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A Study in Teacher's [sic] Perceptions and Understandings of Their Pastoral Care Role and an Exploration of how Social Workers can Work Collaboratively With Teachers Within Pastoral Care Systems

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A study in Teacher's Perceptions and Understandings of their Pastoral
Care Role and an Exploration of how Social Workers can Work
Collaboratively with Teachers within Pastoral Care Systems

By
Kirsty R. Shalders

This thesis is presented as the requirements for the award of
Bachelor of Honours Social Work

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USE OF THESIS

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

ABSTRACT


This inquiry examines teacher's pastoral care roles in a government secondary school. Its purpose is to determine firstly what pastoral care is for teachers within these positions and secondly to articulate why pastoral care is needed in schools, and to discover how teachers and social workers can work together in school to find a common ground within pastoral care. The study explores both the individual experiences of the teachers as they enact this role within the school, but also examines the broader structural factors that are related to pastoral care in schools. The literature acknowledges the importance of pastoral care in relation to the key functions of schooling and highlights the ambiguity and lack of definition surround the term in secondary schooling.

The study utilizes the methodology of critical ethnography, which informs the methods of semi-structured interviews undertaken with the participants. This will conduct four interviews with teachers who are currently or recently (within the last year) have held a pastoral care position within their school. The data was analysed using coding, content analysis, interpretations and triangulation, which involved linking of care categories or prominent themes throughout the participants' responses. The data obtained from the interviews indicated that teachers' perceptions and understandings of their roles are similar, yet how they enact their role within the school is influenced by their own discretion. The results suggest that teachers have a limited understanding of social work, yet have a view on how it should be practice within the school context. The findings also indicate that there are commonalties within the two professions yet more conversations are needed to explore this area further.

DECLARATION

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

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

Signature: 

Date: 18/01/02

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CHAPTER ONE

THE CURRENT SITUATION IN SCHOOLS

Chapter Introduction

This chapter seeks to introduce the research topic and explain the background to its development. Firstly, the chapter focuses on my introductory thoughts surrounding the study and gives a descriptive account of the issues that have motivated my interest in this area of scholarship. This entails exploring the current social context that schools are operating within and the expectations that are being placed on schools to provide effective pastoral care systems. Secondly, it focuses on the status of teachers' pastoral care roles and highlights the current issues that teachers are facing and the implications this has for the delivery of pastoral care in secondary schools.

Locating the Inquiry in My Professional Experiences

My interest in this particular research topic derives from practice experiences that occurred in my third year practicum at a large rural high school. During this period I worked with, and between, a number of different schooling areas in relation to social work practice. The placement presented diverse and relevant learning experiences which allowed me to develop my professional practice framework within the school environment and my professional identity as a social worker. I worked collaboratively with an interdisciplinary team, which included both teachers and other professionals within the school environment, for example the School Psychologist, Chaplain, and Aboriginal Youth Coordinator. The interdisciplinary team was one of the main dimensions of the schools pastoral care structures, which also included the 'Year Centre'¹, administration and form teachers. This integrated approach endorsed an ethos that promoted pastoral care as being the responsibility of all teachers in the school and not just the pastoral care coordinators. Working within this varied and collaborative environment gave me the opportunity to develop professional understandings of other professional's roles within the school setting focusing particularly on teacher's pastoral care roles. While I asked and got answers to many questions while working at the school, on completing my placement I found I still had questions that needed some answers. Therefore,

this inquiry derives from my placement experiences and the questions arising from it.

During the placement I had the privilege of viewing the schools pastoral care structure from an observer position while also being able to establish working relationships with the five Year Coordinators. From this position I was able to identify several dilemmas that pastoral care teachers were dealing with in their roles and examine some of the structural factors that impacted on these roles. For example, time constraints, limited resources, additional subject teaching demands, behaviour management strategies, administrative duties, and addressing students' individual needs. Additionally, I observed that teachers play an important role in creating links between the home environment (parents & siblings), the community (agencies), the students and the school, to ensure that students were provided with support.

It was evident that while this role was crucial to the functioning of the school, the demand for pastoral care was at risk of outstripping the human resources available, especially with the current number of students needing assistance. On many occasions, some teachers expressed to me that they had to go outside their responsibilities when intervening in student problems, and were uncomfortable in doing this, because they felt a duty to intervene, as no other support was available within the school. As a social worker student some of the issues I became aware of, which inform the orientation of this inquiry, include that teachers pastoral care roles are: ill defined, undervalued, under resourced and possibly lacking professional boundaries. I wondered about the reasons for these issues and whether as a social worker I could constructively engage with teachers to further explore their experiences. I thought my beginning career as a social worker might find me in similar professional dilemmas that these teachers were experiencing and therefore wanted to discover if there were any commonalities.

¹ For a description of the structure and purpose of the Year Centre see Appendix A.

Dimensions which Inform the Inquiry's Starting Point

Teacher and School Interventions

While on placement I observed that adolescents were presenting with complex social problems which teachers were beginning to identify but they seemed unable to cope with the apparent needs of students. I discovered that teachers in pastoral care roles were often faced with complex and often distressing cases to which they are expected to respond in a supportive and professional manner. I believe this has not only immediate implications for the management of 'care', but also for the training of those who deliver it. At a structural and policy level this will have major implications for the whole resourcing and quality of 'pastoral care' and the mandate of secondary education in general.

I also found my initial observations to be reflected in the current literature surrounding teachers' pastoral care positions. For example, Pitcher & Poland's (1992) study found that situations where teachers felt least able to intervene were child/sexual abuse, major problems with parents, students involved with drugs or alcohol abuse, divorce and family substance abuse. This increased my interest as a researcher in understanding how teachers experiences fit with my initial observations and the literature that I had researched. I found that the problems students were experiencing were well outside the resources, time and energy, as well as the training, of an average teacher, or even a teacher with a pastoral care role in the school. Yet it would be difficult for teachers to close their eyes to the students difficulties with which they are confronted day after day. My concern was that without a satisfactory level of support staff and help for teachers working in crisis intervention roles, may well lead to an impediment to students progress, teacher burnout, and ultimate loss of teaching staff. This centres on an important matter that has been raised several times in the implementation and delivery of pastoral care; that is whether or not teachers acting in their pastoral care roles, should become involved in their students' personal problems, which they do not have the necessary training or expertise to handle (Carey, 1993 a).

Currently schools and teachers are being expected to take on a number of functions that go beyond their teaching task. It can be clearly identified from my placement experiences and the current literature that teachers' roles have expanded. They are now not just responsible for the academic development of pupils, but they are also expected to play a wider role encompassing pupils' psychosocial needs (Cleave, Carey, Norris, Sloper, While & Charlton, 1997). Schools and teachers are continually being expected to take on more casework with young people (London, 1987) and therefore an extension of teachers pastoral role is occurring. I suspect this could be in part due to the lack of definition and guidelines surrounding teachers pastoral care positions, as they are not necessarily informed about what is expected of them and what the responsibilities of this role entails. This is why this inquiry is focusing on the boundaries of teachers' pastoral care roles as one of the key topics. Lloyd's (1999) study supports these claims as he identified that it is a constant frustration to many teachers that they are left to support students with significant mental health problems with which they are not trained to deal. Perhaps, schools need to have set guidelines attached to teachers' pastoral care roles and how this role should be enacted within the school as without clear boundaries teachers will continually be expected to take on cases which go beyond their role.

I believe that with the current situation in schools there is a need for students to have continual specialist intervention and feel that the social work profession has something to offer schools in the area of pastoral care. I think pastoral care is an excellent access point for the implementation of social work in schools as there are strong parallels between pastoral care and social work. However, due to current restrictions being placed on the research process the literature surrounding school social worker has not been thoroughly examined throughout this paper.

After identifying some of these links over the placement and within the literature I decided to explore pastoral care further focusing on teachers who practice in these roles, hence the commencement of this study. However, what also influenced the initiation of this study was the identification that current

pastoral care systems were under considerable pressure, which was not only impacting on teachers in pastoral care positions, but also on the delivery of pastoral care to students and their families. As a social worker, I felt my main concern surrounding this inquiry was if the current situation went unnoticed or was left, it could inevitably lead to loss of teachers, burnout, high school dropouts and students left with little or no adequate support. I was interested in using my researcher status to re-connect with teachers I had worked with on placement, to continue the fragments of conversations we had begun. In this way, while I don't occupy a typical practice auspice with which to relate to teachers, however I feel the honours research auspice affords some legitimacy. My hope is to work closely with teachers once I'm a practising social worker and I believe the current study will build my understandings of pastoral care teachers experiences and identify what place if any there is for social workers as professional colleagues in supporting pastoral care in schools.

Adolescent Issues: The Socio-Political Landscape and Key Stakeholders in Pastoral Care

In line with pastoral care roles, teachers are expected to deal with the wide variety of problems that young people face (Carey, 1993 a). In today's society, with television and the print media, high pressures are placed on adolescents in terms of socio-economic expectations. It can be suggested that young people are under pressure in a society which has rapidly changing customs and values. Clearly, young people cannot avoid exposure to stressful situations, as they are an inevitable part of life. However, there are variety of different ways in which adolescents will respond to stressful events. Some young people are particularly resilient and have high-level coping strategies while others may have difficulties and need additional support during this period. Of concern to pastoral carers and social workers are those students who struggle at this developmental stage due to various factors affecting their ability to cope with the pressures at school, at home and in the community (Geldrad & Geldard, 1999). Therefore, it is imperative that adolescents are supported during this period to give them the opportunity to develop relevant coping skills and resilience to a variety of stressful environments that they maybe experiencing.

When examining some of the social problems that students currently present with in schools, it is possible to suggest that schools are becoming potential intervention sites for almost every social problem affecting students (Linney & Seidman, 1989). Pitcher and Poland's (1992) research identified that, whatever the trend, every teacher will report that crisis-related problems are commonplace in schools and they are preventing some students from progressing educationally. However, "problems such as suicidal ideation, depression, drug and alcohol involvement, family breakdown, or psychiatric treatment, which are not typically handled by the school" (Palmo, Langlois & Bender, 1988 p.94), but because they have become more prevalent among students, schools by necessity have had to become involved. For example, the literature shows that there has been a dramatic rise in the number of severely and profoundly depressed high school students, ranging from between 6% and 8% of high school students at any point in time (Frymier, 1988 p. 90). Further to this, suicide attempts have escalated between 350% and 700% (Frymier, 1988). The National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (1992) supports these findings and have identified that the problems of 'depression', 'substance abuse' and 'conduct problems' are one of the major mental health problems experienced today by young people (Sawyer, Meldrum, Tonge & Clark, 1992 p. vi).

I believe that schools in the past have typically responded to numerous problems presented by adolescents, however these responses have tended to be diffused, sporadic and fragmented and based on an educational focus rather than a welfare focus (Rose & Marshall, 1974). Therefore, these recent findings demonstrate that young people are becoming victims of complex social and psychosocial crises in epidemic proportions, and they are presenting with the effects of this in schools (pitcher & Poland, 1992). How far the school system has the facilities or resources to respond to these ever-increasing needs is unclear and forms the political/social backdrop to this inquiry. I do not attempt to address this issue substantially within the inquiry.

Current Changing Social Context

A substantial amount of the literature demonstrates that there has been a decline of traditional support networks such as the extended family, and the community in which it is situated (Blakers, 1990, Capuzzi & Gross, 1993). The nuclear family of two parents and children no longer reflects the average family in many areas of Australia (Ashman & Elkins, 1998 p.190). For example, Ochiltree (1984) notes:

Australian families are becoming more diverse in their composition, in their ways of living and their cultural background, and this means that children are growing up in families with varied values, experiences, internal family processes and social and economic circumstances (p. 2).

Family life, as experienced by the current generation of children has changed considerably from family life as experienced by their grandparents. There is ample evidence to suggest that society is changing and some individuals are unable to adapt to these changes. This could be due to the rapid changes and incredible growth of knowledge, technology, and competition in our society, which has contributed to stress becoming a major problem (Capuzzi & Gross, 1993 p. 142).

When focusing specifically on the stresses or tensions that young people experience, Blakers (1990) suggests that this can be exacerbated by the fact that traditions and stability are being eroded within our society and the consequences for young people are bewildering and frightening. Young people may not be aware or understand when they are reacting to stress, and therefore may not know or have the methods for dealing with this stress. Blakers (1990) suggests that the support and concern provided by small and relatively stable communities, by the extended family, by the church and even by the family doctor, have either disappeared or are diminishing. With the disintegration of supports, such as the family and the community, inadequate support for young people and the social consequences of stress are apparent in the incidence of mental illness, suicide, homelessness, alcoholism and other drug abuse. Blakers (1990) suggests that rapid social change destroys the symbolic meanings, which derive from a community life with strong continuity. Young

people need to be supported and taught how to deal with and balance stress in their life to ensure maximum physical, psychological and social well being. This requires schools and pastoral care networks in schools to be aware of the complexity of the social issues that young people are facing and to develop the relevant skills or specialist staff necessary to deal with these situations.

Training in Pastoral Care

As the demand is increasing for teachers to become involved in crisis situations and pupils personal problems, there need for teachers to be trained with the necessary skills and knowledge to serve this requirement. Just as teacher's traditional teaching roles require training, teachers also need to be trained in their pastoral care roles. Bishop (1990) promotes the view that teachers' pastoral care role of guidance, counselling and intervention with students personal needs is not simply caring, listening and being sympathetic, it requires specific knowledge, skills and training. Even teachers themselves have frequently identified gaps in their knowledge, training and skills in relation to their pastoral care roles (Chittenden, 1999). Therefore, teachers' practising in pastoral care roles have obviously had to develop strategies to deal with certain situations based on their own personal skills, and many members of the profession feel that this is not enough (Cleave, Carey, Norris, Sloper, While & Charlton 1997). This centres on the concern I have regarding the lack of support and training available for teachers in pastoral care positions, and how they perceive and enact their caring roles within this social context with limited training.

The literature regarding teacher's pastoral care roles reveals that their roles are undervalued, under resourced, ill defined in schools and no formal training is needed or provided for these positions. Marland (1989 b) states that, essentially, we have a profession untrained for its central daily tutoring task. He suggests that there are few other aspects of the work of secondary schools or of other educational institutions for which so little training is available. Calvert and Henderson (1994) study on newly qualified teachers in their pastoral care roles revealed that many teachers lacked confidence and felt

unprepared to take on a pastoral care position within the school. Therefore, current literature demonstrates that training for teachers in pastoral care has been limited (Ash & Love-Clark, 1985, cited in Taylor, Hawkins, Brady 1991 p.143) while the need for participation in the delivery of stress related crisis intervention services have been increasing. What this means is that teachers are being left to deal with situations they are not trained for with little or no resources, and they are being expected to meet the needs of students. Pastoral care staff need training and adequate support if they are to help students and parents, and they need to be recognised as experts in their field. However, in these situations it should be noted that students require additional support, but we often forget or disregard the needs of teachers, which will be discussed further within the next section. It is really open to debate whether or not the educational establishment as a whole recognises the existence of expertise in pastoral work and the pastoral curricula in schooling (Allder, 1992).

