negative case perceptions, member checking of the data, triangulation and opportunities to formally reflect on the research process have supported the data trustworthiness. These checks combined with the detailed description of the school contexts and richness of the data collected from a range of sources ensured the inclusion of the multiple realities of the participants involved in the research.

Section 3:

Web-based Questionnaire

From the analysis of the qualitative data collected at Trimble and Riverside Colleges four themes emerged which are discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Using the theoretical

framework, the themes provided an understanding of how the social practices and structures influence the pedagogical choice of secondary school middle years teachers at Trimble and Riverside Colleges. In particular teacher collaboration was identified as an important social practice which can promote the use of middle schooling pedagogy. As each social setting is unique, the understanding of social practice developed from the study of Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges can only be tentatively applied to other schools (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Willig, 2008). With this in mind a web-based questionnaire was developed to establish if the themes, social practices and structures affecting teachers pedagogical choice at Trimble and Riverside were present at other schools. The questionnaire had two foci: to gain a description of teacher's perspectives and teaching activities and to identify possible relationships between teacher collaboration and the use of middle school pedagogy. As identified by Bryman (2006), the use of web-based questionnaires and surveys to explore themes developed from qualitative studies is becoming more widely used in social research.

Development of the Survey

Table 11 summarises the connection of the four themes identified from the qualitative data with the sections of the questionnaire.

Themes from analysis of the school qualitative data	Section in questionnaire
School Perspectives	Section 1: Perspectives on the school Section 2: Parents Section 3: Students
Educational philosophy	Section 4: Teaching perspectives
Teaching practice	Section 5: Teaching activities Section 8: Use of teacher time
Planning for teaching	Section 6: Planning for teaching Section 7: Influences on teacher planning Section 9: Promoting effective teaching

Table 11: Connection of themes with questionnaire sections

The structure of the questions within the various sections and questionnaire format were developed with reference to three major studies: Council of Ministers Education, Canada (CMEC) School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) 2004, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) Staff in Australian

Schools (SiAS) 2007 and United States of America Consortium for Policy Research Education Study of Instructional Improvement (SII) 2004. All three studies used questionnaires to collect data on teachers' background and classroom teaching practices. In particular the SAIP science teacher questionnaire explored various aspects of teachers' work with regular administration of the questionnaire since 1996 (CMEC, 2004). The SAIP questionnaire focused on the collection of descriptive data which guided the teaching of science:

Questions were asked about teachers' professional background and experience, teaching assignments and duties, class sizes, interaction with parents and other teachers, lesson planning, classroom activities, resource use, constraints on teaching, homework and student evaluation. Teachers were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a number of propositions about the nature of science, factors affecting student learning and streaming of high school students (CMEC, 2004, p. 110).

The longitudinal nature of the SAIP study and the descriptive nature of the data collection have provided confidence in the appropriateness of the questionnaire design for collecting teacher data. The layout and design of the SAIP teacher questionnaire, science III assessment (2004) has informed the development process of the web-based questionnaire used in this study.

The questionnaire entitled 'Teaching in years 7 to 9, what are the influences?' was divided into nine sections with a total of 134 items covering the four themes derived from the qualitative data (see appendix 8). Response to the questions in each section of the questionnaire was via Likert-type scales as set out in Table 12. The four point scale web-based format for the questionnaire was chosen for ease of completion as computer based questionnaires have become more common and are becoming the preferred method of completion by respondents (Hardre, Crowson, Xie & Ly, 2007). A neutral category was not included in the scale to encourage respondents to make a choice. Schuman and Presser (1981) have shown that there is no effect on the final distribution of responses with scales omitting a neutral option. Respondents also had the option of not answering questions as incomplete questionnaires were able to be submitted.

The questionnaire was piloted via the web based survey tool SurveyMonkey (1999 - 2010) on a small sample of five secondary school teachers to obtain feedback on the clarity of the questions and ease of completion. As a result of the feedback, minor changes were made to the wording of some questions and the layout. Piloting of the web-based system confirmed that participants would take between 30 to 40 minutes to complete all nine sections.

Questionnaire section	Likert-type scale
Section1: Perspectives on the school	Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.
Section 2: Parent	Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.
Section 3: Student	Most, many, some, few.
Section 4: Teaching perspectives	Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.
Section 5: Teaching activities	Every lesson, weekly, monthly, once a semester, never.
Section 6: Planning for teaching	Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.
Section 7: Influences on teacher planning	Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.
Section 8: Use of teacher time	Less than 1hr, 2-5 hrs, 6-10hrs, 11-15hrs, more than 20hrs.
Section 9: Promoting effective teaching	Essential, very important, important, not important.

Table 12: Likert-type scales used with each questionnaire section

Administration of the Questionnaire

The survey was uploaded onto the web-based survey tool SurveyMonkey (1999-2010) for administration and collection of questionnaire data. SurveyMonkey allows respondents to complete the survey from any computer connected to the Internet, providing a secure site for storage of data and anonymity for respondents as the respondents' Internet protocol (IP) address were not stored.

School principals from a number of schools in the western suburbs of Melbourne were approached by letter and follow up phone calls inviting their schools to participate in a web-based questionnaire, 'Teaching years 7-9, what are the influences?' which explored the influences on the take up of middle years pedagogy. Only 4 of the 18 schools approached agreed to participate and a short presentation on the research was given at staff meetings at each school inviting teachers to complete the questionnaire. Teachers who agreed to participate in the questionnaire provided their email addresses. These addresses were used to provide teachers with a link to the questionnaire. All teachers were sent a follow up thankyou/reminder email as in the interest of anonymity survey completion was not recorded, two weeks after the original request. Of the 109 teachers emailed, 57 teachers completed the questionnaire, a response rate of 52 percent, which is within the general range of response rates for web-based questionnaires of between 30 and 50 percent (Cook, Heath and Thompson, 2000).

Analysis of the Questionnaire Data

Data from the questionnaire was analysed using descriptive statistics to examine the perspectives and the activities of the teacher respondents. The survey responses were down loaded from SurveyMonkey as Excel spreadsheets and the Likert-type scales converted to numerical values and entered into the SPSS Version 18 data analysis software.

Due to the small number of respondents, the data analysis should be viewed as descriptive and only providing an indication of teachers' experiences in other schools rather than being directed towards generalisation of the qualitative data. A mean response for each questionnaire item was calculated and expressed as a percentage to provide a picture of the respondents' perspectives and activities around teaching and learning. To establish possible relationships between teacher collaboration and the use and/or implementation of middle years pedagogy, the questionnaire items relating to these perceptions were computed into four new variables to explore possible relationships, as summarised in Table 13. Development of these new variables combined from the questionnaire items improves the validity of any relationships that emerged between the data, as the new variables are not reliant on only one response but made up of several responses relating to perception being investigated (DeVaus, 2002). Each new variable was tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha score (see Table

13) with the scores indicating the reliability should be treated with caution as the score for three of the variables falls slightly below the “rule of thumb” scale of .7 (Brace, Kemp & Snelgar, 2006, p. 331).

New variable	Questionnaire item (see appendix 8 for item codes)	Cronbach’s Alpha
Teacher Collaboration	PS3, PS5, PS8, PT4, PT6, PT11, IP3, IP5, IP6	.697
Support of middle schooling practices	TP1, TP2, TP3, TP4, TP6, TP8, TP9, TP10, TP11, TP13, TP15, TP16	.813
Applying middle years pedagogy	TA3, TA5, TA7, TA9, TA15	.686
Document teaching practices	PT1, PT2, PT3, PT4, IP1	.609

Table 13: New variable connection to items & Cronbach’s alpha score

Section 4:

Ethical Considerations

This research involved teachers, principals and secondary school students as participants in the research. Due to the evolving nature of the research, three ethics applications, one for the interviews with teachers and principals, a second for student interviews and observations and a third for the web-based questionnaire were made to safeguard all involved. Participation at all stages of the research was voluntary and all participants were able to end their participation at any time. Consent was obtained from all participants with consent to interview secondary school students being obtained from both the students and their parents or guardians.

Confidentiality of the participants and the schools involved was important to ensure the participants were comfortable and honest in expressing their views. To ensure confidentiality, the names of participants were not linked to the data and fictitious names have been used for participants and the schools within this final report to protect privacy but allow the data to be presented in a rich and engaging way. Confidentiality of questionnaire data has been maintained with Internet protocol (IP) addresses of computers accessing the web-hosting site not being recorded. All the questionnaire data

were aggregated prior to analysis so that the different participating schools were not identified.

Risks to those involved in the research have been minimal as all discussion and observations have been related to activities taking place in the public arena of the school community. Personal background information was only collected from teachers and this only related to their professional history.

Limitations of the Research

The aim of this research was to examine the social and structural factors which affect the pedagogical choice of secondary school middle years teachers to better understand the school change process. Expanding the research to include a web-based questionnaire was a first step in exploring whether the relationships between components and processes that emerged from the school-based studies occurred in other school settings. The focus has been to understand the influences on pedagogical choice conceptualised within social/cultural and structuration theories.

A number of limitations need to be taken into account when determining the implications and applications of the findings of this research study:

- The small number of schools involved in the study provides data from only two school settings.
- In each school only a small number of teachers were involved in the formal interview process. Although other teaching staff provided comment via informal conversations, the data reflects the perspectives of only a small sample of teachers from the total teaching staff at each school.
- The web-based questionnaire obtained an expected return rate for questionnaires of this nature but due to the small number of schools who consented to participate, the total number of respondents did not allow for extensive statistical analysis.

Chapter Summary

The naturalistic inquiry paradigm, which complement the theoretical framework developed from the work of Bourdieu and Giddens, has enabled examination of social practices and structures that influence the pedagogical choice of secondary school middle years teachers. Naturalistic inquiry takes a constructivist approach to the research collecting rich accounts of qualitative data in the context of the research setting. Maintaining the context of data is essential if the structural, institutional and social conditions in which those practices are located are to be understood.

Naturalistic inquiry enables the complexity of social phenomena to be understood as the data are analysed as they are collected, with the analysis from one data collection cycle informing the next data collection cycle. This allows the researcher to examine the detail of specific social interactions and then compare these understandings to the overall phenomena in an hermeneutic circle thus gaining insight into the interaction of individual actors and social structures. Themes emerge as research progresses with opportunities to clarify relationships between data and develop constructivist grounded theory to understand the phenomena being observed.

These relationships which supported aspects of the grounded theory were explored in other schools by collecting data through a web-based questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed from the themes which emerged from the qualitative data collected and sought to establish if the social practices identified at Trimble and Riverside Colleges were present in schools more widely. It must be remembered that social settings are unique and the findings in one setting should only be applied tentatively to other similar settings.

Having a clear understanding of the research setting is essential to understanding the findings of the research and the appropriateness of using the insights developed to understand phenomena in other similar settings, as a finding from “qualitative research is concerned with description and explanation but not prediction” (Willig, 2008, p. 158).

To understand the context of the research setting the next chapter presents snapshots of each school from the perspectives of the principal, teachers and students. Each

perspective brings a different understanding of the research setting and provides an understanding of the complexity of the data collected. This understanding of the research setting is important when interpreting the data presented in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, as without context, the data loses meaning (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Chapter 5: Our School

This chapter provides a snapshot of each school involved in the collection of qualitative data. The snapshots present the school from the perspectives of the principal, teachers and students and paint a picture of each school which will enhance the meaning of the data analysis presented in Chapter 6. Each school was purposefully selected for the research by the level of engagement with middle schooling. Trimble Secondary College was selected as a school with high levels of engagement with middle schooling as the school has implemented and maintained a number of middle years practices for a period of 10 years. Riverside Secondary College although supportive in principle of middle schooling has been unable to achieve and sustained changes to pedagogy, curriculum or school organisation in the middle years. Both schools are located in regional Victoria, Australia, with each servicing a small town and rural community.

An overview of each school's surrounding community characteristics demonstrates the similar nature of the socio-economic characteristics of the two school communities. The data presented portrays communities with people from a range of socio-economic background, including people with a level of economic and social disadvantage. Understandings from Bourdieu's theory of social and cultural practice would indicate each community contains a range of social groups and habitus which would be reflected in the school classrooms.

Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges serve similar communities but have different perspectives on how to support the learning of adolescent students which extend beyond the use or non use of middle years practices. Each school has developed different structures in the way teachers plan and practice teaching. These structures can be both enabling and restricting to the pedagogical choices of secondary school middle years teachers. The school snapshots provide an overview of the differences between the schools, which will enrich the understanding of the data, and discussion presented in the following chapters.

Introduction

Schools are social structures, which have developed and are maintained by social practices over time and space to become identifiable institutions (Giddens, 1984). The schools involved in the research, as with schools across Australia, have the key actors including principals, teachers and students who reproduce the school practices and thus schools as institutions. The following snapshots from the principals, teachers and students provide a window into each schools' practices.

These snapshots have been developed by carefully combining a selection of comments and observations collected during formal interviews, casual interviews and participant observations. The snapshots of each school provide a 'narrative' of the school's context from the different perspectives of the key groups who are part of the school community. The snapshots provide the context for the data analysis, presented in Chapters 6 and 7, consisting of emerging themes and the nature of relationships between those themes that appear connected with pedagogical choice.

The community in which a school is located will affect the development of the school as a social structure. To understand the possible community influences on Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges an overview of each community's socio-economic characteristics is provided. The statistical data for the two regions are set out in Table 14 and indicate some similarities. Both regions are outside the Melbourne metropolitan area with each school situated in a small town that services the surrounding rural community. From an economic perspective Trimble's community is slightly disadvantaged compared to Riverside's community with a higher unemployment rate, less average total income and a smaller percentage of the population involved in professional or managerial employment. Both communities have a dominant Anglo-Saxon background with very small numbers of people who do not speak English at home. The spread of occupations across the both communities demonstrates a diverse range of social groups. In terms of Bourdieu's theory of social and cultural practices, these social groups will have different practices resulting from the action of each community's distinctive combination of habitus and capital. Although geographically

distant from each other the two schools confront similar teaching and learning issues due to the similarities in the community's socio-economic characteristics.

Characteristics - 2006	Victoria	Riverside	Trimble
Population	4 932 422	4 286	7692
Unemployment	5.3%	6.2%	9.8%
Occupations			
• Managers	13.5%	15%	9.0%
• Professionals	20.8%	15.7%	12.5%
• Technical & trade	14.0%	15.8%	16.6%
• Community & Personal services	8.4%	9.4%	11.7%
• Clerical & administration	14.8%	12.7%	5.3%
• Sales	10.1%	9.3%	10.3%
• Machinery operators & drivers	6.6%	7.0%	8.6%
• Labourers	9.9%	13.6%	14.3%
• Not stated	2.0%	1.4%	1.7%
Persons with post school qualification	52.5%	49.6%	43.9%
Average total income (2005)	\$40 393	\$38 716	\$34 338
Born overseas	25.4%	11.8%	8.6%
Speaks a language other than English at home	21.5%	3.2%	2.0%

Table 14: Socio-economic characteristics of the school's towns compared with the State of Victoria (ABS, 2008)

Trimble Secondary College

Principal

Trimble is currently reviewing its direction as we prepare to move to the new school site. There is a focus on relationship building and community building as well. The teaching and learning is based around relationships with the classrooms using the 'teams small groups' model, which originated in Germany where students are assigned a table group of four to five students. The focus is on learning together and developing the social skills needed to work cooperatively. Something we generally refer to as table groups. The introduction of VELs has really helped us, as we'll have a lesser concern about subjects and more about the essential things that kids need to learn. There will be subject content in terms of literacy, numeracy, personal learning, which is fairly large in terms of relationships and skills sets you need for general living. Applied learning is

a focus, as is assessment of student learning. We have a lot more work to do on that, the notion of assessment as learning, rather than assessment of learning.

From the parent opinion survey there are concerns about the school. Parents would see it as nurturing but I think they would also say we have a fair issue with bullying around the school. That is a lot of what I get on the phone. The kids would see it as a bit feral, their word, but they would also see it as knowing there is someone (teacher) that takes an interest and cares. There has been a change from last year to this year around student behaviour. There's a whole lot more happening in terms of relationship building. If the kids have a disagreement, you can sort things out as people, rather than just power. Still there are a number disengaged kids, four or five in a class and they can dominate, but things have improved dramatically since 2003.

There is a lot of collegiality and a sense of working to make things better amongst the staff. Monday nights' meetings are about professional learning. A key thing that we did last year, and we're doing it again this year, teachers are taking on action research. So we're picking things that people need to be doing in the way we operate. A couple of people are doing habits of mind. That started with one teacher. Now there'd be about three or four and they're doing different elements of it. We've got three teachers who are doing stuff on assessment as learning and there'd be other people doing other elements. So we're trying to build up expertise. Staff feel well prepared for VELs and PoLT this year, because we've been doing what we call instructional intelligence, which is like PoLT, that's the Canadian name for it and we've been doing that since 2004.

Teachers

We would not be seen as an academic school even though many of the kids go on to do very well. Trimble has a reputation as a school with some hard kids and I guess kids go home and say, "there was this kid who swore at a teacher", or whatever. That said, I think parents and kids recognise what the teachers do and that they care about the kids. Some parents say it is fantastic and it might depend on the classes their kids are in and the teachers their kids have, I am sure that makes a difference. The difficulty is some of the parents don't value education. It is a tough background for many kids, which makes it difficult, a lot are just marking time.

I think it is a great school in terms of a fantastic staff which is why I have chosen to stay here with all the travelling and so forth. The staff are fantastic. There is huge support here. It is a really close-knit staff with lots of support. It is a hard school but the staff support is the unique thing that we have got here. I am not sure if it is because we have a junior campus, just to have a seven and eight and a small staff. Everyone isn't just here for themselves, you can say what you think and be really honest. Everything is out in the open in all ways, including sharing ideas for classes. If someone new comes in or is teaching in a new area, everyone is happy to pass on ideas and share curriculum. Support with the classroom when things are going haywire, all aspects.

With the home group I have got there are some challenging kids, but we also have some wonderfully talented kids. I'd say most kids like the school, but I suspect the management problems we have with some of them makes it more difficult for them. Last night, no, the night before was the music night where all the kids that learn an instrument put on a show I am not exaggerating; it blew me away, the talent. We had big bands, a year 12 girl singing, flautist, pianist and a belly dancer. The point I am making is there were probably only 40 people there. So it says a lot about our community. It was fantastic but the small number of people who attended...a tragedy.

Students

Our school is pretty good as long as you stay away from the ferals. The teachers are good and stuff. It is easy to make friends. Everyone has their big group of friends and if you stay away from the ferals and whoever you don't get on with, then things work out pretty much all right. We need new equipment, but we are moving to a new school anyway, so it's all right.

We have this club on Fridays where you get to pick what you want to do and stuff. We have things such as fishing and bike riding. You get an application form and get to choose what you want to do and do it for eight weeks and then it swaps each term.

Mr Taylor is good. He is one of the better teachers. At the start of the year we did games to get to know each other. Then we got put in to table groups and there was only one person we knew in the group and did lots of team activities. In a lot of other classes there is a lot of conflict and different groups and stuff and they don't want to... they

have an attitude they hate school and just want to crack it. There are other good teachers like Miss Elms. She will sometimes discuss an issue that is going on in the school, even if they don't have anything to do with us and she will discuss it with us, so we know what is going on.

(Interviews and observations 2005 – 2006)

The perspectives of the principal, teachers and students had many aspects in common at Trimble with a number of the middle schooling practices discussed in Chapter 2 and summarised in Table 1, being mentioned by all actors. Development of relationships was a characteristic emphasised by all actors, supporting the middle schooling pedagogy of developing small learning communities built on respectful relationships. Other middle schooling characteristics discussed included, assessment that promotes learning, providing students with a home base, teaching a core academic program and providing a range of authentic learning opportunities. Middle schooling practices were strongly promoted by the principal and established by the collaborative practices teachers use to plan teaching actively sharing resources and ideas with colleagues.

The diverse nature of the community which surrounds Trimble was stressed by all actors. The effects of habitus was seen in a range of responses; the students referred to as 'ferals' being disengaged, in comparison to the engaged students at the music night. There was also a teacher a perception that some parents did place much importance on education. Habitus also influenced the behaviour of teachers with the differences in teacher effectiveness being noted by both students and teachers. It appears that some teachers connected more effectively with students than others, and some teachers had more success in using middle years practices than others.

Riverside Secondary College

Principal

Firstly, Riverside is a school that serves the local community, so that is our starting point. There is a strong sense that it is a non-sectarian school. In the sense we do not push any one philosophy we are here to serve the needs of the local community and how they are at the moment. Our sense is that it is a very needy community in a socio-economic sense and that has impacts on student behaviour and how teachers are able to teach.

There is a strong sense that parents don't value education in the sort of support we get from families, I am not talking all families but broadly speaking there is some tension in how the community values or does not value education compared with the value we (education professionals) place on education. Now that is a very broad generalisation. Of course there are many parents that value education highly. Last year we had two students go through to medicine. So that is why I say we should be very proud of what we achieve with the clientele we get.

Riverside has a strong social conscience that recognises if we don't give this kid a go he is not going to get it up the road. We continue to persist with kids longer than one might in many other settings. I think that is recognition of our social conscience and responsibility to this community. There are a number of parents that are choosing the school because of our welfare support which is well embedded and links well into the community. This in turn means we are getting more of that sort of clientele that have significant needs. Other reasons are technology and VET. We have the best in the area in that regard, so people who want their kids to have a "hands on" education would be sending their kids here and there are those who choose the school because of the music program. Beyond that, I think it is convenience.

The staff are basically supportive and becoming more team orientated and more supportive, but we are still locked into a "teacher in a box" and the lack of flexibility that results in. My sense of change is, incremental is the best way. It is the most sustainable in my philosophy. We create the sense we are moving forward that links back to our school motto of "Onward and Upward". So you try and use those sorts of things because they are embedded in the school culture and ethos.

Teachers

I think we have a hangover of being a tech school¹, which it was before becoming a Secondary College. We have good tech equipment so I think you tend to get more boys here. The school has always fought hard to get good results and we have the VET program. Alternatives to VCE have always been taken seriously here I guess it is part of our history as a tech school.

Footnote: 1. Technical schools were part of a dual secondary school system in Victoria. From the mid 1900s, junior technical schools specialised in teaching manual trades. Junior technical secondary schools became general comprehensive schools with the introduction of VCE in the 1990s (Blake, 1973; Navartnam, 1992).

People have come to the school on the basis of what we are doing and what we are not doing. Over a long period of time the school has been known for caring, good for struggling kids or kids that need special assistance.

Being a home group teacher, I speak to parents a fair bit and most are moderately positive. Riverside has a history of being a working class school and there has always been friction about middle-class people teaching working-class kids. At times the parents support the kids in discipline matters against the school. We (the teachers) think the best place for the kid is at school, so you back down.

The school has always had a friendly and supportive staff although some of the younger teachers are not very happy, finding they are not getting enough support and struggling with difficult classes. I think it is to do with time constraints, with people not having enough time to give them, because generally it has been very supportive.

If you did a survey with the students you would get some interesting answers. It would be coloured by the kids who are not happy and the kids that are happy. Some would say the teachers are shit. Most are happy and some kids find likeminded kids and get through doing very well and are very happy here. We can lay claim to one girl who got 99.4. She got kicked out one of the other schools. Bit of a genius, she came in year 10, so we may have had an influence. Overall kids who do well have strong family backgrounds and support too.

Students

The school has a long history and turned 150 years old recently. It's a sporty school with people going to all sorts of sporting activities where people represent our school and do quite well. It is musical and has tech stuff, quite different to other schools, wood tech, auto, metal work, plastics, sewing... a good tech school.

Some stuff is done in school and some after school. Mountain biking is always on weekends and band practice is after school. I guess there are a lot of people in the school and lots of people want to do it. Your friends decide so you go in it as well and people are having fun and they are successful. Like the concert band, bands and the choir went to Tasmania to perform.

You stay in the same group in year seven and eight. I think it is a good thing because you get to know people and make good friendship groups. After two years you can be good friends with them. Sometimes people don't get on but generally everyone has friends.

The teachers have expectations of what they want us to do. My (science) teacher gives us homework and he sets a date to be completed. We are not allowed to do prac until it is done. I think in some classes some kids muck around and keep pushing and pushing them (the teacher) and make it hard so the teacher gets pissed off with them and doesn't want to do the interesting stuff. Yeah that's why everything is writing. It's the easiest way to make sure people are working I think.

(Interviews and observations 2005-2006)

Very few of the middle schooling practices discussed in Chapter 2 were apparent at Riverside with the practical subjects providing opportunities for hands on learning. Although students commented on making friends easily and being kept in the same class group during years seven and eight, the teaching and learning activities of the classroom were individually focused. This individual approach to learning appeared to be the common approach at Riverside. The principal and teachers were aware of the different needs of students but attribute this to habitus, as illustrated by the belief that parents do not value education. There were students who do achieve academically and these students were seen by the principal and teachers as successes, generally with the students having a broader appreciation of the school's attributes. This difference may be due to a difference in habitus and the principal's and teachers' awareness of educational privileging of credentials due to the influence of neo-liberal government policy. This privileging of academic credentials has increased the competition between schools in the area as parents become more aware of the education market.

Comparing the Snapshots

These snapshots highlight the social nature of schooling and although all schools have similar groups of actors including principals, teachers and students, the relationships and social processes in each school can be quite different. In the case of Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges each applied a different school perspective in supporting

the learning of students from communities which had levels of disadvantage. Trimble had founded the teaching and learning activities of the school on the development of respectful relationships. To support these relationships school structures had been developed, such as table groups, based on the German teams small groups approach (Trapani, 2002). Table groups is one of several middle years practices that Trimble had been able to implement and sustain. This is different to the Riverside approach which dealt with students individually, providing each student with the welfare support or alternative programs as required. Although Riverside had attempted to implement middle school practices, few have been sustained.

The approach to students' learning at each school-cooperative learning at Trimble and individual learning at Riverside-was reflected in the way teachers planned for teaching. Teachers at Trimble collaborated around curriculum development and teaching approaches while Riverside teachers, although emotionally supportive of one another, tended to plan curriculum and teaching individually. Collaboration by teachers around planning for teaching as suggested in the literature appeared to be one of the more effective approaches used to achieve pedagogical change (Bumphers, Huffman & Hipp Kiefer, 2003).

The educational philosophies of the schools were also different, which is surprising as the socio-economic characteristics of each school's town was similar with the Trimble community being more disadvantaged than Riverside. Trimble had higher unemployment, lower average income, lower levels of professional occupations and lower levels of post school qualifications than the Riverside community. With both schools located in regional areas and with similar socio-economic characteristics a similar range of social groups and issues would be expected at both schools. Despite these similarities the schools had different educational philosophies. At Riverside, the principal and teachers appeared to have a deficit outlook on the students' education, regarding the students' disadvantage and habitus as a key reason for poor academic achievement. The Trimble principal and teachers in contrast acknowledged the disadvantage in their community and the needs of adolescents providing an approach to teaching and learning which they believe will maximise student success.

The two schools had different perspectives on their school communities, different educational philosophies and different approaches to planning and teaching. With the geographical and social economic similarities of the two communities it is surprising the approaches to education were so different. These differences point to the importance of the social interactions occurring within the schools which shape the school structures. It is unravelling the influence of these social interactions on the school structures which is the focus of the data analysis presented in the following chapters.

Chapter Summary

The discussion of the snapshots has highlighted the different nature of the two schools and has introduced four themes which emerged from the analysis of the data presented in Chapter 6. Even though the two schools developed different practices to support the learning of adolescent students the influences on these practices can be collected under the following four themes,

- School perspectives
- Educational philosophy
- Planning for teaching
- Teaching practices

These four themes are used to present the analysis of data in the next chapter and to begin the journey of understanding why Trimble and Riverside Colleges choose different approaches to the teaching and learning of students in the middle years of schooling.

Chapter Six: Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges – Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges were located in regional areas of Victoria in communities with similar socio-economic characteristics. Although the communities had similar characteristics the two schools had developed different structures and practices. This chapter details these differences to contextualise the level of middle schooling practices occurring in each school and to indicate how these practices support the teaching and learning of adolescents.

Teaching and learning encompass more than the activities occurring in the classroom. They include a wide range of activities which include parent support, guiding school philosophy, administration directives and teacher planning. Four themes emerged from the data analysis which influence teaching and learning:

School Perspectives

This involves three key areas of school leadership and direction, decision-making and parent involvement. Discussion of these aspects provides an insight into the relationship of school structures and how teachers and students go about daily activities within the school.

Education Philosophy

The underlying beliefs about the best way to support student learning can shape many aspects of the school organisation down to the teaching and learning activities in the classroom. The educational philosophies of the teachers and school were examined and are discussed from the principals' and teachers' beliefs around teaching and learning.

Planning for Teaching

The way teachers work, together or individually to develop curriculum and classroom activities has a direct effect on teachers' classroom practice. The planning approaches in each school are explored and the differences in planning approaches examined.

Teaching Practice

Teaching practice is more than the teaching activities conducted in the classroom but includes all the activities which relate to the way teachers' interact with students. The discussion describes the teaching practices in each school examining how closely these practices relate to middle school approaches.

Introduction

Data about the teaching and learning in year seven, year eight and year nine at the two regional secondary colleges were collected over 2005 and 2006 in a series of interviews with principals, teachers and students, school visits, casual interviews and classroom observations. Analysis of the data collected revealed four themes, which relate to the teaching practice and the learning of students at both schools:

- School perspectives
- Education philosophy and beliefs
- Planning for teaching
- Teaching practice

These themes enable the examination of the school structures and social practices that had developed within each school's approach to teaching and learning of students in year seven, year eight and year nine. The aim of the analysis is to compare the range of middle schooling practices that were being used in each school and to identify the factors which were supporting or inhibiting the use of these practices.

School Perspectives

School Leadership and Direction

When school principals and teachers have a common understanding of school direction and the problems faced by the school the development of effective pedagogy and school structures will be enhanced (Fullan, 2005; Wagner 2001). This appeared to be the case at Trimble where the teachers and principal/school administration seemed to share similar understanding of the school's direction. Liam the campus principal and the teachers agreed on the development of curriculum and the pedagogical approaches being promoted. However, the teachers thought Liam was a bit naïve in regard to the level of student engagement currently being achieved. A year eight homeroom teacher highlighted this during a lunchtime discussion:

Liam is taking a year eight English class this term as we had trouble finding a replacement. It might help him realise what we are up against. It will be interesting to see if he can get them on track by the end of term (Research diary, 2006).

In contrast Riverside teachers had less say in decisions relating to school policy. The principal and school administration made final judgments relating to school direction. Problems or issues at Riverside were generally responded to with the implementation of a new program or procedure. These changes were endorsed by the principal but were perceived by teachers as just adding to their workload rather than providing a change of direction to improve curriculum or teaching practice. John, a Riverside teacher, summed up the general feeling:

My theory all along is that if something's important enough to do then you've got to abandon something else, to give them (teachers) time to do it. You can't just add it on and everything new just seems to get added on.

The Riverside principal acknowledged this perception but still maintains the addition of new programs was one of slow evolution of the school's direction and practices leading to improvement.

I see my role as the principal as making links between new projects and what we are already doing, so that it is not 15 balls in the air. It is three balls that have five different components. This is how they link together and yes, this is how things fade and drop off, but something else that is more significant related to that issue is becoming the main focus. There is a sense of (teacher) frustration there is no doubt.

