SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT:    A CONSULTATIVE APPROACH

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis uses a case study approach to show how
a strategy of 'School Development' might be applied
to New Zealand schools.  It is argued that a policy
of school based staff development and training will
lead to greater school effectiveness.  Such a policy
uses a coordinated organizational approach rather
than the more traditional reliance on withdrawing
teachers from their classrooms for a time in order
to concentrate on elements of the teaching-learning
process.  Support for this concept is derived from
Organization Development theory and research.  The
term 'School Development' has been used to
distinguish the particular New Zealand modifications
which have been made to the more generic organization
development theory.  The notion of a consultant is
central to the approach described and tasks and
procedures which would be used by interventionists
are discussed.  School development assumes that
schools have the capacity for self renewal.  The
consultant merely helps the school to realise this
capacity.  Components of teaching practice can be
addressed within the framework of the school where
they occur.  Teachers can in this way increase their
effectiveness with their present classes.  The study
concludes with a discussion of the implications of
school development for teacher education generally.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

'Schools are failing' insist many commentators when
attempting to explain some of the problems we are
presently facing as a society.  It would appear that
many of the older traditional institutions are under
attack.  The churches have a declining membership, the
courts are increasingly questioned, democratic govern-
ment itself is described by some as inadequate, ineffec-
tive and obstructionist.

Young people undoubtedly behave differently, both at
school and after leaving, than they did a generation
ago, but does that mean that schools are unsuccessful?
Some would argue that the reverse was the case.  Never-
theless criticism of the functioning of schools linked
with general economic decline have focused public
attention on the stated role of schools in New Zealand
communities.  Within the profession there is general
agreement that 'school effectiveness' could be improved.

The official response has been to reassure the public
that the overall direction of education has been
correct and that 'basic standards' compare favourably
with other countries.  At the same time pre-service and
in-service training has been examined in order to main-
tain and, if possible, improve this position.
Consequently pre-service training has been increased to
three years in the primary sector, a curriculum studies
unit has been created at the Department level, univer-
sity courses aimed at increasing specific teaching
competencies have been developed, the correspondence
school has offered a variety of courses through the
'Advanced Studies for Teachers' unit, and local and
regional in-service courses have been widened and made
available to a greater number of teachers.

Throughout the emphasis has been on improving specific skill based components of the system. It has then been left to individual schools to incorporate these improvements into their own organizations. Little assistance has been directed to this level. The introduction of 'New Maths' is a good illustration. Courses prepared by the Curriculum Development Unit were sponsored widely up and down the country. Teachers were withdrawn from their classes and instructed in this 'new' curriculum. It is now apparent that the majority returned to their schools and injected some of the jargon into their previous teaching strategies. The cupboards bursting with unused materials in many of our schools bear mute testimony to the failure of this in-service effort.

## In Service Training

The assumption that withdrawal types of in-service training programmes would result in changed teaching behaviour is not supported by the literature (Courtney 1972, Perlberg 1972, Borg 1975). The usual pattern of withdrawing teachers from their classrooms for a short period, exposing them to a variety of new ideas and experiences, and then sending them back to their classes to implement these ideas simply hasn't worked. The nature of the training has been too general and those forces working against change have been too strong.

Attention has been directed to educational innovations which emphasize a particular skill, or a specific instructional process, or as with 'new' maths, a particular curriculum. Too little attention has been given to those organizational features of schools which impede or aid the adoption of such innovations. Similar assessments have been made in other school systems (Schmuck *et al* 1975).

The structure of the support services to our education system further promotes thinking about components rather than processes. For example both the visiting teacher service and the psychological service tend to focus on pupil problems rather than school or class room problems. It is unusual to view these specialists as an organizational resource although they have that capacity.

During the last two years there has been a renewed emphasis on educational administration training. From beginnings at a national seminar in 1978 the Department of Education has fostered national and regional courses through frequent use of the Hogben and Lopdell House residential venues. Districts have also co-operated and there have been numerous 'Principalship' courses. The pattern which is emerging is one where the residential courses attempt to 'train the trainers' and the district courses call upon these newly created resource people to replicate their training in the local area. This social integrative approach has not proved particularly successful in curriculum areas in the past and there is no reason to presume that educational administration training will fare any better.

Many of the people involved in planning these courses are well aware of this danger and consequently a number of innovations have been introduced. One that is significant is the practice of ensuring that at least two people from the same institution attend a withdrawal course. On returning to their school they are able to support each other. It is not that the withdrawal idea should necessarily be replaced with other forms of on-going training, although ideas exploring this notion should be encouraged, but rather that some system of support operate once the teacher, principal, head of department, or senior teacher returns to the school. Furthermore such training should be focused on specific

strategies which have the potential to change teachers'
classroom behaviour (McGee 1978).

## Purpose

What we were attempting to do in this study was to
establish a school-based approach to management training
and development.  The intention was to encourage a
number of schools to engage all their staff in this
task.  We would act as consultants and assist with
data gathering, feedback and general process development.
By dealing with the problems of individual schools and
generating training which endeavoured to increase their
effectiveness, we proposed to illustrate an alternative
view of in-service teacher education and management
training.  Considerable time was spent both in seminars
and in general discussion with principals from the
'Arden' Principals' Association.  Two schools which we
have named 'Belmont' and 'Dee Street' invited us to
work with them as they attempted to implement school-
based training.

## Organization

This thesis is divided into three parts.

Part I deals with the literature related to organization
development theory and details how this concept
originating in commercial and industrial enterprizes
has been increasingly applied to schools.  The notion
that consultants are central to the process is
elaborated.  Strategies and types of interventions are
discussed with reference to a variety of models.  A
modified approach called 'school development' is advanced
as more suitable for New Zealand conditions.

Part II follows a description of the 'Arden' project which details how the participant-observer research began. It is a record of two consultancies lasting throughout 1980. Case 1, 'Belmont' School, illustrates a problem-solving approach which ran into serious difficulties and Case 2, 'Dee Street' School, illustrates a task-oriented approach which was successfully developed. 'Dee Street' School translated to a problem oriented mode later in the year.

Part III explores the implications that these case studies have for future school-based management training and staff development. Attention is directed to the results of organization development interventions in other school systems. Emphasis is given to the necessity of staff participation. It is suggested that the more generic organization development can be modified and applied in New Zealand schools as school development. Some specific guidelines are proposed.

In service training is aimed at increasing educational effectiveness. This all encompassing aim has been its downfall. What is being advocated in this thesis is that this general aim should be replaced with a specific school development programme.

At present, because there is some recognition that individual organizational features influence the adoption or rejection of innovations in schools, senior administrators are being trained to recognise these factors. Unfortunately such training is being undertaken by conventional methods. Once again courses focus on elements or components, with the participants removed from their place of work. Little effort is made to focus on organizational interpretation of the processes involved. To be successful in-service training needs to be school based, organization specific, and valued by all

the participants. Optimistically, a few schools are
taking advantage of the school-based in-service days
they have available to them to begin school development
training similar to that described in Part II. As on
going training, centred on the individual, withdrawn from
his place of work, has been shown to have serious
deficiencies we now turn to a discussion of how training
could be centred on the organization.