Valuing and Resourcing Teachers in Pastoral Care

A troubling question I have is who cares for the caregiver given this complex situation? During my placement I observed that the Year Coordinator's role is very much one which is time pressured with others making many demands, which interfere with their teaching. This situation is also evident within the literature as many pastoral care teachers have high stress levels and are more likely than other teachers to burnout (Freeman, 1987). They have almost no timetabled free time to deal with their responsibilities and are under considerable amounts of pressure within these positions. Therefore, it is vital that teachers are supported in pastoral care positions, as the quality of practice of pastoral carers who are stressed or overworked could be significantly reduced.

One may ask how many teaching days are lost? How many bad lessons taught? How many students suffer because of the frustration of teachers who, for whatever reason, feel unsupported? (Brockie, 1992). What is important to note here is that stress factors not only relate to the teachers individual role

performance but also to the management and organisational components of these roles in relation to staff and students. Teacher's heavy pastoral involvement is reflected in the problems arising from the 'grey areas' of pupils who would probably make most demands on their time for discipline purposes (Freeman, 1987). It is possible to conclude from the results of Freeman (1987) and Dunham (1987) studies that teachers clearly need more time to do pastoral work, so that it can be done properly. Defined job descriptions, more training and support within their pastoral care roles are also important. It is also imperative that teachers adopt self-care techniques to reduce work related stress and to improve their coping strategies. Dunham (1987) argues that healthy schools need to have organised pastoral care systems so that staff and students can both share from the benefits. This highlights that the value of pastoral care is that it does not just involve students, but interactions and support of teachers, especially those working within demanding situations.

Current Status of Pastoral Care in Schools

These questions and my initial explorations into the literature surrounding teachers pastoral care roles inspired me to undertake a systematic inquiry on this particular area of research. The inquiry intends to clarify teacher's pastoral care roles within schools and contribute to building knowledge around the phenomena of pastoral care in secondary schooling. The aim of the inquiry is to highlight what pastoral care means for teachers and why it is needed in schools, and to discover how teachers and social workers can work together in schools to find a common ground within pastoral care. This entails exploring teachers thoughts on social work in schools and the relationship this has to pastoral care. I also hope to gain an insight into teachers' practice experiences of working with students within the school context and identify some of the skills and knowledge that they draw on in practice.

The study assumes that how teachers construct and define their pastoral care role will have immediate effects on how they practice and intervene with students. This recognises that teachers in pastoral care roles construct

subjective meanings, motivations and interpretations, which they place on their actions (Brewer, 2000). Therefore, to gain an accurate understanding of the phenomena of pastoral care and how it is practiced in schools, I must seek an account of how teachers involved and construe their own actions and those of other staff and students. I also intend to identify some of the structural factors that may impact on teachers pastoral care positions, which includes critically analysing the organisational context of the school in which pastoral care is practiced and the inequalities inherent within schools as social institutions. Therefore, the research question for this particular study is as follows:

What are teacher's perceptions and understandings of their pastoral care role and how can teachers and social workers work together in schools to find a common ground for professional practice within pastoral care?

Themes in the Research

The main theoretical themes that are within this inquiry include:

- Teachers perceptions and understanding of the phenomena of pastoral care;
- The impact of the schools organisational context and the broader structural factors that are related to pastoral care in schools;
- The nature of interprofessional understandings and conversations between teachers and social workers.

Underpinning these themes are two key sub-themes:

- The lack of recognition of political issues (training, resources, devaluing, hidden role) within the context of the school and of the contradictory responsibilities placed on teachers engaged in pastoral care interactions with students; and

- An unrecognised need for interprofessional collaboration between teachers and social workers.

Objectives of the Research

1. To discover teachers perceptions and understandings of their pastoral care role and to give teachers an opportunity to voice their experiences.
2. To analyse the structural context of the school and how it impacts on the delivery of pastoral care in schools.
3. To development of my own personal discourse, to find a professional language and develop my identity as a social worker within the context of schools.
4. To discover a common ground between the teaching and social work professions and how they can compliment one another within the school environment.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is based on my own personal development as a professional social worker and the perceived lack of competent psychosocial services to students within today's complex society. I have identified a perceived need for teachers in pastoral care roles to be supported and trained within schools, and I hope to explore with teachers the necessity, desirability and possibility of teacher/social work collaborations in pastoral care as one strategy for responding to this perceived need.

Benefits

In relation to this research a number of potential benefits can be identified. Firstly, the inquiry advocates for an increase in awareness in the pressures that are being placed on pastoral care staff in schools. It hopes to raise positive awareness, recognition and the importance of this position in relation to the whole functioning of the school. Secondly, there are several beneficial aspects for myself as the researcher as it focuses on developing my own personal

discourse in relation to practicing social work within secondary school environments, both in and out of the school, and how to build appropriate relationships with pastoral carers and teachers within schools. This can be demonstrated by my reflection as a researcher which has been documented in Appendix B of this paper. Thirdly, it is locally based which draws on a 'bottom up' (Franklin & Streeter, 1995) technique of research, and aims to identify issues that are of importance to our community, and ultimately our schools. Hopefully, it will be beneficial to teachers highlighting the increased need for contact between teachers and social workers in their quest to improve student's opportunities, and raise the level of well being and highlight the importance of pastoral care in schools for the benefit of students.

Limitations

With regard to the limitations inherent within this research, I intend to discuss the limitations in relation to the research as a whole, and will discuss limitations with regard to methodological approaches and research design within Chapter Three. One of the most controversial limitations with regard to this inquiry is the position or point of view of the researcher. I continually grapple with my position as a researcher in the study as it is at times potentially problematic with representing teachers experiences within their pastoral care roles. Unfortunately, due to several constraints that have been placed on me as a researcher, I have not been able to give the teachers stories as much focus as I would have liked. I also think in taking a social work perspective, I am not adopting a liberal educational point of view with regard to social work or welfare services within schools. However, I am aware that working from this identified position opens several doors for criticism regarding my own personal agendas as a researcher and the need for myself as the researcher to declare my own biases and motivations inherent within the inquiry, which has been the aim of this chapter. I have tried to create a picture of my placement observations, which are supported by the current literature, to demonstrate my position as the researcher conducting this inquiry.

Another prominent limitation I am aware of is the absence of the student's voices and their opinions in relation to pastoral care. Unfortunately, I do not have the opportunity to research the students in context of the school environment and their attitudes and thoughts in relation to the pastoral care system. Additionally, it should also be noted that I intend only to focus on one secondary school in the public sector, which does not involve exploring alternative schools, for instance the Catholic and Community school systems.

CHAPTER TWO

**A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS PASTORAL CARE
ROLES WITHIN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT AND THE
RELATIONSHIP TO SOCIAL WORK**

Chapter Introduction

This chapter introduces the key conceptual themes that inform my thinking as researcher from when I first contemplated undertaking the study through to the presentation of this paper. The analysis inherent within the chapter focuses not only on the analysis of the micro situations of teachers and social workers, but rather seeks to raise a number of broader issues, which also derive from my study. This chapter will be based on six specific themes which will act as the framework for reviewing the literature. These five themes include:

1. Education and the Emergence of Pastoral Care.
2. Principles, Practices and Tasks of Pastoral Care in Schools.
3. Potential Inequalities in Australian Education.
4. A Critique of Pastoral Care as a Control Agent in Schools.
5. Opportunities for Interprofessional Collaboration in Schools between Teachers and Social Workers.

Each of these five themes is directed towards exploring the phenomena of pastoral care in several different contexts. I have adopted a critical perspective in relation to examining some of the major themes and issues inherent in the education system and pastoral care. It requires an analysis of power by identifying inequalities inherent within the education system and how these can exploit certain groups in society and socialise them into accepting the existing social arrangements, and the jobs appropriate to their social class. Another central purpose of this chapter is to explore the complexities inherent within teacher's pastoral care roles and identify how teachers and social worker's can work along side one another.

Theme One: Education and the Emergence of Pastoral Care

Introduction

Education is an important instrument in the socialisation of students ensuring the maintenance and reproduction of society's culture and social order. Angus (1986) suggests the purpose of social institutions such as schools has been to fulfil special needs and thus contribute to the functional unity of society. It was clearly evident over the last century that major themes, such as democracy, social cohesion, social mobility and equality were well established in the prevailing discourse of education in Australia (Angus, 1986). These themes form part of a traditional liberal democratic view of education and society in which education is seen to be capable of altering individual capacities, and therefore, the individuals are socialised to ensure stable social and economic structure within society.

The Myth of Education

It is possible that a false pretence what Freire (1970) calls 'mystification' has been created which suggests the education systems actually offers the means of upward social mobility of personal development to individuals within our society. Sargent, Nilan & Winter (1997) suggest that people who are poor and disadvantaged are victims of a societal confidence trick. People have been encouraged to believe that a major goal of schooling is to increase equality while, in reality, schools reflect society's intention to maintain the previous unequal distribution of status and power. They suggest education system in Australia is actually an institution which absorbs and gives out the ideology, masquerading as 'knowledge' that legitimises inequality. Education is seen to be the means whereby one generation passes on to others the knowledge and skills considered essential to the survival, culture and prosperity of the society and it therefore plays an integral part in the stratification and structures which determine position and power within our society (Sargent, Nilan & Winter, 1997).

Historical Emergence of Pastoral Care in Schooling

Apart from pastoral care formation in the origins of the church, the literature surrounding the history of education has made little or no documentation to the concept of pastoral care or its development within secondary schools. This makes it possible to identify that pastoral is a concept that needs developing and has struggled continually to be considered as a viable part of schools and education. Therefore, with little or no documentation of pastoral care in the historical formation of schooling it renders it impossible to track its original formation. However, there have been several attempts by writers to map the historical development of pastoral care in secondary education. These include:

1. In several papers, Lang (1977) has evolved a narrative, which traces the concept of pastoral care to its root in the 19th century. He identified that schools came to recognise teacher's responsibility for the general and moral welfare of pupils and the development of complex pastoral care systems in comprehensive schools;
2. A similar focus was also advanced by Blackburn (1983), who presented pastoral care as evolving from a general concern in developing positive relationships with children in larger school environments; and
3. Best, Jarvis & Ribbin (1977) interpreted the growth of pastoral care as a form of structure, which served the interest of teachers, administrations and politicians as much as those of children.

However, despite these different understandings in the formation of pastoral care it is possible to identify that these authors agree on at least two points: that the understanding of pastoral care has become more elaborate and sophisticated, and that the range of school areas which are encompassed by the term has expanded (Best, 1999 b). What this demonstrates is that pastoral care has continually developed in schools with new developments being added on to existing institutional structures rather than as a replacement of them. Therefore, this has attributed to the complexity of pastoral care and its lack of precision and definition in schools.

Theme Two: Principles, Practices and Tasks of Pastoral Care in Schools

Introduction

The idea of pastoral care is highly developed within most secondary and primary schooling systems. Clark (1983) suggests that pastoral care ideas are now firmly established as a part of the working vocabulary of secondary education and has become an integral part of Australian secondary schools. Most often it is discussed as one facet of the 'teacher's role', or as a concept implied by students of 'guidance and counselling' in education, or as a structural dimension in the formal organisational or bureaucratic structures of educational institutions (Best, Jarvis, & Ribbins, 1977). Most research has centred on the organisational functions of pastoral care and paid no attention to the effective practice of teachers within these roles (Lang & Marland, 1985). Therefore this section intends to give a descriptive analysis of teachers' pastoral care roles and explore this complicated phenomenon in the context of the school.

The Politics of Language

The debates surrounding pastoral care have been more than a little confusing because of the lack of clear and shared definitions of the key concepts involved. There has traditionally been a lack of clarity regarding the meaning of pastoral care; therefore defining pastoral care in the educational context has proved extremely difficult. Best, Jarvis and Ribbins (1977) suggest that part of the problem in defining pastoral care lies in the failure of much of the literature to make careful distinctions between 'pastoral care' and such associated concepts as 'guidance' and 'counselling'. Within the literature these words appear to be used as synonyms for part of the teacher's role, which is not concerned, directly with the imparting of knowledge. Whilst for others it is used to describe the activities of ordinary teachers with guidance and counselling seen as separate category reserved for specialist roles within schools (Best, et al.1977). In part, the reasons behind why pastoral care is such a complex phenomenon is because of its confused aims, definitions and

objectives, the misguided and heavy discipline orientated administration practices. Hamblin (1986) suggests that this state of affairs could serve the hidden political agendas and struggles in what counts as education as located in the apparent failure of schools to introduce worthwhile pastoral curricula.

The Emotional/Social Underpinnings of a Caring Philosophy

Since to care is a verb, it is clear that pastoral care is something teachers do, and it is not merely an institutional form. The German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1962) (cited in Noddings, 1992 p. 15) described care as the very being of human life. He suggests that we are immersed in care, as it is the ultimate reality of life. Therefore, to care and be cared for is a fundamental human need. “A caring relation, in its most basic form, is a connection or encounter between two human beings – a carer and a recipient of care, or cared-for” (Noddings, 1992 p. 15). Noddings (1992) suggests that in order for a relationship to be properly called caring, both parties must contribute within an interaction. However, many teachers suffer a dreadful loss of energy within their caring roles as many students do not respond to being cared for and an uneven relationship occurs (Freeman, 1987). Additionally within the educational context, teachers not only create caring relations in which they are the carers, but they also have a responsibility to help their students to develop the capacity to care and be cared for.

Pastoral Care: A Broad and Impossible Mandate

Pastoral care has been such a popular and enduring concept, which is reflected in its wide and diffuse applications within education system. During completing this inquiry I have continually grappled with the concept of pastoral care and its meanings in all facets of education. At times I was totally confused by the concept of pastoral care and its purpose and relationship within schools. Therefore I believe that pastoral care can be variously used to refer to:

- A bureaucratic structure of status positions and role definitions,
- Activities or practice performed by the role incumbents,

- The way in which those practices are carried out,
- The quality of relationships between members of the school,
- The attitudes members adopt towards one another, and the values to which these give expression, and
- The ethos or climate of the school as a whole (Best, Lang, Lodge & Watkins, 1995).