The external demands and pressures on schools decisions can be a source of frustration at both schools as teachers tried to implement or maintain middle years practices. Loss of the initial implementation funding for the Riverside's year seven and eight program, known as 'the program', had diluted program effectiveness due to fewer resources being available. The program was developed to strengthen student teacher relationships and to provide a smooth transition from primary school to secondary school (Teacher interview 2). In addition it was seen as the starting point to enable middle years

pedagogy to be applied in years seven and eight, but this was not achieved (Principal interview 1).

At Trimble external directives from the education department demanding a change in reporting and testing had taken time from professional learning team (PLT) meetings. Those meetings supported the table group cooperative learning approaches which underpinned middle years practices at Trimble. PLT meetings provided opportunities for teachers across learning areas to research and discuss classroom practices and activities. (Teacher interview 9). It was these structures which had enabled Trimble to develop adolescent appropriate pedagogy for the last 10 years.

Decision-making

The decision-making process at both schools was consultative with the school administration canvassing teachers' views on many areas. This consultation was valued by teachers but appeared to have grown to a point where teachers were involved in areas they saw as unnecessary and time consuming. Trevor at Trimble was frustrated with the loss of PLT meeting time to administrative meetings. Teachers' time was taken up with examination of report writing systems and administrative issues rather than on spending time on the PLT action research projects around pedagogy.

The disappointing part this year is that once again we've been so tied up with all the other administration stuff, we've only just started this one (action research project) and people are pretty tired and I don't know whether it will work this year. It's tricky. It's that priority thing again. It just keeps getting pushed back.

John found the same difficulties at Riverside with meetings around a range of administration tasks and developments:

My personal view is that we're asked, you know, to make decisions on far too many issues, really, which don't directly relate to our teaching. We need to let other people do their job and us get on with our job in front of the classroom. There's not enough of that. You know, having said that, they'll say, "Well, alright, we'll do that", and you'll

say, "But I want to have a bit of a say over here", so it's a bit of fine tuning, to a knife edge, I suppose.

One aim of teacher involvement in decision-making was to be transparent about school decisions bringing teachers into the process giving them ownership of the school charter and direction (Principal interview, 1 & 2). This had to be balanced with teacher workload and the core activity of classroom teaching. It was unclear whether consultation in the decision-making process had led to a shared understanding and ownership of the school charter and direction at either school.

Parent Involvement

Parents at both schools had minimal involvement even though middle years research suggests parents are an important support to student learning (Chadbourne, 2001). As Stacy, a Trimble teacher, pointed out parent involvement seems to change when children move to secondary school, *in comparison with primary schools, the involvement, it's not the same. Parents tend to be in the background.* Both schools had difficulty getting parents to attend parent teacher interviews. Support from parents also varied at the schools with some parents defending their child's behaviour when they were disruptive rather than supporting school policies (Teacher interview 2, 5, 12). As Graham, the Riverside principal, stressed in his comments about teacher frustrations and parent support:

It does frustrate them (teachers) in several ways. Non attendance at parent teacher interviews, lack of follow up and communication when issues are raised, lack of support for homework, lack of support for uniform, there is a whole lot of ways it comes through.

It was this very parent support that the schools required to deal with some key school issues, particularly issues around student behaviour. The teachers at Trimble acknowledged this need and had developed a home-group system that was aimed at increasing parent contact. Stacy explained that the home-group system started with initiating a parent-student-teacher meeting at the beginning of the year to outline the year ahead and to provide parents with key information and to sign permission forms. As Liam the campus principal pointed out, *an opportunity to get to know the parents.*

Although only in its second year, Stacy explained the home-group system had enabled issues such as, students getting behind in their studies, to be addressed,

The home-group system that we were talking about, that's been a really key thing in building parent relationships. We found that by establishing that contact early in the year with your home group and you have contact with those parents, it starts to build up really good relationships which is then supporting what you're trying to do here. So, in there (pointing to an after school homework group), we've got year seven kids in there tonight. We've got kids from a few different classes in there, doing after-school classes and that's only been allowed to happen because of good parent relationships. Being able to ring and talk about the student being behind in their work, and they need to catch up, and so on. But that's equally supported by parents, but only because of relationships that have been built up through the home-group system, rather than us just, say, ringing up out of the blue, never having talked to that parent, saying, "Your child is behind in their work", and then may be getting a bit of defensive stuff from the parent and, "Oh, my child wouldn't do that".

Teachers at both schools commented on the principal and school administration being naïve about the classroom situation and the difficulties of teaching adolescent students with a range of social backgrounds and academic abilities. At Trimble the principal had an understanding of the teachers' situation and was supportive of middle years pedagogy and curriculum change that was led by the teachers. On a practical level he took on teaching a year eight English class for the year to understand the classroom situation directly. This was different to Riverside where the principal was more distant from the teachers, directing the implementation of programs to attend to the different needs of the students rather than collaborating directly with teachers to explore suitable practices.

The difference in the school perspectives was most clearly seen in the issue of parent involvement. At Riverside, teachers were working to support student learning but were frustrated by the lack of parent support and viewed this as a difficulty which had to be endured. Trimble teachers took a different approach to parent-school involvement. They had recognised the importance of parents in supporting adolescent student learning and

in collaboration with the principal developed an approach to increase the opportunities for parent contact. Trimble teachers demonstrated high levels of agency and had taken action to collaboratively make changes, a process that was supported by the principal's direct involvement.

Education Philosophy

In secondary schools, teachers generally worked in isolation with groups of students. Although guided by curriculum documentation, the school vision or charter and school policies, teachers are primarily independent and can run their classrooms as they wish (Gratch, 2000). This is an aspect of teaching John enjoyed, *I think that being brought up in the 70's you are against power, suits, ties and that sort of thing. I like a bit of freedom and don't like to be regimented and in the classroom you are pretty much your own boss.* This level of autonomy means a teacher's underlying education philosophy and beliefs will guide or influence their classroom approach (Groundwater-Smith, Mitchell & Mockler, 2007). There were some similarities in teachers' education philosophy and beliefs within and across the two schools but from the general discussions in meetings and staff rooms around school practices the Trimble teachers were more consistent than the Riverside teachers in their belief of middle years practices and the importance of staff/student relationships as the foundation of good teaching practice (Researchers diary, 2005-2006).

At Trimble the team small groups approach which originated in Germany, and referred to as 'table groups' by Trimble teachers, is a strategy where students are grouped in table groups of four to five students who work collaboratively (Trapani, 2002). Table groups is a recognised pedagogy for developing small learning communities and building trust as promoted by middle schooling (Stancato, 2003). Table groups had been in place at Trimble for 10 years and although the practice had lost some prominence, the focus on co-operative learning and developing professional relationships between students, teachers and parents was still guiding school practices (Teacher interview, 9 & 12; Principal interview, 2). Both Trevor and Stacy identified relationships with students as underpinning their teaching practice. Trevor put relationships as number one, as he explained:

I value the relationship with the kids very highly. For me you have to get that right first and if you have got that right you have a bit of a safety net. We have some tough kids and if they are going for my jugular, I would put relationships as my number one thing. I have expectations with a good behaviour management system in place. If it breaks down, I have the kids work through it and we get back on track.

Relationships, co-operative learning, authentic learning tasks and learning activities that are challenging to all students, were the key tenets of teaching for many Trimble teachers. Over the research period students at Trimble were seen to be involved in authentic learning tasks in many areas with students filming a video on bullying, a group of students as part of their physical education studies ran a lunchtime sports competition and a group of science students set up a worm farm (Research diary 2006).

Barry and John from Riverside both agreed that knowing students and being on good terms with them was important for student learning and management of student behaviour as John reflected on the year seven and eight program at the school:

We've always had behaviour issues here. With the old system (teaching one class for one subject), you didn't get to know any of them well and I think it is a greater advantage to get to know the kids well. I've always felt that the best way to handle this sort of problem was to see more of these kids rather than less of them, but having said that, there are some I'm quite happy never to see again. The year seven/eight program is very good in the way they have a small group of teachers who teach all the classes and because they know the kids well. They can meet together and talk about what works for the different kids, strategies and that sort of thing. There's still a feeling in the school with those people who've never been involved with the year seven/eight program that the results aren't flash.

The general education philosophy at Riverside was more focused on the individual skills and curriculum content which the Riverside students emphasised. The students commented that classes often had lots of worksheets and bookwork (Student interview 1 & 2). Technical and creative arts subjects were the exception being more hands on and creating authentic work products such as making electronic candles for the school

drama production in electronics (Student interview 2). This practical approach to learning was a not a function of the middle schooling philosophy but due to the nature of the subject and the development of craft related skills connected to that subject as was the case for woodwork, metalwork and electronics.

Teachers at both schools acknowledged the importance of knowing students in effectively supporting student learning but appeared to develop different relationships with the students. At Riverside knowing students was focused more on knowing the academic strengths and weaknesses of each student. Trimble teachers discussed knowing students as integral to the development of respectful relationships, which involved understanding the academic and social aspects of each student. At Trimble development of respectful relationships was the basis of the middle years pedagogy of cooperative learning using table groups to develop small communities of learners.

Planning for Teaching

Teachers are independent professionals working within their classrooms developing teaching and learning activities from education department curriculum guidelines and school policies (Hargreaves, 2000). These guidelines and policies are only two of several factors which frame teachers' planning. A number of factors that influence planning for teaching was found in both schools. However, teachers' responses to the factors varied. The factors are summarised in Table 15 with examples of supportive data from both schools.

Influence factor	Comment/observation		Comparison of influence factors
	Trimble Secondary College	Riverside Secondary College	
Development of social groups in the classroom	<i>Yeah, we count on 7B. 7B are good. You can do discussions with 7B. You can do that really well, but you couldn't do it so well with another class. A part of that's about the kids need to learn how to do discussions. There are definitely things that you would do with some classes and not others, or that would work better with some classes and not others, so depending on the mix of kids (Teacher interview, 14).</i>	<i>It certainly does depend on your group of kids and what you think they will be capable of and as you know you have great ranges of ability, well not ability within class groups but some classes are easier to work with than others, so yeah that does influence it (Teacher interview, 2).</i>	Both schools had a range of social groups within the classroom. This reflected the range of social groups and habitus expected from communities with similar economic and social characteristics. It appears that the mix of social groups within a classroom influences the social interaction of those student and the way they engaged with the learning activities presented.
Student behaviour	<i>Every now and again he would psych out and Mr Mayes would calm him down and he was actually doing work. He had a card he could show a teacher if was feeling bad and could go and see Mr Mayes without any hassle or anything (Student interview, 4).</i>	<i>I think in some classes some kids muck around and keep pushing and pushing them and make it hard so the teacher gets pissed off with them and doesn't want to do interesting stuff (Student interview, 2).</i>	At both schools teachers had to manage students with disruptive behaviours, which can influence their choice of learning activities.

Table 15: Summary of influences on teachers planning

Influence factor	Comment/observation		Comparison of influence factors
	Trimble Secondary College	Riverside Secondary College	
Student ability	<i>I had some difficult kids, talking with teachers and seeing what works for them and what doesn't, it takes time. But that is the only way you are going to help them (the students), find out what works (Teacher interview, 10).</i>	<i>I mean, that's probably a symptom of the system a bit, and the big issue about boys is, when they do miss out – like, those guys have just missed, obviously, a chunk. Either they've sat in class and just not got there or they've missed out lots of time at school or whatever. Are you able to catch them up, or do you bypass that and find other ways? I don't know (Teacher interview, 3).</i>	In middle years classes across both schools there was a wide range of student ability with some students who had difficulty with learning. The teachers at Trimble had a belief that all students can learn; appreciating it may be at different rates and to different levels. At Riverside, the teachers, particularly in the non technical/arts subjects, focus on managing the behaviour of students who had difficulty learning rather than on academic achievement.
Teacher inter-communication	<i>I think after school is the only time now that you have got. You are so busy during the day, unless you plan for it. I know Julie and Sally will find time to sit down and plan stuff across their class, as they teach the same class (Teacher interview, 9).</i>	<i>Teachers are needed somewhere else in the school or just timetabling issues and time management issues where you can't get all the teachers together at the same time to discuss planning (Teacher interview, 1).</i>	Teachers at Trimble purposefully took action to communicate with each other sharing ideas and resources across learning areas. This was supported by PLT meetings which focus on pedagogy. Riverside teachers tended to meet at scheduled subject meeting times with teachers who teach in the same subject. These meetings had an administrative rather than a pedagogy focus.

Table 15 (continued): Summary of influences on teachers planning

Influence factor	Comment/observation		Comparison of influence factors
	Trimble Secondary College	Riverside Secondary College	
Time	<i>Like preparation time, it's not more time. We actually have that time but our preparation time is taken up with other things, management, home group, dealing with student issues. So the time you are actually sitting doing planning is minimal (Teacher interview, 2).</i>	<i>We could do a little bit more timetable-wise and we went along that way a few years ago and then withdrew. We looked at larger blocks of teaching time (Principal interview, 1).</i>	It appears that teachers at both schools believed they had enough time to manage their teaching. But often time was taken up by issues and activities not directly related to teaching. External demands and management of time, rather than lack of time was the issue.
Professional development (PD)	<i>I have had opportunities to do PD and I have said no because I have been out of the class too much. Too many things going on, it is just too important the classroom. The best PD is in school or a pupil free day (Teacher interview, 12).</i>	<i>I always hope that when I go to a PD I will get one good idea and I usually do. I think in-service is a good approach, external people coming in (Teacher interview, 3).</i>	There appears to be a consensus between teachers across the schools that PD can be valuable in improving teaching practice. Teachers felt providing PD in the school context with colleagues had more value than in isolation. Visiting other schools to see approaches being used in context was also seen as beneficial to understanding new practices.

Table 15 (continued): Summary of influences on teachers planning

Influence factor	Comment/observation	Comparison of influence factors	
	Trimble Secondary College	Riverside Secondary College	
Personal experience and pre-service teacher education	<i>I can remember doing sheets on something like adverbial adjuncts, and I still have trouble telling you what it is now. I played the game, but I know that it had no influence in the writing I did. So I think that's always stuck in my mind. There's never "Copy this down" because it's a waste of time-I think it is (Teacher interview, 10).</i>	<i>I do use things and techniques I was taught with when I was a learner. I do use those but I'm also using a fair few which I found out about a month ago (Teacher interview, 6).</i>	Personal educational experiences and pre-service teacher education programs did influence pedagogical choice of teachers. The evaluation and decision to continue to use or not to use an approach was connected to how reflective teachers were about their teaching practice. The teachers at Trimble were more reflective about teaching practices actively discussing pedagogy with colleagues.
Resources	<i>I was really alarmed about the education centre planning. They were at the architect stage and none of the private consultants had been to see what we are doing here with table groups and the resources we need (Teacher interview, 9)</i>	<i>We have reached a point now that we would have to restructure the school in a major way. We are held back in a physical structural sense by the physical space that we have... The next step for us over the next few years is to put forward a model of how we would restructure the middle years area and that could include a link with the primary school because they have the same sort of issues in regards to restrictions of space and so forth. (Principal interview, 1).</i>	Many resources within both schools were determined by external factors which influenced the school decisions. This included the number of funded teachers and physical spaces of the school which are determined by government education departments, often without consultation. This lack of consultation can result in inappropriate resources being allocated or school buildings being built which do not fit with the pedagogical direction of the school.

Table 15 (continued): Summary of influences on teachers planning

Out of all planning factors examined three out of the eight involve students, indicating students are an important factor teachers take into account when developing teaching and learning activities at both schools. Not only was the range of student ability acknowledged, but also individual behaviour and most notably the way a class ‘naturally’ operates as a group. Teachers at both schools indicated that some groups of students worked more cooperatively together than others. This aspect of the whole class dynamic will govern the ease with which small learning communities may be established with more ‘difficult classes’ potentially undermining the development of middle years practices in the classroom. Time was a constant issue for all teachers. Time for planning lessons and curriculum was available but was reported as being consumed by other school demands.

There were clear differences between the schools in the way teachers reflected on their teaching practice and the level of teacher collaboration. At Trimble both Trevor and Stacy reflected on the teaching and learning approaches they used in their classrooms. As Trevor highlighted when recounting improvement on the biographies project:

All the work I do gets a little bit better every year. You never do it the same. You are always looking to build on it and the biography was the same. Starting with the old boring one, go and research Cathy Freeman or someone famous, to an older person who they know. The relationship the kids develop with the older person was just fantastic and then I wanted to do the presentation night, but I didn't get around to it until a couple of years ago. I said, "I am going to run that night". No one has ever done it before and I know it is a bit risky as they might not turn up, but the kids invited their families and the person they interviewed. It was great.

Teacher reflection at Trimble was enhanced by the high levels of collaboration which occur formally and informally, as Stacy found when she was trying to develop a more hands on approach to examining symmetry in her maths class. Stacy explained that she was discussing her class with June and:

June said you should get them to do the alphabet and the lines of symmetry and so on... What a great start. We ended up with words and the kids made posters of the words showing the different planes of symmetry.

This was in contrast to Riverside where collaboration did not occur to the same level as Barry found within the Physical Education faculty, providing as he called it, a ‘regurgitated’ curriculum outline at the start of the year, leaving him to design his own teaching program. However, he did gain some help from Peggy a fellow year eight teacher, *20 years experience makes a big difference, having her to discuss things with.* Even though Peggy was in a different faculty, her role as a year eight team leader enabled her to provide a level of mentoring for Barry around general school procedures and classroom management. As Barry noted, *when you first start, you don’t know whether it is OK to send a kid out to the corridor or not.*

Teachers at Riverside tended to plan in isolation which decreased the amount of reflection on teaching practice as reported by John who noted that he tends to, *forget what I do from year to year. I should be more organised so I can go back on my previous file and look at my ideas.* However, the English department was trying to make things more uniform by storing curriculum materials on the school’s intranet which John agreed would be useful for all English teachers but particularly those new teachers coming into the school (Teacher interview, 2).

The two schools differed in the way teachers planned with the Trimble teachers discussing their ideas as part of the daily routine, an approach which did not occur at Riverside. This appeared to isolate planning as an individual activity at Riverside, although Riverside teachers had opportunities for discussions during key learning area (KLA) and year level meetings.

Teachers at both schools had a curriculum framework to guide the development of learning activities, but tended to plan only two to three classes ahead to be flexible to student needs but this resulted in minimal documentation of teaching practices. Even with the rationale of a flexible approach, there was an acknowledgement that more detailed documentation would be useful when teachers were reflecting on the

effectiveness of their practices and when sharing practices with other teachers. The PLT action research projects at Trimble were an example of how detailed documentation of teaching practice can enhance reflection and sharing of practices. The action research project reports were well documented with lesson plans and examples of student work from the trials teachers had conducted with their classes. This level of documentation enabled Trimble teachers to share effective teaching approaches, which led to a number of teachers trialling thinking tools, an approach they had not previously considered (Teacher interview, 10).

Teaching Practice

Students from both schools were very clear in what they viewed as the characteristics of effective teachers, summarised in Table 16. Across the characteristics identified, teachers knowing students and being genuinely interested in their students' learning appeared to be key teacher attributes from the students' perspective. These characteristics underpin the constructivist learner centred approaches of middle years practices which effectively support adolescent learning. Cornelius-White's (2007) meta analysis of 119 studies found that positive student teacher relationships resulted in above average improvements in both academic and social measures compared with other educational innovations (p. 132). Madeline, a year seven student, was able to explain in detail how teachers knowing students was important for students learning:

I think also teachers, if they in the first term read your work and stuff and find out where your weaknesses are and stuff, then help you throughout the year. A lot of students are at very different levels through the classroom. So the teacher has to give you different work for different levels of understanding. So at some stage the teacher gathers together all the people that might be having difficulty and goes over the work with them. There is not that much different work for different people. It's more like if you get it you keep going and if you don't get it she will come back and explain it to you.

Effective teaching characteristics identified by the students	Student comments		Comparison of characteristic to middle years practices
	Trimble Secondary College	Riverside Secondary College	
Sense of humour.	<i>Everyone would like teachers to have a sense of humour, that is approachable and can have a laugh with you but when enough is enough they get you down to work again. Like Mr Mayes. He is just fun to be around (Student interview, 4).</i>	<i>Take a joke and are good fun to work with (Student interview, 2).</i>	Students regard teachers who have a sense of humour and who are able to see the funny side of some situations as being more approachable. This helps the development of respectful student/teacher relationships.
Genuine interest in the students being able to learn and succeed.	<i>When teachers find out where your weakness are and stuff and then help you through out the year (Student interview, 4).</i>	<i>Good teachers will really care about the students and what happens to them rather than doing it for the money (Student interview, 2).</i>	Teachers' genuine interest in student learning encourages students to engage in learning activities and supports middle years practice; expecting all students to meet a high standard in their studies.

Table 16: Characteristics of effective teachers as identified by student

Effective teaching characteristics identified by the students	Student comments		Comparison of characteristic to middle years practices
	Trimble Secondary College	Riverside Secondary College	
Genuine interest in the subject they are teaching.		<i>Yeah, the teachers have to enjoy it. Like when you walk into music you get straight into prac you grab a guitar and learn a new song. In maths you walk in and it is straight down to work. The teachers don't seem to care if you're interested (Student interview, 2).</i>	Enthusiasm for the subject being taught was mentioned by several Riverside students when speaking about the teachers of technical/arts subjects and the difference teacher enthusiasm made to learning. Trimble students did not mention this attribute, speaking about teacher interest in general terms as fun to be in their class, grumpy or caring.
Make an effort to plan classes and not teach straight out of the book providing a range of learning activities.	<i>We do all sorts of learning. Play a game type learning. We are doing homophones at the moment and he makes it into a game and we are learning more (Student interview, 4).</i>	<i>The teachers in tech, like they put their time out there and their effort so we can do stuff we want. They get strict if we stuff up but we can do whatever. (Student interview, 2).</i>	Students at both schools acknowledged the effort teachers put into the preparation of classes and learning activities. At Riverside this was emphasised with the technical and art teachers, who often made studios and workshops available for students at lunchtime and after school.

Table 16 (continued): Characteristics of effective teachers as identified by students

Effective teaching characteristics identified by the students	Student comments		Comparison of characteristic to middle years practices
	Trimble Secondary College	Riverside Secondary College	
Know each student's weakness and is able to help each student understand.	<i>Like Miss Elms, she actually came down when I did not know anything about fractions and helped me with it (Student interview, 4).</i>	<i>It's frustrating, we had him last year. He has got better but he explains things in ways I don't understand. I wanted him to explain it again but he was too worried about two people stuffing around (Student interview, 1).</i>	Students across both schools reported the importance of understanding the topics being covered. They became frustrated if teachers moved onto new work before everyone understood the current concept. This frustration by students is recognised in the literature on middle years practices with the use of constructivist approaches to learning and by supporting learning within each student's zone of proximal development.
Has control over the class without resorting to yelling and getting grumpy.	<i>Good teachers, they realise straight away that someone is mucking around. Yeah, they can have a joke but when someone gets out of control and stupid they can bring it back into control (Student interview, 3).</i>	<i>They are strict like do your work and that's it. Your'e at school to do work and it's not like we will make it more fun so your will work more (Student interview, 1).</i>	All students saw classroom management as an important characteristic of teachers. Effective management was achieved by knowing students and working with students rather than by intimidation and threats of punishment.

Table 16 (continued): Characteristics of effective teachers as identified by students

Effective teaching characteristics identified by the students	Student comments		Comparison of characteristic to middle years practices
	Trimble Secondary College	Riverside Secondary College	
Able to deal with disruptive students and not afraid to act.	<i>Every now and again he would psych out and Mr Mayes would calm him down and he was actually doing his work. (Student interview, 3).</i>		Students at Trimble called disruptive students ‘ferals’. At Riverside students did not comment on the presence of disruptive students and indicated that students generally got along with each other.
Do not take poor behaviour of one student out on the rest of the class.	<i>Mr Veal goes off his nut and then holds a grudge...It is like when we are doing something fun in class and one or two people muck around the whole class is not allowed to do it (Student interview, 3).</i>	<i>Like Mr Potts, he’s the best PE teacher in the school. If we get our theory done we get to do prac all week. If up to 4 people don’t do it we do prac but if is 5 we do theory (Student interview, 1).</i>	Students at both Trimble and Riverside had similar views on the injustice of teachers who punished a whole class for the actions of a few students. Teachers who regularly used this approach were seen as ineffective and out of touch with the students in the class.

Table 16 (continued): Characteristics of effective teachers as identified by students

The students at both schools were insightful about the characteristics of effective teachers, drawing their conclusions from experiences with effective and less effective teachers across both schools. Sean summed up his version of an ideal teacher:

I think the ideal teacher would probably be strict to a point where kids that would normally muck around in that class don't, but they are still fun, so for the people who are not mucking around, they can get on with it and you could have a conversation with the teacher.

His version included the top three traits all students agreed on: class control, sense of humour and being approachable. These aspects seem to fit closely with the importance of authentic relationships identified in the middle years literature and in the teachers' own education philosophy and beliefs. There appears to be agreement between students and teachers in both schools and with the middle years literature that education is a social process and teacher-student relationships are the important foundation of effective teaching and learning (Carrington, 2006; Vygotsky, 1962).

Students were also able to identify teaching and learning activities they felt were supportive of their learning as summarised in Table 17. All of these approaches were identified as middle schooling characteristics as discussed in the Chapter 2 review of literature. From the teacher interviews, student interviews and classroom observations, Trimble Secondary College had more middle schooling approaches and at a much higher frequency than Riverside Secondary College as detailed in column four of Table 17.

Middle years practices identified by students	Student comments		Comparison of middle years practice occurrence
	Trimble	Riverside	
Create small learning communities based on mutually respectful relationships.	<i>Our class works well because at the start of the year we did games to get to know each other. Like we sat in a circle and had to say what we liked about a person. We had names like bubbly Ryle because she is always happy, kool Clare with a K...we were then put into our table groups (Student interview, 3).</i>	<i>I think it is a good thing (staying in the same class group for years 7 & 8) because you get to know people and make good friendships the second year is a lot calmer (Student interview, 1).</i>	Development of small learning communities in the form of table groups underpinned the pedagogy at Trimble. At Riverside there was not targeted pedagogy to support the students being kept together over years 7 & 8.
Variety of teaching and learning approaches.	<i>In maths we started with a fair bit of writing but now we do more games and stuff, challenging things (Student interview, 4).</i>	<i>I like the hands on subjects really. Putting things together. Sometimes when I am writing it down I just don't take it in. (Student interview, 2).</i>	A variety of teaching and learning approaches were seen across all learning areas at Trimble. At Riverside the technical and Art subjects appeared to provide an alternative approach to the teacher centred approach of core subjects which included maths and English.

Table 17: Teaching and learning activities that supports student learning

Middle Years Practices Identified by Students	Student comments		Comparison of Middle Years Practice Occurrence
	Trimble	Riverside	
Authentic learning tasks.	<i>We had stuff stolen from our classroom and used our science class looking for clues using forensic science (Student interview, 4).</i>	<i>For maths it is always out of the book and sheets. And if they do give a problem it is what colour is the hamburger and you use the problems to work out the letters. It is not very real life (Student interview, 2).</i>	Trimble teachers actively developed authentic learning tasks as part of assessment with some tasks integrated across subjects. These were developed collaboratively. At Riverside subject type tended to dictate the occurrence of authentic activities with technical and Art subjects providing these opportunities.
An expectation that all students meet a high standard in their studies.	<i>Year seven is becoming more fun as we do things that are more challenging for us like timetable challenge and the next day we might play a maths game (Student interview, 4).</i>	<i>I like the challenging stuff. Luke, a kid in another class and myself are doing year 10 maths at the moment. It does not happen very often but when it does it is great (Student interview, 2).</i>	Although there was an expectation for students achieve in both schools, teachers at Riverside were more frustrated with what to do in the case of students who had difficulty learning or were disengaged.

Table 17 (continued): Teaching and learning activities that supports student learning

Middle Years Practices Identified by Students	Student comments		Comparison of Middle Years Practice Occurrence
	Trimble	Riverside	
Co-operative learning approaches.	<i>Once we are put into our table groups we do lots of team activities. In maths we did how long is your stride out on the basketball court and made parachutes for eggs (Student interview, 3).</i>	<i>Yeah we can go in partners this year. Me and my friend Jake went partners with two beds and we filled them up with plants. Yeah and we did the front of the school. We did all the bark; rip out all the ivy about five of us did that all in horticulture (Student interview 1).</i>	The table groups focus at Trimble was supported by cooperative approaches to teaching and learning with students working in a range of configurations with other students. At Riverside opportunities to work with peers was generally seen in Arts and technical subjects and not in core subjects.
Learning activities which connect with students lives.	<i>The autobiography where you write about yourself, but you had to interview Mum and Dad about it and find out about all the funny things you did as a kid. Yeah, you find out heaps about yourself like when you were a baby and stuff. It was pretty much your life story (Student interview, 3).</i>	<i>In auto you get taught how to service a car in year nine and in year ten you are allowed to bring in your own car to fix and stuff. (Student interview, 1).</i>	Both schools provided learning activities which connected with student lives and the broader community. This is an important aspect of middle years pedagogy providing adolescents with opportunities to engage with real world problems.

Table 17 (continued): Teaching and learning activities that supports student learning

Stacy's self-paced maths book was one of many middle schooling examples which effectively engage adolescents. With the maths booklet students had a level of choice and responsibility for their own learning. Co-operative learning was encouraged through the table groups with students able to ask each other as well as the teacher for assistance as Stacy explained:

This is a booklet that they work through to revise their number skill work. I do it at the end of year seven and give them three periods to work on it and they can start on any page. They absolutely love it, and then I give them a week to take it home and finish it off... It is different to me explaining something up on the board or project work.

Although not all teachers at Trimble taught in this manner there were a number of learning activities embedded within the curriculum which encouraged middle schooling approaches for all students. They included autobiographies at year seven and biographies at year eight linked to English studies, 'developing your own country unit' in humanities studies and the 'house and land unit' in mathematics at year eight. These units of work were referred to as 'rich learning tasks' and integrated learning from a number of key learning areas, requiring students to work together and independently. The completed projects were presented to their peers and or parents as part of the assessment of the students' learning (Teacher interview 10 & 12). In addition to these curriculum embedded rich learning tasks, the professional learning team meetings enabled Trimble teachers to research and share effective middle schooling approaches as Trevor describes:

In the past sharing approaches has been people saying, "I tried that and yeah that went well". But where is the evidence? So we collected visual evidence, photographs of the kids engaged actually doing something, so if someone else wanted to run think, pair, share they could see it. Now Mark is a fairly new teacher. These are the photos I have taken, we did a video, Shelly and Anne did the place-mat approach, you know the place-mat approach. What it did was generate awareness with everybody of how different approaches work. To just heighten the usage of good thinking skills, teaching and learning approaches across the board. We didn't say right now we want you all to go

away and do a place-mat, but in reality everyone is. It has been quite widely used, because they saw what it was and they saw pictures of kids doing it.

At Riverside it was the key learning area that appeared to encourage or discourage the use of some middle schooling approaches in the classroom. Technology and creative arts subjects often used authentic learning tasks and elements of co-operative learning. These learning opportunities appeared to be learning area specific, as there were very few examples of middle schooling approaches used in the core subjects of humanities, English and mathematics. This was exemplified by John's English class where he had tried to connect writing a persuasive/argumentative essay with students' lives by using a cartoon show and the essay topic, 'The Simpsons cartoons do not just make us laugh'.