Essentially, one of the reason why teachers work in pastoral care roles is because they are concerned for pupils welfare, in addition to their teaching commitment (Freeman, 1987). The pastoral system is usually thought of as bearing responsibility for the relationship aspect of the student's school experience.

“It is possible to identify conceptual distinctions between the different tasks teacher do and between the different structures and processes which schools institutionalise to facilitate these tasks and ensure they are done” (Best, 1999 b p. 57).

Such analysis has been the focus for a number of authors over the last decade. These include: Best et al.'s (1977) attempt to distinguish between 'specialist guidance and counselling' and 'generalist teacher-care'; Marland's (1980) distinction between guidance and counselling, the pastoral curriculum and the tutorial program; Best et al.'s (1983) construction of the education, disciplinary, welfare and administrative aspects of pastoral care; and Watkins' (1985) distinction between casework, curriculum and management (Best, 1999 b p. 57). From this accumulated knowledge and wisdom, it is possible to offer a model of five pastoral tasks in schools (Refer to Appendix C). This model provides a framework for understanding the many varied roles that pastoral care teachers undertake within the school.

A Working Definition

Best, Lang, Lodge and Watkins (1995) suggests that the most recent and authoritative definition of pastoral care comes from the report carried out by

Her Majesty's Inspectorate in twenty-seven comprehensive schools in 1987-8:

“Pastoral care is concerned with promoting pupils’ personal and social development and fostering positive attitudes: through the quality of teacher and learning; through the nature of relationship amongst pupils, teacher and other adults other than teachers; through arrangement for monitoring pupils’ overall progress, academic, personal and social; through specific pastoral structures and support systems; and through extra-curricular activities and the school ethos. In such a context it offers support for the learning, behaviour and welfare of all pupils, and addresses the particular difficulties some individual pupils may be experiencing. It seems to help ensure that all pupils, and particularly girls and members of ethnic minorities, are enabled to benefit from the full range of educational opportunities which a school has available” (cited in Best et al., 1995 p.5).

This definition is appealing as it encompasses most of the theoretical components that are inherent within pastoral care and provides a great deal of depth and flexibility. It demonstrates the conceptual width and diversity of pastoral care within the school context, and as it is seen to be achieved through systems, structures, relationships, teaching quality, monitoring arrangements, extra-curricular activities and school ethos. From examining the literature it is possible to conclude that there is no other alternative definition available that encompasses the range and diversity of structures, practices, attitudes, values, relationships and so on, which pastoral care denotes.

The Integration of Pastoral and Academic Aspects in Education

The relationship between the pastoral care the and academic aspects of schools, until recently, has been largely neglected. However, now there is a considerable amount of attention being paid to the pastoral curriculum and the

separation of pastoral care academic structures, which has become to be known as the 'pastoral care academic split'².

The problem generally in schools is that they continually overlook the pastoral aspects of learning and place a greater emphasis on the academic aspects of education. This is because the value system of schooling has been dominantly linguistically, cognitively and intellectually based with little emphasis placed on the emotional, intuitive and experimental aspects of human development (Noddings, 1992). Generally school have not placed importance in the area of pastoral care and as a consequence it is continually being devalued, under resourced and overlooked within the educational context. Courtman (1996) suggests that we need to focus on the emotional development of the students as it lies at the heart of all learning. Ideally both the aspects of 'academic' and 'pastoral' education need to be reunited and given equal focus in education and within the curriculum, as it is apparent that the quality of a child's school experience is important not only for academic and achievement outcomes but also for fostering self esteem, self-confidence and general psychological well being (Best, 1989 & Courtman, 1996).

Concluding Comments

One of the primary functions of pastoral care structures is to educate students in all facets of their lives. That is education, properly conceived, must be oriented towards the development of the whole person in a balanced and measured way. "This makes it possible to see it as an educative process aimed at the social and emotional side of the child's personality" (Haigh, 1975 p.2). However, schools cannot educate the whole person unless they respond to the needs of the individual: as child, student and citizen. Therefore, to fail to meet any one of these needs of the individual, in any of these 'selves', is by implication is to fail to contribute to the development of the whole person (Best, Lang, Lodge & Watkins, 1995). However, the idea of pastoral care also

² I acknowledge that this debate between pastoral care academic aspects of schooling could be widened to include the liberal view of education and alternative forms of education, unfortunately I do not have the opportunity to expand on this issue.

needs to be located in a broader contested terrain which helps to build a picture of the double bind for teachers who work in pastoral care positions.

Theme Three: Potential Inequalities in Australian Education

Introduction

When examining the school context from a critical point of view it is possible to identify that schools have a role to play in reinforcing inequality, through, for example, the stratification of class within our society. Critical theory recognises that an emancipated society is one in which human beings actively take part in controlling their own destinies, through a heightened understanding of the circumstances in which they live (Preston & Symes, 1992). However, it is not usual for people in everyday discussion to characterise the school as an institution of social control (Foster, 1981). We seldom ask why schools are organised the way they are or analyse the social context in which they exist. Many questions have arisen about the ability of such institutions to provide a climate satisfactory for the emotional and social development of students. What we need to examine is the external factors that influence and determine what happens in schools, therefore within this situation I want to examine the social context in which schools operate and identify some of the structural inequalities that impact on students' achievement and socioemotional development.

There is no doubt that schools provide some of the foundation experiences, which shape our lives. They help to frame our values and outlooks on many areas of human experience and provide a mechanism by which we are located and positioned in society. Schools act as a powerful vehicle for the transmission of values which are central to the Western tradition. How a society selects, classifies, distributes and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control (Young, 1971). When rules are applied and enforced for the power of a few over the wishes of the majority we should

declare a structure as undemocratic and acknowledge that rule enforcement is, at the very least for good or ill, a form of social control (Gillett, 1993).

Class, Power and Inequality

Social inequalities are reflected both in different distributions and in the patterning of relationships within society. Delpit (1988) suggests it is not just access and control that are of importance, but also power over these aspects of society in an equitable way. She suggests that if schooling prepares people for jobs, and the kind of job a person has determines her or his economic status and, therefore, power, then school is intimately related to that power. She also states “the rule of the culture of power is a reflection of the rule of the culture of those who have power” (p. 283). This means that successes in institutions such as schools are predicted upon acquisition of the culture of those who are in power.

“Children from middle-class homes tend to do better in school than those from non-middle-class homes because the culture of the school is based on the culture of the upper and middles classes – of those in power” (Delpit, 1988, p. 283).

Gillett (1993) supports this claim by stating that schools are supervised by a huge bureaucracy and financed by government which decides the funding levels. They are run by middle class, well-educated mainly Anglo adults who have rarely experienced poverty or unemployment and who were trained by middle class academics. It is not surprising that any structure that encourages, models and iterates hierarchies and competition and which has a predominantly white middle class curriculum, is setting poor, non-English-speaking backgrounds and black students up to fail and reject the system (Delpit, 1988). Therefore, it may be possible to suggest that schools may exacerbate or contribute to rather than reduce racial and economic stratification in Australian society.

The Importance of Context

To provide schooling for everyone's children that reflects liberal, middle-class values and aspiration, is to ensure the maintenance of the status quo, to ensure that power, the culture of power, remains in the hands of those who already have it. Those with power are frequently least aware – or least willing to acknowledge – its existence (Delpit, 1988). However, to act as if power does not exist is to ensure that the status quo remains the same. Hamilton (1983) suggests if schools are to be made more effective we must understand both their academic and socialisation functions and the interactions between the two. “We must also understand the interaction between what happens in schools and the social context in which school are embedded” (Hamilton, 1983 p. 332). It is therefore essential that people needed to be aware of the context or hegemony³ in which schools exist and the politics and power they play in schools. This enables an appreciation of the political nature of education and its contested mandate and the differential value for children.

Theme Four: A Critique of Pastoral Care as a Control Agent in Schools

I have tried to establish the social context in which schools exist and the multiply faceted forms of discrimination and social control that impacts on students from a structural viewpoint. However, it is also necessary to look at social control within the school and its relationship to pastoral care systems. When focusing on the organisational context of schools and how it affects the role of pastoral care, this entails identifying the hidden functions or agendas surrounding pastoral care systems. Within this section I will examine the functions of pastoral care systems and explore the relationship between the notion of care and control at an operational level within the school environment.

³ “This is a term used by A. Gramsci to describe how the domination of one class over others is achieved by a combination of political and ideological means” (Ambercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1994 p. 195).

Dilemma of Care or Control

When we focus on the topic of social control in relation to pastoral care systems at a practice level, it is possible to identify that teachers are engaged in an educational dilemma between the care and control of students. What makes this a dilemma for teachers is whatever way they choose to act there will be consequences which are unpleasant or unacceptable or undesirable in some way (Best, 1988). Much of the early critique of pastoral care, what was termed the 'conventional wisdom' of pastoral care was based on precisely this argument. It was argued that students were not 'cared' for in the same way that sheep are fed and cared for by the shepherd (Dooley, 1978), and that a system of 'caring' in schools either made the students dependent upon the 'carer' or else merely represented a structure for imposing demands for obedience to a hierarchy of authoritarian controllers, which was simply unacceptable especially in an institution purporting to be educational (Best, 1989).

One of the key propositions in this critique of pastoral care systems was that the rhetoric of caring for children concealed a reality of protection for teachers. Best (1988) argued that the latent function of pastoral care structure was to provide a hierarchy of a progressively more powerful and authoritarian controller who spent more time sorting out the discipline problems of weak teachers than they did in solving the personal, social and emotional problem of their pupils. It can be clearly identified that pastoral care was actually used by the early advocates of mass schooling who, on the one hand portrayed the system as a philanthropic, paternalistic movement, yet on the other hand saw it as a means of exercising a form of social control over the masses. The rationale behind such an approach was that effective administration was the key-stone to effective 'care', which seeks to anticipate pupils problems at each stage of their school career, which meant that it also played a key administrative role at the same time (Clark, 1983).

Disciplinary Functions Inherent in Pastoral Care

Lang (1977) claims that because of vagueness and lack of clarity in the aims of the pastoral care systems, they have actually degenerated into an extension of the disciplinary role of schools (cited in Dyann, 1980). Pastoral care systems have assumed responsibility for examining school rules, for establishing norms of pupil conduct and for administering the appropriate disciplinary sanctions for any infringements (Clark, 1983). Therefore, discipline and control have become an important function of pastoral care in secondary schools. The unfortunate consequence of this line of argument seems to be a feeling that 'discipline' and 'control' are dirty words which ought not to be uttered in places where 'pastoral care', 'guidance' and 'counselling' have currency. However, it is not to say social control is bad. We need it to keep society functioning in an orderly manner. There is also nothing wrong with order, as without it societies cannot exist. Therefore, in summarising it is not wrong to exercise control over students, provided that it is practised by those (teachers) who have a moral obligation to create and maintain order and that it is exercised in the interest of those who are controlled (students) (Best, 1988 p. 3).

Concluding Summary

Therefore, in summarising it is possible to identify two positions within the debate over whether pastoral care structures care or exert control over students. Some educationalists believe that pastoral care has been seen as a net to 'pick up' the unfortunate minority of pupils who cannot cope on their own, a service reluctantly offered only to those with 'serious problems'. For yet others, pastoral care is a positive and proactive contribution to the well being of the school and all the members of its community. I believe it is possible to say that pastoral care systems actually perform both of these functions. However, the real dilemma facing teachers in practice is not whether to care or control, because they care, but it is how to exercise control in ways which helps the student towards rationale autonomy and in ways that can be accepted by the student as expressions of caring (Best, 1988).

Theme Five: Opportunities for Interprofessional Collaboration in Schools between Teachers and Social workers

Introduction

Schools are located within wider socio-political communities and are part of a network of welfare concerned with the needs and interests of students (Lang & Marland, 1985). Each state offers a network of support services to schools, generally through three separate departments, health, social welfare and education (Fitzgerald, Musgrave & Pettit, 1976). It has been identified that within the current social climate, that an integration or collaboration of such services needs to be developed in conjunction with schools and the community they are located. It has been highlighted that schools are beginning to take part in relationships with other outside agencies and organisations. For example, Carey's (1993 a) study revealed that teachers who were working within current pastoral structures have contact on a regular basis with social services, medical services, police services, specialised groups and community groups. Hence, this focuses on the development of relationships between the school, the community, agencies, the home and other professionals within this network. Therefore, this section intends to explore the possibility of interagency and interprofessional collaboration when establishing networks and relationships with schools and focuses specifically on establishing relationships between teachers and social workers.

In presenting this collaborative approach between agencies and relationships among professionals it should be recognised that there has been little research or critical analysis to validate these type of approaches. Therefore, within this section I intend to not only give a descriptive analysis of interagency and interprofessional collaboration but also intend to explore these themes within the broader context using a critical post-modern analysis, which has emerged in response to increasing complexity in the broader social environment. Thorne-Beckerman (1999) suggests when applied to organisations a post-

modern framework⁴ supports decentralisation of power, equalised relationships, intuitive information, critical reflection, and an emphasis on building community. It's purpose being to generate tailor-made solutions to local problems within a context of human empowerment. This type of analysis represents an alternative approach for evaluating the school environment (Thorne-Beckerman, 1999), it facilitates an ongoing critical analysis, which questions the "hegemony of the dominant order". It provides an alternative conceptual lens that can guide daily practice and aims to enhance teachers' and social workers ability to participate purposefully in restructuring efforts.

Interagency Collaboration

Bucci and Reitzammer's (1992) study identified a number of communities and schools have adopted grass-root models that aim to link services between the school and the community. These approaches focus on accumulating the resources of schools with agencies or the community and focusing on developing approaches to offer services to both children and their families. This requires schools and agencies "to jointly develop and agree to a set of common goals and directions, and a shared responsibility for obtaining goals and using the expertise of each other" (Franklin & Streeter, 1995 p. 777). In adopting an integrated approach Taylor and Adelman (2000) suggest that schools can better reduce barriers to learning and teaching and promote positive development, as the school is an integral part of the community. This focuses on addressing the isolation of schools from human service agencies as a means of creating new and improved service delivery by the integration of resources. It also seeks to address the cracks that exist between agencies and schools, which students can fall through, and to decrease fragmentation by establishing a continuum of care.

In the process of adopting collaborative partnerships between human service agencies and schools there would undoubtedly be regular communication

⁴ The postmodern framework is process orientated and acknowledges that bio psychosocial and cultural factors are important influences in the perceptions of individuals and groups (Thorne-Beckerman, 1999 p. 185).

between teachers and other professionals. With this continued contact between schools and human service agencies I believe that teachers and social workers will become more involved in one another's professional spheres. This then directs my attention towards the opportunity for teachers and social workers to develop strong professional relationships and identify common ground for working with one another in pastoral care systems. However, before launching into these discussions, I feel that we need to briefly explore some of the structural components that impede collaborative structures being developed with schools.

Applying A Critical Analysis Reveals

During recent years, demands for educational reform have entered the forefront of national debates. Many parents and professionals have suggested that public schools are not preparing students adequately for the demands of the 21st century (Franklin & Streeter, 1995). Social problems such as violence, drug abuse and suicide impair many students' ability to learn. With an increasing racially and ethnically diverse student populations this poses new challenges for school staff. Thorne-Beckerman, (1999) suggests many parents, educators and politicians share a sense of urgency to re-examine educational goals and outcomes, which has generated a number of national, state and local reform efforts. A common goal underlying these current educational reform efforts is the decentralization of the educational bureaucracy. Concepts like shared decision-making, site-based management, shared governance, and empowerment are the focus of many debates on restructuring education. Thorne-Beckerman (1999) suggests that decentralised planning and school based site management represent a significant departure from the traditional model of school organisation, which relied on a top-down, hierarchical management approach. Consequently, reform efforts, as they pertain to shared decision making, have been met with mixed feeling by school staff, and their hesitant implementation has resulted in a number of organisational dilemmas. Within this particular section I want to explore the unique features of the

current epoch⁵, which creates a context within which to explore future trends in the roles and relationships of social workers and teachers.

Central to the organisation of most public schools is a belief in the effectiveness of bureaucracy. Thorne-Beckerman (1999) suggests that this is evidenced by schools' reliance on a hierarchical structures, a fixed division of labor, with a specific span of control and authority for each position and rules that guide organisational power. As society has evolved it seems possible to question the adequacy of schools to respond to student's current needs. Galbraith (1997) suggests that bureaucratically organised systems are only effective in relatively stable predictable environment. In a rapidly changing social climate I believe it is necessary for the bureaucratic structures of schools to endorse a flexible format. Franklin and Streeter (1995) support this claim by stating that schools are linked to a changing and dynamic environment. Therefore in adopting a postmodern organisational⁶ framework it is possible for schools to be more responsive to students needs.

Thorne-Beckerman (1999) suggests postmodern discourse breaks with an empirically conceived view of the world, postmodern organisational analysis breaks with traditional bureaucratic and scientific management principles. Postmodern organisations, by their nature, must be reactive, inviting problem-solving strategies triggered by local interpretations rather than centralised planners. This study attempts to examine current local issues in schools and attempts to acknowledge and use a grass roots approach to address the schools and communities needs. Peter's (1992) suggests that postmodern organisations actually strive to seek consumer input, with the aim of changing passive consumers (students, teachers) into active participants. According to Thompson (1998) postmodern approaches view power as "everywhere and nowhere" implying that power cannot be possessed by individuals, groups or agencies but is always a "relationship", decentred from a subject (p. 199). The

⁵ A postmodern epoch is defined by rapid transitions in economic, political and social sectors.

⁶ "Postmodern organisations tend to be small or located in small sub units of larger organisations there objective is typically service or information, if not automated production: its technology is computerized, its division of labour is informal and flexible, and its

aim of adopting grass-root approaches is diverse groups are empowered to participate in decision relevant to the operation of their school. What this research is attempting to do is to create a dialogue between social workers and teachers who are crucial stakeholders in school reform and the analysis of social problems in schools.

Interprofessional Collaboration

After exploring interagency collaboration in the context of human service agencies and schools, it now seems appropriate to introduce and discuss the possibility of interprofessional collaboration. Within the literature it is possible to identify that there has been a surge of interest in interprofessional working in recent years. Traditionally, most professionals are trained to function both independently and autonomously (Cook & Friend, 1996). However, there are many initiatives being taken in a variety of settings to improve the ways in which colleagues from different professional backgrounds can work together effectively. Interprofessional collaboration refers to relations between different professionals both in and across organisations. It entails crossing occupational boundaries, setting aside the ‘rightness’ of our own professional views and having a willingness to listen to what colleagues from other occupations are saying. As a researcher I have a large interest in the possibility of professionals working together in collaborative partnerships. I see it as an invaluable learning opportunity which can advance my own professional development as a social worker and provides an awareness of how other professionals practice. However, this type of working requires some bravery to stand aside from one’s own profession and to acknowledge the contribution which others have made. Some of the identified objectives of interprofessional working and practice can be defined as the coming together of people from different professions and disciplines, each having specialist knowledge and skills,

- to give and share information,
- determine needs,

management structures is functionally decentralised, electric and participative overlapping in

- formulate plans, and
- provide appropriate care,

to enable the individual/s to achieve the highest level of life and enjoy the maximum independence as possible in their community” (Ovretveit, Mathias & Thompson, 1997 p. 121).

Although some counsellor education programs provide interdisciplinary training for future school counsellors, teachers and administrations, these programs are rare. It seems there are limited opportunities to learn about the roles, responsibilities and perspectives of other professions. “Advocates of interprofessional education believe that people in need will benefit more from professional services if they receive interprofessional care” (Harbaugh, Casto & Burgess-Ellison, 1987 p. 141). For example, Harbaugh et al. (1987) research indicates that interprofessionally trained professionals are more likely to (a) consider a multifaceted approach to clients, (b) actively work with professionals of other field in providing whatever care is needed, and (c) know and use a range of interdisciplinary resources in complex situations.

Interprofessional working requires:

- voluntary participation,
- parity among professionals,
- is based on mutual goals,
- a shared responsibility for participation and decision making
- a sharing of resources, and
- accountability for outcomes (Cook & Friend, 1996).

It emerges and grows from trust, respect and a belief in the value of collaboration. It involves the redistribution of power by analysing the organisational context in terms of power, structure, culture and values. Some of the theoretical underpinnings in adopting such an approach draw on social interaction theories, power and culture, structuralism, systems theory, social exchange and co-operation theory. It draws strongly on the concept of reflective practice where learning is drawn out of different levels of practice. It requires a learning process that is a repetitive spiral, where learning involves

many ways with non-managerial functions” (Hassard, 1993 p. 184).

an inductive process that is drawn up from practice and a deductive process that is drawn from theoretical knowledge. In adopting interprofessional collaboration it is possible to identify within the literature that these approaches have many advantages⁷ and dilemmas⁸. However, for present purposes it is not necessary to speak specifically to the research study, rather for now it is sufficient to recognise that they exist.

It needs to be recognised that adopting interprofessional collaboration within and between organisations is hard work, particularly in the bureaucracy of education and human service agencies. It calls for an understanding of numerous aspects of other professions and requires mutual professional respect, honesty, an ability to listen and a willingness to learn from one another. I believe that interprofessional collaboration is linked specifically to this inquiry as it forms the bases of collaboration between professionals, which in this case is teachers and social workers. It identifies the positives and negatives of working in partnership roles with other professionals which I think is needed within the context of schools. It gives professionals the opportunity to learn from one another to offer different ways of working within different contexts. Thus to explore this possibility further the next section focuses specifically on identifying some of the overlaps or similarities between the role of pastoral care teachers and social workers.

Common Ground Between Pastoral Carers and Social workers

As illustrated earlier, there are signs of a growing awareness of the need to bring the helping professions into a much closer association with the education system. The literature within pastoral care structures focuses on the possibility of cooperation between schools and agencies, which directs attention towards the roles of the social worker and the various attempts which have been made

⁷ Within the literature it is possible to identify the following advantages of interprofessional collaboration: greater efficiency in the use of resources and improved standards of service delivery, reduction of gaps in services, awareness of treatment alternatives, clarification of roles and responsibilities and the delivery of comprehensive holistic services.

⁸ Problematic areas in interprofessional collaboration include: professional rivalry, discrimination and racism, exclusion from significant others, perceived occupational status,

to, enable teachers and social workers to work together. I believe as do other authors (Lopez, Torres & Norwood, 1998) that the provision of social work services in school settings has created a natural opportunity for social workers and teachers to develop collaborative partnerships. As educators are becoming more aware of the effect of social problems on student's academic performances, they will centre on the vital role that social workers can play in schools. What schools most need is close cooperation between teachers and social workers within the organisational context of the school. However, research (Johnson, Ransom, Packwood, Bowden and Kogan, 1980) points out that very few teachers have actually met with social workers in the course of their job. Therefore, this inquiry intends to explore the possibility of teachers and social worker working collaboratively in and out of the school for the benefit of students schooling opportunities.

Because there has been an overlap between pastoral carers and social workers within the school context, there is confusion and mutual misunderstanding between who the professions (Musgrave, 1975). It is likely that professionals in these positions are in doubt as to when to intervene and when not to. Musgrave (1975) suggests that one of the greatest uncertainties for teachers and social workers is how these two professions should be working together in schools. Fitzgerald, Musgrave and Pettit's (1976) research discovered that many teachers believed that their pastoral work is linked to the social work profession even to the extent that some days they feel like social workers and not teachers. This could be attributed to the fact that there has been limited contact between school professional and social workers, which has contributed to limited understandings of one another roles within the school context. Social workers and teachers need to embrace collaboration with other helping professions and boldly begin to redefine their roles in ways that positions them to lead comprehensive, school-based prevention programs that are an integrated part of efforts within the larger community.

CHAPTER THREE

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter Introduction

This chapter offers my theoretical perspective I have used to guide this inquiry. It begins with a discussion of my worldview and attempts to link constructivism and critical theory. It is also designed to explore the methodological underpinnings of the inquiry, outline the methods used in data collection and explore the ethical considerations inherent in this study and any identifiable limitations.

Introduction: Paradigms

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) suggest a paradigm is a set of basic beliefs that deals with ultimates or first principles.

It represents a worldview that defines, for the holder, the nature of the “world”, the individuals’ place in it, and the range of possible relations to that world and its parts (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.107).

Paradigmatic views are human constructions which represent the most informed and sophisticated view that its proponents have been able to devise, given the way they have chosen to respond to the three defining elements of a paradigm. These three defining elements include: epistemology⁹, ontology¹⁰ and methodology¹¹ (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, Crotty, 1998).

In the layout of this chapter I intend to separate these three elements of the paradigmatic approach and represent each one separately. I acknowledge that all three elements are interwoven and cannot be entirely separate of one another (Stanley & Wise, 1993). I am also aware of the contested terrain of intra paradigmatic critiques, and I realise that there are several opposing views and debates, especially with regard to qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). While it is beyond the scope of this inquiry to explore these debates, Oakley’s (2000) claim that it is rigour and

⁹ Epistemology seeks to explain what it means to know something and discover the relationship between the inquirer and the known.

¹⁰ Ontology raises basic question about the nature of reality.

¹¹ Methodology focuses on the processes we use to gain knowledge about the world.

systematic knowledge development that is implicit, not the paradigms per se, it has been useful as a beginning point for positioning myself within this inquiry.

Constructivist Worldview

The paradigm informing my worldview in this inquiry is constructivism. The ontology of this paradigm seeks:

Realities that are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature, and dependent for their form and content on the individual person or groups who hold the constructions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.110).

Constructivism endorses an idealist philosophy: that is, it assumes that what is real is a construction in the minds of individuals as they engage within the world they are interpreting. Constructions are not more or less 'true' in any absolute sense, but simply more or less informed or sophisticated (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.111). The inquiry aims of this paradigm are oriented to the production of reconstructed understandings, and the quality criteria of this paradigm are based on trustworthiness and authenticity (Saratankos, 1998).

The theory of knowledge embedded in constructivism is considered to be transactional or subjective in nature. It suggests that:

Reality is not 'out there' but in the minds of people; reality is internally experienced, is socially constructed through interaction and interpreted through the actors, and is based on the definition people attached to it (Sarantakos, 1993 p.35).

This means the researcher and the object of investigation, in this case pastoral care, are assumed to be interactively linked so that the 'findings' are literally created as the investigation proceeds. The nature of social constructions suggests that individual (teachers) constructions can be elicited and refined only through interactions between and among myself as the researcher and the participants. It suggests that teachers invent concepts, models and schemes to make sense of their own experiences and continually test and modify these constructions in the light of their new experiences. In using this perspective I

want to know how teachers create their own meanings of their pastoral care role, and how they do this by engaging with staff and students. This assumes the way humans perceive things is influenced by their personal circumstances and personal views of the world.

Constructivism argues that objective knowledge can only be understood in relation to the means of knowing. From the constructivist viewpoint, meaning (or truth) cannot be described simply as 'objective' and by the same token, it cannot be described simply as 'subjective' (Crotty, 1998 p. 43). Crotty (1998) suggests there are strong threads within structuralist, post-structuralist and postmodernist thought espousing a subjective epistemology but constructivism is slightly different. The constructivist worldview suggests that we as actors have something to work with, and what we have to work with is the world and the objects in our world. This suggests that the world already exists and it is how we as individuals ascribe meaning to our world, as without these meanings being attached it could be suggested that the world and objects in the world maybe in themselves meaningless. Therefore, objectivity and subjectivity need to be brought together if we are to understand social actors and their interpretations of their world. Crotty (1998) suggests that constructivism does precisely this.

Theoretical Perspective

A theoretical perspective identifies the philosophical stance that lies behind our research focus, chosen methodology and research goals. Crotty (1998) suggests that we should attempt to explain our theoretical perspective and how it provides a context for the process and grounding of its logic and criteria. Inevitably, the researcher brings a number of assumptions to the research endeavour, and the purpose of exploring the theoretical perspective allows the researcher to identify these assumptions.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) suggest that decades from its origins in challenges to scientism and effects to restore to human inquiry, a principal focus on the everyday world of lived experience, the interpretive and constructivist

epistemologies have now been blended with insights from feminist methodologies, poststructuralist, postmodernisms and critical hermeneutics. This movement demonstrates that a transition is occurring where many different epistemological and methodological positions are being adopted and created in relation to research. However, this process of connecting different worldviews is highly contested among researchers and is complex and fraught with many difficulties (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). It requires the researcher to redescribe and reconceptualize the underlying assumptions and conflicting considerations of different worldviews in an attempt to build and theorise another viewpoint. Within this section, I have attempted to engage in a similar process in an attempt to identify and name the philosophical stance that lies behind my research focus, which entails linking the components inherent within critical and constructivist worldviews. I take a similar opinion to Pelie (1994), who suggests that paradigms are not hard and fast sets of rules; they are loose and evolving frameworks for their ongoing production and resolution of problems.