The class had already watched several Simpsons episodes and taken notes about them. They had discussed the concepts of institutional power and social morality. It did not seem that the students understood either of these two concepts. John used a student's book to rewrite some notes on the board. He was unable to find the notes he was going to give them. While he wrote on the board, he asked the class to get their books out. I asked one of the boys nearby what they had been doing and he passed his book over saying, "his Mum had done this bit (which was a page of writing) and this was his", an illegible paragraph. Lots of questions came from the students whether to write the notes down or had they written it down already? (Research diary, 2006).

Without a collaborative approach to planning John had few opportunities to discuss other ways of approaching the year nine English class and how to deal with the students who are struggling, as John pointed out:

That group of boys at the front was a very slow group and I haven't really got on top of alternative programs for them and in all honesty, I suppose, you know, I might just say to them "On the date, just summarise the episodes", and it's one way of dealing with the different levels.

Although Riverside students were provided with a range of learning experiences through the different subjects available to them, middle years practices were not being

intentionally used but were attached to the nature of the subject diluting the potential effectiveness of the practices. At Trimble the table groups co-operative learning approaches which underpinned the teaching and learning direction within the school were supported by curriculum requirements of rich learning tasks being a part of every student's assessment. The development of middle years teaching practices were supported with PLT meetings providing teachers with opportunities to share pedagogy and ideas across subject specific areas.

Chapter Summary

The four themes presented in this chapter indicate there were differences between the approaches to teaching and learning of the two schools. At a structural level the principal and school administration at Trimble were more closely connected to the teaching staff with a common understanding of the school direction than at Riverside. The Trimble principal took an active role in the development of pedagogy by supporting the PLT action research projects. Teachers at Trimble were able to take action around identified issues with the principal's support and involvement as demonstrated by the development of a home-group system which was aimed at improving communication and connection with parents and care givers.

This was in contrast to the situation at Riverside where the principal and administration team were more distant from the teachers' planning for student learning. The principal and administration team approached student learning and behaviour issues by selection of a specific program to address the problem. Teachers were consulted about possible programs, but the decision of implementation was taken by the principal and administration team. Without a clear understanding between the teachers and the principal of the school's direction, new programs were added and old programs faded away. This addition of new programs without understanding the loss of other programs has led to feelings of an ever increasing workload by teachers.

The way teachers planned for teaching were distinctly different between the two schools with Trimble teachers collaborating across learning areas to plan curriculum and reflect on teaching practices. PLT meetings formed the official structure of this collaboration

as teachers worked in small groups on action research projects around pedagogy. This official structure was supplemented by informal PLTs which formed around issues the teachers identified, being disbanded once the issue had been resolved. The collaboration was supported by the principal who provided time for the meetings and became actively involved in enabling teachers to take action.

At Riverside planning for teaching was primarily done individually with teachers developing their own teaching and learning activities. Teachers discussed broad curriculum issues in KLA meetings along with administrative requirements. There was some sharing of resources as teachers did meet informally and supported each other around classroom management and learning activities. This level of collaboration benefitted individual teachers but did not achieve the broad changes to pedagogy and school structures which were seen at Trimble.

The range of middle years practices at Trimble was quite extensive with many of the pedagogical, curriculum and organisational factors identified in the middle years literature being present. This was in contrast to Riverside where only a small number of middle years practices were identified. Chapter 7 will examine the frequency of middle years practices in detail and use the analytical framework developed from Bourdieu and Giddens to establish the influences which have enabled Trimble to implement and maintain many middle years practice while Riverside has struggled to achieve changes to pedagogy although the principal and teachers were supportive of middle schooling.

Chapter Seven: Why Trimble?

The four themes which emerged from the data discussed in Chapter 6 had the most substantial impact on the teaching and learning of students at Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges. The themes are listed below with the differences between the schools for each theme summarised:

School Perspective

Trimble teachers and principal had a common understanding of school direction with teachers taking action on school issues with the principal's support. At Riverside the principal and teachers had different perspectives on the school's direction. Problems or issues at Riverside were generally responded to with the implementation of a new program or procedure as directed by the principal and administration team.

Educational Philosophy

At Trimble authentic professional relationships underpinned teaching and learning. Cooperative learning was promoted as an effective way for students to construct knowledge with all students being encouraged to achieve. Teachers at Riverside focused more on knowing students' capabilities and capacities. Learning was more individually focused with teachers providing individual support to help students achieve.

Planning for Teaching

Trimble teachers' planning involved collaborative activities centred around pedagogy with teachers working in PLTs which collected teachers together from across the key learning areas. At Riverside teachers planned material individually and tended to come together in key learning areas to discuss administrative issues and swap learning resources.

Teaching practices

At Trimble a wide range of teaching practices were employed with the PLT action research projects evaluating and promoting different teaching approaches. The majority of these approaches supported a middle schooling philosophy. Teaching and learning practices at Riverside were generally teacher centred where the teachers controlled the

pace and direction of learning. The learning area influenced teaching practices with some middle years practices being used in the technology and creative arts learning areas.

The differences between the schools indicate that Trimble teachers used many more middle years practices than the teachers at Riverside even though both principals were supportive of a middle schooling philosophy for the teaching and learning of adolescent students. This chapter will explore the social and structural factors of the schools. These factors combined with the influences on teaching and learning enable an understanding of why Trimble Secondary College had been able to implement and maintain a level of middle schooling for 10 years, and why Riverside Secondary College had struggled to sustain middle years practices in the middle years of secondary school.

This difference between the schools reflects the difficulties outlined in the literature in changing classroom practices towards middle schooling practices that are effective for adolescent teaching and learning and appropriate in an era of liquid modernity (de Jong & Chadbourne, 2007; Fullan, 2005; Palinacsar, 1998). Although the differences and have been identified, how the influences mediate teacher choice is still unclear. The framework developed from the work of Bourdieu and Giddens is used in this chapter to explore the relationships between the influences and the social and structural factors which make up schools. Bourdieu's (1984) theory of social and cultural practice enables an understanding of how social groups and social background affect a person's actions. Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration enables the examination of human agency and institutional structure interaction.

The analysis of the data using the theoretical framework points to the importance of social groups and habitus in the competition for influence in the social field. It is the individual connection to a social group which affects the way people interact with others and institutional structures. The analysis identifies actors' knowledgeability, level of ontological security and routinization of practices as being strongly connected to the stability of social structures within the school. The factors that undermine a teacher's ability to change pedagogical practice are discussed along with the positive influence collaborative reflective discussions has on teachers' knowledgeability and frames of meaning in influencing pedagogical change.

Introduction

Trimble and Riverside, typical of many schools across Australia, were focused on preparing adolescents to be competent citizens in an ever changing world as presented in the 2008 Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008). These goals encompass a broad range of skills, knowledge and understandings, which arguably are needed to engage effectively in society. Society of the 21st century has seen the rise of neo-liberal market driven government policies with a deregulation of government services and a reliance on the market forces expected to provide the efficient delivery of services (Lee & McBride, 2007). These changes to government policy place more responsibility on the individual to make decisions and live with the consequences of those decisions (Bahr & Pendergast, 2007). Middle schooling approaches as discussed in Chapter 2 have been identified as the most appropriate for adolescent learning and the development of skills, knowledge and understandings required in a such a world.

From the data presented in Chapters 5 and 6, Trimble Secondary College had more middle schooling characteristics and appeared to use middle years pedagogy at a much higher intensity than Riverside Secondary College. An overview of the two schools' adoption of middle schooling principles is summarised in Table 18 with the first column listing the 16 middle schooling characteristics identified from the literature in Chapter 2 in Table 1. A summary of the data for each school's middle schooling characteristics is presented along with a summary comparison between the two schools. The school data that is shaded with ticks indicates a strong presence of this character was seen at the school. From the data presented in Table 18, Trimble exhibited 12 out of the 16 middle schooling characteristics while Riverside only exhibited 5 of the 16 middle schooling characteristics.

Middle schooling: Adolescent teaching and learning approaches (see Table 1, p. 33)	School data summary		Comparison of middle schooling summary
	Trimble Secondary College	Riverside Secondary College	
Pedagogy Constructivist, student focused teaching incorporating student choices.	<i>Rich learning tasks have been developed for all students at each year level. Examples of teachers using a constructivist approach were observed during classroom observations. Students description of learning activities indicated a constructivist approach ✓</i>	<i>The use of a constructivist approach was not observed during classroom observation. Teacher and student interviews indicate teacher centred approach in the classroom.</i>	From classroom observations examples of student work and teacher interviews, many Trimble teachers used a constructivist approach to teaching and learning enabling students to construct their knowledge. Few opportunities were identified for students to construct their own knowledge at Riverside.
Cooperative learning approaches.	<i>Small learning communities in the formation of table groups PLTs examined cooperative learning approaches to teaching and learning High importance placed on relationship building between students and between students and teachers. ✓</i>	<i>Limited examples of students working together in some of the technical and creative arts learning areas. An individual focused approach to teaching and learning appears to be the common across the school.</i>	Cooperative learning approaches were promoted across Trimble through table groups and PLTs. Students at Riverside reported working with peers in the technical and creative arts learning areas. Teachers controlled the approaches to learning in each classroom with teacher led instruction being the common approach across Riverside classrooms.
Skills in organisation, study, research, reporting, and thinking (metacognition) are taught and used in all learning areas.	<i>Rich learning tasks have been developed at each year level requiring organisation and research skills. Thinking tools being actively developed by the PLT action research projects, e.g. placemat, Venn diagrams, habits of mind. ✓</i>	<i>Content based approach to most subjects with students reporting some project work involved research skills in various classes. Thinking skills do not appear to be actively taught.</i>	The Trimble principal and teachers developed activities across the school and identified the importance of thinking skills and the ability for students to investigate topics and to develop a range of research skills. At Riverside individual teachers decided if tasks requiring research and thinking skills were given to students.

Table 18: Summary of middle schooling characteristics at Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges (Interviews & research diary, 2005 – 2006). Ticks and shading indicate significant connection to the middle schooling characteristic.

Middle schooling: Adolescent teaching and learning approaches (see Table 1, p. 33)	School data summary		Comparison of middle schooling summary
	Trimble Secondary College	Riverside Secondary College	
Pedagogy Variety of teaching and learning approaches both enactive and vicarious, to provide opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate their learning in different ways.	<i>Teachers across the school used a range of activities, e.g. cooperative learning, self paced learning, rich learning tasks, hands on problem solving. Students also presented their learning in portfolios at parent teacher meetings providing an opportunity to demonstrate the learning achieved over the year. ✓</i>	<i>Creative Arts and technical subjects provided different learning opportunities to text based subjects.</i>	Classroom observations teacher and students interviews showed there was a greater variety of teaching and learning activities at Trimble than at Riverside. At Trimble there was a more targeted approach across the school to ensure a variety of opportunities were available for students with the end of year portfolios which provided a structure for students to demonstrate their learning.
An expectation that all students meet a high standard in their studies.	<i>Teachers commented on all students being able to succeed. ✓</i>	<i>Feeling that some students are limited academically having missed out in primary school.</i>	Teacher discussions at Trimble indicated a belief that all students should succeed while acknowledging students' different capacities. There was a subtle difference at Riverside around student ability with more comments about students having missed out academically and a sense that less was expected of these students.
Assessment that promotes learning.	<i>Range of assessment approaches used, e.g. portfolio assessment, presentations and projects. Current focus to develop 'assessment as learning'. ✓</i>	<i>Assessment is generally content based. The exception is in technical and creative arts subjects where products of learning are often assessed. ✓</i>	Both schools provided opportunities for assessment that promotes learning. The key difference was that a range of learning areas used this approach at Trimble whereas at Riverside it was generally confined to the technical and creative arts learning areas.

Table 18 (continued): Summary of middle schooling characteristics at Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges (Interviews & research diary, 2005 – 2006). Ticks and shading indicate significant connection to the middle schooling characteristic.

Middle schooling: Adolescent teaching and learning approaches (see Table 1, p. 33)	School data summary		Comparison of middle schooling summary
	Trimble Secondary College	Riverside Secondary College	
Pedagogy Provide opportunities to study topics that integrate several learning areas.	<i>Teachers share and plan some areas together such as the set rich learning tasks in the curriculum, e.g. house and land, my country, autobiographies, and biographies. ✓</i>	<i>Teachers tend to plan and teach in isolation.</i>	The rich learning tasks developed at Trimble intentionally integrated curriculum areas. No intentionally integrated curriculum was noted at Riverside.
Create small learning communities where stable, close mutually respectful relationships with adults and peers support the learning process.	<i>Table groups approach used. Homeroom teachers and students are together for two years. Homeroom teachers' home group for at least two subjects. ✓</i>	<i>Year seven & eight program has students and homeroom teacher together for two years. ✓</i>	Teachers at both schools acknowledged the importance of knowing students.
Technology infrastructure incorporating Information Technology into good pedagogical practice.	<i>Information technology is available and used for internet research and presentation of work. Technology does not appear integrated into general teaching practice.</i>	<i>Information technology is available and used for internet research and presentation of work. Technology does not appear integrated into general teaching practice.</i>	Although teachers at both schools used technology it did not appear to be intentionally integrated into daily work of students. Opportunities were provided to work in the computer lab from time to time.
Curriculum Teach a core academic program.	<i>Outlined in Victorian Essential Learning Standards documents. ✓</i>	<i>Outlined in Victorian Essential Learning Standards documents. ✓</i>	This was mandated by the government education department.
Community based learning and support that incorporates a vocational dimension.	<i>None observed.</i>	<i>Some examples in the senior areas with Vocational Education and Training (VET). None in the junior years. ✓</i>	Riverside had many vocational opportunities for senior to students connect with the community and work place. This had filtered down to the junior classes with strong school links back to the community. This was not observed at Trimble.

Table 18 (continued): Summary of middle schooling characteristics at Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges (Interviews & research diary, 2005 – 2006). Ticks and shading indicate significant connection to the middle schooling characteristic

Middle schooling: Adolescent teaching and learning approaches (see Table 1, p. 33)	School data summary		Comparison of middle schooling summary
	Trimble Secondary College	Riverside Secondary College	
Curriculum Curriculum that incorporates issues and context that connects to the students' worlds.	<i>Rich learning tasks have student input & choice, biographies, my country, house and land projects. ✓</i>	<i>Occasional opportunities to choose own project topics in humanities subjects.</i>	Trimble had developed learning tasks which connected with students at each year level whereas Riverside it was up to the individual teacher.
Organisation Teachers and students need a home base within the school.	<i>Homeroom teacher and classroom for two years. ✓</i>	<i>Homeroom teacher and classroom for two years. ✓</i>	In both schools years seven & eight had the same homeroom teachers and a set classroom area within the school.
Block of time scheduling allows for different learning approaches and opportunities to study concepts in depth.	<i>Some classes are scheduled together to allow teachers to cross over classes, e.g. 7A and 7B have classes scheduled together with their homeroom teacher.</i>	<i>None.</i>	Intentional scheduling did not occur at either school. Some Trimble teachers did exploit the situation of their classes being timetabled at the same time to do some integrated teaching across their classes.
Allow teachers to be in control of a group of students, of space, the calendar and time.	<i>Homeroom teachers have responsibility for welfare of their students.</i>	<i>Homeroom teachers have a team leader who is also responsible for student welfare.</i>	Homeroom teachers did not have any administration control of timetable or time organisation at either school.
Parent and community involvement in student learning.	<i>Parents are invited to presentation nights of students' work. Home group teacher meets with parents at the start of the year and then throughout the year. Parents attend end of year student portfolio presentation. ✓</i>	<i>Parent teacher interviews when students' reports are written. Parents often do not attend.</i>	Both schools had difficulty connecting with parents. Trimble teachers addressed this issue by developing a homeroom system which was aimed at connecting with parents.

Table 18 (continued): Summary of middle schooling characteristics at Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges (Interviews & research diary, 2005 – 2006). Ticks and shading indicate significant connection to the middle schooling characteristic.

The four themes: school perspectives, educational philosophy, planning for teaching and teaching practices presented in Chapter 6 enabled the differences in middle schooling practices between the two schools to be reported. These themes embody the social practices and institutional structures of Bourdieu's and Giddens' social theories. The theoretical framework developed from these theories will now be used to examine how the social practices and institutional structures are implicated in teachers' pedagogical decisions. The discussion will explore the stability of professional habitus and social structures within the school and the role of collaborative reflectively discursive discussion, teacher knowledgeability and teacher ontological security as factors affecting teachers' pedagogical choice.

Habitus and Social Practices

From the school snapshots presented in Chapter 5 and the themes discussed in Chapter 6, it is clear that both schools had students from diverse social backgrounds. The principals and teachers at both schools were generally from, as John from Riverside, remarked as 'middle class backgrounds'. All had completed a university education and all had parents with post secondary school education who pursued careers in teaching, banking or management. As expected, parents of these teachers valued education and would in Bourdieu's (1984) terms, had a similar habitus and inhabited a similar social space, passing on these same values and habitus to their children.

Students at the schools, in contrast, came from a much broader range of habitus and social spaces. Some students had middle class backgrounds similar to the teaching staff while others were from working class or disadvantaged groups. As Trevor noted that a number of Trimble students came from families that *are third generation of unemployment*. This range of backgrounds according to Bourdieu's (1984) theory of social practice will have two effects: the formation of social groups and potential difficulties in communication between these groups.

Students from similar backgrounds to the teachers will understand many of the meanings and symbols teachers use compared with students with different social backgrounds (Bourdieu, 1984). John highlighted this issue at Riverside, where *there has always been friction about middle-class people teaching working-class kids*, indicating that due to teachers' habitus, teachers may not be able to relate to or understand the

social circumstances of some of the students they are teaching. Nash (1990) identifies students with similar habitus to the teachers as having a “readiness for school knowledge” and being easily able to connect with teacher practices (p. 436). Both Trimble and Riverside had the situation of some students being more ‘school ready’ than others due to their habitus. Trimble appeared to deal with the variation in school readiness more effectively than Riverside by the school’s focus on positive relationship building.

The process of building relationships at Trimble Secondary College was initially focused on student relationships, with the introduction of table groups, where students were assigned to a table with four to five other students to encourage cooperative learning approaches. The benefits of table groups were seen in the classroom, as *no kid comes into the room and sits by themselves feeling isolated* (Teacher interview 9). The relationships had been extended further than just with students, as Emma a year seven student noted about her teacher Ms Elms, *like she can look at you and read you like a book. I reckon she can do that to me anyway, and she talked about me during (portfolio) presentation to my parents and was able to tell them how I had gone over the year.* Teachers’ development of relationships with students and parents will potentially increase their understanding of all groups, and contribute to the development of a common purpose around the students’ education (Beamon, 2001).

At a classroom level the relevance of relationships in education was seen clearly in the way Trevor developed positive student-student and student-teacher relationships in his class at Trimble. As a year seven student, Bridget explained, *We have this guy Matthew. He comes from a pretty rough background. Every now and then he’d psych out and Mr Mayes would calm him down and he would actually do his work...Mr Mayes explained that we helped him do his work by realising he needed a bit extra.* The students understood Matthew’s background and his needing help to manage his behaviour in the classroom. The development of relationships was not based only around learning abilities or academic needs but around understanding one another and working together cooperatively.

Understanding and working cooperatively together had been extended to parents through a home group system which at Trimble focused on greater contact with parents.

The process began with meeting parents at the start of the year to inform them about their child's learning for the year ahead and to communicate the general requirements of school organisation. These meetings continued throughout the year and had the potential to increase both parent and teacher understanding. This could be particularly important for parents who carry negative attitudes towards education or have positive attitudes towards education but lack the knowledge and skills to help their children to maximise their learning opportunities. Gorman (1998) in his study of parental attitudes found that some working class parents shunned higher education seeing common sense and practical skills as all that is required to have a successful and fulfilling life. This attitude appeared to come from what Gorman (1998) refers to as "hidden injuries of class" (p. 12) feelings of being marginalised or belittled by the education system or attitudes of white-collar workers. Other parents even with similar negative experiences see education for their children as a means to advancement in uncertain economic times and in a changing workforce (Gorman, 1998; Orozco, 2008). Positive teacher-parent relationships at Trimble through the home group system appeared to improve understanding between teachers and parents as demonstrated by parent support of the after school homework group (Teacher interview, 14; Research diary, 2006). This parent support and increased communication with teachers may potentially improve parent opinion about the value of education and provide greater access for parents to teachers' professional knowledge.

Social practices, as influenced by habitus and capital, can be very stable, which was a condition seen in the resistance to the processes of change at Trimble. Jim, the campus deputy principal, identified resistance as a factor in shifting some teachers' attitudes, *for example some staff still talk to the students in an antagonistic old fashion sort of way, I'm the teacher you listen*. This resistance was not confined to teaching staff as a year eight student highlighted, stating that his class was 'hard work' and spoke with pride about a teacher leaving because she could not deal with the student behaviour (Research diary, 2006). Habitus and the social values and practices generated can be difficult to change even when the underlying philosophy of the school is actively focused on drawing different social groups closer together. Groups may resist these good intentions, "as habitus is learned more by experience than by teaching, and through socialisation remains durable" (Gunter, 2002, p. 10). It appears this durability led some groups to actively work against the school philosophy at Trimble.

As discussed in Chapter 6 and summarised in Table 18, Riverside Secondary College took a more individual approach to deal with ‘school readiness’ of students, believing that by the time students reached secondary school a number had already missed out on some foundations of learning. Teachers were aware of individual students’ abilities and identified those needing help, connecting them into various networks within the school and community, as Graham the principal explained when discussing parent choice:

Technology and VET courses are a key thing. We have the best in the area, so parents who want their kids to have a hands on education would be sending them here...there are a number of parents that are choosing the school because of our welfare support which is well embedded and links well into the community.

This individual approach maintained habitus of the various groups with students seeking ‘hands on education’, ‘welfare support’ or an ‘academic education’. Students reflected such habitus in their practices and chosen educational pathways, as seen with Mick’s plans, *I am going to be a roofer, because I have been helping my Dad’s mate, mostly tin roofs and he pays me 50 dollars a day*, and in year nine, Sean’s plans, *I want to do something in marine biology, so I am looking to colleges and uni, VCE points and all that*. Teachers also operate with this in mind but there was some tension between different areas as John explained:

Yes, there’s always that tension and you try not to let it govern too much because you know all the kids are not going to be doing VCE and particularly here, you’ve got the VCAL and VET and the trades. Some kids are much more interested in the trades subjects. There’s been more of a shift in the last few years back into preparing kids for VCE. There was a real move against that a while ago, to not let them buy into something they’re not going to do, but now people are saying they’re not prepared for writing an essay, not prepared for this or that.

Habitus and social groups were maintained and reproduced by the practices at Riverside. The school attempted to cater for the different groups separately rather than drawing the groups together. The awareness of the different groups by both teachers and students added to the influence of habitus and potentially increased the competition between groups for school resources and influence.

Fields of Activity

Group association is a key mechanism in maintaining habitus and the practices of the social group (Bourdieu, 1984). Students who were struggling academically at Riverside sat together in class collaborating in each other's distraction to make it through the class, while academically able students formed separate groups (Researcher diary, 2006). John elaborated on the academically able groups of students which formed in the school:

You get groups of kids and they sit together and they can achieve well together. It's like a mini school going through and half of those get lots of extra help at home. You wonder also if they were at a different school their results would be even better (Teacher interview, 2).

Teachers at Riverside encouraged formation of friendships at years seven and eight by keeping students in the same class groups for the two years enabling them to get to know one another. However, this process did not recognise the importance of habitus, as students tended to form friendships with people from similar social background as they could more easily communicate with each other. These groupings were clearly seen in the classroom with students sitting in groups of likeminded people (Research diary, 2006, 2007). Within these groupings, students maintained habitus and the social practices of the group by group members reinforcing and promoting the social practices they valued.

Grouping of students based on habitus and social practices is likely to encourage competition for influence and power within the social field of the classroom, "as agents that are involved in the field share a certain number of fundamental interests...that is worth fighting about" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 73). Competition for influence and exercising of power was seen in the Riverside classrooms in different ways, boys cutting up a folder rather than completing the class work required, girls not working in class, saying they will 'do it at home' (Research diary, 2006). Groups of students working studiously to achieve high marks and students being disruptive were all different approaches to the exercising of power and to gain influence in the classroom. The content based individual approach to teaching appeared to maintain this power struggle, with teachers

providing individual work that was easily monitored but which students could actively resist as seen in John's English class, where students complained about the length of writing they had to complete and not really understanding the task. This resistance by the students resulted in John having to help each student individually with their questions or difficulties after a general introduction was provided (Research diary, 2006).

Diminishing the assertion of power and competition for classroom influence was seen in the Trimble classrooms with students working in assigned table groups rather than in friendship groups. Learning tasks were designed around co-operative learning, encouraging students to assist each other before asking for the teacher's help. These sharing of power approaches are supported by several studies on cooperative learning which identified among other benefits, a significant increase in self esteem and positive interpersonal relationships of students (Gillies, 2007; Johnston, Johnston & Stanne, 2000; Slavin, 1990). Although these approaches modified the group association by habitus and the corresponding struggle for dominance in the classroom, it still did not occur with a specific group of students at Trimble dubbed the 'ferals'. As Alex explained, *they have the attitude they hate school and just want to 'crack it', they sort of want to get into trouble and get sent to the student centre.* This resistance of the 'ferals' indicates that the strength of some group associations may require more active intervention to breakdown habitus to encourage inclusion rather than the struggle for influence. As Bourdieu (1991) points out when discussing how language provides access to a social group.

What is rare is not the capacity to speak...but rather the competence necessary to speak the legitimate language which depending on social inheritance, re-translates social distinction into specifically symbolic logic of differential deviations or in short, distinction (p. 55).

Without communication and understanding between the groups of students the ferals continued to identify as a group and fight for their space in the social field even at the expense of their own learning.

The combination of assigned table groups with co-operative learning approaches and classroom management based on positive professional relationships may decrease the social distance between the different groups of students and between students and teachers. This reduced social distance seems to increase communication and lessen the need to exercise power and compete for influence in the social field of the classroom, improving the personal relationships and understanding between students and between students and teachers.

Planning for teaching also occurs within a social field where different groups compete for influence, exercising power in different ways. The principal and school administration exercise control over planning with the development of meeting schedules, allocation of non-teaching duties to teachers, school policies and curriculum guidelines. The Department of Education Early Childhood and Development (DEECD) in Victoria exerts power and influence through State curriculum documentation that teachers must follow (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008). Considering that teacher planning is focused on the activities within the classroom, it is surprising the number of power relations which exist outside the classroom and which struggle for control over the teaching and learning process. Development of classroom learning activities is not a compact between the teacher and his or her students but is negotiated within institutional structures where school administration, principal and the education department all struggle for influence over the planning process (Bourdieu, 1993).

The planning for teaching process was different at the two schools with the planning approach at Trimble being more collaborative than the approach at Riverside. At Trimble collaborative planning was done in both a formal and informal manner: formally via professional learning team (PLT) meetings on Monday nights and informally between teachers in the staffroom. The PLT meetings grouped teachers around action research projects rather than a learning areas arrangement which appeared to expand the professional habitus secondary school teacher have traditionally carried. Professional habitus for teachers is the gaining of a sense of identity via their learning area and the attending pedagogy of that learning area (Burn, 2007; Kempe, 2009). For example 'I am a science teacher, it is important for students to conduct practical experiments to illustrate accepted concepts', or 'I am a maths teacher and concepts must be taught in sequential order'. Teachers working in PLTs on action

research projects resulted in teachers sharing information on teaching and learning approaches which crossed learning area boundaries (Principal interview, 2). This sharing of information and approaches to teaching and learning breaks down professional habitus through increased understanding of each other's work. Collaboration also occurred informally at Trimble with teachers swapping information and resources over lunchtime conversations and forming casual PLTs to develop rich learning tasks for a year level as in the case of the year eight house and land unit (Research diary, 2006; Teacher interview, 12).

Teacher planning at Riverside maintained the traditional secondary school teacher habitus by grouping teachers by subject knowledge or key learning area (KLA). This meant that all science teachers met to plan out the science curriculum and maths teachers, mathematics curriculum. This grouping of teachers was restricted even further with KLA teachers meeting in year levels as John noted when deciding which meetings to attend, *there is a bit of a problem there too because if you teach year eight and ten (English) there are two separate meetings and you've got to choose*. KLA based planning limited the flow of information and understanding across the KLA groups of teachers decreasing opportunities for inter subject teacher collaboration. The KLA groups tended to maintain the habitus of individual planning as they were further isolated into year level groups. As Graham the principal highlighted, *we run enhancement programs and things like that, but we are still locked into a teacher in a box and that lack of flexibility which that results in*. Strong group association maintained competition for influence in the planning for teaching field as the KLA groups struggle for resources. Without a unifying goal in the form of a clear school philosophy around teaching practice, groups competed to maintain values the group viewed as important. This struggle for influence was common as John pointed out when speaking about new programs being introduced, *but it's like everything else, thousand and one priorities, everyone gets spread out and nothing is done properly. Once considered a priority, but every year there seems to a new thing that takes over*. Barry was also frustrated with the way teacher resources move, with the year seven and eight program initially having the support of skilled senior teachers. Only one was left after the funding was reduced. *We have lost all our senior teachers from the program, it's not valid to them, they are teaching in VCE* (Teacher interview, 7). It appeared that the most powerful group at Riverside was able to influence the movement of cultural capital from

one area to another. The frequency of these changes indicated a high level of competition and movement of power within the field. John suggested that some of this competition and power may be due external sources such as the DEECD performance plans, *people have these CV building activities and for my performance plan, this is what I have to do and me doing it will mean every other bugger has to do it. I blame performance plans. I think it has a lot to do with it.*

There is a clear relationship between teacher practice in the classroom and planning for teaching. At Trimble, the cooperative practices in the classroom were reflected in the collaborative practices of planning for teaching which were guided by the school educational philosophy that positive professional relationships are the basis of education. Even though not all teachers took on all aspects, the connection between educational philosophy, teacher planning and practice were clear and supported many of the middle years' practices being maintained at Trimble by decreasing the distance between social spaces of students and decreasing the level of competition and exercising of power in the classroom. Collaborative planning combined with the educational philosophy of relationship building also affected professional teacher habitus with teachers at Trimble identifying less with their learning areas and more as educational professionals with responsibility for young peoples' learning.

Teaching practices at Riverside were also reflected in the planning for teaching. Teaching practices with content driven individual approaches were seen in both the classroom and planning for teaching fields. Competition in the classroom field was high with large distances between the social spaces of students being maintained. Teachers identified strongly with their learning area, working and planning in isolation in comparison to Trimble. It appeared the lack of uniting goals or the purpose of a clear educational philosophy encouraged an individualist approach to planning and teaching.

The social practices at Trimble appeared to influence school processes by decreasing the distance between the social groups within the school leading to improved communication. Improved communication was brought about not by students changing their habitus or personal social values and practices but through an increased understanding of the symbols and meanings different groups use. The cooperative learning practices increased interaction between students from different groups

potentially weakening the importance of group association and competition between groups within social fields. Teachers at Trimble inhabited a similar social space and had a similar habitus to those at Riverside, but collaborative planning around pedagogy appeared to open up the barriers of professional habitus of the teachers leading to an increase in teacher communication and understanding of each other's teaching practices. This increased understanding promoted less competition in the social field giving impetus to change and the development of middle years practices across the school.