Candy (1989) suggests that interpretive and constructivist approaches to social research have been criticised from within, because they do not go far enough in that they have been inclined toward revealing misconceptions and confusion while leaving situations unchanged. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) identify this problem as one of descriptivism, of the lack of critical purchase and of privileging the views of the actors. They suggest the principal objection here is that interpretative accounts lack any critical interest or the ability to critique the very accounts they produce (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 130). It has also been suggested that constructivist research often neglects the relationship between individual's interpretations, actions and external factors, thereby risking ignoring the facts that social reality is both shaped by, and shapes the interpretations and perceptions of individuals. Focusing on these particular limitations inherent in constructivist inquiry, this research embraces critical theory and attempts to unite the critical and constructivist paradigms on the basis of their rejection of positivistic¹² accounts of knowledge. It highlights

¹² Positivism is characterised by an insistence that science can only deal with observable entities known directly to experience (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1994).

that these paradigms are closely linked with regard to their methodological underpinnings and their concern with the perspective of the actors involved with the research.

My understanding of a critical position is that actors are confronted by socio-economic conditions that shape their life, however actors are also capable of assigning meaning to their world and can act on it to make changes (Crotty, 1998). Adopting a critical perspective does more than a pure constructivist approach in that it gets below the surface, to expose hidden relations, to disclose myths and illusions, and how to achieve social goals, and in general how to alter the world. It not only gives the researcher the opportunity to examine internal politics of schooling, but also the social conditions and a historical relation in which schooling is positioned (Popkewitz & Fendle, 1999). This component is extremely important as interpretivists tend to not account for the process of historical change, they assume that the social order is stable (Peile, 1994 p. 61). This historical perspective can empower teachers within the schooling environment and assist in an acknowledgment that the participant's reality is complex, diverse, social constructed and multi-faceted. For purposes of the research I have provided a space for pastoral care teachers to name their world (Freire, 1970) as a necessary aspect of occupying a socially valued role within the school and to locate this in broader contested and historical factors through a critical analysis. To complete such a task I have drawn on a methodological approach that focuses on the school as a living cultural institution, which requires a critical framework to the research.

Critical Ethnography

Ethnography is the science of ethnos that is, people, culture or nations. "In a broad sense, it encompasses any study of people for the purpose of describing their socio-cultural activities and patterns" (Burns, 1994, p. 245). Culture is perceived as a system shared by groups of people who learn its main elements or configurations through interaction and living in its context. According to Ellen (1984, p. 77) this occurs when the researcher:

Abandons the idea of absolute objectivity or scientific neutrality, and attempts to merge him/herself into the cultural phenomena being studied (cited in Berg, 2001, p. 134).

Within the literature it is possible to identify that in recent years there has been increased sensitivity to issues of power and control (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) which has encouraged a rethinking of research design and implementation. In traditional research, as practised by both positivist and interpretivists, the authority for research decisions has resided with the researcher. However, within contemporary research literature there has been an emergence of postmodernist and action orientated models that have begun to challenge this position and the power dynamics within the researcher-participant relationship. Therefore, focusing on this relationship and the current developments within methodological approaches, this research adopts a methodology of critical ethnography as the methodology.

With the emergence of these ideas and revelations within research traditions, critical ethnography has become a significant methodology used when conducting research within educational institutions (Pignatelli, 1998). There has been a substantial growth in the body of research concerned with issues of equity and access, which aim to inform progressive school reforms and identify alternative responses to fixed and disabling reviews of the social world (Anderson, 1989). In a similar view to Masemann (1982), my research as critical ethnography refers to studies which use a basically anthropological, qualitative, participant-observer methodology but which rely for their theoretical formulation on a body of theory deriving from critical sociology and philosophy. Le Compte, Millroy & Preissle (1992) suggest that there are five crucial themes (knowledge, values, society, culture and history) that are central when working within critical discourses in educational ethnographies. I shall briefly explore the relevance of each of these themes for the current inquiry.

Knowledge: A Contested Politics of Ideas

Critical ethnographers understand knowledge as a set of discourses and texts, which suggests that truth is embedded in the social relations of material practices revealed in the demystification of ideology and culture, conceived in a vision of freedom and proved in the emancipation of people through radical transformation (Le Compte, Millroy & Preissle, 1992). According to Le Compte et al. (1992) the goal of critical ethnography is:

Not to present some objective or emic (insider) representation of a particular culture but is to clarify the myriad ways in which historical relations become manifested in cultural construction (p. 466).

According to Foucault (1980) truth is found in the struggles of everyday politics and the 'wars' of institutional practices. This requires the researcher to be engaged in the process of praxis¹³, which is created as the researcher interacts with the researched. This requires both symbolic and material transformation because knowledge is always formed through power and power is always located in knowledge (Le Compte, et al.1992, Foucault, 1980). It requires an understanding of the connections between issues of everyday practices in specific schools, but also the broader social, cultural and structural issues that are related to such interactions.

Value Position as a Critical Researcher

Critical ethnographers are occasionally criticised for imposing their values on the group they are engaged with. It is perhaps not a matter of whether or not researchers impose their values but the implications of the values that they are imposing. However, Le Compte, Millroy & Preissle (1992) suggest that critical ethnographers do impose a value system that requires the researcher to place the culture being studied into a wider discourse¹⁴ of history¹⁵ and power¹⁶,

¹³ The idea of praxis means that we must implement theories in practice, so that practice reflects on and alters the theory (Payne, 1991).

¹⁴ Discourse is a domain of language-use that is unified by common assumptions about a particular way of social life (Thompson, 1998, Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1994).

which serves an emancipatory interest. Whereas other ethnographers impose a value system that requires the researcher to treat every culture as if it were independent of or, at most, related to history and power. Therefore, the need to reflect on the intrusion of values into research is one of the central features of critical ethnography. As a critical ethnographer I must reflexively address my own situated character and recognise the activity of research, as it is located in historical/structural constraints of asymmetrical power conflict. As such, I need to understand these contradictions and act to reveal them either in the written descriptions or notice the traces of power inequalities in the lived reality of the teachers and in my research relationship with them.

Society: A Structural Analysis

In critical discourse, society is understood to involve some kind of constitutive relationship between material and cultural relations; therefore, any ethnographic study that does not examine this relationship fails to bring the insights of critical discourse to the study (Le Compte, Millroy & Preissle, 1992). This involves incorporating the material and embodied dimensions of situations when exploring teacher's workplace culture. The current inquiry then examines social processes in terms of asymmetrical powers relations embedded in particular historical/structural conditions. Le Compte et al. (1992) suggest that: "Modern societies are not merely marked by the rise of capitalism¹⁷, patriarchy¹⁸ and Eurocentrism; capitalism, patriarchy and Eurocentrism have formed modern societies". Individuals must always construct their cultural lives within and against these constraints with varying degrees and focuses of understanding and recognition. As the researcher I'm interested to discern how teachers construct their cultural lives within and

¹⁵ History is interpreted as being materialist, which suggests that, social, cultural and political phenomena are determined by the mode of production of material things (Abercrombie et al., 1994).

¹⁶ Foucault (1980) writes of 'capillaries of power' within our everyday relationships which are motivated by profit and self-gain.

¹⁷ Capitalism is a type of economic organisation, which is considered to be a dynamic form of economic activity that is continually evolving, in a system in which trade and industry are controlled by private owners (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1994).

¹⁸ Patriarchy is a concept used to describe the dominance of men over women, which appears in several quite different kinds of society (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1994).

against these constraints with probably varying degrees of understanding and success. If ethnography fails to examine culture (the social relations and practices which comprise the school), as embedded in such complex and conflictual social life, it has failed to describe its object and may risk an over focus on individual teachers' competence at the expense of the structural constraints on their practice.

Schools as Cultural Organisations

A critical discourse must recognise that culture is in some way intricately located in the historical/material world. For my research to be considered 'critical', it needs to participate in a larger dialogue, which requires an understanding of the complex relationships among the material, the historical and the cultural. This suggests that organisations such as schools must be seen as constituent parts of wider social arrangements and the teachers take part in a dialectical that attempts to deal with both the broad social structural issues and issues of participants' social action in everyday life. This recognises that the 'outside forces' are an integral part of the construction and constitution of the 'inside', the cultural process (Anderson, 1989) and assumes that individuals teachers' actions are manifestations of cultural standards and principles of a larger socio-cultural system, and they can be better understood if they are seen in the context of the whole system.

An Historical Analysis

The analysis of history plays an integral part in critical ethnography. However, it must be understood to be both the 'march of time' and an active force in structuring the moment, so that we cannot limit our concept of history to 'setting the chronological stage' and the 'shoulders upon which we stand' (Le Compte, Millroy & Preissle, 1992). We must recognise that history is continually expressed through constraining cultural formations and that it is an active force in constructing the future. History includes both the constraints and the possibilities of cultural and social life. "It is more than an analytic tool for unpacking present-day cultural, it provides the potential for transformation

by negating reification” (Le Compte, et al. 1992, p 493). Within critical research social structures are always historical, created by people and potentially alterable by people. When history is presented as a productive force rather than as a mere contextual factor, then history must play a central part in the presentation of the concrete practices of oppressed people.

Concluding Summary

Critical ethnography offers, myself an opportunity to examine how participants in a given social setting (school) actively create meaning that generate the human practices out of which structures emerge. It also allows for the opportunity to raise serious questions about the role of schools in the social and cultural reproduction of social classes, gender roles and racial and ethnic prejudice. It acts as a bridge between micro and macro analysis and focuses on examining how social structures and interactions are connected. It aims to generate insights, to explain events, and to seek understanding. Critical ethnography opens the door to understanding how schools work as part of a larger social ordering. It seeks to represent the understandings of teachers within the school context and pastoral systems, and seeks to effect change by creating a space for conversations across professional boundaries searching for a common language and purpose between teachers in these positions and social workers.

Methods

This research study employs a combination of methods. These include participant observation, interviewing, reflexivity and document analysis. These methods will be used to gather the empirical evidence surrounding the phenomena of pastoral care and explore the interprofessional understandings between the teaching and social work professions.

Participant Observation

Participant observation involves “data gathering by mean of participating in the daily life of informants in their natural setting: watching, observing and talking to them in order to discover their interpretations, social meanings and activities” (Brewer, 2000 p. 59). Using the method of participant observation during my placement enabled myself as the researcher to hear the stories of teachers, and to obtain their perceptions of reality expressed in their actions, feelings, thoughts and beliefs. The observations I made during this period indirectly inform the basis of this research study, as I was not formally engaged in research, but rather engaged in a reflective learning process. This method has been used to orientate the research focus and to include my motivations and experiences as the legitimate concerns in critical ethnographic research. Therefore, it needs to be noted that the method of ethnographic interview is the primary source of data collection, and the information observed over my placement will only be used to complement the data collected from the interviews.

Ethnographic Interview

This study involves conducting ethnographic interviews with participants using a semi-structured interview format. Ethnographic interviews aim to discover cultural meanings as conceptualised by individuals, search for cultural symbols, establish relationships between cultural symbols and in general to explain the meaning of the culture for the people (Burns, 1994). They are key informants, that is, people who have knowledge of the issues and situations in which the researcher is interested. I have adopted this method as the main instrument of data collection as it is reliant on a dialogue mode of discussion that takes place between the researcher and the participants. I see the interview method as creating a space for teaches and myself to discuss issues that are related to this inquiry. I am aware of the power imbalances that can be inherent in this approach, however at this point in time this was the most appropriate method to use (Sarantakos, 1993).

I have decided to use a semi-structured interview format (Refer to Appendix H) because it gives me the opportunity to use a number of predetermined prompts which direct some parts of the interview. This type of interview permits greater flexibility than close-ended interviews and is suggested to give a more valid response from the informant's perception of reality (Burns, 1994). It allows the participant freedom to talk about what is centrally significant to them, but also gives the researcher a loose structure to follow in the interview and covered some of the specific themes, which are considered crucial to the inquiry. I believe the interview is directed towards understanding the participants' perspectives of their lives or experiences as expressed in their own words and how they come to attach certain meanings to their experiences. However, I found the interview process to be disjointed at times, and I struggled with directing teachers to focus on specific points and where my voice, as the researcher, was located while trying to create a space for teachers to tell their stories. See Appendix I for the procedure of undertaking the interviews.

Reflexivity

“Reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the human as instrument” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000 p. 183). This means the researcher does not use an instrument in the sense positivistic researchers do; he or she is the instrument. “It is a consciousness experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self with the processes of research itself” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000 p. 183). This process forces me as a researcher to come to terms, not only with the choice of research problem and whom I engage with in the research process, but also to discover the multiple identities that represent my fluid self as the researcher in the research setting.

This process requires the researcher to adopt a critical attitude towards the data by focusing on a recognition of the influences on the research, which include such factors as the location of the setting, the sensitivity of the topic, power relations in the field and the nature of the social interactions between the

researcher and researched, all of which influence how the data is interpreted and conveyed in writing up the results (Brewer, 2000 p. 127). I feel that when the researcher engages in a reflexive process, it implies that they understand they are part of the social world that they are investigating. This process has helped to locate myself as part of the research as it has been a part of me. Adopting a critical analysis has assisted me in recognising the limits of my position and acknowledges the process that occurs when the researcher is engaged in this process (Refer to Appendix B). To accomplish such a task, I have engaged in a continuous internal dialogue that repeatedly examines what the research reveals and how the researcher has come to know this (Berg, 2001). I think by the use of subjective disclosures, the researcher allows the research participants to better understand why the research topic has been selected, how it was studied, and by whom.

Participants

A total of four participants were interviewed within the duration of this study. There were three males and one female interviewed over a period of two weeks. The interviews were 30-45 minutes in length and all took place within the school. Participants were selected on the basis of having a specific pastoral care role within their school and were sent a letter asking for their involvement in the study. The participants interviewed were spread across the following year groups: eight, nine, ten, and twelve. All teachers have only taught within the secondary schooling system and their experience ranged from 11 to 21 years.

Description of the School

The data collection for this study took place within a rural government secondary school. The school can be described as having a conventional academic structure with heads of departments and curriculum areas. The school has approximately 95 staff and total 1100 students' spread over years eight to twelve. The school covers a large diverse geographical area and its catchment area is mixed with students who come from lower socioeconomic

families, middle-class families with owner-occupied housing, and from outlying farming towns.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is an ongoing cyclical process into all phases of qualitative research (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989). McMillan & Schumacher (1989) suggest that qualitative analysis is a systematic process of selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising and interpreting, to provide explanation of the single phenomenon of interest. The data has to be organised so that comparisons, contrasts and insights can be made and demonstrated. The purpose of analysing the data is to find meaning in the data and this is done by systematically arranging and presenting the information (Burns, 1994). Within this study there are several stages that can be identified which took place within the analysis of the data. These include, transcribing of interviews, categorising and coding of the data, content analysis of the transcripts, interpretation of the results, and triangulation.