Influence of Knowledgeable Actors

To change social practices a change of social structures is required as social structures are dependent on the actions of individuals (Giddens, 1984). To achieve change, people interested in change must gather enough symbolic power to influence other people so that the desired change is viewed as "a legitimate vision of the social world" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 137). In the case of middle years teaching practices this means the combined actions of individuals within the school community must aggregate enough symbolic capital to exert symbolic power over other social groups within the school to consider middle school approaches as legitimate. Giddens' theory of structuration provides a framework to consider how individual action can influence social structures.

Giddens (1991) identifies all people as knowledgeable actors. He argues that, "to be a human being is to know, virtually all of the time in terms of some description or another, both what one is doing and why one is doing it" (p. 35). This does not mean that every act is premeditated. Many actions are 'automatic' responses accessing tacit knowledge or habitus from practical consciousness in response to daily events. These responses to daily events are guided by frames of meaning, "clusters of rules which help constitute and regulate activities" (Giddens, 1984, p. 87). Frames of meaning provide actors with a sense of security and trust through predictability of other actors' responses, what Giddens (1991) identifies as, ontological security. For actors to achieve intentional change they must question current frames of meaning and act with purpose and an outcome in mind. Although Trimble and Riverside had similar goals and difficulties to overcome, the purposeful action of the actors was different in each school.

Purposeful Action

For 10 years Trimble took purposeful action as a whole school to decrease disruptive student behaviour and associated negative effects on student learning in the classroom, using the table groups approach, as Trevor explained:

No, personally I thought people wouldn't be game enough to make the change, it doesn't sound like a big change but for a secondary school it was... This is ten years ago, to change every classroom, every teacher had to accept it, it was no good if one person didn't, every classroom had to teach in that way. We knew that it meant a change in pedagogy. There was only one other school doing it at the time and they don't any more... I really thought people would say, "no, this is too big", some said that, others were nervous but we went ahead anyway and it's the best thing we ever did.

The purposeful action started with an *acknowledgement of staff that something had to be done* (Teacher interview, 9). Student behaviour in the classroom was impeding learning and the teaching practices being used were not effective. It appeared that teachers were forced to question their current frames of meaning around teaching practices. This reflection may have been driven by need but was achieved by collaborative discussion as Trevor described in the search for an alternative approach:

There was no one particular person leading it and that was the other powerful thing. It was like a team. There was Jimmy Hills and myself and another couple pretty interested in this idea, but no one was really running it. Each week we would come along and report back and it gathered its own momentum.

The weekly meetings enabled teachers to reflect on and discuss teaching practices expanding their knowledgeability via the discursive consciousness which involved the identification and articulation of the outcomes of actions (Giddens, 1984). In this case the discussion involved the recognition of the outcomes of teaching practices. Collaborative discussions, unlike individual reflection, encourages the exploration and evaluation of ideas as actors explain or defend their position with an increased likelihood of unacknowledged conditions of action and unintended consequences of action being revealed (Passman & McKnight, 2002).

At Trimble, colleagues collaboratively evaluated the current frames of meaning and explored possible new interpretations. Research and input from external sources added to the reflective and discursive process showing a connection between the social well-being of students and their learning (Royal Children's Hospital, 2001). The teachers became more knowledgeable about their students and the different ways to accommodate the range of students' social and academic needs. The teachers' knowledgeability about the teaching and learning practices at Trimble expanded. Previously unacknowledged conditions of action, including isolation of students in the classroom and related unintended consequences of action, which included students' feelings of isolation leading to disruptive classroom behaviour, were reported. This resulted in a change in practice with the introduction of table groups and cooperative learning pedagogy to assist the development of supportive student relationships, in keeping with the finding of Bond, Clover, Godfrey, Butler and Patton (2001) in their study of 26 schools involving cooperative learning and student engagement. The expansion of teacher's knowledgeability and subsequent change in teaching practice resulted in a change in student behaviour with less class disruption evident and with fewer serious behaviour issues having to be dealt with by the principal (Principal interview, 2).

Expanded knowledgeability of the teachers at Trimble occurred due to the reflective and discursive nature of the weekly meetings. As discussed in Chapter 3, expanding knowledgeability comes from the recognition of unacknowledged conditions of action and revelation of unintended consequences of action related to a specific issue or event. Acknowledgement of these conditions and consequences can lead to new insights and result in action being taken to address the situation. This was the case with the Trimble teachers who recognised which of their teaching practices were promoting poor student behaviour. Changes in teaching practices resulted in improved student engagement. At Riverside the influences of knowledgeability, frames of meaning and purposeful action produced a different story.

The frames of meaning that guided teaching practices at Riverside were focused around teachers caring for *struggling kids or kids that need special assistance* (Teacher interview, 2), while still enabling students to achieve at VCE, VET or VCAL in the

senior years. Teachers understood that many students came from difficult circumstances and many have missed out in primary school as Graham, the principal explained:

These problems don't go away so if they have them in the primary school they are going to have them still when they get to the high school but perhaps more so. There is a fair amount of communication between us (Primary and secondary school) to bring those students through.

The frames of meaning at Riverside developed stable approaches to the teaching and learning of students. Giddens (1984) would term this stability as “routinization” (p. xxiii), where teachers are accessing the tacit knowledge of their practical consciousness to deal with much of the daily teaching routine. Students at Riverside knew what to expect and generally responded accordingly, but with some subversive resistance, as demonstrated by the boys cutting up folders, the girls reading novels under the desk or saying “I will complete it for homework” (Research diary, 2006). Students with learning or behaviour difficulties were managed individually via support systems in the school. As Graham noted about a student with behaviour issues, *we have a social conscience that recognises that if we don't give this kid a go he is not going to get it up the road. So we persist with kids longer than one might in many other settings.*

Reflection as with planning for teaching was generally done at an individual level at Riverside, with teachers clearly recognising students' needs and how they may attend to those needs. John discussed this in relation to his group of year nine boys who were not coping with the English assignment, *I might just say to them "On the date, just summarise the episodes", and it's one way of dealing with the different levels.* The art teacher also noted the needs of a group of enthusiastic and talented art students requiring more opportunities to explore life drawing (Research diary, 2006). Individual teacher reflections, although important, do not promote the level of discursive activity found in collaborative teacher discussions (Lyons, 2006). This could be part of the reason why teachers at Riverside appeared to have stable frames of meaning around their teaching practices.

Lack of collaborative discussion and teachers' acceptance of the situation at Riverside has led to a routinization of teaching practices. These practices produced unintended consequences which remain hidden due to the low levels of collaborative discursive

activities across the school. Knowledgeability of teachers remained unchanged, resulting in the reproduction of current practices and structures. Importantly, unintended consequences, such as the boys' subversive resistance to learning remain unchanged.

Changing Social Structures

The duality of structuration asserts that the actions of actors create, reproduce or modify social structures and these same structures influence the actor's actions (Giddens, 1984). Examination of actors' purposeful actions and how these actions interact with institutional structures can provide an insight into personal agency which Giddens (1984) describes as the ability to act and 'make a difference':

To be able to 'act otherwise' means being able to intervene in the world, or to refrain from such intervention, with the effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs. This presumes that to be an agent is to be able to deploy (chronically, in the flow of daily life) a range of causal powers, including that of influencing those deployed by others...capacity of the individual 'to make a difference' (p. 14).

At Trimble the increased knowledgeability of teachers and the campus principal developed symbolic capital and power that brought about changes in the social structures of the school. These changes to social structure were reflected in the school organisation, institutional orders and social practices which are summarised in Table 18. The shaded and 'ticked' characteristics are not only significant middle school characteristics but are also modifications to school structures resulted from the purposeful action of the teachers and the campus principal. Such purposeful action Giddens associates with human agency. The intentional outcome of improved student engagement and less disruptive behaviour in the classroom also occurred as Liam, the campus principal noted:

Mind you, the way we were operating at one stage here, on this campus, you probably wouldn't have wanted your kid to come to the school...Things have changed that much...if the kids have a disagreement, you can sort things out as people rather than just power.

The change in social practices was clearly seen within Trimble but those practices were not universally present. Students still identified a group of students as ‘feral’ due to their anti-social, anti-school behaviour. Students also discussed teachers who were seen as ineffective in managing student behaviour. Teaching practices were varied with some teachers still using teacher centred approaches as their primary teaching mode. As Rory described with his music class, *At the moment we are doing note reading and it is really hard and she is telling us all this stuff and you are just copying it down and not getting a word that she is saying.* So why hasn’t middle years pedagogy become universal across the school after 10 years of purposeful action promoting and supporting middle years schooling practices?

A number of social and structural factors appeared to undermine the universal incorporation of middle schooling characteristics into the school structure. Each year staff changes reoccurred with teachers leaving or retiring from the school being replaced by new teachers who on the whole were not aware of the table groups approach and co-operative learning focus of the school’s educational philosophy (Teacher interview, 9; Principal interview, 2). In the first few years after the introduction of table groups at Trimble there was an induction process for new staff which has slowly disappeared. As Trevor explains, *we did have an induction for new staff, a little booklet put together, but somehow that fell off the cart along the way.* Staff induction to table groups and cooperative learning became reliant on informal staff mentoring which decreased the effectiveness in changing teachers’ professional habitus. Stacy identified the possibility that the table groups may become diluted out of existence:

There's a few of us that very much stick to the group system, and there would be others that have their rooms set up in a different way-they're (students) not actually in the (table) group(s)-so it would depend what teachers were here and who came in and who went. It is quite possible that it just might filter itself out, if it's not addressed.

Trevor pointed out that table groups can be the worst sort of learning situation if teachers are not using the appropriate pedagogy. *Cooperative learning can be the best type of learning if done well and done poorly the worst. Having kids working individually facing each other distracting each other is not going to work.* The lack of

induction of new staff to table groups and cooperative learning pedagogy developed differences in teachers' knowledgeability about the teaching practices in the school. Teachers operating from different frames of meaning. Unintended consequences of creating teacher social groups based on professional habitus may develop with supporters and detractors of table groups and cooperative learning pedagogy with the potential to develop opposing sides in staff discussions and decisions.

Ontological security involves having a sense of one's presence in the world with feelings of continuity as one deals with day-to-day activities (Laing, 1960). It is an important motivating factor for all people including teachers and provides a person with feelings of competence to get on with the task at hand and cope with the *durée* of daily life (Giddens, 1991). Routinization of social practices and institutional orders such as school policies all assist in feelings of ontological security (Giddens, 1984). Moving away from the familiar, changing social practices or changes to institutional orders all have the potential to threaten ontological security. Teachers as do all people, try to maintain their ontological security (Norgaard, 2006). New teachers who come into Trimble with teacher centred approaches to teaching and learning informed by behaviourism, will wish to control the pace and direction of learning. These 'teacher centred' teachers are unlikely to change their frames of meaning unless they go through a reflective and discursive process similar to that experienced by teachers at Trimble who introduced the table groups approach. For these teachers, being in control of the pace and direction of the lesson supported their ontological security. To move away from this practice could threaten feelings of competence and ability to cope with the daily demands of teaching.

The allocation of resources and institutional orders are explicit demonstrations of an institution's influence on social practices (Giddens, 1984). Within schools, organisation of time, allocation of teachers' work, funding and provision of teaching spaces are all examples of resource allocation. As institutions are created and maintained by the actions of actors, it is the actors controlling the real and symbolic capital and associated real and symbolic power who are influencing the social practices. At Trimble resources were starting to be directed away from the structures that supported middle schooling pedagogy. PLT meeting time was being given to administrative meetings to discuss issues around the new school campus, action research projects were overshadowed by

implementation of a new reporting systems and the documentation of VELs. This change in resource allocation may seem necessary as new demands have to be met but it may also undermine the changes achieved at Trimble. The improvements seen at Trimble in student achievement and behaviour are the result of collaborative reflective activities of teachers evaluating teaching practices, taking purposeful action to use middle school pedagogy. If resource allocation undermines these activities, the increases in knowledgeability of new teachers and subsequent change to their frames of meaning are unlikely to occur. New teachers to Trimble will maintain the teaching practices they have brought with them and over time may further dilute the use of middle school practices across the school.

Students and student learning was at the centre of the purposeful activity observed at Trimble and its distinctive social practices. It was not just the teachers' practices which had to change to maintain the structural change but also the students' practices. There were clear links between teacher and student practices as Stacy reported when talking about 7B:

Yeah, we count on 7B. 7B are good. You can do discussions with 7B. You can do that really well, but you couldn't do it so well with another class. A part of that's about the kids need to learn how to do discussions. There are definitely things that you would do with some classes and not others, or that would work better with some classes and not others, so depending on the mix of kids.

Some students will act purposefully to undermine the actions of teachers within schools. Trimble students identified the feral students as actively undermining the learning activities of their classrooms. The teachers were also aware of the issue when first implementing change across the school, requiring all classrooms to use table groups to routinize students' classroom practice around cooperative learning. For structural change to occur at an institutional level, all actors must have similar expectations; both students and teachers have to expect middle schooling approaches to be the norm in every classroom. New teachers and new students entering the school each year without the routinized background of table groups and cooperative learning approaches will require reflective discursive activities to expand their knowledgeability. Increased knowledgeability will enable changes in their frames of meaning and social practices.

Liam the campus principal was aware of this situation as he explained about the year eight class he was taking due to a teacher having left the school:

One of the reasons I want to work with this year eight class is at the moment they've got into habits of talking a lot of time and interrupting and not focusing on their learning. They can't just switch on, focus on something, you know, relax and do something else. They can't do that...So you sort out your school rules, classroom rules, how you work in your groups. You start with working out the table groups and working out activities get kids to cooperate with each other. They are all just learned skills.

Stability of Social Structures

Social structures and associated practices appeared very stable at Riverside. Frames of meaning were maintained by the routinized practices of all agents. Although purposeful action had been taken with various programs, the structures and supporting core teaching and learning practices remained unaffected. As John illustrated with a past program of vertical organisation:

We've always had behaviour issues here, years and years ago we had a vertical unit structure. The vertical unit structure was from memory years seven, eight, nine and ten. There were basically two levels. Subjects weren't called English and history, they all had nice names like 'the police and you' exciting things which the kids very quickly learnt weren't really as exciting as they sounded. I think that was part of the problem. Really the idea behind that was mainly to stop kids becoming too familiar with each other because of the discipline problems. So give them a term and before they can get their little groups together, break them up into a different group...but now they're together in seven and eight, they're better managed. Having said that I had the worst year eight class I've ever had this year.

The vertical units were unsustainable as pedagogy remained unchanged within the subjects carrying 'exciting' titles. Changing the organisation of the students was not a structural change to the institution, as the teaching and learning practices were left unaffected. Without a change to social practices, duality of structure tells us that structures will be left unchanged. The organisation may look different but this is merely cosmetic. The structures remained unaffected as agents went about their daily tasks in

the same manner as before the 'cosmetic change'. A similar issue was occurring with the year seven and eight program at Riverside with students being kept in the same class group over the two years but with other practices remaining unchanged, as Graham the principal pointed out when discussing the achievements of the program:

It (year seven & eight program) has (achieved) in a welfare sense but not in a curriculum sense... I don't think we have achieved it in terms of the middle year philosophy in terms of cooperative learning and having a say in the curriculum. So I think we have much more we could achieve in that area but in terms of welfare support we have achieved well. We have reached a point now that we would have to restructure the school in a major way. We are held back...by the physical spaces we have.

Graham felt that changes in teaching practices were being held back by a lack of the appropriate teaching spaces to apply cooperative learning approaches. John identified it as more a matter of priorities:

You don't actually get to run the program as it should be run for whole lots of reasons, such as you can't have one teacher teaching the kids for three subjects because that teacher is needed somewhere else in the school or just timetabling issues and time management issues where you can't get all the teachers together free at the same time to discuss students and planning which is an important part of it (the program). You could only do that if you didn't have some other program going at some other level in the school which is making demands in the same way. We spread ourselves too thin.

It is clear that teachers at Riverside wanted to see improvements in student behaviour and student learning but were constrained by the stable frames of meaning around student welfare and the individual management of student needs. The structures of the school appeared to exert a high level of influence on the social practices of the agents. Teachers at Riverside associated by learning area and appeared to compete for resources influenced through their group association and sort to maintain many routinized behaviours and to reinforce professional habitus based around learning areas.

Teachers may resist modifying teaching practices as they work to sustain ontological security. Changing teaching practices may produce unexpected outcomes or increase

levels of anxiety with concerns of not being able to cope. Maintaining ontological security may have been the reason for the difficulty in changing class length at Riverside, as Graham explained:

We could have done it (changed from 50 minute to 75 minute periods) but staff made the choice to stay in the model they are comfortable with which is the six periods so there is not a great deal we can do while we have that model...We are almost at a time where we have 50% saying yes and 50% saying no. At the time we made the judgment 'no', it would have been a gamble. It might have come off but it might not have. My sense is that I would have preferred to have 'gone for it' but we didn't. Unless you have a good proportion of the staff supportive of it you are setting yourself up for failure.

A change to longer class time would enable teachers to use more adolescent appropriate teaching approaches such as inquiry based learning, cooperative learning and negotiated curriculum (Beane, 1980; Davis-Wiley, George, & Cozart, 1995). It appeared the small change of moving from six classes to four longer classes over the day threatened teachers' ontological security, with teachers not knowing how students would react, or as teachers how they might cope with the longer class period. Staying with the routinized practice of six 50-minute classes per day supported current frames of meanings and feelings of ontological security demonstrating the stability of institutional structures and agents' frames of meaning.

Chapter Summary

The collaborative reflective discussions between teachers at Trimble enabled teachers to recognise unacknowledged conditions of action and unintended consequences, leading to the implementation of new teaching practices to improve student learning and behaviour. The collaborative planning by teachers appeared to change teachers' professional habitus by becoming orientated around education professionalism rather than specialist knowledge. Cooperative learning approaches in the classroom increased communication between students, as they better understood the symbols and meanings of different social groups within the classroom.

This was in contrast to Riverside where school structures and classroom practices encouraged the maintenance of different social groups, with students working in self-generated groups they developed and with teachers collecting around specialist subject knowledge. Routinization of school practices was reproducing this situation as students, teachers and parents interacted around school activities using tacit knowledge and practical consciousness.

A significant difference between Trimble and Riverside was the reflectively discursive discussions in which teachers and students participated. At Trimble teachers engaged in collaborative reflective discourse, formally and informally around pedagogy, students and school related issues. This process engaged teachers' discursive consciousness, expanding their knowledgeability around teaching and learning practices used at Trimble and the outcomes of these practices on student achievement and behaviour. The cooperative learning approaches used in the classroom in conjunction with the table group organisation enabled the crossing of social boundaries for both teachers and students, leading to improved communication and understanding of each others' habitus.

In contrast the reflective discourse at Riverside was focused on the individual with teachers reflecting on their own classes in isolation. This isolated reflection was centred on classroom issues or individual students rather than on the broad pedagogical discussions and school wide issues that collaborative discussion at Trimble generated. Without collaborative discussion Riverside teachers maintained current frames of meaning leaving teaching practices unevaluated and unchanged. Students continued to work with likeminded students which reinforced the social habitus and the maintenance of social groups. These groups continued to exercise power and the gaining of influence within the social field of the classroom.

Teacher ontological security influenced the teaching practices at both schools and was an important factor in teachers at both schools maintaining or experimenting with teaching and learning approaches. At Trimble the collaborative reflective discussions led to changes in the teachers' frames of meaning which appeared to strengthen teacher ontological security and enabled new teaching practices to be implemented. At

Riverside the lack of collaborative discussions supported frames of meaning around the current practices and resulted in stable routinized practices.

Using the social lens of the theoretical framework developed from Bourdieu and Giddens to examine the data has revealed relationships between a number of social factors not identified in the initial data analysis discussed in Chapter 6. These social factors mediate the action taken by teachers around pedagogical choice. Social practices including teaching practices are very stable. Habitus and the maintenance of ontological security supported the stability of social practices including teaching practices. Social group association reinforced habitus as group members had a common understanding of symbols and meanings. With teachers, this was seen in the formation of professional habitus. The tacit knowing of how a person's professional group members are going to act strengthens feelings of ontological security and maintains institutional structures around teaching practices. To initiate pedagogical change these stabilising aspects must be challenged.

At Trimble collaborative reflectively discursive discussion was able to overcome some of the stabilising aspects of social practice by expanding teachers' knowledgeability. Increasing knowledgeability not only changed teachers' frames of meaning around teaching and learning but increased the understanding of colleagues' professional habitus associated with different key learning areas. Understanding other teacher's professional habitus increases communication and combined with insights into personal teaching practices can lead teachers to take purposeful action and change classroom pedagogy.

The factors of stable teaching practices and institutional structures and the role of teacher collaboration in developing teacher agency are key concepts which have emerged from the data analysis. It would be expected that these two factors may be present in secondary schools generally and if so provide support to this data analysis that teacher agency is mediated by the social practices and institutional structures of the school. To explore the stability of teaching practices and institutional structures plus the role of teacher collaboration, a web-based questionnaire was developed. The findings of the questionnaire are presented in Chapter 8.

Chapter Eight: What is the Situation for Other Teachers?

Findings from the Trimble and Riverside Secondary College's analysis of data using the theoretical framework developed from the work of Bourdieu and Giddens emphasised that the stable nature of social practices and institutional structures within schools appeared to support the routinization of teaching practices. The analysis discussed in Chapter 7 also established the potential of teacher collaboration to support reflection on teaching practice and to reveal ineffective pedagogies and school structures.

Recognition of ineffective practices can lead to increased teacher knowledgeability and ontological security leading to purposeful action, changing teaching practices and school structures.

Although the contexts of Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges are unique, an understanding of the influences on the pedagogical choice of middle years teachers in these schools can be tentatively applied to other similar settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Willig, 2008). Taking this into account a web-based questionnaire was developed. Its purpose was to explore the stability of social practices and institutional structures and the role of teacher collaboration in other secondary schools. The questionnaire had two aims: to gain a description of teacher's perspectives and teaching activities; and to explore possible relationships between teacher collaboration and the use of middle school pedagogy.

Introduction

School principals from a number of western suburbs of Melbourne were approached by letter and follow up phone calls inviting their school to participate in a web-based questionnaire, ‘Teaching years 7-9, what are the influences?’ which explores the factors affecting on the take up of middle years pedagogy.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the questionnaire was developed from the analysis of qualitative data collected at Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges. The four themes of school perspectives, educational philosophy, teaching practices and planning for teaching which emerged from the data analysis provided the framework for the survey questions. As set out in Appendix 8, the web-based questionnaire contains nine sections. Data collected from the questions was collected into new variables to examine the relationship of teacher collaboration in the use or implementation of middle years pedagogy.

Only four of the 18 schools approached agreed to participate. The researcher gave a short presentation on the research at staff meetings at each school and invited teachers to complete the survey. Teachers who agreed to participate were sent a link to the survey via email. 57 of the 109 teachers emailed completed the survey. This is a small sample of the teaching profession but provides triangulation of two key themes from the qualitative data: the stability of social practices and the role of collaboration and discursive processes in expanding teachers’ knowledgeability. The general characteristics of the teacher respondents are summarised in Table 19.

Years of teaching experience	Learning area
19% 5 years or less	42% English/Humanities
24% between 6 and 15 years	26% Maths/Science
32% between 16 and 25 years	17% Creative Arts/Technology
25% more than 25 years	10% PE/Health
	5% ICT

Table 19: Summary of teacher respondents

Stability of Social Practice

As the summary in Table 20 indicates there was a surprising consistency in some aspects of teachers' perspectives on teaching and learning with all teachers agreeing on the need to know students and provide regular feedback on their learning. Knowing students enhances the education of all students, but is emphasised in the middle years literature as important for adolescent learning (Department Education, Training & Youth Affairs (DETYA), 2001; Bahr & Pendergast, 2007). More specific middle schooling approaches were highly regarded by the majority

Teaching and Learning Perspectives	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Middle years perspectives				
Students become more engaged in their learning when they have input and choice into what is going to be studied.	32%	56%	12%	0%
Cooperative learning where students can investigate concepts together is an essential aspect of learning.	38%	53%	7%	2%
Units of study or topics and learning activities should be connected to issues in the wider community and students' own lives.	47%	40%	11%	2%
An important aspect of student learning is presenting their work to different audiences.	26%	60%	14%	0%
Regular teacher contact with parents outside parent/teacher interviews is important for student learning.	26%	59%	16%	0%
Mean	34%	54%	12%	1%
Non middle years perspectives				
Students learn more effectively when concepts are presented in a sequential and logical fashion.	38%	51%	11%	0%
It is essential that students develop a strong knowledge base of my subject in preparation for years 11 and 12.	44%	42%	12%	2%
Mean	30%	47%	22%	1%

Table 20: Summary teaching perspectives

Teaching and Learning Perspectives	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Non middle years perspectives (continued)				
Activities such as copying notes from the board and answering questions from a textbook are important parts of students' learning.	9%	47%	42%	2%
General teaching perspectives				
It is important to know students' individual strengths and weaknesses.	74%	26%	0%	0%
Getting to know students individually is a key aspect of classroom management.	69%	31%	0%	0%
Regular guidance and feedback to students about their work is essential for learning.	69%	31%	0%	0%
Mean	71%	29%	0%	0%

Table 20 (continued): Summary teaching perspectives

of teachers surveyed but 16% of teachers viewed these approaches as unimportant. A surprisingly strong alignment was seen with teacher centred approaches grouped under 'non-middle years perspectives to teaching and learning' with 91% of teachers agreeing with learning being more effective when concepts are presented in a logical and sequential fashion. 86% of teachers surveyed regarded a knowledge base of their learning area as essential to future learning and 56% identified copying notes from the board and text bookwork as important.

The teacher centred approach to teaching and learning was supported by how often teachers used particular teaching activities. The frequency teachers reported using a particular teaching activity is presented in Table 21 with the most frequently used activity ranked 1 down to the least frequently used activity ranked 15 (see Appendix 9 for details).

Rank by Frequency of Use	Teaching Activities
1	I work with individual students.
2	I demonstrate to students how to solve problems or answer questions.
3	Students work on individual tasks
4	Whole class discussions.
5	Students work in pairs.
6	I give notes.
7	Students work in small groups.
8	Students work on practical activities.
9	Give extension work to various students.
10	Students examine issues or problems to find solutions.
11	Students share work they have completed
12	Revise concepts for test and examinations.
13	Students complete tests.
14	Have incursions, guest speakers or people from the wider community to work with students
15	Go on excursions related to the unit being studied.

Table 21: Teaching activities ranked by frequency of use

The activity ‘I demonstrate to students how to solve problems or answer questions’ was the second most frequent response with ‘students working on individual tasks’ ranked third. Middle years practices such as ‘students work in small groups’, ‘students work on practical activities’ or ‘students examining real issues or problems’ were used much less frequently used being ranked 7 or less out of the 15 activities. With one quarter of teachers reporting they give notes every lesson, the use of teacher centred pedagogy is still extensive. This is in contradiction to teachers being aware and supportive of middle schooling practices. Such a contradiction was also found by Schraw & Olafson’s (2002) study of teachers’ epistemological beliefs which found that “teachers may have strong beliefs about the importance of student-centred constructivist pedagogy; yet often revert

to a more traditional style” due to a range of constraints including time and curriculum demands.

The apparent difference between teachers’ beliefs around teaching and the practices used in the classroom supports the notion of institutional structures maintaining social practices across time and space (Giddens, 1984). This maintenance of teaching practices leads to routinization which is difficult for teachers to change even when there is an awareness of other teaching approaches as indicated by teachers’ support of middle schooling.

Role of Collaboration

Many authors have found that collaboration between teachers encourages reflection on teaching practices and increases awareness of different approaches to teaching and learning (Carrington & Elkins, 2002; Cumming & Owen, 2001; Fullan, 2003; Hargreaves, 2000; Lyons, 2006). This increase in awareness through collaboration was seen in the questionnaire data with a moderate but significant correlation between teacher collaboration and support for middle schooling ($r = .342, N = 57, p < 0.01$ two tailed). This correlation of 11.7% of the variance in teacher support for middle schooling indicates that collaboration among teachers does influence teacher belief in middle years teaching approaches which is an important first step in the application of middle schooling (Fullan, 2003; Palack & Walls, 2009). However, no support was found for the important second step of application, with no correlation between teacher collaboration and the applying of middle years pedagogy. There was also no correlation between teachers’ support of middle schooling practices and applying middle years pedagogy.

Collaborating teachers were more likely to document their teaching practice as indicated by a moderate correlation between teacher collaboration and documentation of teaching practice ($r = .506, N = 57, p < 0.01$ two tailed). Documentation requires the use of discursive consciousness to articulate one’s practices, leading to opportunities for reflection. But without a change to classroom practices, it would seem teachers are maintaining a conservative position. This finding of teacher collaboration leading to positive support of middle schooling but not leading to a change in teaching practice is similar to the finding in Cohen and Hill’s (2001) study of school reform in California

that found collaboration does not lead to change per se, as professional learning communities can be both “conservative as well as progressive” (p. 11).

The outcome of this style of collaboration was seen at Riverside where many teachers and the principal had a positive view of middle schooling but had not resulted in changes to teaching practices. A targeted and sustained approach to professional development and collaboration appears to be required to change teacher beliefs and classroom practices (Sing Chai, Teo & Beng Lee, 2009; Fullan, 2003; Hill, 2007; Lyons, 2006).

Teachers’ learning opportunities should be grounded in the work they do in the classrooms. When teachers study the content, curriculum materials assessments, and instructional methods they will be using, student achievement improves (Hill, 2007, p. 121).

The collaborative activities and influences on planning summarised in Table 22 suggests that teachers do talk about teaching and learning and plan curriculum together. Although teachers talk, it does not seem that this is leading to reflection and changes in teaching practice. With 60% of teachers planning as they go, 55% of teachers lacking the time to use the principles of teaching and learning (PoLT) framework which was developed from middle years research, it appears the support needed to expand knowledgeability of teaching practice is lacking. Without the resources to critically evaluate teaching practices, collaborative discussions are more likely to reinforce current practices, leading to routinization of practice rather than exploring the unintended consequences of practice which may lead to changes in classroom teaching (Schraw & Olafson, 2002).

Rank	Teacher collaboration	% Agree	% Disagree	Rank	Influence on planning for teaching	% Agree	% Disagree
1	I use the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and the Principles of Learning and Teaching to guide my planning.	91	9	1	I always pre-test students' knowledge	61	39
2	I frequently plan collaboratively with other teachers	66	34	2	I develop activities and assessments with the average student in mind	64	36
3	I frequently plan and coordinate my teaching with other teachers of the same students	60	40	3	When planning lessons I tend to 'plan as I go' depending on what the student has achieved.	60	40
4	I prefer to work on my own when planning units of study or lessons	50	50	4	When planning lessons I tend to 'plan as I go'	60	40
5	I plan by starting with assessments and then develop classroom activities	40	60	5	I do not have enough time to take on programs such as PoLT	55	45
				6	Students' behaviour in class directs the type of teaching and learning activities I am able to run.	49	51
				7	I am frequently unable to plan some activities in my classes due to students being disruptive.	21	79

Table 22: Teacher collaboration and Influence on teacher planning

Chapter Summary

The survey data supports the findings of the qualitative record collected from Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges that teachers' beliefs and social practices are quite stable and difficult to change with the institutional structures of schools encouraging the routinization of teaching practices. Teacher collaboration can expand teachers' knowledgeability but for purposeful action leading to a change in classroom teaching, a reflectively discursive environment which encourages evaluation of current teaching practices and the identification of unintended consequences, similar to the situation established at Trimble, is required. As Lang (2000) identifies:

Collaboration is a complex task dependant on mutual help, trust, openness, open access to various sources of information, reflective experiences from inside and outside the school, and autonomy in a community of the individuals involved (p. 10).

It appears from the teachers surveyed that while teachers actively plan and discuss their teaching activities, the complex reflectively discursive collaboration required to initiate changes to classroom practices does not generally occur. A combination of institutional structures, habitus and maintenance of ontological security seems to encourage the routinization of teaching practices and a "steady as you go" approach to education.

The next chapter brings together the findings presented in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 in an attempt to understand how the various influences recognised interact at a structural and individual level to enable teachers to evaluate teaching practice. Two pathways to this evaluation are identified and explained in detail: the evolution of practice pathway which leads to a change or deepening of understanding of teaching practices and the reproduction of practice pathway which leads to the routinization of teaching practices and a reliance on tacit knowledge.

Chapter Nine: Building Reflective Practice to Promote Adolescent Learning

The data presented and analysed in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 have revealed a range of influences which can be enabling or inhibiting to teacher collaboration and the implementation and maintenance of middle schooling. Trimble and Riverside Colleges have provided examples of how school structures can support or discourage authentic collaboration which can result in the routinization or the changing of teaching practices. The web-based questionnaire highlighted the stability of teaching practices, corroborating the qualitative findings that the application of middle years practices requires more than teacher belief.

This chapter draws the findings together to convey an understanding of the influences on the pedagogical choice of middle years secondary school teachers. First, the chapter summarizes adolescent appropriate pedagogy and the importance of this pedagogy in supporting the learning of young people in year seven through to year nine. The chapter then describes possible pathways teachers can take to evaluate teaching practices: the evolution of practice or the reproduction of practice pathway. The effects of the pathway elements on teachers' evaluation of teaching practice are then explored. This discussion is presented in three sections:

Section One: The Pathways – Evolution or Reproduction of Practices

This section describes the two pathways for the evaluation of teaching practice and identifies the complex range of institutional, social and personal factors which interact to produce either an evolution or reproduction of practice pathway. The roles of teachers, students and social structures are discussed in detail using the theoretical framework developed from the theories of Bourdieu and Giddens to explain the relationships which exist between the factors. Recognition and understanding of the pathways provides an insight into enablers and inhibitors of pedagogical change.

Section Two: Influencing the Pathway Taken

This section discusses the importance of the reflectively discursive process and the power relationships developed in schools to support the evolution of practice pathway,

which leads to pedagogical change. Within the reflectively discursive process the relationship between the elements of trust, knowledgeability and ontological security are explored. The power relationships that promote or impede the collaboration of teachers to engage in reflectively discursive activities are acknowledged and the role of power in enhancing or diminishing the opportunities for teachers to participate in the activities is discussed.

Section Three: Which Path, Evolution or Reproduction of Practice

This section explores why some teachers and schools are able to critically evaluate and change teaching practices while others act to maintain the status quo. The factors that support or undermine teachers and schools taking the evolution of practice pathway are examined. Discussion of the influences highlights the complex nature of schools as social structures and how a change in one aspect of the school will affect all other aspects of the school.

Introduction

The focus of this research has been the adoption of adolescent appropriate pedagogy in the early years of secondary school, which includes students, aged 12 – 15. The literature suggests that these years are a significant developmental period for young people, a time when young people are at risk of becoming disenchanted and disengaged from education as they move from childhood to becoming young adults (Bahr & Pendergast, 2007). In the 21st century, education has become an important factor in providing life opportunities, with a person's access to economic, social and cultural assets being closely correlated to the level of education achieved (Argy, 2006; Teese, 2006). The application of adolescent appropriate pedagogy in the classrooms of students in years seven through to nine increases the engagement, social and academic success of all students and in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Caldwell, 1998a; Fullan, 2000; Luke, et al. 2003). It is this evidence from the educational research which points to the importance of teachers applying adolescent appropriate pedagogy to the teaching of students in years seven, eight and nine. However, both the literature and the data from this research indicate the uptake of this pedagogy is sporadic both across and within schools (Hill & Russell, 1999; Hargreaves, 2009).

A classroom which has a focus on promoting the engagement and learning of adolescents would involve groups of young people cooperatively working on challenging tasks. These tasks would require students to master new skills and knowledge and apply them to authentic problems which connect with the world beyond the classroom. The democratic organisation of the classroom would mean students have input into aspects of the studies in which they are engaged. Problems and disputes would be dealt with as a community rather than by teacher decree. Ideally all the elements summarised in Figures 8 and 9 would be identifiable in the classroom. These classrooms would be supported by school structures and organisation to provide all the characteristics of middle schooling which have been discussed in Chapter 2 and are summarised in Table 1.

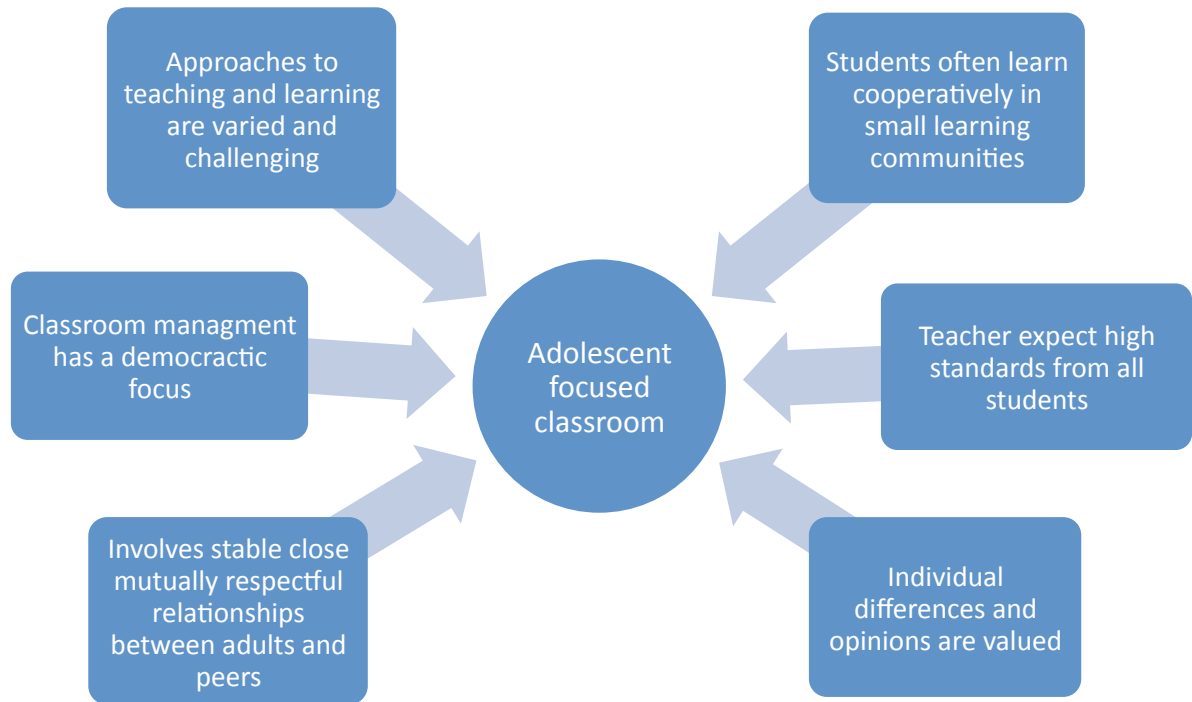


Figure 8: Elements of an adolescent focused classroom

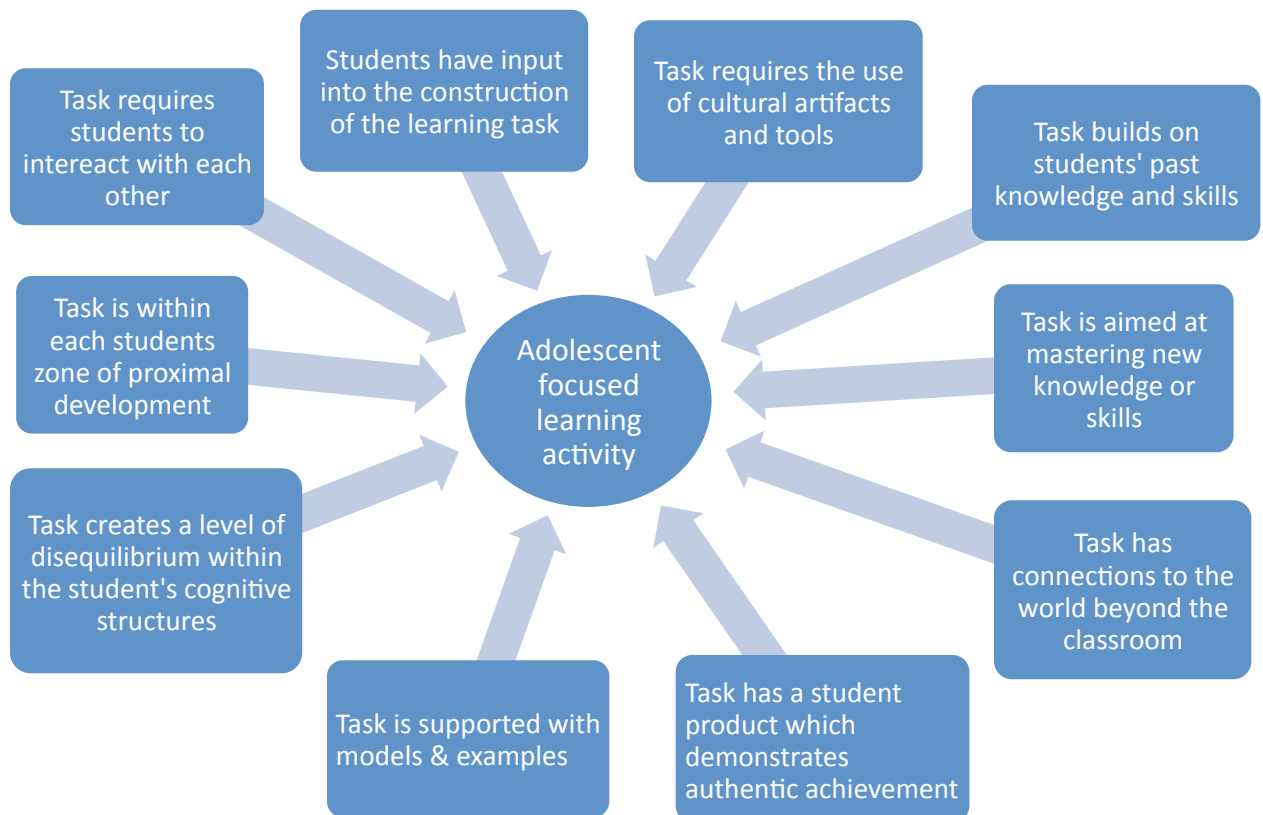


Figure 9: Elements of adolescent learning tasks

It is the implementation of these elements into classroom practices that has been the unattained goal of the middle years' reform movement, both in Australia and internationally, for the past 20 years (Borman, Hewes, Overman & Brown, 2003; Fullan, 2009). This research has investigated the influences on pedagogical choice from the teacher's perspective in an attempt to better understand the implementation process. It has been guided by the following research questions:

- What are the components and processes involved in the pedagogical choice of secondary school middle years teachers?
- How do these components and processes influence teachers of secondary school middle years students to select or discard various classroom teaching and learning activities and approaches?
- How could school structures encourage middle years secondary school teachers to adopt adolescent appropriate pedagogy leading to more successful implementation of middle schooling and improved learning outcomes for adolescent students?

The research questions have provided a clear focus for the investigation. Data were collected from Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges which were located in regional areas with similar social and economic characteristics, similar social groups and similar issues at the schools. Despite these similarities each school had developed different educational philosophies, social practices and institutional structures which guided the teaching and learning of adolescent students.

Trimble teachers and the principal had a common understanding of the school's direction with teaching and learning of students underpinned by the development of authentic professional relationships and the construction of knowledge through cooperative learning activities. The school structures had a degree of flexibility enabling teachers to design curriculum, pedagogy and organisation through collaborative investigation in professional learning teams. Although these structures and social practices had maintained many middle years practices for 10 years, the practices were not consistent across the school. As teachers moved in and out of the school and as

government education departments placed requirements on the school, various teaching practices and organisation structures gained and lost prominence. However, overall Trimble had maintained a school environment which was both collaborative and reflective with teachers engaging in reflectively discursive discussions about teaching practices and supportive school structures and were able to initiate changes as unintended outcomes were identified.

At Riverside there was a greater institutional distance between the principal and teachers with the principal and school administration implementing programs to address curricular or student needs. Teachers planned and worked in greater isolation than did the teachers at Trimble. The Riverside teachers came together in KLA meetings to discuss curricular and administrative issues. Student learning had an individual focus, which was teacher directed with the teacher supporting the needs of individual students. Opportunities for different learning experiences for students came primarily from the range of subjects available with technical and creative arts learning areas providing opportunities for students to work with peers and develop practical skills. The school structures and social practices had become routinized at Riverside leading to a stability in teaching practices.

The data collected from the two schools revealed a matrix of social structures and processes which affect teachers' work and teachers' agency around pedagogical choice. The snapshots presented in Chapter 5 presented the distinct nature of each school and the complex nature of schools' generally, as social institutions. Both schools contained common elements common to each other. At Trimble there were groups of teachers who avoided actively collaborating and maintained their current teaching practices, exhibiting the routinization found at Riverside. There were groups of Riverside teachers who collaborated similarly to many of the teachers at Trimble, despite the overall isolated planning structure at Riverside. It is this very complexity and diversity of schools as social structures which makes the theoretical framework developed from Bourdieu and Giddens so useful. The framework enables the data to be examined on a variety of levels from an institutional level, to the influence of social groups, down to individual teacher agency. Being able to examine the school data at these different levels has enabled the relationship of individual teacher agency and school structures to be understood. In this Chapter rather than addressing the research questions individually

the influences on middle years teachers' pedagogical choice will be discussed holistically from the perspective of the teacher and the school as an institution, exploring the relationships connecting teacher agency, professional habitus and school structures.

Section 1: The pathways – Evolution or Reproduction of Practices

From the data analysis there appear to be two pathways which were taken to inform teaching practices by individual teachers and schools as organisations: the maintenance and reproduction of practice or the evaluation and evolution of practice. Both of these pathways can be present within the practices of individual teachers and within schools as institutions; a teacher or school moving from one path to another intentionally or unintentionally. Movement by teachers or schools towards the evolution of practice pathway will encourage the development of educational arrangements that are responsive to the needs of adolescent students in the rapidly changing times of what Bauman (2000) refers to as 'liquid modernity'. An evolution of practice pathway will enable teachers to move towards the development of effective learning tasks that as Willms, Friesen, and Milton (2009) report, include:

- The tasks require and instil deep thinking.
- They immerse the student in disciplinary inquiry.
- They are connected to the world outside the classroom.
- They have intellectual rigour.
- They involve substantive conversations (p. 34).

The teaching practice pathways are summarised in Figure 10 and combined with the analytical framework will underpin the discussion on teacher pedagogical choice and ultimately the potential evolution or maintenance of school structures and teacher practices which may inhibit or enhance adolescent learning.

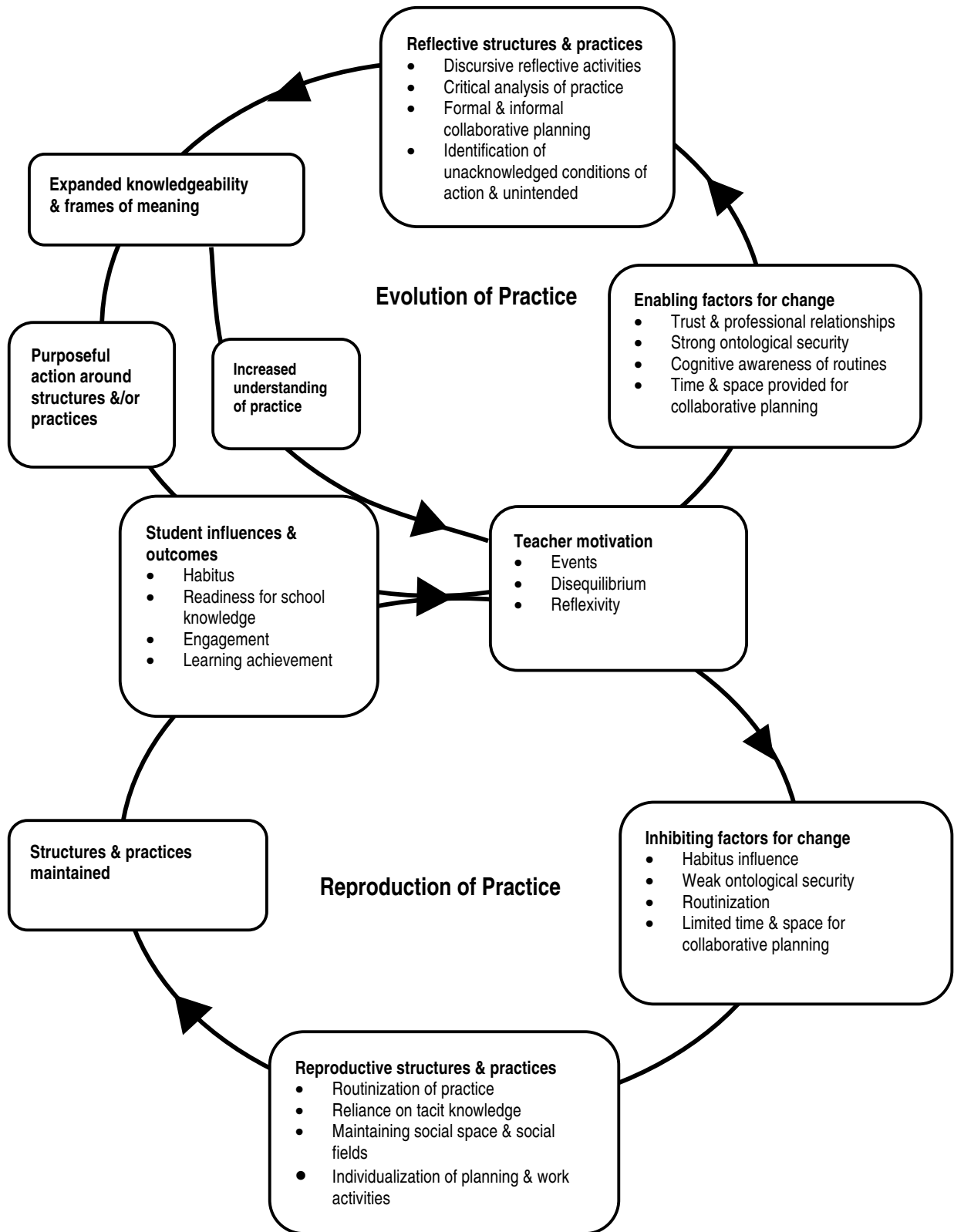


Figure 10: Teaching practice pathways

Student Influences and Outcomes

Student learning should be at the heart of school organisation and structure as outlined in the Melbourne Declaration on Education for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008). The goals of the declaration focus on equity and excellence and assert the need to provide all students with opportunities to become successful, confident, creative learners who will actively participate in society (MCEETYA, 2008). This means the evaluation of teaching practices must respond to the student influences and outcomes as identified in the teaching practice pathways (See figure 10) to improve student learning.

Student habitus and readiness for school knowledge will influence how students engage or resist school structures and the teaching practices being employed as demonstrated in Paul Willis's (1977) study of working class boys. The habitus and readiness for school knowledge of the boys within the study affected the way they engaged with schooling. A similar finding was seen in the schools which were the focus of this study with examples of students actively engaging with learning and also examples of students actively undermining teaching and learning practices. These different actions by students are expressions of student agency. As self-reflecting humans, adolescent students have the capacity to act intentionally contributing to life circumstances (Bandura, 2006; Giddens, 1984). At Riverside 'mini schools' of capable students formed where students tended to group together in class to support each other's learning. It was pointed out by John that these students get *a lot of extra help at home* indicating a family background which has the cultural capital able to support the student's learning. This was in contrast to "the ferals" whom Trimble students identified as those students who *hate school and just want to crack it* (Student interview, 4). This range of student behaviour around learning activities was seen in both schools with teachers and principals suggesting that students' background had a least some influence on their level of engagement. As Graham the principal from Riverside noted, *there is not a strong sense of value in education, so we feel some frustration around that, because it comes through in the way kids behave and the sort of support we get from the local community, families and I am not talking about all families.*

Many studies have reported the importance of student engagement with school and corresponding student behaviour (Atkinson, 2000; Beamon, 2001; Carrington, 2006;

DETYA, 2001; Elliott & Bempechat, 2002; Wiggan, 2008). Students who are more engaged at school are more likely to complete secondary school leading to better employment opportunities and post-secondary education possibilities (Willms, 2003). The difficulty as Zyngier (2007) has found is defining student engagement, but broadly he argues the term “student engagement is an empowering one, developing a sense of entitlement, belonging and identification” (p. 1774).

The factors of student engagement, habitus and readiness for school knowledge influence learning achievement and outcomes of students. Teachers’ recognition of one or a combination of these factors and outcomes can be the motivating influence for teachers to examine school structures and teaching and learning practices.

Teacher Motivation

Teacher motivation appeared to be initiated by three factors which resulted from consideration of the component, student influences and outcomes, of the teaching practice pathways. These factors of teacher motivation are: events, disequilibrium and reflexivity. One factor can initiate teacher motivation but more often a combination of the three factors was seen to provide the impetus for examination of personal teaching or school organisation practices.

Events are significant occurrences. These include internal changes, such as the change of principal, government education department initiatives or school issues which demand attention such as declining student attendance or spiralling anti-social behaviour. Events of this nature provide opportunities for teachers and the school administration to examine current practices (Lampel, Shamsie & Shapira, 2009). The staff at Trimble Secondary College reported the steady build up of poor student behaviour to a point where *something had to be done* leading to the formation of a team of teachers investigating the issue of student behaviour (Teacher interview 9). Another event was the introduction by the Department of Education and Training in Victoria Australia of the Middle Years Research and Development (MYRAD) project in 1998, an initiative which provided opportunities for schools to examine the implementation of middle years approaches into classrooms of years six to nine, through the provision of funding, advice and training for schools and teachers (CAER, 2002). Both of these examples motivated teachers and schools to examine teaching and learning practices.

The situation at Trimble could be seen as problem solving with the issue of student behaviour 'driving' the search for a solution, whereas the MYRAD project was a government department initiative providing an opportunity for the review of current practices in many schools across Victoria through the incentives of funding and professional development (Hill & Russell, 1999).

Disequilibrium occurs when a situation does not proceed as one expected and cannot be explained by current frames of meaning. This tension between the current experience and a person's established worldview can motivate the examination of the situation or personal understanding more closely (Bone, 2005; Festinger, 1957). This tension is common in schools and seen when teachers question what is happening in their classrooms or the school more generally, such as when John from Riverside was frustrated with the students' approach to tackling a book report:

I said we are going to spend a period a week in the library, quiet reading then you report back on what you have read both in writing and as an oral presentation using some props or power point as part of the presentation. A lot of kids just got up and held up the book they had read for half an hour...disappointing.

Similar questions occurred at Trimble exemplified by Stacy's questioning around group work, *sometimes I have a group of kids and they are just that, a group, they are not working together.* This type of questioning can lead teachers to recognise problems, or unintended consequences of action, motivating them to examine personal teaching practices or the more general structures of the school. Examples of this type of questioning were seen at both schools. John identified the possible unintended consequences of staff performance plans at Riverside. He was concerned that these plans might restrict the flexibility of the way teachers work:

Once again this is my own cynical view that people have these C.V. building activities and for my performance plan this is what I have to do and me doing it will mean every other bugger has to do it. I blame performance plans which I think has a lot to do with it...Performance plans force people to say I am going to do this and this through the year...but by the end of the year I should have said I was going to do that and that because things change.

Stacy reflected on potential improvements to her mathematics teaching, seeing a need to connect maths concepts to students' lives:

I really want to get more into the real life with maths, I am quite happy with trying to get kids to understand things and take risks of getting things wrong and developing their confidence, but I am not happy with the work. I want to get it to be more real life and have more projecty (sic) things. Make it more relevant.

For teachers, reflexivity generates the internal motivation to develop personal teaching practices and is seen most clearly in teachers and administrators who reflect regularly on practices and approaches used with students, formulating goals and future actions (Macintyre Latta & Kim, 2009). Reflexivity is the process whereby people reflect on their experiences and position in relation to their social context, transforming these experiences into understanding and knowledge about personal identity and practices (Archer, 2007; Dyke, 2009). Trimble staff demonstrated high levels of reflexivity as exemplified at a teacher level by Stacy's goal setting:

This year my goal was to look at assessment and see what am I trying to achieve and what I should be teaching so I have sort of gone backwards. Through looking at the assessment it has made me look at what am I trying to achieve and what I want the kids to gain out of this. Before that it was just classroom management and feeling comfortable in the classroom. I have always been OK, but for the first couple of years, I don't know what I even taught.

On a school level this was seen in planning for student transition from primary to secondary school and the development of relationships, as Liam explained, with some structural planning the school was investigating:

I want to work out something reasonably concrete to begin with and that was to actually look at sequencing the curriculum-what are the essential things you have to teach in year five, year six, year seven and year eight, and that can be in terms of content, it can be in terms of skills, and then where does it get taught? And then, when you add in the personal things, like, you know, relationships and things like that, that can't be just left

to be haphazard. You've got to find a structural way of doing that (Principal interview, 2).

All three motivational factors of events, disequilibrium and reflexivity were present in both schools. These factors generate the questions that can motivate a review of teaching practices and school structures. Whether the pathway taken is reproductive or evolutionary is influenced by the context of the motivation combined with the level of enabling or inhibiting factors of change that are present in the school.

Enablers and Inhibitors of Change

Giddens and Bourdieu identify people or actors as knowledgeable and reflexive agents who not only monitor the activities and the environment around them, but also respond to those same activities and environmental changes. As represented by the theory of structuration, the response of agents will be informed by the very factors that agents monitor (Giddens, 1984). The presence and strength of the enabling and inhibiting factors of habitus, ontological security, trust relationships, the level of routinization and the availability of time and space will affect agents' responses to the examination of teaching practices, leading to potential change or reproduction of current structures and practices.

Influence of Habitus

As members of the school community, teachers, students, and principals bring their individual habitus to the school setting. People inform their habitus via a system of schemas of perception and discrimination, which they use to navigate their way through the social world. Habitus not only enables people to navigate the world but is also part of their identity and connection to social class (Bourdieu, 1984).

In the cases of Riverside and Trimble Secondary Colleges, habitus affects the way members of the school community interact. Homogenous communities are united by similar habitus and have a common recognition of cultural symbols and communication. Barriers to working collaboratively and setting goals are low due to the ease of communication. In diverse communities this is not the case with individuals of similar habitus forming distinct social groups. Formation of groups restricts collaboration across the community as each group competes for control over the social field.

Competition of this nature encourages protection of current practices, with the powerful group striving to maintain dominance, promoting the group's goals, ethics and aspirations (Bourdieu, 1984).

For change to occur in diverse communities the barriers of habitus must be broken down via increased understanding and the development of trust. Without a common understanding of cultural symbols and communication, collaboration between individuals from different social groups is unlikely. This is seen on a professional level with teachers at Trimble and Riverside who had a similar social habitus coming from 'a middle class background'. But their professional habitus was diverse with most teachers viewing themselves as specialists, such as science teachers, English teachers or art teachers. Professional habitus is an important cultural identity as Bourdieu (1984) emphasises this in his example of:

An old cabinet maker's world view, the way he manages his budget, his time or his body, his use of language and choice of clothing are fully present in his ethic of scrupulous, impeccable craftsmanship and in the aesthetic of work for work's sake which leads him to measure beauty of his products by the care and patience that have gone into them (p. 175).

Secondary school teachers connect strongly with their specialist knowledge such association becomes a dominant attribute of their professional habitus (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000; Kempe, 2009). The questionnaire data revealed professional habitus as a contributor to teachers' identity and was reinforced by school structures that organise teachers' time and activities based on specialist areas. This occurred more clearly at Riverside where teachers not only met and planned curriculum in subject disciplines but were also housed in subject or faculty based staff rooms. This is not to say habitus cannot change, as identity and professional habitus are, "continually informed, formed and reformed as individuals develop over time and through interaction with one another" (Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt, 2000, p. 750). This was the case at Trimble with teachers housed in multi-discipline staff rooms and with planning being conducted in professional learning teams around pedagogy rather than specialist learning areas, an organisation providing opportunities for inter-disciplinary collaboration. Such structures and planning approaches changed the specialist oriented

habitus of many Trimble teachers and developed a pedagogically focused habitus, as teachers collaborated across subject disciplines, leading to their gaining understanding of one another's work.

Ontological Security

The ability to overcome the barriers of habitus and to collaborate with people of different professional habitus is closely tied to ontological security. This quality which stems from feelings of a personal presence in the world, of being real with a sense of continuity through space and time as one interacts with others in day to day activities (Laing, 1960). This interaction confirms a sense of one's own and other people's reality and identity with ontological security being the boundary between self and the world. A secure person has a "stable sense of autonomy, identity and a capacity for sustaining good-enough personal relationships" (Prince, 2005, p. 285).

Feelings of insecurity come from threats to identity or the capacity to cope with the demands life may place upon an individual (Spitzer, 1978). Such threats can produce anxiety levels, which inhibit a person's ability to effectively deal with problems or issues that may arise in their daily lives. It is likely that implementing new teaching approaches can produce significant threats and inhibiting levels of anxiety within teachers.

For many teachers the approach taken to teaching and learning is closely aligned with their specialist teaching area (Fisher & Webb, 2006; Goodson, 2003). The focus of connecting pedagogy to subject specialist knowledge often starts during teacher education programs where student teachers attend specialist method teaching classes (Shulman & Sherin, 2004). To move away from these practices towards middle schooling approaches may feel threatening to a teacher's professional identity and capacity. This fear of losing professional identity was evident at Riverside and exemplified by teachers who did not want to move to 75 minute class periods, as they did not know the outcome of such a change on their teaching approaches or student behaviour. As Barry's comments at being comfortable with 50 minute physical education class periods attested, *I'd probably say I would prefer singles, just because they (the students) understand we're under a limited time frame, they won't actually get a game if we don't get the skills part done.* Barry used the short class length as a tool for

keeping his physical education students focused even though it restricted teaching some activities (Teacher interview 5). He seemed reluctant to move away from this arrangement even though longer class time could improve the range of activities available to students.

Not knowing the outcome of a particular action that is taken Kierkegaard links to personal anxiety, as the “possibility of possibilities”, and the unknown outcome of choice (Kirby, 2004, p. 73). Where there is a choice there is always the risk of choosing a course of action that will not result in the desired outcome. The risk of a poor outcome is the source of anxiety and is quite different to fear, which is an individual’s reaction to a specific objective danger. For example, teachers may be anxious about using a new pedagogical approach or longer class periods as their students may become disruptive. The anxiety stems from the possibility of not being able to cope with the students’ behaviour, whereas, teachers may be fearful of losing their job due to falling enrolments and associated cutbacks. The implementation of middle schooling approaches to teaching and learning is likely to develop anxiety in teachers rather than fear.