Interpreting data and drawing relevant conclusions that will answer satisfactorily the research question is one of the most significant steps of the research process. This involves making decisions and drawing conclusions in relation to the research question. Sarantakos (1998) has suggested that there are no existing rules to guide the researcher about how to interpret the data; therefore the actual interpretation is left exclusively to the researcher. I have attempted to disclose the multiple meanings and voices surrounding the research topic and used the direct quotes of participant's responses to demonstrate the information. This process entailed checking these interpretations with the participants, adopting a critical attitude towards the transcripts, seeking alternative explanations, representing the polyphony of voices and keeping the data in context. However, in using this process it needs to be acknowledged that my interpretations are but one of several possible readings including the participants own narratives, and it needs to be highlighted that there is no single interpretative truth (Brewer, 2000).

Triangulation

Once the interviews had been completed, triangulation¹⁹ surfaced as a critical element in the analysis and collaboration of all data collected. This study has placed a firm reliance on using multiple methods within the research, by the use of interviews, observation, document analysis and reflexivity. By relying on multiple methods I sought to cross over, converse with, and tap into different kinds of data within the research study. I believe that research methods are not passive strategies. They differently produce, reveal and enable the display of different kinds of results or information. Triangulation has been employed within this inquiry as it allows the researcher to obtain a variety of information on the same issue. It uses the strengths of each method to overcome the deficiencies of the other, it achieves a higher degree of validity and reliability, and to overcome the deficiencies of single-method studies (Burns, 1994). This involves analysing the information collected to support recurrent themes, and cross-referencing the data obtained from the use of each method.

Ethical Considerations

All human behaviour is subject to ethical principles, rules and conventions, which distinguish socially acceptable behaviour from that which is generally considered unacceptable (Anderson, 1998 p. 16). Research is no different, and it is the researcher who should be aware of the impact of their research on the participants' lives. Researchers, perhaps to a greater extent than the average citizen, have an ethical obligation to their colleagues, their participants and the larger society as they delve into the social lives of other human beings. Thus, researchers must ensure the rights, privacy and welfare of the people and communities that form the focus of their studies. Traditionally, ethical concerns have revolved around the topics of informed consent, right to privacy and protection from harm (Sarantakos, 1998). The ethical considerations

¹⁹ Triangulation involves the use of multiple methods in the one inquiry, which reflects an attempt by the researcher to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question.

inherent within this particular study include, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity for the participants and the school involved within the research.

Conventional social work practice and ethical codes espouse the view that various safeguards should protect the privacy and identity of the clients, and in this case research participants. The major safeguard to place against the invasion of privacy is the assurance of confidentiality. "Confidential information implies that the identity of the individuals will remain anonymous" (Anderson, 1998 p. 20). It demonstrates an active attempt by the researcher to remove from the research records any element that might indicate the participant's and the organisations identity. To ensure that participants remain anonymous within the study the use of pseudonym names²⁰ will be adopted for both the participants and the school. However, as a researcher I have also been extremely careful about how I discussed the participants and the setting, as the descriptions given could identify the location of the study.

The most fundamental principle for ethical acceptability is that of informed consent. The involved participants must be informed of the purpose of the research, its risks and benefits and must consent to participate without coercion (Anderson, 1998). Informed consent²¹ needs to be obtained from all potential participants before any interviews and data can be collected. This ensures that the potential participants are knowingly participating in a study, and they are doing so at their own choice. Researchers have a responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well being of research participants is not adversely affected by the research (Anderson, 1998). As a researcher, I have undertaken an overt approach with regard to the research. I have tried to inform participants about every aspect of the research, and that I have no hidden agendas. Informed consent forms were dated and signed by both the potential participant and myself the researcher before the interviews commenced (Refer to Appendix F). At this point in time, there are no

²⁰ Requires the researcher to systematically change each subject's real name to a pseudonym when reporting or publishing the data.

²¹ Informed consent demonstrates the knowing consent of individuals to participant as an exercise of their choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress, or similar unfair inducement or manipulation (Berg, 2001 p. 56).

anticipated risks to which the participants and the school will be exposed during the research process, and ethical clearance has been gained from the Edith Cowan University Ethics Board.

Limitations

There are several limitations that need to be explored in relation to this research design. These limitations are either inherent in the methodological underpinning's of the research design or the methods used for data collection. Some of the limitations include generalisability, researcher bias, interpretivism, time limitations, and the inexperience of myself as a researcher. I intend to briefly discuss each of these limitations and highlight some of the strategies that were used to address these limitations.

Firstly, the most prominent limitation of this research is its lack of generalisability. Generalisability refers to the applicability of the data to other like cases or situations. With data only being collected within one school, positivist accounts suggest that the research isn't really generalisable to other schools or circumstances. Generalisability within ethnographic research has been identified from the positivistic traditions as a significant limitation of qualitative studies, however I would argue that this term is 'owned' by positivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). This research adopts a qualitative methodology, which involves the collection of in-depth analysis, and which I consider to be more beneficial and helpful in exploring a particular phenomenon.

Another prominent limitation within this research design is the use of ethnographic interviews, which are solely based on conversation or discourse analysis. Using the interview as a method of data collection entails face-to-face encounters between people, and therefore the socio-demographic characteristics of the researcher can influence the course of the interaction and the responses given. This has the effect of minimising the articulation of extreme opinions and behaviour and exaggerating the centre, and communication and information given to the interviewer can be distorted. To

combat this limitation, I conducted all of the interviews to try and establish a constant interview effect and used the method of triangulation to compensate for these errors inherent with single methods. However, I did feel that the use of interviews may well have not been the best possible method of data collection. I think several interviews would have worked better as it would have given me the opportunity to not only have continual contact with the teachers, but would have allowed me the opportunity to ask further questions that needed answering after the first initial contact. I think a group discussion format (Krueger, 2000) would have been more beneficial so teachers could hear each other's perceptions and understanding of their roles.

Thirdly, within the constructivist paradigm criticisms, can be directed towards what might be called the 'dangers of high interpretative science' (Sarantakos, 1993). It could be argued that in interpreting the participants' transcripts, the researcher has a degree of authority and control within the research. It is essentially the researcher's construction of the participants' interpretations that can have a large impact on how the dialogue data is analysed and interpreted. This occurs, as the researcher is not considered to have an objective position within the study and is involved in the interpretation of how the participants construct their worldview. However, in contrast, I have identified and positioned myself within the research process and have queried the role-played by myself as the researcher, who is 'producing' or 'interpreting' the data. I have purposely used ethnographic interviews to allow the participants a greater voice and tried to minimise the influence of myself as the researcher. However, in using the interview method I constantly engaged in a critical analysis of the relationship of power between myself as the researcher and the participants, which involved a reflexive process, and which assumes the researcher is engaged in a learning process by collecting information from the experts, the participants.

Other limitations that also need to be considered within this research study are the limited time frame that the research has been completed in, and the inexperience of myself as a researcher. There have been considerable delays in time due to the structural factors within the educational institution and the

changing of supervisors. The inexperience of myself as researcher I believe could be regarded as a limitation, however I consider the process of complementing an honours project as a learning process for the researcher in gaining experience within research traditions. No research is full proof and every research has limitations. The question is does the information sought cancel out these limitations and has the researcher allowed for them within their study. I have identified several limitations within this study and am aware that these limitations exist, however I have also taken an active approach within this study to reduce these limitations as best as possible.

CHAPTER FOUR

**THE TEACHER'S VIEW POINTS ON THE CURRENT
SITUATION IN SCHOOLS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF
COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE**

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter I describe and explain the themes I've identified in the teacher's stories and conversations that took place within the interviews. The chapter will focus on delivering a detailed analysis of the information collected via interviews, by focusing predominately on the representation of the four teachers who took part in the interviews²².

The results section has been divided into two sections to correspond with the same format that was used in the semi-structured interviews. The first section will focus specifically on teacher's perceptions and understandings of their pastoral care role. The second section will focus on exploring the professional relationships between social workers and teachers and the possibilities of working together within pastoral care structures in schools. From the interviews a wealth of information was recorded and collected, however in this section, I can only focus on it 'being a summary' of the most prominent themes that were highlighted during the interviews.

Section 1: Teacher Perceptions and Understanding of their Pastoral Care Role

What is Pastoral Care for Teachers?

All of the teachers who interviewed were asked to explain how they perceived and understood their pastoral care role within the secondary school environment. They all responded by stating that it was to develop a connection between the students and themselves within their designated year group. Most teachers suggested that they act as a support network for the students while also focusing on the student's academic, personal and emotional components with regard to their learning. This entailed focusing on the education of the whole student or adopting a holistic approach, which is an integral component

²² Pseudonym names have been adopted and all other identifiable information has been deleted from all the transcripts for issues surrounding the confidentiality and anonymity for the participants, and the school that took part within the research.

of pastoral care and caring for students. For example, this was demonstrated by Sam when he suggested that his role was to:

“Develop a rapport with all the students in year nine or as many as I possibly can and to assist with their education pathway from year eight to twelve in terms of all components of social development, emotional support and even academic development and try to monitor their progress and assist where possible so that process take place for most students” (Interviewee Two).

This demonstrates that the role is focused on developing a trusting relationship with students and helping them to adapt and work to their full potential within the school environment. It highlights that the teacher becomes involved in all problems surrounding the student but is specifically focused on their educational development. However, John suggested that he felt the role entailed:

“I just felt I was doing a liaison role between the administration and things that concerned that year and the student’s as a whole. I thought a lot of people got involved with the problems of the kids and I don’t really see that as the Year Coordinators role as much anyway. Certainly directing them to the available help, but not to sit down and deal with the kid’s problems over and over again” (Interviewee Three).

He suggested that he saw the role as being a facilitator or liaison person for students and it was not the teacher’s role to become involved within the student’s personal issues. He felt that the role was to direct students to services. However, between of all the teachers’ responses John was the only teacher to suggest that his pastoral care role really didn’t include individual counselling and guidance of students.

The above two quotations represent slightly different perspectives of teacher’s understandings of their pastoral care role. I feel this demonstrates that teacher’s pastoral care roles are multi-faceted and are not defined in schools, and this position involves a high degree of personal interpretation by the teacher. It highlights that the role is practiced at the teacher’s discretion, and they define the role as they wish to practice it. Within the overall analysis of teacher’s perception of their role, or what they defined it to be, all teachers demonstrated

that they are committed to developing positive relationships with students and generally care about their well being. The teachers who tended to hold these positions within the school were dedicated and highly passionate about helping students reach their full potential, and were willing to offer assistance to students regardless of other priorities, such as their teaching responsibilities. These teachers need to be able to establish good working relationships with as many students as possible, and gain their trust to be able to intervene when they are in need. They not only need to be approachable but also genuine in their attempt to help students as several teachers suggested that students know when a teacher is really concerned about their well being.

Demands Being Placed on Teachers in Pastoral Care Roles

From the discussions surrounding teachers' pastoral care roles within the school, it was highlighted that this role entailed many tasks and responsibilities. It was continually mentioned during the interviews that teachers' felt their pastoral care role was demanding. During the interviews with Sam and Lisa, it was acknowledged that limited time was a major issue for the teachers within pastoral care positions. They both insisted that they have too much to do in the time they are given, and both thought the need to support students is increasing. It was even highlighted by Sam and other teacher's that with the current time restrictions being placed on role, it is beginning to affect their teaching role, for example Sam suggests that:

"I use my upper school group not my year eleven's because its got some characters but my year twelve class, which is fairly mature, I can actually set them work in the library sometimes and then I use up to 20 or 30 minutes on parent meetings or if I need to go and chase kids up. So the one grid line that we get a day just is not enough" (Interviewee Two).

It was expressed that with the current time-limitations being placed on pastoral carers that the level of care that they can offer to all students is sometimes limited. It was recognised that some teachers' felt their teaching lacked as their pastoral care duties had begun to override their teaching responsibilities. As with Blackburn's (1983) study he concluded that teachers who are involved

with pastoral duties noted that they miss their classes, or arrive late or are often interrupted during the course of the lesson. It is clearly evident from these interviews that teachers are engaged in a constant dilemmas between prioritizing their pastoral care role and their teaching responsibilities. Many of the teachers interviewed suggested that they take part in a lot of extra activities within their own personal time. This involved staying at school after hours doing paper work and other tasks, like meeting with parents.

Complexity and Diversity of Teachers Pastoral Care Roles

Another prominent theme that was identified within a majority of the interviews was teachers are dealing with some complex sociological problems within the school in relation to student's personal and family problems. It was highlighted that teachers in these roles were dealing with student's problems that involved crisis intervention, counselling and guidance, and working with parents and other teachers for the betterment of the student. During the interviews many teachers suggested that they were continually dealing with problems of the following nature: suicidal behaviour or self-harm, severe behavioural problems, family issues, abortion and drug abuse. For example, within Sam's interview he stated that:

"Well at times we counsel kids for anything from abortion to suicide ,which are very heavy issues that properly need trained professional people to deal with. We also do minor issues of I broke up with my boyfriend type thing. Last year I was counselling a student for a murder suicide of her mother and her father hang himself two days later. Pretty heavy stuff." (Interviewee Two).

Many of the interviewees highlighted within the interviews that they were dealing with student's problems that were out of their expertise. It was expressed in some cases that the students who had the more complex and severe problems, really needed to be working one-to-one with a trained professional. Therefore, a considerable gap exists between the number of trained professionals in the school and the growing number of students presenting with complex problems.

Lack of Boundaries Surrounding Teachers Pastoral Care Roles

Another prominent issue, which is associated with dealing with students' personal and family problems, is the issue of boundaries surrounding teachers' pastoral care positions. Throughout the interviews, all teachers' expressed a concern that there were no specific protocols or formal guidelines within the school. Many teachers suggested that they are nervous regarding this issue and felt at times that they had stepped out of the boundaries when practicing their role. In most cases this only occurred when they were dealing with students' personal or family issues. Most teachers highlighted that there is a considerable gap between being able to refer on inside the school and the services that are available. Many teachers felt that the availability of support staff was lacking in the school, which will be discussed at length during section two. However, now I would like to demonstrate an example of where a teacher felt that their role was grey and was confused where their obligation as a pastoral carer ended. For example, during Peter's interview he focused on an example, which demonstrates this dilemma:

"Boundaries are grey for a teacher. For me just speaking personally they are quite grey in that, I will give you an example of a girl who I know at school who I have spoken to and have found out that or she has described her family to me as being suicidal. That her mother has attempted suicide a couple of times as with her brothers and sisters. I tried to help her by talking to her and giving her a chance to talk too more about things but I felt I was in deep water. There gets to a point with boundaries where you have to jump over the other side and than you find your not really equipped to jump over" (Interviewee Four).