Teachers’ reaction to anxiety will vary, as it will in all people. A situation for one person may result in avoidance of a problem due to high levels of stress, while another person will embrace the same situation and problem as exciting and challenging (Kirby, 2004). This means anxiety can be an enabling emotion with the potential to encourage problem solving and creativity (Giddens, 1991; Spitzer, 1978).

Peoples’ ability to manage anxiety is connected to ontological security. Those people with strong levels of ontological security feel less threatened by unknown outcomes of their actions and are more able to take action (Prince, 2005; Spitzer, 1978). This was the case at Trimble where Trevor with a group of colleagues tackled what was seen as a school wide problem of student behaviour. Examination of the issue created levels of anxiety that produced teacher comments of “no, this is too big” in reference to a change in teaching practices. After consideration and management of this anxiety teachers were able to examine their teaching practices which resulted in 10 years of ongoing change and improvement of learning for adolescent students (Teacher interview, 9). Had Trevor and his colleagues been ontologically insecure, the levels of anxiety may have swamped

any attempt to examine teaching practices, leading them to retreat from the situation because they felt an inability to deal with the outcomes of change (Kirby, 2004).

At Riverside the teachers focused on student welfare to manage issues of student behaviour and learning. They provided students with programs and support on a case by case basis. This approach not only related to the Riverside teachers' shared frames of meaning but was also a means of maintaining ontological security. To move away from the individual management students would require an examination of teaching practices. Such an examination would require the teachers to have strong levels of ontological security as the outcome is unknown and could be threatening to their professional identity. It appears that a number of Trimble teachers had strong levels of ontological security which were not observed at Riverside. Strong ontological security combined with a collaborative approach to examine the issue of student behaviour enabled the process of change to occur at Trimble.

Trust & Relationships

Development of trust can also strengthen ontological security as trust relationships make situations less complex, with people taking on tasks or commitments for one another (Jalava, 2001). Trust is a sign of hope in the future as, "trust itself, by its very nature, is in a certain sense creative, because it entails commitment that is a 'leap into the unknown'" (Giddens, 1991, p. 41). This leap involves the risk of an adverse outcome, leading to a conscious examination of possible consequences and associated risks of the action to be taken (Luhmann, 2000).

The development of trust hinges on the ability of the people involved to reach a mutual understanding of the actions to be taken and the goals to be achieved. Habermas (1990) identifies the process of mutual understanding as communicative action. The ability of people to understand one another Bourdieu (1984) suggests is related to their habitus, as people who inhabit similar social spaces will be able to more easily communicate with one another, due to a common understanding of social symbols. Habitus may therefore affect the process of communicative action. To overcome the influences of habitus on communicative action the development of a social space which, "is open to all those who engage in a process of mutual deliberation about what counts as equal and common in their perspectives, experiences, needs, and problems is required" (Johnson, 2006, p.

2). This type of social space Habermas refers to as the public sphere and in a school setting would allow all teachers to present opinions openly to colleagues, trusting the group to discuss these opinions without the strategic focus of predetermined outcomes (Somers, 1993 p. 588).

For the teachers at Trimble to take on a school wide change in pedagogy, all teachers had to trust each other to implement the table groups and cooperative learning approaches. As Trevor stated, *it was no good if one person didn't, every classroom had to teach in that way*. These trust relationships were developed through the forum of regular meetings, a form of public sphere where teachers were able to openly discuss the issue of poor student behaviour and possible courses of action to be taken. Opinions and approaches were freely discussed and evaluated until a mutual agreement on table groups and cooperative learning approaches was reached (Teacher interview, 9).

Trust relationships by nature are temporal, being no longer required once the task is completed or a change in the situation occurs (Jalava, 2001). This may be the case at Trimble, as the commitment to table groups and cooperative learning has weakened across the school over the last 10 years with the improvement of student behaviour and other factors taking precedence, resulting in teachers no longer feeling there was an expectation to follow the approach. The development of trust and understanding was dependent on communication being conducted in the public sphere of the school, each person having a clear understanding of their role and accepting what was required of them (Luhmann, 2000). For cooperative learning approaches to be maintained across Trimble, ongoing communication was required. The need for table groups and cooperative learning needed be reinforced as did the specific goals and expected roles of each teacher.

Routinization

Routines strengthen ontological security, building confidence that aspects of daily life will be predictable. The structure of schools produces many routines such as timetabled classes, examination periods, set holidays and codes of behaviour creating high levels of predictability. As Graham the principal from Riverside pointed out when discussing some of the school's most disadvantaged students, *there are all sorts of complexities in their lives which makes it amazing the kids turn up (to school). I suppose they turn up*

because this is one of the stable places in their lives. Giddens (1991) suggests the routines of social structures reduce levels of anxiety through the use of tacit knowledge with practical consciousness monitoring and responding to many daily activities, allowing discursive consciousness to be attentive to unusual or difficult tasks which may need consideration. Tacit knowledge is shared between actors, having been developed over time through experience and interaction with others. Actors become aware of the possible responses from other people to various actions or situations, developing a shared “framework of reality” (Giddens, 1991, p. 36). Within schools this framework of reality results from interactions among teachers and interactions between teachers and students and between students and students. Most members of the school community develop a shared framework of reality of how to interact at school. This framework is both robust and fragile; robust due to the reliability of the framework proven by teachers’ and students’ experiences but fragile when an unexpected reaction occurs creating feelings of anxiety and disequilibrium.

A shared framework of reality can be restricting if change creates anxiety and stifles creative risk taking, but it can also be enabling. Understanding school interactions can strengthen teacher ontological security to enable creative risk taking to occur. Teachers who are ontologically secure are more able to move away from routine into the unknown (Macintyre Latta, 2005). This is a tension that teachers at Trimble were able to overcome, regularly taking creative risks, such as, Mark using the think-pair-share thinking tool in his classes, Trevor engaging the students’ families in the biography project and Stacy designing a self-paced maths booklet for her students (Teacher interviews, 9 & 11). All of these approaches required a student centred approach to teaching. Teachers had to step away from “what is considered traditional or a teacher centred” approach (Schuh, 2004, p. 833). It appears that many Trimble teachers had a high level of ontological security with an awareness and understanding of the accepted routines enabling the management of anxiety levels which encouraged them to take purposeful action around classroom pedagogy. This is in contrast to the teachers at Riverside where teacher centred classrooms were common, as they were in other schools, as reported in the questionnaire data presented in Chapter 8. At Riverside, routines of practice appeared to be embedded in the practical consciousness of teachers, and were associated with many unacknowledged conditions of action and unrecognised and unintended consequences. Although the routines on the surface may provide a sense

of control, understanding of the routines had not developed the ontological security required to enable teachers to achieve apparently small changes, such as, maintaining the teaching of multiple subjects to the same class by one teacher at years seven and eight (Teacher interview, 7).

Time and Space

The availability of time and space is essential for inter-disciplinary teacher collaboration to occur. With time and space shrinking in modern society through faster communication and access to information, time has to be consciously 'set aside' to engage in collaborative activities (Bauman, 2000). Ideally collaboration must come from the teacher's own desire to participate and to create an emotional and cognitive space "within which a new way of being can emerge" (Catlaw & Jordan, 2009, p. 306). Under circumstances where it is directed by the school administration, collaboration can become superficially focused around tasks, organisation requirements, and attending to the needs of school policy, rather than being directed to a critical analysis of teaching practice (Hargreaves, 2000).

Lack of time and space in schools has been a well documented issue around school reform with the intensification of teacher's work leading to a loss of planning time (Fink, 2000; Fullan, 1993). The loss of planning time was an issue at both Trimble and Riverside with both principals acknowledging it was difficult to provide teachers with the additional time needed to meet collaboratively (Principal interview, 1 & 2). This inability to meet collaboratively due to the intensification of teachers' work was also noted by Hargreaves' and Goodson's (2006) study of innovative schools, which found the "school eventually succumbs to the external pressure as teachers lost the time to meet and learn", leading to a decrease in innovative practices (p. 33).

At Trimble time and space were provided both formally in PLT sessions and informally as teachers worked collaboratively on projects in their own time. The informal PLT development was supported by the school administration, *leaving the rest of the week meeting free...that gives teachers enough time to work together on other things and we are trying to help them. Most nights, there's people staying back and that is the time they can meet together* (Principal interview, 2). In contrast formal meeting times at Riverside were conducted around school procedural issues and the development of

curriculum in key learning areas. Formal time provided for inter-discipline collaboration was collected around year levels and focused on student issues and organisation rather than around pedagogy. As Barry described about year level meetings, *the period allowance is meant to be meeting time to come together with other members of the team to discuss various educational issues, where we are going, what we are doing in our home group classes, what behavioural issues we have got.* Although timetabled, teachers still found difficulty in getting to meetings due to clashes with other meetings or classes as John noted, *you've got to choose which one (to attend) and you will miss out on what they are doing in year 10.*

The level of enabling and inhibiting factors present in the school will influence the pathway taken by teachers as they examine teaching practices and structures leading to the evolution or reproduction of practices within the school. Trimble demonstrated more enabling factors for change than Riverside. The trusted and professional relationships between teachers and among teachers and the principal provided a foundation for the collaborative activities undertaken by the professional learning teams (PLT). The PLTs gave teachers an opportunity to understand each other's professional habitus and to develop an awareness of school routines. This is in contrast to Riverside where the relationship between the principal and teachers was more distant. Teachers maintained professional habitus by meeting in key learning areas (KLA) a process which also maintained school routines and structures leading to the routinization of many practices.

Structures and Practices

Teachers' frames of meaning guide teaching practices and have been developed from the experiences, of being a student, trainee teacher and finally trained teacher. The frames of meaning that guide teaching practice are contained in the teachers' tacit knowledge about teaching and learning (Giddens, 1984). It is this tacit knowledge of the practical consciousness, which teachers need to elevate to the discursive consciousness for the teaching practices to be examined. This examination by teachers will be affected by the enabling and inhibiting factors that are contained within the school structures and social practices and they are included in the review process.

Frames of meaning support peoples' ontological security, as they enable people to respond in an expected manner during daily interactions, providing a sense of predictability and continuity in the world (Prince, 2005). This also occurs for teachers as frames of meaning guide their teaching practice and the expected response from students and colleagues. To change teaching practices means a greater possibility of unexpected responses, which can lead to anxiety (Spitzer, 1978).

Anxiety can be an enabling or an inhibiting factor in teachers taking purposeful action depending on the strength of one's ontological security and the ability to deal with unknown outcomes (Kirby, 2004). Unknown outcomes in terms of structuration theory are the unintended consequences of purposeful action. Recognition of unintended consequences has the potential to expand knowledgeability through the increased understanding of those actions (Giddens, 1984). As teachers become more knowledgeable about personal teaching practices, they are able to predict possible outcomes of actions taken, leading to a greater control of anxiety. As teachers are more able to manage anxiety they will have stronger feelings of ontological security and potentially, increased agency.

Discursively Reflective Activities

Discursively reflective activities have the potential to increase teachers' knowledgeability, which can result in feelings of stronger ontological security. At Trimble the discursively reflective activities of the PLTs provided teachers with opportunities to expand their knowledgeability of teaching and learning practices. The teachers worked together in inter-discipline teams in action research projects focused on teaching and learning. An important aspect of the PLTs was reporting back to colleagues the results of the investigations with:

evidence, so we had visual evidence, photographs of the kids engaged actually doing something, so if someone else wanted to use it they could see it and we had examples of student work, testimonials from teachers' evidence of how it worked...We didn't say right, now we want you all to go away and do a placemat, but in reality everyone is, that was a good thing, it has been quite widely used, because they saw what it was and they saw pictures of kids doing it (Teacher interview, 9).

The sessions where teachers shared results of the investigations were a reflectively discursive process. The discussions made clear how an approach worked and did not work and examined possible changes for improvement. The sessions enabled teachers to explore possible outcomes of using the pedagogy presented, to consider unintended consequences and to expand knowledgeability about teaching and learning. The process cannot hope to pinpoint every possibility, but increased knowledgeability will strengthen ontological security, which for some teachers may be a lengthy process. This was the case for some teachers at Trimble where they maintained current teaching and learning practices while other teachers were comfortable trialling the different approaches investigated. The difference in the time taken for teachers to feel comfortable trialling approaches may indicate the efficacy of the PLT action research activities on individuals with some teachers being able to develop strong levels of ontological security quicker than others.

For the reflectively discursive activities to be effective, teachers must critically examine the routines of practice which requires the articulation of tacit knowledge. As Giddens (1984) notes about the practically conscious reflexive monitoring of actions, “there are causal factors which influence action without operating through its rationalisation” (p. 346). This means, actors respond to many events automatically or ‘without thinking’. They rely on tacit knowledge. To effectively examine personal practices and routines, agents must explore tacit knowledge discursively, for it is here where the unacknowledged conditions of action and unintended consequences remain hidden.

There was a lack of critical examination at Riverside, seen in the routine of keeping students together for two years which was aimed at developing an inclusive community. Rather than broadening student relationships the lack of appropriate pedagogy maintained social spaces, isolating disadvantaged students. This same issue was avoided at Trimble through the critical examination of school practices and the introduction of cooperative pedagogy with the table group approach. For the table group approach to be effective students were taught the skills of cooperative practices. The critical examination of practices at Trimble was not achieved by teachers examining teaching practices individually but occurred collaboratively in the trusted environment of the public sphere. Collaboration is an important aspect of the discursively reflective process.

Collaboration

Effectiveness of reflectively discursive activities is closely aligned with collaboration, as there is a ceiling effect on how much an individual teacher can learn independently (Fullan, 1993). As Hargreaves (2000) argues, it is “collaboration in dialogue and action which provides sources of feedback and comparison that prompt teachers to reflect on their own practice” (p. 246). With reflection and feedback comes the potential to trial different teaching and learning approaches. This was demonstrated by the Trimble teachers when they trialled practices such as the thinking tool ‘place mats’ which were investigated as part of the PLT action research projects (Teacher interview, 10).

Collaboration can also expand professional habitus when teachers from different teaching specialities work together. At Trimble for example teachers formed informal PLTs to develop interdisciplinary units of study for students (Teacher interview, 13). The interdisciplinary units required teachers to work together, a practice which was observed when the art teacher helped the humanities teacher, enabling students to build models of their countries in the ‘developing your own country’ project they completed in geography (Teacher interview, 10). This sharing and understanding of different practices can lead to a shift in school culture. A project initiated by the Centre for Teaching Quality in the United States found, “school cultures begin to evolve as teachers explore new instructional practices and learning becomes more authentic. Tasks transform from those requiring simple rote memory and recall to more sophisticated, intellectually challenging activities” (Rasberry & Mahajan, 2008, p. 3). Sachs (2003) found a similar outcome in her research on teacher professional activities in Australia where:

Teachers who participated in projects like the National Schools Network and Innovative Links did develop new skills: collecting and analysing data; publicly presenting their research to broader audiences; and developing processes which could be extrapolated across other areas of school improvement. Through the acquisition of such skills, teachers gained a clearer idea of their own and other’s work practices (p. 81).

Collaboration is a potentially powerful. It not only enhances reflectively discursive activities but also can open up the isolating nature of professional habitus with the potential to affect school wide practices and culture. This collaboration was observed at Trimble where the formal PLT meetings combined with the large communal staff room led to the development of informal PLTs examining different pedagogical and school issues.

Expanded Knowledgeability and Frames of Meaning

The focus of collaboration around reflectively discursive activities is the expression of the individual teacher's knowledgeability around their teaching and learning practices. It is only when individual teachers recognise the unacknowledged conditions of action and the unintended consequences of action relating to their practice, that knowledge will be expanded or frames of meaning changed. Without a change in knowledgeability or frames of meaning, the current anxieties and concerns around teaching and learning will frustrate any agency for change. Uncovering unacknowledged conditions of action and the unintended consequences of action expands an individual's knowledgeability as he or she becomes aware of both the motivation behind actions and the possible consequences of action (Giddens, 1984). This awareness decreases anxiety associated with a strengthening of ontological security and brings the potential for purposeful action.

The Trimble teachers were only able to take the action of introducing cooperative learning approaches after examining their own practices. All teachers agreed on the approaches but teachers only applied the new practices when they felt ontologically secure to do so. Although collaboration and the reflectively discursive activities supported the expansion of knowledgeability around teaching practice across the school, the process had to occur at an individual level for each teacher to personally take action. As Liam, the campus principal, identified when exploring the introduction of home groups, *the teachers started with little knowledge of what a home group was, just basic knowledge of it, and then that practical experience of doing it for 12 months was really positive and strong with all of them, and so it happened.*

Hargreaves (2000), Fullan (1993), Ball (2003), Sachs (2003) and Cumming (2001) all regard the teacher as the agent of pedagogical change and it is teachers' ability to,

“rethink their social relationships and pedagogical practices within and outside of school...questioning and shedding previously cherished values and beliefs” (Sachs, 2003, p. 152), which provides the catalyst for that change. It is this type of critical questioning through reflectively discursive activities which expands teacher knowledgeability, developing the ontological security required for teachers to take purposeful action around pedagogy.

Purposeful Action or Increased Understanding of Practice

Purposeful action, however, does not always occur with an expanded knowledgeability. Often expanded knowledgeability can lead to an increased understanding of teaching practices without action being taken. This increased understanding may indicate a need for change but the individual teacher is still unsure of possible outcomes and requires a stronger sense of ontological security before trying different teaching and learning approaches. This situation was reflected in a number of Trimble teachers taking “time to come on board” with the use of thinking skills, maintaining their original teaching practices longer than many of their colleagues (Teacher interview, 9).

For many teachers the reflectively discursive process reveals why a practice is effective, leading to maintenance of the approach. As Trevor pointed out about the use of table groups at Trimble, *(having table groups) means that no kid comes into the room and sits by themselves feeling isolated...we don't have one kid sitting by themselves in the corner and kids wanting to sit with popular kids, that causes a lot of problems.* Attributing the decrease in problems to the use of table groups encourages teachers to maintain the approach over time, potentially becoming an effective routine practice. This understanding encourages examination of other areas, such as, the increased contact with parents at Trimble, with the introduction of individual meetings at the beginning of year between home room teachers, parents and students (Teacher interview, 9). The increased contact with parents aimed at improving teacher/parent relationships was a natural extension of the student relationship focus of the table groups (Principal interview, 2).

Purposeful action can also include the maintenance of particular practices, as reflection may establish positive aspects of an approach not previously noticed. The defining characteristic of purposeful action is the use of the discursive consciousness rather than

the practical consciousness and tacit knowledge. Whether teachers decide to maintain current practices or change practices after critical evaluation of the current pedagogy, purposeful action has been taken.

The teaching practice pathways exemplify the complex interaction of social processes and school structures which influence the pedagogical choice of secondary school middle years teachers. If schools are to develop pedagogies and structures to support the learning and development of adolescents, teachers have to examine their teaching practices. The pathways indicate the possible outcomes of teachers' evaluation of teaching practice; change and evolution of practice or maintenance and reproduction of practice. School structures are an important aspect of the evaluation process as the school structures will enable or inhibit the critical examination of teaching practice that leads to change or routinization of practice. These enabling and inhibiting factors were seen at Trimble and Riverside Secondary Colleges. Trimble exhibited enabling factors with trusted professional relationships developed between teachers and the principal so that teachers were prompted to collaboratively examine teaching practices in professional learning teams. The structure of the teams and the provision of meeting times supported teachers' understanding of each others' habitus, moving teachers away from subject specialist association towards a generalised professional educator habitus where teachers communicated across learning areas and developed a greater awareness of school routines.

This was in contrast to the factors at Riverside where the relationship between the principal and teachers was more distant with teachers planning teaching activities in isolation. Meeting structures in the school were based around key learning areas supporting a subject specialist professional habitus. This maintenance of professional groups and planning isolation decreased communication between teachers at Riverside and the awareness of school routines prompting the competition for resources and influence between the teachers' professional social groups.

It is the teaching practice pathways component, enabling and inhibiting factors for change, which encourage or discourage teachers' engagement in authentic collaborative reflectively discursive discussion. These discussions appear to be an effective process for expanding the knowledgeability and ontological security of teachers. Without a

strong sense of ontological security, teachers are not going consider changing their current approach to teaching and learning. The development of ontological security was seen in the Trimble teachers with the collaborative discussions around student behaviour and taking purposeful action to implement table groups and cooperative learning approaches. In contrast a lack of action can be traced back to different levels of ontological security and teachers' levels of anxiety over change at Riverside where the status quo was maintained. This was exemplified in the way Graham the principal felt about change in the school feeling that *there is a comfort zone factor...my sense of change is that incremental is the best way.*

Section 2: Influencing the Pathway Taken

The teaching practice pathways presented provide a framework to understand how the social and structural elements within a school influence how teachers may go about reviewing their teaching practice. Whether teachers take the evolution or reproduction of practice pathway appears linked to opportunities to engage in reflectively discursive discussions. These discussions not only support reflection on practice but are a vehicle for developing strong ontological security. The relationship between discursively reflective discussions and ontological security will now be explored along with the role of power relationships in providing opportunities for these discussions.

The Discursively Reflective Process and Development of Ontological Security

The reflectively discursive process, summarised in Figure 11, is the vehicle for the development and maintenance of teachers' ontological security, enabling teachers to manage levels of anxiety leading to creative risk taking and purposeful action around pedagogy. Understanding how the elements of trust, knowledgeability and ontological security interact provides an insight into how the factors support or impede schools taking the evolution of practice pathway.

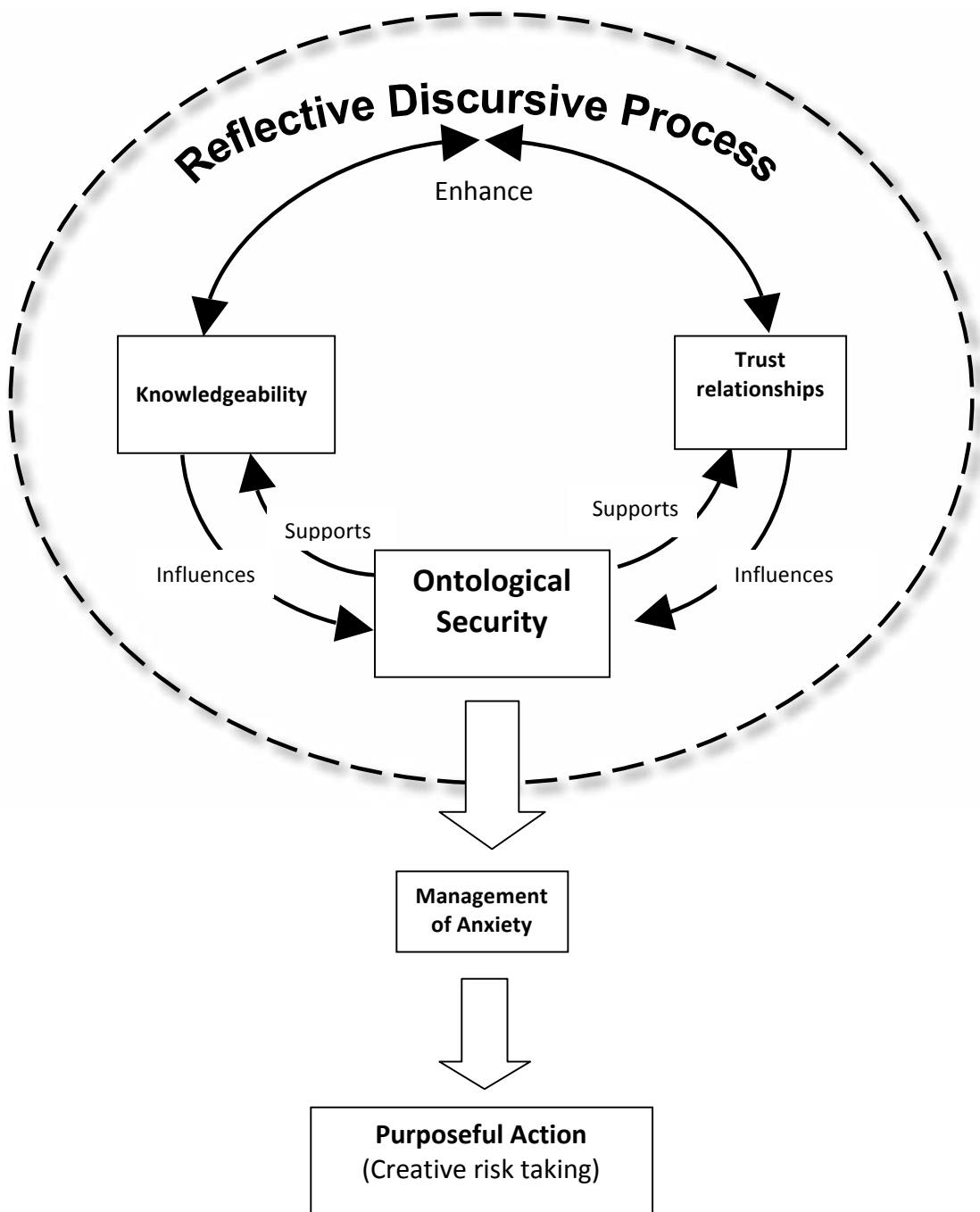


Figure 11: Relationship of elements within the discursively reflective process

The elements of trust relationships and knowledgeability enhance each element's development and together directly influence teacher ontological security. Increased knowledgeability is achieved as the individual teacher uncovers previously unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences of teaching practices. Although recognition of these conditions and consequences can be achieved in isolation, the process is enhanced through critical collaborative discussion with peers

(Fullan, 1993; Hargreaves, 2000). For critical discussions to occur, those involved with the discussion must agree on a common purpose and feel free to openly present ideas focusing on rational discussion to achieve understanding (Habermas, 1992). The trust relationship developed between teachers through this agreement focuses the discursive activities on expanding knowledgeability of teaching practice, with knowledgeability expanded on two fronts: understanding of personal teaching practices and the understanding of colleagues' teaching practices. Personal understanding can lead to a strengthening of ontological security with the revelation of previously unrecognised consequences of teaching practices. The increased understanding of colleagues' teaching practices breaks down the isolating nature of professional habitus, strengthening trust relationships within the group.

This change in professional habitus was seen at Trimble with the formation of informal professional learning teams comprising maths, art and humanities teachers who came together to develop integrated units of study for students across a year level. Teachers not only developed new ways of teaching but also increased their understanding of how teachers from different learning areas explored various concepts with students (Teacher interview, 10). This understanding of each others' teaching practice was a positive aspect of collaboration reported by Giles and Hargreaves (2006) in their case study of innovative schools, where, "many teachers felt that they had experienced accelerated professional growth through belonging to a community of learners in which new ways of working and thinking were internalised and rapidly became their philosophy of practice" (p. 139).

The strengthening of teachers' ontological security through critically collaborative discussion in turn has a positive influence on development of trust relationships and knowledgeability, as ontologically secure teachers, "are not terrified of intimacy or beset by nagging anxiety" (Prince, 2005, p. 285). The process builds upon itself, as ontological security fosters greater risk taking with trusted colleagues and exploration of practices. It is ultimately the strengthening of ontological security which enables the personal management of anxiety, empowering individual teachers to take creative risks around teaching and learning as required.

There are several aspects to the development of trust relationships and expansion of knowledgeability which if not attended to can undermine the reflectively discursive process. As the process relies on collaboration, all teachers and other participants involved in the discussions must have a sense of belonging and feel free to openly present ideas for discussion.

Habermas' (1992) concept of the public sphere provides an example of a trust environment which will support open discussion. Within the public sphere all opinions are given equal merit and the discussion is an inclusive process with the goal of purposeful action which Habermas refers to as communicative action (Edgar, 2006 p. 21). "In communicative action participants are not primarily oriented to their own individual successes; they pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can harmonize their plans of action on the basis of common situation definitions" (Outhwaite, 1996, p. 161). In essence the focus of communicative action is towards understanding, learning and enlightenment (Godin, Davies, Heyman, Reynolds, Simpson & Floyd, 2007). Strategic action, in contrast, can undermine the focus on understanding to one of goal orientation where an individual or a group of teachers strive for a specific outcome (Edgar, 2006). Focus on a predetermined outcome, whether done openly or covertly, will compromise the reflectively discursive process.

Predetermined goals can develop from a range of sources and can potentially hijack the reflectively discursive process. The influence of predetermined goals was seen at Trimble, with the introduction by Victoria's Department of Education and Early Childhood Development of a new reporting system. Introduction of the reporting system started to direct some of the collaborative discussions away from the focus around pedagogy (Teacher interview, 10). The professional habitus of teachers new to Trimble also appeared to be having an impact, as new teachers strove to maintain personal teaching practices and resisted the table groups and cooperative learning approach by simply not participating, as Trevor pointed out about the action research projects. *I mean, there's new people here that did it, and we didn't put pressure (on them), but there would have been two people last year who didn't even do it.*

Unfortunately it is these small beginnings that can lead to the slow demise of the evolution of practice cycle as Goodson, Moore and Hargreaves (2006) found in their sustainability of school reform study where changes in leadership and staff combined

with social changes resulted in schools becoming less innovative and responsive to students' needs.

Teachers can also undermine the reflectively discursive process with strategic action, when they compete for control and resources within various social fields as seen at Riverside. The program for years seven and eight, which focused on the transition of students from primary school to secondary school was initially funded to allow for additional teaching staff, attracting senior teachers to the implementation phase. As both Barry and John reported, funding and experienced teachers were soon drawn away from the program when other activities within the school were regarded as more important than the transition program (Teacher interview, 2 & 5).

The maintenance of the public sphere is an important contributor to the achievement of the reflectively discursive process, as the development of trust can only occur when participants are open and honest, giving equal merit to all opinions. Too easily, external influences and hidden agenda of interest groups can result in the application of strategic action either overtly or covertly to achieve a specific goal. Goal orientated action compromises the process of increased understanding, learning and enlightenment because it discourages the kinds of exchange which allow teachers to discern unacknowledged and unintended consequences of teaching practices.

For personal and collegial understanding to occur it is important that the expansion of knowledgeability is a process of self-discovery. Although collaborative discussions may introduce new perspectives about individual teaching practices, it is ultimately the teacher who must identify the unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences of his or her teaching practice (Donnelly, 2006). It is only when the individual teacher has the 'ah ha' moment of understanding that he or she is in a position to explore a change of practice. This exploration will involve the examination of pedagogical options which have the potential to attend to the unintended consequences identified. Too often collaborative discussions or professional development activities are focused on new ways of doing things in the classroom rather than on critically exploring what is currently happening in 'my classroom' (Sarsar, 2008, p. 6). The reflectively discursive process will be undermined if there is a focus on implementing a particular approach rather than on an exploration of current practice.

Change in pedagogical practice must come from the personal exploration of possibilities and the identification of potential outcomes of the practices to be implemented.

An example of externally driven pedagogical change was seen at Riverside with a specific professional development program being advocated by the government education department's regional office and the principal in the form of Harvard Online: Teaching for Understanding. The program had been offered to a number of teachers who were completing the program over a six week period with funding for the program being provided by the regional office. Barry, who was in the middle of the training felt along with others obliged to complete the course, *a couple of people, first year or second year out, didn't feel as though they had much of a choice to do it. They were asked, and thought they'd better.* No formal implementation strategies or sharing of ideas or pedagogy gleaned from the program had been developed. It was up to key learning area coordinators to access people who had completed the training to present ideas from the program at KLA meetings (Teacher interview, 7).