Peter suggested in his interview that it would be good for teachers to have some sort of process that they could follow when intervening with students. Most teachers felt that they needed clearer guidelines to follow especially in the more in-depth and complex cases. Because the boundaries of these positions are continually being breached, teachers have become uncertain about their responsibilities, which has left some teachers in a position where they felt that they were unable to act. Most teachers were unsure where they should stop intervening as a teacher compared with as caring human being. I

know it is a constant dilemma for myself as a social worker and there is really no simple once and for all answer.

Expansion and Evolution of Teachers Pastoral Care Roles

Within several of the interviews most participants discussed the issues relating to the expansion or evolution of their pastoral care roles. All of the teacher's interviewed had between eleven and twenty-one years teaching experience. The two teachers that had been longer within the schooling system suggested that there has been an incredible shift within pastoral care, yet the other two teachers expressed that a shift had occurred but were unable to identify any specific movements. This meant that teachers in pastoral care roles are not only attending to students academic needs in relation to their learning, but are being expected to take on counselling and guidance roles to support students who were experiencing personal and home difficulties. On many occasions, teachers were dealing with some extremely complex cases and needed additional support if or training to be provided.

From the interviews it was suggested that teachers were not only uncomfortable in conducting this part of their practice, but they actually suggested that they would prefer to hand some of the more complex cases to a trained professional. During some interviews, it was suggested by the teachers that they saw their role as being solely concerned with the provision of emotional first aid as a source of support for student under stress and at times felt they were in a role equivalent to a social worker. However, what was also recognised in several interviews, was that most teachers felt that the expansion of their roles in schools was directly related to changes in family structure and the community. They suggested that social movements have had a considerable impact on their role. During Peter's interview he indicated within his seventeen years of teaching he has seen a considerable change in pastoral care and demonstrates this by stating that:

"In my career I have seen pastoral care go from being almost non existent with just the domain of the School Psychologist. In my early days the house system was purely a positive activity

it was about sport, about community activities, it wasn't so much about students problems. Student problems manifested themselves in bad behaviour and then that bad behaviour was dealt with in a disciplinary system, so we got rid of it. But in the last ten years pastoral care has become an absolutely daily event, in that I could come to school all day everyday and not teach a class and be completely occupied" (Interviewee Four).

Peter's statement demonstrates that there is a considerably large gap between the services available to students and the load of work pastoral care teachers are doing. Within all of the interviews there was a consensus among teachers that when the house system was functional in the school, it was focused more on activities and sporting events and now over the last ten years the role has come to include counselling and guidance, and programs for students who are at risk of educational failure.

Equality for all Students

A theme that was also highlighted in several interviews was the issue of equality for all students in regards to having access to their allocated pastoral carer. It has been recognised that most students who have continual contact with the pastoral carers are those students who are considered to be disadvantaged within the school or have prominent behavioural and personal problems. All teachers' agreed that this is a huge concern, and they suggested that their role can become easily consumed with disruptive students when it should entail working with all students in a particular year group. Best, Lang, Lodge & Watkins (1995) also identified this to be a major issue for pastoral carers and highlighted that teachers are continually struggling with this issue. The teachers interviewed are aware of this dilemma, however, under the circumstances they are restricted with time limitations and unable to attend to this concern.

Training and Recognition of Teachers Pastoral Care Roles

Other issues that were prominent within the interviews was the lack of training and recognition-surrounding teachers pastoral care roles. The majority of

teachers identified that there is no formal training available for this role, however on some occasions they did attend professional development days. Most teachers believed that training was only necessary within the role in relation to the complex cases. However, John felt that this type of training was not necessary, as the teachers should not even be dealing with these issues.

In relation to the issue of recognition surrounding teachers' pastoral care roles, there was a feeling that the role was unidentified and devalued at times. It was mentioned that pastoral care is still not identified at a national level and there are many expectations being placed on this role. However, one teacher did suggest that at an administrative level, teachers were being acknowledged for the work they do with the students. It was also recognised within the interviews that other teachers perceived the role to be very demanding and time consuming and did not want to be involved within this area of schooling. It was quite evident during some of the interviews that other teachers had a somewhat negative perception towards working within pastoral care roles.

Section 2: Social Work Within the Secondary School Environment

What Does Social Work Mean for Teachers?

This second section will focus specifically on social work in schools. I will represent the findings of how teachers think social work should be practiced, where it should be located within the school and whether they believe teachers and social workers could work collaboratively together within schools. The first part of the interview was focused on ascertaining what teachers perceived social work to be. It was found from most of the interviews, that teachers had a rather limited or relatively narrow view of social work practice. Most teachers tended to focus on the traditional stereotypical view of social work practice, which included some of the following statements:

"Social work, well I see the word social I suppose, helping people socialise and deal with social problems" (Interviewee Three).

"Basically social worker can help use and out kids deal with social problems" (Interviewee One).

However, the two teachers who had been longer within the education system did show a considerable amount of insight into the profession, and demonstrated a rather diverse understanding of social workers. Most teachers within the interviews seemed to find it easier to explain what social work practice would look like within the school, instead of what they thought social work was at a more general level.

Teachers Perceptions of a School Social Workers Role

During all of the interviews, teachers were constantly identifying and describing what they thought the social workers role should be within the school. Following is a list of common themes that all teachers mentioned within the interviews in relation to how they viewed the role of a social worker, and what qualities and tasks they should be doing within the school.

1. Develop a strong rapport with students and be identifiable within the school.
2. Advocate and mediate with students, staff and outside agencies.
3. Have an extensive knowledge of resources available to parents and students and know how to access these resources.
4. Provide supervision to pastoral carer's.
5. Be approachable and available to students and staff at all times.
6. Educate parents.
7. Liaison with staff, students and outside agencies.
8. Take part in policy formation with regard to pastoral care.
9. Practice using generic based social work skills.

From this list there is a considerable amount of information suggested by teachers, and at one point an overwhelming response to what teachers perceive the role of social work to be. From the list of information collected, it is possible to see that teachers do understand several dimensions of what social work and what it looks like in practice, however they seem to view it as being

functional, which misinterprets that social work has multiple layers of complexity and diversity. They also do not identify social workers role in policy, community based issues, service development, political activism and so on. Some of these points within the list will be discussed at length within this section, however other points that seem somewhat self-explanatory will not be covered.

Availability of Professional Staff in Schools

From the interviews it was demonstrated that there was a strong consensus that social workers should be located permanently within the school. Some teachers even suggested that it should be compulsory. They felt a social worker was needed within the school to deal with some of the more extreme or complex issues that students are presenting with. This issue was a critical issue for all of the teacher's as within there current pastoral care arrangements the school psychologist is only available two or three days a week. It was suggested that if a worker was permanently on-site they could provide consistent support and build strong relationships with students and staff. It was highlighted that the social worker needed to be an integral part of the school and not a 'blow-in', who is only available two or three days a week. They needed to be part of the school community. Many of the teachers felt that students needed to know and trust the person before they will disclose any of their problems. If the worker was here on a temporary basis they would not be able to develop these connections.

Crisis Intervention in Schools

Another issue that is closely linked to the availability of the social worker within the school was students problems normally need on the spot crisis intervention, and this would not be possible if the worker was only at the school temporarily. One teacher suggested that issues in relation to student's needs or problems unravel everyday and on the spot assistance is needed. At this point in time no professional is available at the school, and the pastoral

carers are being left to deal with these students. Lisa's demonstrates this point within her interview, by stating that:

"Some of these things that students present with are crisis and we need someone here basically all the time, like some of the things we deal with A we are not trained to deal with or B we don't have the resources in terms of time to give them in terms of what they deserve and our kids are more important than that" (Interviewee One).

This is not only an issue of availability of the worker, but one which entails issues related to resources, management, politics and funding.

Location of Social Work in Pastoral Care Systems

Another prominent theme among all the teachers' interviews was that the social worker should be located within the current pastoral care structures. Teachers felt that all professionals within the school should be located within the same area. This would give students more opportunity to choose whom they felt comfortable working with. However, they suggested that the social worker not only needed to be permanently located within the school, but also considered an integral component in relation to the functioning of the school community. It was suggested that if a collaborative arrangement was adopted it would increase communication between all professionals and reduce any stigma attached to students accessing services within the school. Most teachers felt that a collaborative approach was needed between all school professionals, and that the school should move away from the traditional specialist model and be more flexible and available to students.

Teachers Perceptions of Social Workers in Schools

During most of the interviews the teachers explored some of the advantages and disadvantages of having a social worker within the school. Some of the advantages highlighted included decreasing the workload on pastoral care teachers and therefore increasing the popularity of these positions. For example, John stated that:

“It’s not a popular job, like people aren’t crying out to do it and I think part of that is they know they are going to get bound up with the behaviour and socialisation problems that generally the year eight, nine and ten’s have” (Interviewee Three).

Other advantages identified were that pastoral carers could focus on other tasks, such as positive reinforcement, rewards for the middle row students and be more available to parents and students. It would also be another knowledge source in the school that parents, students and teachers could access.

It was also highlighted that one of the advantages of having a social worker at the school would mean pastoral carers could take on a more preventative approach to working with students. It was suggested by the teachers, that currently, the school is being reactive in its approach when working with students and needed to focus on taking a more proactive approach. However, for this to be possible, teachers, administration, other professionals within the school and parents need to be involved in such an approach for it to be truly successful. All teachers identified that they felt there was only advantages of having a social worker in the school and could not identify any disadvantages.

Connecting Parents with Students Schooling

Another prominent theme identified in the interviews was that teachers expressed that there is a large gap at the moment between parents and the school, and they felt that a social worker could help them to increase parent involvement within the school. It was suggested that parenting nights were needed as parents were continually contacting the school and asking for advice regarding the parenting of their children. Many teachers suggested that parents need advice surrounding their child, and at this point in time, the only people available to give advice were pastoral care teachers. Therefore, they felt the social worker could be a central point of contact for parents needing help with general or more specific issues, which at this point in time the school was unable to provide.

Common Ground between Teachers and Social Workers

One of the topics of discussion within all the interviews was the identification of commonalities or similarities between the social work and teaching professions. Most teachers agreed there were commonalities, but that they had trouble identifying them. Some teachers suggested one of the most prominent commonalities between teachers and social workers was that they deal constantly with a diversity of people and focus on building positive connections and relationships. Within Sam's interview he suggested that there was an overlap between both of the professions, in relation to interpersonal skills, identifying abnormal behaviour, the ability to approach people and inquire about them and their state of mind. With Peter's interview he also suggested that the two professions were closely linked and suggested that:

“That there is an overlap, you know they say teacher are becoming social workers, but social workers in many ways are also teachers, its just teachers get to a point where they can't be a social worker and a social worker gets to a point where they can't be a teachers. The two are similar in my opinion they are both on the some sort of track” (Interviewee Four).

Even though there was not a considerable amount of information collected regarding the commonalities and similarities between the teaching and social work profession, I perceive this topic to be under explored. I feel that the more contact between teachers and social workers the more commonalities will be identified.

In relation to the issue of agency collaboration within the community, many teachers were perceived to have a rather negative perception of accessing other agencies. This seemed to be due to previous experiences when contacting the agencies for assistance and the lack of time teachers have to establish relationships. One of the other problems that teachers identified surrounding collaboration were: workers are constantly shifting and have heavy caseloads. Teachers can only develop relationships by phone contact, as their time is restricted with class schedules. They felt that it wasn't one of their major roles, however they recognised that they needed a point of contact within the agency

before any real assistance was given and felt that some agencies were uncooperative. Most teachers felt that the idea of agency collaboration was workable, however they believe the best outcome would be for a professional to be located on-site.

The Future of Pastoral Care in Schools

After the interview was completed, I asked each teacher where he or she thought the future of pastoral care in secondary school is heading? Most teachers felt that the needs of students are increasing and there are going to be more issues and complex problems coming their way. But the extent to which they handle these issues will depend on the allocation of resources. One teacher recommended that the school should move back to a vertical pastoral care structure, because teachers then would only have one fifth of each year group and be able to help one another better. However Peter suggested that he felt the situation was only going to become worse before it begins to improve:

*“Well I wish it was a really rosy future and I would like to think it is. However I tend to think though you need a major incident that triggers it off and I hate to say this but I felt that the incident that will trigger it off will be some form of American copy violence and shooting, killing type situation. Then everyone will step back and look at things and say hey we need some social workers in our schools. I would much prefer they looked at the future and thought we don't want this to happen, so why don't we do something about it”
(Interviewee Four).*

There was a large amount of information collected during the four interviews, however unfortunately I have only been able to explore the prominent themes.

CHAPTER FIVE

A REFLECTION ON THE INQUIRY PROCESS

Chapter Introduction

Within the chapter I intend to draw out several themes about pastoral care and the implications this has for teachers in pastoral care roles and social workers working together in conjunction with schools. I want to focus specifically on the possibility and desirability of developing professional partnerships between teachers and social workers under the umbrella of pastoral care. I intend to use a critical analysis as with other chapters and explore the implications of representing teachers' experiences and my own biases as a researcher, by posing questions and making some tentative suggestions for further fruitful bases for cross professional conversations.

The foundation of this inquiry has been specifically focused on the representation of teachers' experiences of their pastoral care roles. The teachers' interviews are grounded in their everyday lives as it is practiced within the school (Stanley & Wise, 1993). This study highlight that teachers continually struggle against political, social, economic agendas in high schools to provide students with the best possible level of care. This inquiry has been the first initial step to developing an understanding the worldview of pastoral care teachers, which has alerted me to the dialectical relationship between the social structural constraints on human actors and the relative autonomy of human agency (Thorne-Beckerman, 1999).

Pastoral Care in Secondary Schools

Pastoral care is an ever-changing element of secondary education. Historically, it has been concerned with the issues of discipline, administration and social control within the school environment (Dooley, 1978, Best, Jarvis & Ribbin, 1977). In recent times it has become a core element in schools in relation to, not only the schools ethos, but also the education of the whole student as a learner, both academically and socially. From this study and my placement experiences it has been recognised that teachers in pastoral care positions work with limited resources, their role is at times undervalued, ill defined within the

school context, lacked professional boundaries, and there is limited opportunities for professional development and training.