This was in contrast to the teacher driven exploration taken to determine the applicability of table groups and cooperative learning at Trimble. A group of teachers at Trimble wishing to resolve the problem of student behaviour started by exploring current practices and potential approaches over many meetings. The findings of these discussions were expanded to include all teachers within the school, enabling each teacher to consider personal teaching practices and the appropriateness of the approaches being presented. Open discussion led to purposeful action by teachers to implement the cooperative learning and table groups.

If an expansion of knowledgeability is going to occur, leading to feelings of ontological security, the reflectively discursive process requires the development of trust relationships which enable reflective discussion to take place in the open and honest environment of the public sphere. Development of these opportunities school wide is reliant on power relationships within the school that support and promote teacher engagement in reflective discursive activities.

Power Relationships and Reflectively Discursive Activities

A single teacher or a small group of ontologically secure teachers can engage in discursively reflective activities, reflecting on personal teaching practices and making changes to teaching practices as required to enhance their students' learning, all done in relative isolation of the school as an institution. Examples of these reflective teachers are seen in the literature (Strahan, 2008; Thwaites, 2008; Keast & Cooper, 2009) and were acknowledged by students in both schools (Student interview, 2 & 3). On this scale it is only the classrooms of those ontologically secure and reflective teachers which exhibit adolescent appropriate pedagogy. The school as a whole remains unchanged.

To achieve broader change across a school, the majority of teachers must develop levels of ontological security enabling them to engage in reflectively discursive activities and to take purposeful action. This widespread strengthening of teacher ontological security can only occur if the appropriate power relationships within the school are developed.

Within human interactions, Foucault (1982) regards power as a ubiquitous feature. But power is not the domination of one person over another, but a more complex “understanding, is that of power as involving not only a capacity but also a *right* to act, with both capacity and right seen to rest on the consent of those over whom the power is being exercised” (Hindess, 1996, p. 1). This is seen in social institutions where there is a matrix of relationships at any given time, with multiple agents having divergent interests and objectives (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983; Lukes, 2005). Achieving particular objectives will not only require a person or group of people to act but also require the consent of others, as seen in the changes to pedagogy at Trimble. Without the majority of teachers consenting to the objectives of the ontologically secure group of teachers who were initiating a change in classroom organisation and practices, whole school change would not have occurred. The objective was reliant on all people involved exercising power. Those teachers who wanted to initiate change had to gather enough cultural capital and symbolic power together to present a case for innovation. Colleagues being asked to change practices had to agree with the course of action, adding their agency to the process. If teachers under pressure to change practices had exerted their power by refusing to trial the suggested practices, the outcome at a school

level would have been quite different. All agents have power, including those who are not initiating change. It is the combination of power exerted by all parties involved which leads to the final outcome (Lukes, 2005).

Both Giddens and Bourdieu support this understanding that all agents are able to exercise power. Giddens (1984) identifies power as the “capacity to achieve outcomes” and power as the medium through which freedom or emancipation can be achieved (p. 257). As with Bourdieu, Giddens lists resources as the tools needed to exercise power with the level of cultural, social and economic capital affecting an individual’s or group’s capacity to act (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008; Hindess, 1996). Giddens (1984) expands the concept of power to not only be associated with the individual and accessible resources, but also to be contained within the social structures, as power relations are seen in the institution’s routines, with actors behaving in accordance with those routines (Hindess, 1996). Foucault (1983) describes institutions as complex systems of power relationships “bringing into being of general surveillance, the principle of regulation, and to a certain extent also, the distribution of all power relations in a given social ensemble” (p. 223). The power relationships developed by the institutional orders, norms and routines become an important influence on normalising behaviour. To behave in a different way becomes deviant and the offending behaviour would need reforming to what is judged as normal (Foucault, 1974). Surveillance by the institution occurs in the form of reporting procedures, organisational meetings and analysis of performance resulting in the monitoring of the behaviour of individuals within the organisation. An illusion develops that the institution has the power rather than the people who are working within it. This is seen typically in schools in staff meetings, student reports, year level meetings, performance assessments, promotion pathways and the myriad of school policies covering everything from discipline to dress codes.

It is the combination of surveillance, normalising judgments of behaviour and examination, discussed by Foucault (1977) as “the power in the hierarchized surveillance” (p. 177) which encourages individuals to regulate their own behaviour and maintain the status quo. The questionnaire outcomes, reported in chapter 8, confirmed the significance of the routinization of practice with teachers maintaining teacher centred approaches even though supportive of middle years practices. It appears the

structures in many schools exert institutional power encouraging teachers to maintain current practices.

The conventional structure of secondary schools adds further to this complexity of the power relationships by collecting groups of teachers into departments with associated lines of communication (Bernstein, 2000). Departments become the symbolic structures of the teachers' professional habitus and place boundaries between groups of teachers. These boundaries are maintained through the specialist knowledge and language becoming "the full stop between one category of discourse and another" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 6). Teachers' desire to maintain their specialist and departmental group identity can motivate the development of power relationships that exclude rather than promote collaborative discussion.

The strong ontological security needed by teachers to develop reflectively discursive practices requires that these hierarchized power relationships be replaced. Support from the school hierarchy is essential if such an amendment is to occur. Principals must not only be supportive of the discursive activities but must re-evaluate the use and application of the implicit and explicit surveillance and the normalising and examining tools of the school and external education departments.

This was achieved at Trimble where the principal established more equitable power relationships. Decision-making was shared with teachers as they were given the opportunity to explore solutions to poor student behaviour. The principal directly supported these investigations encouraging teachers to implement new strategies. This sharing of power resulted in the adoption of middle years practices and the development of structures which supported ongoing reflective discussion. However, the Trimble principal and school administration also became caught up in normalising power relationships. This occurred in relation to the design of the new school campus. Teachers were ignored during the planning process, only being consulted once the plans were completed from the discussions between the education department, consultants and school administration. It was only when the teachers complained about the lack of input into the planning process that they were consulted (Teacher interview, 10). Once the principal realised this position, he brought teachers into the discussions but the inertia of the process was too great at this stage for teachers coming from a subordinate

position of power to have any real effect (Tilly, 1991). This deviation away from the equitable power relationships established at Trimble demonstrates how easily institutional power can mediate the behaviour of social groups and individuals.

At Riverside different groups exercised power in the competition for resources with subordinate groups having little influence on the allocation of resources as seen in the loss of senior staff from the year seven and year eight program. Barry pointed it out, *it's not valid to them*. The change in resource allocation came as external funding for implementing the year seven and eight transition program dried up and priorities moved with a subsequent re-allocation of resources. John summarised how the power relations affected the allocation of resources *There's been a fair bit of fuss kicked up about it (loss of resources to the year seven and eight program)... but is really, you know robbing Peter to pay Paul sort of stuff rather than paying Paul so that you can help Peter*. This comment highlights the underlying focus of the year seven and eight transition program to improve senior students' achievement through the better transition of students from primary to secondary school. But it also indicates the competition for resources. This level of competition appears to encourage groups and individuals to actively influence the school priorities, such as, year nine and year ten teachers complaining they are disadvantaged by the year seven and eight program timetable, VCE teachers wanting students better prepared for essay writing and the school administration wanting the curriculum aligned with VELs, to name a few of the competing priorities (Teacher interviews, 3 & 7). The structure and organisation at Riverside including teachers meeting in specialist groups, specialist staff rooms and few inter-disciplinary activities supported competition rather than collaboration. Maintenance of the social fields encouraged competition for power and resources to serve one's group rather than to examine the broader issues of the school. Glenn, the Riverside principal, attested to this when he tried to get a majority of teachers to agree to timetable changes, in his words, *we are still locked into a teacher in a box and the lack of flexibility that results in*.

Trimble College has been able to change this situation by breaking down the professional habitus of the teachers and corresponding social fields. The result has been to change the power relationships within the school. The process started 10 years ago and involved the school administration playing a key role led by the principal who gave

unbridled support to the group of teachers investigating approaches to improve student behaviour. Support for the investigation involved the campus principal in reflectively discursive activities as he provided feedback to the teachers and became involved with researching the possible approaches to change. This level of involvement developed more equitable power relationships between the school administration and the group of ontologically secure teachers as both groups worked towards the same goal. As ideas and approaches became established more teachers were drawn into the discussions around changing teaching practices, further breaking down any potential competition between groups as a public sphere was established.

The development of a public sphere and the school administration connection with teachers through the principal's involvement in the collaborative discussions was embedded in the current Trimble school structure. After school organisational staff meetings were changed to provide staff with time to meet in professional learning teams (PLT) involving both the campus principal and assistant principal. The PLTs were interdisciplinary teams. They focused on pedagogy and developing action research projects to investigate aspects of teaching practice. The outcomes of these investigations often translated into new classroom practices or school structures, such as, the beginning of year meetings with parents and students to build teacher-parent understanding of student learning (Principal interview, 2). The openness of the discussions and the active involvement of the school administration in these discussions were two important factors in developing more equitable power relationships across the school. Involvement of the campus and assistant principal in the PLTs had been achieved in an open manner without hidden agenda or pre-determined outcomes. This was essential if the public sphere and opportunities for communicative action were to be maintained. Issues such as student reporting requirements or the implementation of education department policies which may have a predetermined outcome were not dealt with during PLT meeting times but at separate meetings, which were called as needed. Clear delineation of issues that had a pre-determined agenda maintained the integrity of the public sphere required for PLT groups to develop the kind of trust relationships where personal pedagogical practice could be critically evaluated.

Even with maintenance of the public sphere, the school had to be vigilant to the influences of the external surveillance activities of the education department and the

wider community as governments make demands on the school around student reporting, funding and curriculum. These external requirements did require attention and drew resources away from the focus on pedagogy, as Trevor highlighted with the loss of PLT meeting time. Small changes from the external demands can slowly alter previously equitable power relationships into asymmetrical ones where strategic techniques can undermine the communicative action of the public sphere (Habermas, 1992).

Equitable power relationships which developed a public sphere for reflectively discursive discussions became a distinguishing feature at Trimble. It was the equitable power relationship and authentic reflective discussion that enabled pedagogical change to occur at the school. The increased communication and understanding between Trimble teachers encouraged the authentic collaboration around key school issues and the evaluation of teaching practices. At Riverside the school structures and power relationships maintained an individualised approach to planning and problem solving with different groups competing for resources in pursuit of various agenda. This competition maintained school routines and the influence of institutional power. Teachers responded to students' needs and issues with tacit knowledge rather than examining routines discursively. Without reflectively discursive discussions, unacknowledged conditions of action and unintended consequences remained hidden and as a result routinization of practice was strengthened.

The reflectively discursive process is reliant on the provision of equitable supportive power through the school administration providing time for teachers to respond to the outcomes of the process. Internal and external surveillance processes have to be moderated to ensure the development of a public sphere where communicative action is the goal of the discussion process. The influence of the enabling and inhibiting factors combined with the power relationships within the school will leading to the adoption of the evolution of practice pathway or the reproduction of practice pathway is taken.

Section 3: Which Path: Evolution or Reproduction of Practice?

The key influences in teachers and schools moving towards an evolution of practice pathway are the enabling factors for change which support reflectively discursive activities. These activities are more than a matter of teachers meeting together to discuss teaching and learning practices. Reflectively discursive activities critically examine the tacit knowledge of the practical consciousness, which underpins day-to-day teaching and the learning practices being employed. It is only when examination of this type is undertaken that the unacknowledged conditions for action and unintended consequences of actions will be identified. The result of such an informed examination is the expansion of teachers' knowledgeability.

Often teachers meeting around curriculum planning can appear to be actively reflecting on their practices but in fact may only be supporting the use of current practices, therefore strengthening routinization and leading to increased stability of school structures. This type of 'collaborative' planning Hargreaves (2000) has referred to as "contrived collegiality" (p. 211). It generally involves the teachers' participation in mandated meetings where issues may be discussed, but not probed deeply. There tends to be a dominant "group think" present in these settings (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006, p. 127). This is where the group tends to look for reasons to maintain the status quo or for excuses which explain the current situation, rather than critically evaluating personal teaching practices and school structures. Examples were seen at Riverside, with the principal identifying that a change to current teaching practices was reliant on an injection of funding to upgrade the physical spaces and resources of the school. This seemed to justify a lack of action and sidelined other issues such as the potential of teacher collaboration (Principal interview, 1). Teachers at Riverside often excused student difficulties as an individual issue to cope with rather than a reason to examine current teaching practices. John's approach to some boys with literacy difficulties in his English class is an example:

I don't know if you can catch up on primary school... like, those guys have just missed, obviously, a chunk. Either they've sat in class and just not got there, or they've missed out lots of time at school or whatever. Are you able to catch them up, or do you bypass that and find other ways? I don't know (Teacher interview, 3).

This comment highlights how problems with student learning can be individualised with the result that these boys ‘missed out’. There seems to be no questioning of the effectiveness of the teaching and learning practices employed. Such explanations lead to a maintenance of current practices rather than a critical examination of teaching practices or school structures.

The isolation of problems or issues of individual students or contexts can be compounded by teachers meeting in key learning areas. English teachers meeting together will have a similar professional habitus and may see the student literacy issue from the same perspective. For example, they may agree that many of the literacy issues seen in secondary school English classrooms are a result of students missing out in primary school rather than this being a product of current practices. Teachers feeling that students had just missed out during their schooling is a common response as the recent Carnegie Corporation of New York (2010) report on adolescent literacy found.

This excuse of students missing out in primary school is an example of how the reproduction of practice pathway is taken by teachers. Student outcomes motivate the teacher to ask questions about students’ literacy. But from this point the reproduction of practice pathway is taken. An explanation which fits with the teachers’ current frames of meaning is used to account for the ineffective teaching practice. An example is John’s explanation, *I don’t know if you can catch up on primary school... like, those guys have just missed, obviously, a chunk*. This resulted in John maintaining his teaching and learning practices and these students being ‘bypassed’, *I might say to them on the date, just summarise the episodes, it is one way of dealing with the different levels*. John felt it was the best he could achieve without support from the student’s home, teacher’s aide or computer access in the classroom (Teacher interview, 3). For John to move away from his current frames of meaning will mean managing the anxiety produced from trying different teaching approaches which have unknown outcomes. This management of anxiety may require a strengthening of John’s ontological security which could be achieved through an expansion of his knowledgeability. His participation in reflectively discursive discussion with colleagues could be the basis of expansion.

Collaborative identification and exploration of problems and issues in the trusted environment of the public sphere can broaden and deepen the reflective process, potentially leading to discursively reflective activities and communicative action. The issue of student behaviour at Trimble provides an example, with individual teachers initially dealing with individual student behaviour in their classrooms. Once highlighted the issue of student behaviour was discussed collaboratively initially with a small group of teachers. These discussions broadened across the school and learning areas with conclusions being reached. This was not just an issue about individual student behaviour but a question about classroom culture, pedagogy and adolescent development. Additional information and research enabled current teaching practices and school structures to be critically examined leading to the introduction of cooperative learning and table groups throughout the school (Royal Children's Hospital, 2001).

This example of teachers taking the evolution of practice pathway is not straightforward. The process at Trimble required a number of motivated ontologically secure teachers to help drive the reflective process. Trevor, Jimmy Hills and the campus principal were all key agents who drew teachers into the process (Teacher interview, 9; Principal interview, 3). These teachers demonstrated strong levels of ontological security through the evaluation of their professional practice. Such evaluation has unknown outcomes and might involve the anxiety of revealing poor teaching practices which can threaten professional identity. Information on adolescent learning and pedagogy from the Gatehouse Project and the work of Dr Barry Bennett were used to support the critical analysis of current teaching practices (Teacher interview, 9). Discussions were expanded from the ontologically secure teachers to all teachers within the school. This discursive process expanded teacher knowledgeability and developed trust relationships which supported teachers in taking action in their classrooms. Over the 10 years through which this change had been sustained, a new habitus had formed where collaboration across teaching disciplines and around issues or problems became the norm. Reflexivity became a strong source of motivation in the maintenance of the evolution of practice pathway at Trimble, where many teachers developed questions around their practice and agreed on goals for improvement.

However, there is evidence that not all teachers were reflexive and that the table groups approach and cooperative learning pedagogy was not being maintained across the school (Teacher interview 14). This loss of a consistent approach across the school appeared to be in part due to teacher turnover. New teachers brought their specialist teacher professional habitus to the school. Without involvement in reflectively discursive activities, these teachers' knowledgeability did not change. They had to rely on tacit knowledge and previously developed routines and practices even though these practices had proved to be ineffective at Trimble. As a student declared, *yes, I hate having Mr Veal, because the kids just go feral and everyone is running around, it's a riot* (Student interview, 3). Until Mr Veal is able participate in discursively reflective activities with the other teachers at Trimble to evaluate why, *going don't do this and don't do that and people just don't listen* (Student interview, 3), is ineffective and his practices are unlikely to change.

Moving Between Pathways

Michael Fullan (1993, 2000, 2006, 2009), Andy Hargreaves (1991, 2000, 2009) and others have consistently reported reflexive teachers as the key to schools as effective learning organisations for all students (Bumpers Huffman, & Hipp Kiefer, 2003; Dufour, & Eaker, 1998; Hayes, Mills, Christine, & Lingard, 2006). The difficulty in achieving this has been to maintain teacher agency through the evolution of practice pathway where teachers are reflexive practitioners, critically evaluating teaching and learning approaches and making adjustments as required. Too often teachers are slowly drawn into the reproduction of practice pathway through becoming reliant on routine and operating within the practical consciousness (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006).

Trimble Secondary College provided an example of a school striving to maintain an evolution of practice pathway through the development of reflexive teachers. The school structures at Trimble provided more equitable power relationships which supported open collaborative discussions around teaching and learning. PLT meetings promoted reflectively discursive discussions and built the teacher ontological security needed to support teacher agency and the action required to support student learning. At Riverside Secondary College the school structures maintained institutional power

impelling teachers to take the reproduction of practice pathway which relied on tacit knowledge and established social practices in the management of student learning.

Table 23 lists the five pairs of factors which influenced the pathway teachers took to review teaching and learning practices. The pairs pose an inverse relationship where the increasing influence of one will lessen the effect of its pair, as in the case of inter-disciplinary collaboration vs habitus. Collaboration with teachers from other disciplines opens up the constraints of professional habitus to see teaching and learning from a number of different perspectives. The beneficial aspect of collaboration was seen at Trimble where art, humanities and maths teachers all worked together to develop authentic units of study and where the inter-disciplinary professional learning teams worked on pedagogy focused action research (Teacher interview, 9). The opposite condition was seen at Riverside where teachers planned in isolation and met together in KLAs. This conventional approach led to a maintenance of professional habitus and the belief that some issues such as the literacy of year nine students could not be addressed with the currently available resources (Teacher interview, 3).

Enabling Factors for change	Vs	Inhibiting factors for change
Inter-disciplinary collaboration		Habitus
Trust & relationships		Isolation & individual problem solving
Strong ontological security		Weak ontological security
Awareness of routines and practices		Routinization
Time & space provided for collaborative planning & decision-making		Limited time & space available for collaborative planning & decision making

Table 23: Pairs of influencing factors on pathway direction

At Trimble teachers developed a common understanding of each other’s work and how it related to the school focus which resulted in all teachers initially using the same table groups approach to teaching (Teacher interview, 9 & 12). However, this did start to break down as not all teachers continued with the table groups approach. As less time was made available to the PLTs due to administrative demands, the levels of staff collaboration decreased. Less collaboration meant new staff did not engage in the

discursive activities which would expand their knowledgeability. (Teacher interview, 12). Trevor pointed out this situation with the most recent PLT projects:

The disappointing part this year is that once again, because we've been so tied up with all the other stuff, we've only just started this one (PLT action research projects), and people are pretty tired, and I don't know if we're going to get away with it, you know. Whether it will work this year, I don't know, but everybody's got something they're working on, somebody they're working with.

A similar process was reported in Giles' and Hargreaves' (2006) study of innovative schools where the initial 'golden period' of innovation was slowly eroded by changes in staff and external influences decreasing resources and time for collaboration (p. 131).

It is possible that this loss of time may mean less effective collaboration adding to the potential dilution of key school philosophies. This may also flow onto teachers' feelings of ontological security and their ability to evaluate the effectiveness of current routines. Thus all the factors are intertwined with the combined influence of the factors directing teachers to one pathway or another.

It appears schools need to be vigilant if they are to maintain the evolution of practice pathway. Trimble had managed to achieve the evolution of practice pathway with a level of success for 10 years, but was starting to see it erode due to what Trevor referred to as 'other stuff' making demands (Teacher interview, 9). This included the external demands of a new reporting system, government policy and moving to a new school site (Teacher interview, 9; Principal interview, 2). Loss of time for collaboration has been a key issue that has undermined many innovative schools' maintenance of effective middle schooling pedagogy, a finding highlighted in Hargreaves' and Goodson's (2006) study of eight innovative schools across Canada and the United States.

It is important if sustained change to pedagogy is to be achieved that teachers continue to appraise their teaching practices through continual personal discovery, through critical collaborative discussions which explore unacknowledged conditions of action and unintended consequences of teaching practices. This exploration can maintain or

strengthen ontological security as teachers' awareness of the possible outcomes of various practices become apparent. Teachers with strong ontological security are better able to manage anxiety and can be ready to explore and apply pedagogy most appropriate for the group of students they are working with.

Chapter Summary

The teaching practice pathways described in this chapter outline how social processes and structural influences interact to enable or inhibit the evaluation of teaching practices. A theoretical framework from the work of Bourdieu and Giddens applied to the analysis of research data has provided a new understanding of the complex social nature of teacher pedagogical choice. Influences on teachers' pedagogical choice occur at a personal, social group and institutional level, with all affecting the ontological security and the agency of teachers.

Reflectively discursive activities support the development of strong ontological security by expanding teachers' knowledgeability. This expansion occurs when critical reflection on teaching practices reveals the unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences of action. The discursive process is enhanced when teachers collaborate around the critical reflection to share perspectives and develop an understanding of the issues or questions being explored. As teachers' ontological security is strengthened their ability to manage anxiety improves so does their potential agency to be reflexive and take purposeful action in regard to their teaching practice. This may also lead to increased reflexivity with teachers' reflection on teaching practice becoming the norm and the important factor for teacher motivation which assists in maintaining the evolution of practice pathway.

School structures support the development of authentic and reflectively discursive activities when equitable power relationships are developed among teachers and between teachers and the school administration. Equitable power relationships support the development of the public sphere. In the public sphere teachers come to the discussion ready to engage in communicative action which will have an identified purpose and which is not strategically hidden to pursue a secret agenda of an individual

or group. Schools must be mindful of external influences which make demands on teachers and undermine the integrity of the public sphere.

With the understanding of the influences on secondary school middle years pedagogical choice explored and discussed, the final chapter summarises the findings and returns to address the guiding research questions individually.

Chapter Ten: Teaching Practice Pathways

The finding of this thesis is that the pedagogical choice of secondary school middle years teachers follows either of two teaching practice pathways: an evolution of practice pathway or the reproduction of practice pathway. This final chapter will summarise the conditions of practice which influence teachers to take one pathway or another.

The understandings presented in Chapter 9 on how social and structural elements interact to influence teachers' pedagogical choice are used to address the guiding research questions individually. Addressing the guiding questions individually provides a clear focus to identify the components and processes which influence teacher pedagogical choice. How the components interact provides an insight into which school structures need to be examined and modified to promote pedagogical change.

The chapter concludes by returning to the literature on school change and placing the findings of this study into the context of previous research. Questions for future research that have emerged from this study complete the chapter.

Introduction

The teaching practice pathways presented in Chapter 9 are an exploration of how various the social processes and structures of schooling interact. They also suggest reasons why teaching practices are both stable and durable. Stability of practice per se is not a detrimental condition in education, if the practices being used are both appropriate and effective. The concern is often that teachers are maintaining pedagogy that is neither appropriate nor effective. For teachers to effectively meet the needs of students they must regularly and critically review the pedagogy being applied in their practices.

The critical evaluation of teaching practices is particularly important in a society characterised by the liquid modernity of the western world. Adolescents of today require different skills and knowledge from students of just a decade ago. With the rise of neo-liberal market driven politics, more responsibility is placed on the individual with digital technology providing faster access to a wider range of information. To engage and navigate their way through adult life adolescents have to respond to this fast-moving and flexible environment (Pendergast & Bahr, 2005). Schools have to attend to these changes, with teachers examining the teaching and learning activities within the school, making changes and adjustments as required to support student learning. This responsiveness is required for all students but in particular for students in the middle years of schooling, where many adolescent students are achieving below expectation, reporting high levels of disengagement and leaving school early (Hill & Rowe, 1996; Luke, et al, 2008).

The Theoretical Framework

Collaborative and reflectively discursive inquiry has emerged from this research as a process which can lead teachers to critically evaluate teaching practices and school structures. Critical evaluation through this process can result in teaching practices and school structures being changed. However, this process is not simply gathering together a group of teachers to discuss their work. A range of social factors must be managed if the inquiry process is to be authentic and empowering for teachers to exert agency. The combining of the theories of Bourdieu and Giddens with Habermas' concept of the

public sphere has been instrumental in revealing the complex relationships that exist between these factors and their influence upon social interaction.

As discussed in Chapter 9, authentic and reflectively discursive inquiry is dependent on the development of the trust environment of the public sphere. Trust environments are reliant on communicative action which will be influenced by actors' habitus. If people involved in the inquiry come from a range of social groups they will bring with them a range of practices and habitus to the public sphere. This diversity can both enhance and inhibit the inquiry process. Enhancement of reflective discussions is likely to occur when people with different habitus and perspectives justify their ideas and practices. This is important as Giles and Hargreaves (2006) found that teachers can meet regularly to collaborate on curriculum development and teaching approaches with no change in teaching practices. They can insulate themselves from change with the development of "group think" rather than entering into a critical evaluation of practice (p. 127). The rich discussions generated from a group of people with a diversity of habitus and perspectives are more likely to uncover the unintended consequences of the practices being discussed. It is this discovery which leads to an expansion of knowledgeability. These discussions can also be inhibited by habitus as people from different social groups may not share the same understandings of cultural symbols and practices, thus compromising the potential for informed communication. Poor communication and peoples' natural tendency to connect with people from the same social group may lead to a stratification of those involved with strategic groups forming which will undermine the public sphere.

Awareness of these potential influences of habitus and social group association on the trust environment of the public sphere highlights that the inhibiting potential of habitus must be managed. Communication has to be encouraged between social groups so that they develop shared meanings and equitable power relationships. These aspects need to be established before authentic reflection can occur.

For action to be taken people must exert agency. Structuration theory links human action with social structures through the duality of structure where the actions of people not only influence structures but are influenced by them. To exert agency to change these structures, actors require strong levels of ontological security to manage the

potential anxiety of taking creative risks. Ontological security as discussed in Chapter 9 is strengthened through an expanded knowledgeability that can result from reflective discussions. This means that habitus has the potential to affect the development of ontological security and agency through the enhancing or inhibiting of the public sphere.

In social institutions such as schools it is unlikely that the action of one person exerting agency will have an affect on the institution's structures or practices. According to structuration, social institutions become recognised through the reproduction of practice over time leading to routinization. With many people having reproduced the practices the exertion of one person's agency within an institution can be absorbed without change to structures or practices. This is regularly seen in schools where ontologically secure teachers may transform the learning of the students in their classrooms but other classrooms remain unaffected. For strongly ontological secure teachers to have effect on the structure of schools, they must assemble the social and cultural capital required for other teachers to view their actions as legitimate. If the actions are seen as legitimate there is greater likelihood of widespread change but this will not occur without all teachers involved developing the levels of ontological security required to take creative risks. Here the theories of Bourdieu and Giddens together with the concept of Habermas' public sphere provide an insight into why school change is so difficult to achieve.

Social institutions are very stable by nature with the structures that characterise institutions having been created by the routinised practice of many people over time. These structures mediate the current practices of actors adding to institutional stability. Social stratification and habitus also become part of this process as habitus also directs individual practice. Thus social structures are created and reproduced not only by the practice of individuals but are also influenced by the cultural norms of the various social groups with which people are associated. The power of social groups across society varies depending on their access to capital. If asymmetrical power relationships exist between social groups involved in reflective discussions, the trust environment of the public sphere will be difficult if not impossible to establish. Without the development of a public sphere, authentic reflective discussion cannot occur and the knowledgeability and ontological security of those involved remaining unchanged. This explains why

collaboration in schools between actors with different professional habitus and access to capital and associated power is important. It is authentic collaboration between people from diverse social groups in reflectively discursive discussion which can increase understanding of each other's habitus and develop equitable power relationships. This emerged from the data and is supported by the school change literature (Fullan, 1993; Hargreaves, 2000).

Examining the social and school structures using the framework developed from social theories has produced the teaching practice pathways proposition which has provided an understanding of the interaction of social and structural factors which influence teachers' pedagogical choice. To summarise the pathways discussed in Chapter 9 (See figure 10, p. 202), teacher motivation will be used as the starting point for the discussion.

Student influences and outcomes provide the catalyst for teacher motivation, raising questions about the teaching practices being employed. These questions may be reflective in the form of, "I thought the students would have really connected with this topic" or puzzling, "This concept is so straight forward. Why don't the students seem to understand?" or global, "Why have students become so disruptive across the school?" No matter the source of the questions, answers are required. How the questions are addressed will orient the teachers towards one pathway or the other.

The Pathways

Teachers taking the evolution of practice pathway are supported if enabling factors for change are dominant within the school. If trusted relationships have been developed between the teaching staff and time has been provided for collaboration, teachers are likely to engage in discursively reflective activities. The establishment of a local public sphere will provide teachers with an environment in which to openly discuss the strengths and weaknesses of teaching practice collaboratively without fear of coercion or pressure to take a particular course of action. Discussions will focus on communicative action to identify unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences of teaching practices. This identification will expand teachers'

knowledgeability about personal teaching practice increasing their reflexivity. Expanded knowledgeability can lead to two possible outcomes: 1) the taking of purposeful action to change teaching practice or school structures, with subsequent effects on student learning; or 2) an increase in understanding and feelings of increased ontological security which may prompt further discussion or a new direction for discussion around the issue or problem in question.

The reproduction of practice pathway is taken if inhibiting factors for change are dominant within the school. When teacher professional habitus prevails across the teaching staff, teachers will identify strongly with their subject speciality, aligning themselves with like-minded people. Science teachers work mainly with science teachers, English teachers with English teachers, a pattern which develops identifiable social fields within the teaching staff. The development of social fields is a barrier to collaboration, as identity and ontological security are tied to the social field. School routines also support barriers to collaboration by teachers relying on tacit knowledge developed from routines of practice, with the predictability of behaviour providing a level of comfort in knowing what to expect. To move away from routine or to engage outside one's social field becomes threatening to professional identity and ontological security, creating feelings of anxiety. Following established routines manages this anxiety and provides a sense of order in the daily routine. This supports the established school structures and teaching practices. These practices then continue to influence student outcomes in a predictable manner even if those student outcomes are not ideal. To maintain the established school structures, teachers often look to other sources for an explanation of student outcomes, such as, missing out in primary school, family background or influences of modern society, rather than resorting to the examination of the established school structures and teaching practices.

Promoting the Evolution of Practice Pathway

Promoting the evolution of pathway practice was the character of practice at Trimble Secondary College and led to the development of a teaching culture which has been responsive to the learning and developmental needs of adolescent students. Promoting the pathway is not a simple matter of teachers being supportive of middle years practices. This was confirmed in the data from Riverside and the web-based questionnaire which clearly indicated that belief is not enough as teachers supported

middle years practices, but continued to practice teacher centred approaches in their classrooms.

Teachers who engage in collaborative and reflectively discursive activities can expand their knowledgeability of teaching practices by systematically becoming aware of the unintended consequences of action. With expanded knowledgeability teachers can feel ontologically more secure, as they are able to predict possible outcomes of innovations and changed teaching practices. Prediction of possible outcomes can help teachers to manage anxiety leading to purposeful action. This has been discussed in detail and was seen at Trimble with the implementation and maintenance of table groups and cooperative learning approaches. But this is not enough. For collaborative and reflectively discursive activities to be authentic, the activities must occur in the trust environment of a public sphere. Development of the public sphere was promoted at Trimble by a sharing of power as the principal and school administration acknowledged the agency of the teachers and established a more equitable power relationship than that at Riverside.

To promote the evolution of practice pathway a number of factors within the school structure had to be managed. Equitable power relationships which acknowledge teacher agency had to be maintained by the school administration to promote the development of the public sphere. Authentic collaboration of teachers around pedagogy in interdisciplinary groups had to be promoted to open up the socially restricting influence of professional habitus. Teachers had to engage in regular reflectively discursive activities to critically evaluate personal teaching practices thus expanding their knowledgeability about teaching practices and school structures. These reflective activities strengthened teacher ontological security which combined with equitable power relationships enabled the teachers to take purposeful action to support student learning.

With the teaching practice pathways summarised and the factors that promote the evolution of practice pathway highlighted the guiding research questions can be addressed.

Guiding Research Questions: A response

What are the components and processes involved in the pedagogical choice of secondary school middle years teachers?

Within secondary schools, teacher professional habitus is strongly associated with the teachers' specialist knowledge. Pre-service teacher education courses start this process with pre-service teachers developing their craft in the context of a teaching method, graduating as a science teacher or physical education teacher connecting their teaching identity with their specialty. This identity is strengthened in Victoria by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), which registers school teachers. The VIT produces specific guidelines for secondary school teachers' specialist learning areas which principals and university teacher education course consult (VIT, 2008). Once in schools, professional habitus is further strengthened with secondary schools being structured into subject faculties or key learning areas. As teachers work together in their key learning area, professional habitus can become a strong influence on pedagogical choice.

As teacher professional identity is strongly linked with specialist knowledge, so is ontological security, with an understanding of how to teach one's specialty, supporting feelings of security and being in control. Teachers' knowledgeable ability can become contained within the established pedagogy of the associated specialist area with only unintended consequences for student learning remaining hidden.

School structures and routines can further support feelings of control with teachers meeting in learning areas and only being responsible for specific sections of the curriculum. Teacher collaboration may occur at a broader school level with general decisions on school policy, but this type of collaboration will have little influence on teaching practice or pedagogical choice.

How do these components and processes influence secondary school middle years teachers to select or discard various classroom teaching and learning activities and approaches?

For teachers to select or discard teaching and learning activities based on how effectively those activities support student learning, evaluation of the activities is required. Collaborative and reflectively discursive inquiry provides an effective means

for this evaluation. For the collaboration to be open and authentic, the trust environment of the public sphere must be developed where teachers feel at ease with each other to discuss pedagogy and school structures openly without fear of hidden agenda or strategic action. In such an environment reflective discussions can reveal unacknowledged conditions of teaching practices and the unintended consequences of those practices, thus expanding teachers' knowledgeability. The discussion process requires teachers to articulate their tacit knowledge about established teaching and learning practices, bringing the knowledge to the discursive consciousness for examination. The process of articulation will be enhanced by interdisciplinary collaboration with teachers from other specialist backgrounds, as a range of perspectives and understandings are brought to the discussion.

As discussed in Chapter 9, the reflectively discursive process supports the expansion of knowledgeability and the development of trust which strengthens ontological security. Teachers who are ontologically secure are more able to manage anxiety enabling them to move out of the social field of professional habitus and the established routines of practices and to take purposeful action to modify or discard teaching practices identified as not supporting middle years student learning, demonstrating reflexivity.

How could school structures encourage middle years secondary school teachers to adopt adolescent appropriate pedagogy, leading to more successful implementation of middle schooling?

School structures are an important influence in the development of opportunities for teachers to participate in discursively reflective activities. Power relationships within the school are reflected in the school structures in the organization of teachers' time, allocation of funding, provision of space and school policies. The hierarchical nature of schools with the principal and school administration overseeing the activities of teachers and students distributes power from the top, with various groups within the school competing for influence and resources. For reflectively discursive activities to occur in the trusted environment of the public sphere, this asymmetrical power relationship must be amended to a more equitable situation where discussions will be free of strategic action. Provision of time and space by the administration for reflectively discursive inquiry will demonstrate support for the process and power will be attributed to the process if the deliberations are acted upon.

The remaining question is whether or not both the evolution of practice pathway and the reproduction of practice pathway can be present in a school at the same time? The answer is a tentative yes, as the change process at Trimble appeared to start with a small number of ontologically secure teachers coming together to examine the problem of student behaviour across the school. At Riverside, there were examples of individual teachers making changes to their teaching and learning practices to better support their students' learning. Again at Trimble, the established cooperative teaching and learning practices appeared to be undermined by teachers new to the school resisting the established pedagogy. These teachers were maintaining and reproducing the pedagogical practices they brought with them, even when confronted with less than ideal student outcomes.

It appears that professional habitus and ontological security are very strong influences on pedagogical choice, with both elements supported by the established routines of secondary school structures. With Giddens' theory of structuration highlighting the duality of structure and Bourdieu's theories of social and cultural practices emphasising the importance and influence of social identity, this research finds that changes to pedagogy will not involve a simple intervention from education departments. To sustain pedagogical change within secondary school middle years classrooms, the issue of teacher ontological security and the influence of professional habitus must be addressed. This requires a change to the power relationships within schools to enable teachers to participate in interdisciplinary reflectively discursive inquiries, where the school principal and administration support the deliberations. This requirement is in contrast to the neo-liberal approach to government and the economy which has driven the commodification and marketisation of education. Education departments must move away from developing a culture of performativity which privileges academic test scores to a culture which promotes teacher collaboration through the goal of nurturing and developing young people to become useful members of society.

Final Considerations

The following two quotes from Australian researchers some eight years apart demonstrate the difficulties in achieving and sustaining changes in classroom pedagogy in Australian schools.

What is known of the education of young adolescents? As the literature indicates, the decline in student enjoyment of school during the middle years and the associated lessening of their engagement in learning affect not only students' learning progress but many other aspects of the educational experience of young people (Hill & Russell, 1999, p. 3)

Reform efforts are patchy, difficult to sustain over time, with participants often reverting to traditional teaching ways when energy flags, support lessens and things get difficult (Wallace, Sheffield, Rennie and Venville, 2007, p. 31.).

How do the findings of this study add to the understanding of the school reform process in particular to that of the middle years? As discussed in the literature review a range of reform processes have been implemented in Australia and across the world with little sustained effect.

The use of the theoretical framework developed from work of Bourdieu and Giddens uncovered elements that influence aspects of school change not previously reported. These include habitus, the relationship between knowledgeability and ontological security and the influence of power relationships in providing trust environments for collaboration. These three aspects, as explained in this chapter and Chapter 9, are interrelated and are important elements which can lead teachers and schools to take the evolution of practice pathway to evaluate school structures and teaching practice.

When determining the implications of these findings the limitations of the study should be considered. These limitations discussed in Chapter 4 included, the small number of schools involved in the research and the corresponding rich but restricted source of

principal, teacher and student data. The findings from the qualitative data was supported by the web-based questionnaire but did not allow for extensive statistical analysis.

Many researchers have noted the importance of teachers being involved in the education change process. As Hargreaves (2000) states, “the involvement of teachers in educational change is vital to its success, especially if the change is complex and is to affect many settings over long periods of time” (p. 11) (Cumming & Owen, 2001; Fullan, 1993, 2000; Hill & Russell, 1999; Sachs, 2003). The difficulty of changing teachers and school cultures has also been highlighted, with strategies such as professional learning teams, sustained professional development, transformative leadership all being suggested as approaches to encouraging teachers to collaborate around changing the teaching and learning in classrooms (Caldwell, 1998a; Rasberry & Mahajan, 2008; Sarsar, 2008). Hargreaves (2000) in his book *Changing Teachers, Changing Times*, methodically examined the range of teaching cultures and identified the characteristics of the “collaborative solution” (p. 245).

What appears to be absent from the education change research is an understanding of the influences behind teachers’ engagement or resistance to the change process. This research has identified teacher ontological security as an important personal factor influencing teachers’ choice to try a new pedagogical approach. Ontological security varies between people with examples at Trimble of strongly ontologically secure teachers leading the change process, while other teachers at Trimble took a long time to feel confident enough to take on the new pedagogies. As exemplified at Trimble, if school wide change is going to occur, the strong ontological security of all teachers must be developed. This development process is reliant on the school structures providing equitable power relationships which involve the principal and school administration actively supporting the development of a public sphere. Without the trust environment of the public sphere, authentic and reflectively discursive discussions are unlikely to occur as teachers will be mindful of hidden agenda or strategic action. Without authentically reflective discussion, a change in teacher ontological security is unlikely, inhibiting the change process.

Government education departments have a responsibility to support the development of a public sphere. The external influences which education departments produce can

encourage the development of strategic action in schools. An example of this influence is being seen in Australia with the recent development of national testing and publishing of school test results on the Government's My School web-site. The national testing policy drive by the government is leading to strategic action being taken in schools. Examples of this were reported in the daily press with schools' asking students who may perform poorly on national tests to stay at home on test day (Andersen, 2010). National test scores are becoming privileged information for parents as this data becomes prominent to the selection of schools for their children. The result is that principals and teachers take strategic action to improve overall national school test scores at the expense of pedagogy which develops the skills and knowledge students require for a society characterised by liquid modernity (Lingard, 2010).

In summary, if teachers are going to engage in collaborative activities that will bring about changes in classroom practice to support the development and learning of adolescent students, schools and government education departments need to promote the evolution of practice pathway. This promotion will be achieved by developing power relationships within the school that have a level of equity and support the creation of the trust environment of a local public sphere, where critically and discursively reflective discussions can occur. Collaboration of teachers across disciplines has to be encouraged if narrow professional habitus is to be broken down and they are to be encouraged to explore the range of teaching and learning practices. The critical examination of teaching practices within the public sphere is needed where colleagues identify unintended consequences and unacknowledged conditions of practice leading to the expansion of their knowledgeability about teaching and learning. Expanded knowledgeability achieved by teachers enhances ontological security. Ontologically secure teachers are better able to manage levels of anxiety and take purposeful action in their classrooms to implement adolescent appropriate pedagogy and enhance the achievement of middle years students.

Further Research

This research has presented an understanding of the influences on the pedagogical choice of secondary school middle years teachers which can affect change in the teaching and learning practices of middle years classrooms. From the research the

following questions have also emerged which could be the basis of future investigations:

- Are the evolution of practice and reproduction of practice pathways a universal phenomenon?
- Are both pathways present in schools all of the time?
- Is the development of equitable power relationships sustainable in schools with so many external influences, such as National and State Curriculum, National Testing and funding for special projects impinging on the work of teachers and schools?
- How important is the principal in developing and maintaining equitable power relationships across the school?
- How durable is teacher professional habitus and what level of collaboration and reflection has to occur for teachers to view themselves as educators rather than knowledge specialists?
- How influential is student habitus on developing productive relationships between students and between students and teachers?

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Data collection Cycles

Collection cycle	Focus of data collection	Data collection approaches
Cycle 1	Teacher and Principal backgrounds, perspectives of the school culture, education philosophy and community perceptions of the school	Semi-structured interviews with participating teachers and Principal. Field observations.
Cycle 2	Teacher preparation and practices	Semi-structured interviews with participating teachers. Classroom observations. Field observations, informal interviews with participating teachers and principals.
Cycle 3	Student perspectives of school cultures and classroom teaching and learning activities	Semi-structured group interviews with students from years seven to nine. Field observations, informal interviews with participating teachers and principals.
Cycle 4	Member checking of emerging themes from the data collection cycles	Semi-structured interviews with participating teachers. Field observations, informal interviews with participating teachers and principals.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Teacher Background Semi-Structured Interview

The purpose of this interview is to build up a picture of the teacher's background and how their background may influence their teaching practice and decision-making.

How long have you been teaching?

What types of schools, if any others, have you taught at?

What types of jobs, if any, have you had before becoming a teacher?

Why did you take on teaching?

What course did you complete to become a teacher?

What other education or training have you completed?

How long have you been teaching at this school?

What classes, subjects and responsibilities have you been involved in?

How would you describe the ethos of this school?

How would you describe your style of teaching?

What do you like best about being a teacher?

What personal interests do you have outside school, such as sport, community organisations, and hobbies?

What is your family situation: single, partner, children, care for elderly parents or other family members?

Interview is estimated to take between 45 and 60 minutes.

Appendix 3: Interview Guide for Principals

1. How would you describe the philosophy, vision and/or charter of the school?
2. What values do you think the parents and wider community place on education and the role of the college?
3. What do you think influences parents to send their children to this school?
4. How do you communicate with staff around decisions that relate to the school philosophy, vision or charter?
5. How would you describe your teaching staff?
6. What do you think teaching staff require most to support the school's vision and charter?
7. What sort of influence do education department directives have on the running of the school and teacher work in the classroom?
8. How do teachers generally go about planning curriculum?
9. What sort of role does professional development play in the curriculum and pedagogy?
10. Where do you see the school in five years time?

Interview is estimated to take around 45 – 60 minutes

Appendix 4: Interview Guide for Teacher's Approach to Planning Classes

This semi-structured interview will explore how the teacher goes about planning for classes and overall curriculum.

Immediate planning

Describe a general teaching day and how you prepare for your year seven-nine classes.

This general question will open up the opportunity to ask more specific questions as the teacher describes his/her teaching day.

What do you feel are the factors you take into account when selecting class activities and approaches?

How do you go about assessing the effectiveness of your selected class activities in terms of student learning? (Ask for examples)

Do you use some activities or approaches from one year to the next? (Ask for examples.)

If so, what are the reasons for using them again?

How have you assessed the effectiveness of these activities for student learning?

Would you say some of these approaches or activities have been used so often that they have become the foundation for some of your teaching or particular topics? (Ask for examples.)

If so, what has made them so useful?

What have been the activities' key strength in promoting student learning?

Medium term planning

How do you go about planning for a series of classes that may be linked by a particular topic or series of activities?

How do you go about assessing these series of classes for student learning?

This question will allow for follow up questions on specific issues as they arise such as a particular skill or topic related to preparation for year 10 or VCE.

What factors do you have to take into account when planning series of classes? (Example of factors may be access to laboratories, time of day am or pm, sports days, having to race off after school to pick up children).

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Long-term requirements

How does your faculty or year level (depending on the structure and approach of the school) review and develop curriculum for a year level or series of year levels?

How does the faculty track this curriculum back to individual student learning?
How do you go about assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum on student learning?

This question will allow for specific follow up question as the general planning process is discussed.

What do you feel are the main factors that are considered when developing curriculum at a school level?

Interview is estimated to take between 60 and 90 minutes.

Appendix 5: Classroom Observation Checklist

Adolescent focused classroom?

Evidence of respectful relationships between teacher and students.

Evidence of respectful relationships between students.

Students are given a variety of learning tasks.

Students are engaged in learning tasks.

Teacher expects high standards from students.

Student work in pairs or groups at times.

Level of democracy in management of student behaviour.

Adolescent focused learning activities?

Learning activities are relevant to students' lives.

Conversations are around the learning tasks student-student/student-teacher.

Learning tasks are supported with examples and clear criteria.

Students are challenged.

Authentic work products are produced or will be produced.

Cooperative learning.

Constructivist teaching approach.

Are individual students' needs met?

Mastery of skills and knowledge is the focus.

Is the school vision/charter reflected in the classroom activities?

Appendix 6: Interview Guide for Semi-Structured Student Group Interviews

These group questions are only a guide to get the discussion going. The key thing is to get the students' perspective of how they view the school and the various classroom activities.

1. How would you describe your school to a person from another town?
2. Can you describe me a general day at school?
3. What are the aspects of school that you most look forward to?

This could then be directed at class-based activities, co-curricular activities such as sport, debating, music, camps, etc.

4. Why do you look forward to these things?
5. What aspects of school do you find frustrating, don't look forward to or you think, "I just have to do that"?
6. Why are these things frustrating?
7. What is the best piece of schoolwork you have done at secondary school?
8. What is it about this piece of work that makes you think it is the best?

This area of questioning may lead to asking further about the activity and the way the teacher presented it and how the students reacted to the processes.

9. Can you give me an example of an interesting activity you did in class in the past week?
10. What made this activity interesting?
11. Do you think others in the class also thought it was interesting?

This area of questioning should also open up and explore what the teacher did and the reaction of the class to the activities presented

12. Can you give me an example of a boring or frustrating activity you did in class in the past week?
13. What made the activity boring or frustrating?
14. How did the others in the class react to the activity?

This area of questioning should also open up and explore what the teacher did and the reaction of the class to the activities presented

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15. What things do you think help you to learn here at *(school's name)*?

16. Is there anything else you would like to add about the *(school's name)*?

Appendix 7: Emerging Themes from the Data Collection Cycles

Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4	Themes
<p>School related themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School perceptions – How teachers & principals thought parents and students viewed the school • School organisation • School influences <p>Teacher related themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason for teaching • Professional development • Teaching style/philosophy • Education and work history • Time 	<p>School related themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School influences on teaching planning and practice • School culture • Faculty level planning for curriculum <p>Teacher related themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching style • Teaching approaches • Planning for teaching • Identifying effective teaching practices • Personal commitments • Faculty planning <p>Student related themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student behaviour • Pastoral care 	<p>School related themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School culture • School facilities <p>Teacher related themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and learning activities • Teacher attributes <p>Student related themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support learning • Frustrations at school • Personal aspirations 	<p>School related themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making processes • School culture • School planning • Change influences • Parents/ community <p>Teacher related themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching approaches • Teaching style • Planning for teaching • Faculty planning • Time • Professional development <p>Student related themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral care • Student behaviour 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> School Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leadership & direction • Decision-making • Parent involvement Education philosophy Planning for teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class culture • Student behaviour • Student ability • Teacher intercommunication and collaboration • Time • Professional development • Personal experience • Resources Teaching practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher perspective • Student perspective

Appendix 8: Questionnaire Items

Teaching in years 7 to 9. What are the influences?

General Information (G)

- G1. School where you are currently teaching.
- G2. Numbers of years you have been teaching.
- G3. Your main teaching area (the area you spend most time teaching at year seven-nine, e.g. Drama).
- G4. Year levels you are teaching in 2008 (check all relevant year level boxes).

Section 1: Your perspective on the school (PS)

Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school:

(Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)

- PS1. Teachers are given many opportunities for professional development.
- PS2. Teachers are encouraged to experiment in their classes with different teaching approaches at this school.
- PS3. Teachers share approaches and teaching ideas freely with each other at this school.
- PS4. Teachers in this school respect colleagues who are expert in their craft.
- PS5. There is a high level of teacher collaboration around approaches to teaching and learning at this school.
- PS6. Teachers have opportunities to team teach in each other's classrooms to share ideas and approaches.
- PS7. Programs tend to come and go at this school without creating substantial change.
- PS8. Teachers are highly involved in the decisions made at this school.
- PS9. The administration of the school consults with teachers on all important issues.
- PS10. Teachers have a clear understanding of the school's charter and the school's future direction.
- PS11. Teachers value the opinion of students at this school.
- PS12. Student welfare is a key strength of this school.
- PS13. This school takes on new programs and direction from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, providing time and resources for the changes to be implemented.
- PS14. This school would be viewed by the wider community primarily as a school with an academic focus.
- PS15. This school would be viewed by the wider community primarily as a caring school.
- PS16. This school would be viewed by the wider community as primarily a sport focused school.
- PS17. This school has a comprehensive induction program for new teaching staff enabling them to gain a clear understanding of the school's direction and philosophy.

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- PS18. This school has a comprehensive induction program for beginning teachers providing them with mentors, preparation time and guidance for the first few years of their teaching.
- PS19. The majority of teachers in this school agree with the direction and focus this school is taking.

Section 2: Parents (PP)

Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements on parents' involvement in the school.

(Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)

- PP1. Parents of this school's students place a high value on education.
- PP2. The majority of parents attend parent/teacher interviews at this school.
- PP3. Teachers at this school regularly contact parents outside the normal report and interview times.
- PP4. Parents have a high level of input into the school via an active school council and parent group.
- PP5. Parents regularly contact teachers, counsellors or the Principal at this school about their children, outside parent/teacher interview times.
- PP6. Parents have a detailed understanding of the school's curriculum and the types of activities students do at this school.
- PP7. Parents have a clear understanding of their children's social and academic progress at school.
- PP8. The majority of parents are able to help their children with year seven-nine level homework.
- PP9. If asked, the majority of parents would be happy with the school's approach.

Section 3: Students (SS)

When thinking about students in your school, how would you describe their behaviour and attitudes?

(most, many, some, few)

Students in my year seven – nine classes:

- SS1. Concentrate well.
- SS2. Relate well to others.
- SS3. Are able to think clearly and critically.
- SS4. Prefer to work alone.
- SS5. Prefer 'hands on' practical tasks.
- SS6. Are able to manage their learning, setting and completing personal goals.
- SS7. Display leadership.
- SS8. Are easily distracted from set tasks.
- SS9. Participate enthusiastically in activities.
- SS10. Are generally uninterested in school.
- SS11. Are creative problem solvers.
- SS12. Enjoy classroom discussions and are able to acknowledge different view points.
- SS13. Struggle to understand new concepts.

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- SS14. Relate well to teachers.
- SS15. Need additional support with their work.
- SS16. Take pride in their work.
- SS17. Have respect for school property.
- SS18. Feel that teachers know who they are.

Section 4: Teaching perspectives (TP)

Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about teaching and learning.

(Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)

- TP1. Teacher enthusiasm about the subject being taught is more important than their depth of content knowledge in helping students learn.
- TP2. Students become more engaged in their learning when they have input and choice into what is going to be studied.
- TP3. Students generally appreciate a high level of class control by the teacher.
- TP4. Classrooms where students and teachers are able to laugh at a joke together are more effective.
- TP5. Students learn more effectively when concepts are presented in a sequential and logical fashion.
- TP6. Cooperative learning where students can investigate concepts together is an essential aspect of learning.
- TP7. It is essential that students develop a strong background in the content of my subject in preparation for years 11 and 12.
- TP8. It is important to know students' individual strengths and weaknesses.
- TP9. All students have the ability to learn if provided with a range of learning approaches.
- TP10. Regular guidance and feedback to students about their work is essential for learning.
- TP11. Learning different approaches to manipulating data and problem solving is an essential aspect of every subject area.
- TP12. Activities such as copying notes off the board, answering questions from a text book, are an important part of student's learning.
- TP13. Getting to know student's individually is a key aspect of classroom management.
- TP14. Units of study and learning activities should be connected to issues in the wider community and students' own lives.
- TP15. An important aspect of student learning is presenting their work to different audiences.
- TP16. Regular contact with parents is important for student learning.
- TP17. My teaching approach and philosophy is strongly aligned with the school direction and philosophy.

Section 5: Teaching activities (TA)

How often would the following teaching and learning activities happen in the classes of your dominant teaching area (as identified at the start of the survey).

(every lesson, weekly, monthly, once a semester, never)

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- TA1. I give notes.
- TA2. I demonstrate to students how to solve problems or answer questions.
- TA3. Students work in small groups.
- TA4. Students complete tests.
- TA5. Students work on long-term research projects.
- TA6. Students work on practical activities (e.g. Science practicals, model building, drama presentation, speeches, sports drills, etc).
- TA7. Whole class discussions.
- TA8. Students work in pairs.
- TA9. Students work on individual tasks (writing tasks, question/answer, maths problems, individual reading, etc).
- TA10. Students examine issues or problems to find solutions (social issues such as global warming, poverty, or practical issues as buying a car, applying for a job, or designing and building a bridge).
- TA11. I work with individual students.
- TA12. Go on excursions related to the unit being studied.
- TA13. Have incursions such as guest speakers or people from the wider community to work with students.
- TA14. Revise concepts for test and examinations.
- TA15. Give extension work to various students.
- TA16. Students share work they have completed (in small groups, proof read each other's work, critique work or presentations such as speeches, posters, performance, etc).
- TA17. I have to interrupt the flow of the class due to disruptive student behaviour.
- TA18. I have to take disciplinary action with an individual student such as time out, sent out of the room or detention.

Section 6: Planning for teaching (PT)

Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about planning for teaching.

(Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)

- PT1. The school has detailed documentation for all units in year seven – nine in my teaching area.
- PT2. I use the Victorian Learning Essential Standards and Principles of learning and teaching to guide my planning.
- PT3. I clearly document my units of work and use this planning as a resource the following year.
- PT4. I have a detailed knowledge about the content covered and the teaching methods used by other teachers in this school.
- PT5. When I begin working with a new group of students, I am able to access detailed information about what they have previously learned and achieved.
- PT6. I frequently plan and coordinate my teaching with other teachers who teach the same students.

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- PT7. I always pre-test my students' knowledge at the start of a new unit of work. (This may be via formal tests, discussion with students, discussion with their previous teachers, etc).
- PT8. When planning lessons I tend to 'plan as I go' depending on what the students have achieved.
- PT9. I develop activities and assessments with the average student in mind.
- PT10. I plan by starting with the assessment and then develop the classroom activities.
- PT11. I frequently plan units of study collaboratively with other teachers.
- PT12. I am frequently unable to plan some activities in my classes due to students being disruptive.

Section 7: Influences on teaching planning (IP)

Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about influences on teaching.

(Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)

- IP1. My subject area has clear guidelines of what is taught each semester.
- IP2. I do not have enough time to effectively document my lesson planning.
- IP3. Teachers in my subject area have many opportunities to examine curriculum and planning throughout the year.
- IP4. My best teaching activities have been developed from formal professional development days or conferences I have attended.
- IP5. My best teaching activities have come from casual conversations with fellow teachers at my school.
- IP6. My best teaching activities have been developed in organised planning sessions with fellow teachers.
- IP7. My best teaching activities have occurred spontaneously in class when I had done little formal preparation.
- IP8. I talk to teaching colleagues more about teaching practices and students during informal times such as lunch, preparation periods and after school than in organised meetings.
- IP9. I frequently repeat teaching and learning activities which have been successful in the past.
- IP10. My planning time is often taken up with administrative and pastoral care duties.
- IP11. I prefer to work on my own when planning units of study and lessons.
- IP12. I do not have enough time to take on programs such as PoLT.
- IP13. I often teach the way I was taught as secondary school and university.
- IP14. Students' behaviour in class directs the type of teaching and learning activities I am able to run.

Section 8: Use of teacher time (TT)

Indicate the average hours per week (please include hours outside school time) over a semester you would spend on the following activities. Realising some activities occur in bursts over the semester, total the hours and divide by 20 weeks, e.g. 2 days of professional development is 16 hours = 48 min per week (less than 1 hour).

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(Award conditions require attendance at school 38 hours per week, maximum of 20 hours per week face to face teaching, (24 x 50 min lessons).

(less than 1hr, 2-5 hrs, 6-10hrs, 11-15hrs, more than 20hrs)

- TT1. Classroom teaching.
- TT2. Pastoral care issues with students.
- TT3. General administration (attendance roles, form collection, etc).
- TT4. Organisational (coordinator rolls, e.g. year level coordinator, subject coordinator, sport coordinator).
- TT5. Contact with parents.
- TT6. Planning and preparation for classes.
- TT7. Marking and report writing.
- TT8. Professional development.
- TT9. Co-curricular activities (sport, productions, camps).
- TT10. Meetings.
- TT11. Student supervision (yard duty, detention, etc).

Section 9: Promoting effective teaching (PET)

Please indicate how important the following factors are in the development of effective teaching and learning approaches in year seven-nine classrooms.

(essential, very important, important, not important)

- PET1. Principal, administration and teachers having an agreed understanding of the teaching and learning approaches that should be used in year seven-nine classrooms, e.g. authentic assessment, cooperative learning, practice exams, etc.
- PET2. Opportunities for teachers to work in each other's classrooms, team teaching or observing different teaching approaches.
- PET3. Regular curriculum planning time for teams of teachers to do classroom level planning.
- PET4. Increased contact with parents outside parent/teacher interview times.
- PET5. Smaller class sizes.
- PET6. Flexible timetabling that allows for longer periods of time for students to work on complex tasks.
- PET7. A focus on the development of students' research, communication and analysis skills across learning areas rather than a focus on specific subject content.
- PET8. Connecting student learning assessment tasks that relate to personal or wider community contexts.
- PET9. Increased student contact with individual teachers, via such things as students having the same teacher for two or more subjects, combining subjects for integrated learning, etc.
- PET10. Development of teaching teams at each year level where teachers spend 70% or more of their time teaching in the one year level.
- PET11. A focus on cooperative learning approaches.
- PET12. Increased opportunities for students to participate with 'hands on' learning e.g. working on community projects, model building, problem solving, experimenting, etc.

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- PET13. Teachers to have greater control over the timetable, calendar and use of teaching spaces for their year level.
- PET14. Opportunities for students to have input into curriculum planning and or assessment.
- PET15. Regular external professional development on middle years education and pedagogy.
- PET16. Increased access for students to ITC resources.

Appendix 9: Frequency of Teaching Approaches Used Listed in Rank Order from Most to Least Used

Rank	Section 5 - Teaching Activities	Mean	SD	Every Lesson	Weekly	Monthly	Once Semester	Never
1	I work with individual students.	4.68	0.572	74%	21%	5%	0%	0%
2	I demonstrate to students how to solve problems or answer questions.	4.52	0.603	58%	37%	5%	0%	0%
3	Students work on individual tasks (writing tasks, question/answer, maths problems, individual reading, etc).	4.51	0.539	52%	47%	2%	0%	0%
4	Whole class discussions.	4.47	0.604	54%	41%	5%	0%	0%
5	Students work in pairs.	4.09	0.815	30%	54%	9%	7%	0%
6	I give notes.	3.96	0.873	25%	54%	14%	5%	2%
7	Students work in small groups.	3.74	0.995	19%	47%	26%	5%	3%
8	Students work on practical activities.	3.65	1.061	24%	34%	26%	14%	2%
9	Give extension work to various students.	3.40	0.961	9%	43%	31%	14%	3%
10	Students examine issues or problems to find solutions.	3.39	0.940	10%	38%	34%	16%	2%
11	Students share work they have completed (in small groups, proof read each other's work, critique work or presentations such as speeches, posters, performance, etc).	3.26	1.027	10%	33%	33%	21%	3%
12	Revise concepts for test and examinations.	3.07	0.850	4%	25%	51%	18%	4%
13	Students complete tests.	2.81	0.875	9%	3%	57%	26%	5%
14	Have incursions such as guest speakers or people from the wider community to work with students.	1.85	0.756	0%	4%	13%	52%	32%
15	Go on excursions related to the unit being studied.	1.77	0.567	0%	2%	2%	69%	28%