After examining the literature and the results obtained from this study, I found it possible to identify several shifts that I believe to be occurring in the area of pastoral care. In listing these movements, I realise each needs arguing out in detail, however I cannot address each point separately. But what I really want to demonstrate is that a shift is occurring in pastoral cares focus and function within schools. These movements include pastoral care moving:

1. From being reactive to proactive;
2. From the curriculum being disregarded to being considered part of its development;
3. From a disciplinary role to being development focused;
4. From being unrecognized to being recognized as part of student educational needs;
5. From dealing with students on an individual bases to a whole year group approach;
6. From dealing with difficult and disruptive students to the entitlement of all;
7. From being individually based within the school to include other professionals and agencies.

Of course these changes in some of the seven identified areas are disjointed however, I believe that the practice of pastoral care is in a time of transition, which can be linked to the changing social and broader conservative political climate that students are now experiencing. Out of these identified shifts in pastoral care, I suggest that schools need to focus on not only the delivery of pastoral care but also on the schools purpose and aims of their pastoral systems. Pastoral care has so much to offer schools, students and teachers yet it

is not being recognized as a valid and important part of students schooling²³ (Courtman, 1996, Allder, 1992, Best, 1999a).

One of the central aims of this inquiry was to explore teachers' perceptions and understandings of teacher's pastoral care roles. The results obtained from this inquiry indicate that at a practice based level, teachers understand their pastoral care role to entail working with students in a caring relationship by monitoring their academic and social progress and assisting them to meet their full potential within their schooling. The inquiry confirms that teachers' interpretations of the phenomena of pastoral care are similar yet how they interpret and enact this role in practice is slightly different. Teachers use their own professional discretion as a source of informal power (Rees, 1991), wherein teachers negotiate tensions, pressures and contractions between care and control. This suggests that teachers find their own meaning and enact it in their own individual way (Foucault, 1980; Sarantakos, 1993), which is supported by a constructivist worldview. However, this involves teachers being able to hold a tension between their role as a carer and as a regulator of control within schools, which will be discussed at length later within this chapter.

After examining the research objectives that were directed at exploring teachers' perceptions and understandings of pastoral care it is possible to raise several critical questions that derive from this inquiry, these include:

- Is pastoral care serving as a buffer against the re-structuring of education along managerialist lines (Smyth, 2001)?
- Are teachers wearing the effects of knowledge and power contradictions not 'managed' elsewhere. E.g. shrinking resources and rising demands?
- Are teachers left to do the emotional work of an organisation that is increasingly instrumentalist in its policies and mandates?

²³ However, at this point in time I am unable to elaborate on the importance of pastoral care systems in secondary schooling and my contribution as a social worker in this regard.

- Are the needs of students being met under the current system within the school?
- Has the lack of adequate guidelines, policies and rules governing pastoral care effected teacher's intervention and availability with students?
- Who has the resources/power/resistance in these situations?

Social Work within a Secondary School Environment

There is a need given the immense personal and social pressures on young people, to have properly trained and qualified people who can act as a support for already existing pastoral systems in schools. From the results obtained in teacher's interviews it is possible to conclude that there has been a limited amount of contact between teachers and social workers. It was identified by two of the teachers involved in the research that, this was their first encounter with a social worker. I believe that this inquiry has provided a model for the beginning dialogue between these two professions, but has not gone far enough to include the voices of other social workers. I feel that there is an opportunity for developing professional relationships that could be productive for both professionals. In future developments regarding this area of research I see the possibility of co-operative inquiry (Reason, 1988, Heron, 1996) as a meeting point where both professionals can talk about shared work interests and concerns. Heron (1996) suggests this method emphasis the involvement and the participation of both the researcher/s and 'participants' in political (planning and decision making) and epistemic activities (experiences and actions). This method enhances the level of participation between professionals, focus on the phases of action – reflection – action, places attention to validity, and is based on a 'radical epistemological' approach (Heron, 1996).

The Beginning of a Connection

This inquiry has been the starting point for beginning a conversation between teachers and social workers. As previously discussed throughout the study I identified during my placement experiences the opportunity for social workers

and teachers to have more contact when working within the school or in conjunction with human service organisations. This research was aimed specifically at exploring the opportunity for these two professional groups to have continual contact and identifying whether there was a common ground between these professionals. I wanted to focus on developing collaborative partnerships between teachers and social workers, as I believe that we will eventually be involved on a regular basis when dealing with some students' issues in schools. As a professional I believe if we work together it will give professionals the opportunity to deal with more severe complex problems (cases) than we could work singly. When working collaboratively it is possible to apply a wider range of appropriate skills, preventative services, and communication is enhanced and therefore professional development and learning is promoted. However, I acknowledge that there is no doubt that the possibility of linking social workers and teachers as professionals is highly controversial and politicized.

After examining the research objectives the possibility of identifying common ground between the teaching and social work professions and how they can compliment one another when working collaboratively it is possible to raise several critical questions that derive from the completion of this inquiry. Some of the questions that I have identified and want to explore further include:

- Is my position as a researcher clouded by my own professionalism as a social worker?
- Who benefits from continual contact between teachers and social workers?
- Who is not being heard/silenced in this process?

Pastoral and Social Carers: Bureaucratic Contexts and Complex Work Demands

One of the objectives of this inquiry was to identify a common ground between teachers and social workers, which they could practice from when working together. From the results collected with regard to identifying common links between these two professions was minimal. However, as the researcher I feel

it is possible to identify some of the similarities between these two professions from my own experiences as a social worker when working within the school. Some of the areas of commonalties I identified included: relationship based (Hamblin, 1981), a need for reflective practice, a focus on helping or empowering individuals, networking with others to work effectively (Franklin & Streeter, 1995), working within powerful bureaucratic structures (Davis, 1976), practicing in a complex and demanding role (Allder, 1992), engaging in similar dilemmas and working with these tensions in practice. I believe that there are more similarities between the professions, however these were not identified due to the limited scope of the study. I believe if teachers and social workers had regular contact there would be a number of practice skills or knowledge that would be linked to their everyday practice with students in the school context. The value of these interviews has been to begin the process of identifying commonalties between the professionals and has allowed an opportunity for both professionals to explore each other's professional domain further.

Franklin and Streeter (1995) suggest that we are at a point where the scarcity of resources and funding is having a huge impact, both on practitioners within their organisations and on their relationships with workers in other agencies. For example, Davis (1976) suggests that pastoral care staff in schools are usually virtually doing two jobs simultaneously, since they can be relieved of only a small part of their teaching responsibilities but must be available continuously to counsel and discipline large numbers of students. Similarly, from my own placement experiences, I discovered that social workers are also invariably working with huge caseloads, which include a wide variety of clients, and call repeatedly for crucial decisions on priorities. I feel that both professional groups acknowledge privately that they cannot do their job properly that only more staff and money would permit them to meet the reasonable expectations of outsiders who judge their service simply by its stated aims and standards. Therefore, it is possible to identify that both teachers in pastoral care roles and social workers have highly demanding jobs, which are at times under funded and resourced which puts extreme amounts of pressures over people employed in organisations. Therefore, as these

professionals work in similar bureaucratic structures, they are likely to have very similar everyday organisational experiences, which could be shared with one another, if contact between the two professions was increased (Davis, 1976).

After identifying some of the similarities between teachers and social workers in their practice and work environments, it is possible to identify several critical questions with regard to collaborative practice between teachers and social workers, these include:

- Does the current complex work demands of teachers and social workers impact on the services offer to their clients?
- Could conversations between these professionals act as a support network in collaborative practice when working with schools?
- What would these conversations between teachers and social workers achieve?
- Would continual conversations challenge both professionals' practice within the school context?
- Would collaboration between teachers and social workers in schools reduce the complexity and demands on one another roles?

A Troubling Shared Professional Dilemma

From the completion of this inquiry I feel that it is possible to identify parallels between teachers experiences and my own as a social worker that involves a similar core professional dilemma, which centers on the issues of care and control. The care/control dilemma has been long-standing point of debate and perhaps of stress for both social workers and teachers (Loxley, 1997, Davis, 1998). It is possible to identify that many social work positions as with teacher's pastoral care roles require these professionals to take on an authority role. It would seem that currently the view is that social workers and teachers are increasingly expected to be engaged in social control to the detriment of their caring role (Davis, 1998). Many contradictions can arise from this dual

responsibility. However, when we examine caring and control from a critical viewpoint we need to understand when caring is appropriate and when it is more appropriate to centre on the rights and empowerment of an individual as with the function of control (Lather, 1986). Thompson (1998) suggests adopting a 'caring' approach means much more than simply providing care in an unthinking uncritical way. He suggests that it is not a morally neutral activity. At times it can be highly beneficial and greatly appreciated by the individual concerned and at other times, it be harmful or disempowering. It is crucial that we recognise teachers are constrained by their social context, while at the same time agendas are actively shaping and resisting this same context, which teachers need to be engaged with for their own survival and where they can for the good of students. It is a testament to teachers that they achieve as much as they do.

From the viewpoint of an approach following Foucault (1980) care and control are much a side of the same coin. He suggests that they are both modes of social regulation, both techniques for the ordering and disciplining of individual (Tierney & Lincoln, 1997). Therefore, when we examine the function of caring in the organizational context of these two professions (school, statutory agency), it is possible to suggest that the ethos of such organisations involved a complex interplay between care and empowerment. Reed's (1992) suggests that enshrined within all work organisations there lies a 'dialectic of control'; that is, a dynamic process of struggle between contending groups to secure and command the conditions through which collective action is made possible (cited in Thompson, 1998). It is the dynamic process which underlies changing the balance of power experienced in all complex organizations and the crucial effect it has on the capacity to shape and reshape the structures and practices through which domination is simultaneously protected and challenged at the level of routine everyday life or at the level of strategic decision-making and corporate governance (Thompson, 1998 p. 184). Ife (1997) suggests this distinction between care and control is at odds with the idea of practice under a critical model as the power relationship effectively prevents the establishment of a mutually respecting dialogical relationship. Therefore, the challenge for both social workers and teachers is whether it is

possible to introduce at least some form of critical practice when engaging in relationships with students. However, there is no easy answer to this dilemma and I believe it will continue to be a source of tension for both professionals.

After listening to teacher's own experiences and reading literature surrounding the topic of care and control within practice, I feel that it is possible to move beyond these initial discoveries to explore these issues further. The following questions demonstrate my thinking surrounding the situation and the movement forward.

- Would a connection between teachers and social workers alter the current situation?
- Will schools make changes, and if not what are the political/social/economic factors are stopping this from occurring?
- Are teachers and social workers experienced affected by similar structural and personal issues in their work contexts?

A Critical Analysis

One of the prime focuses of this inquiry has been to gain a legitimate position as a researcher to conduct the research within the school and be able to comment on this situation. I have grounded myself within my own professional experiences of working within the school and have tried to understand and represent pastoral care teacher's points of view in this inquiry. This at times has been challenging with being aware of my own personal agendas within the research and any confrontational issues between teachers points of view and my own as a social worker. I am aware of complexity involved in representing (Tierney & Lincoln, 1997) the participants and have used what Denzin & Lincoln (2000) call a self-conscious writing approach. I have also attempting to address this issue by treating participants as active 'subjects', not objects by including them in an ongoing conversation, by respecting previously formed relationships and including them in the process of collaborating and reporting the results (Stanley & Wise, 1990). I have found locating this inquiry within a critical framework has been crucial within this process as it encourages self-

criticism and a continuing critique through a praxis method (Lather, 1986).

This process has allowed myself as the researcher a powerful opportunity to the extent that the research process has aided in a deeper understanding of pastoral care teacher's situation and status in schools. It has also allowed me to raise serious questions about the role of school in the social and cultural reproduction of social class, gender roles and racial and ethnic prejudice.

Within this inquiry, I have endorsed a critical framework, to examine the situation of teachers within the school context, and the issues that are impede on their role. Lather (1986) suggests that the adoption of a critical approach call for empowering approaches to research whereby both the researcher and the researched become involved in the research design, which I believe this inquiry lacked with regard to the method chosen. These approaches recognise that an emancipated society is one in which human beings actively control their own destinies, through a heightened understanding of the circumstance in which they live. As a researcher I have taken action in the interests of the pastoral care teachers within this school, who I believe are silenced within school and education systems. I have used the teacher's stories as a way to speak about issues of power and inequality within the schooling system. I believe that this research can be used to help the teachers understand and facilitate in the process of change. I believe this study has created a beginning connection for mutual dialogue between teachers and social workers, which could be developed and used to promote the establishment of procedures for communication and action among professionals both in and out of the school environment.

In adopting a critical approach this has given myself the opportunity to examine both the analysis from a micro or individual level to participating in a larger critical dialogue. Pignatelli (1998) suggests critical ethnography lies principally in its ability to make concrete the particular manifestation of marginalised cultures located in a broader sociopolitical framework. This means that research must also seek to understand how macro structures affect the worldview of the acting subjects (teachers), setting limits and conditions

upon individuals experienced in such micro situations. Working between these two levels has been challenging and at times confusing. I have continually tried throughout this inquiry to move the individual circumstances of teachers' experiences from a personal level to be redefined as social problems that requires political, social and economical solutions. This has also played at part in the analysis of schools in general as they should be seen as constituent parts of wider social arrangements. This recognizes that the 'outside forces' are an integral part of the construction and constitution of the 'inside' (Anderson, 1989). A stronger, explicit focus on power within the interviews may have enacted a more substantial critical analysis by focusing on questions directed towards power.

Finding a Way Forward

Even though the results collected do not extend on previous findings within the literature I still feel that teachers and social workers would benefit greatly from regular meetings where each could discuss their viewpoint of the others profession in an attempt to develop mutual respect between both professions. I think these meetings could be used for extending understandings and developing the links essential for effective action in pastoral care systems. I feel that with continual contact any barriers to co-operation that may arise between teachers and social workers could be removed by mutual dialogue to promote the establishment of procedures for communication and action. I believe relations between different 'helping' organisations need and deserve a much more careful analysis and not only as an inter-organizational, but also as an inter-personal and an inter-professional phenomena. I feel as collective teachers and social workers or other professionals within the school have the power to create an environment within which standards of excellence are actively pursued and healthy social and emotional development is encouraged. To achieve such a task professionals in contact with the school need to not only understand the hidden processes and latent meanings in the school's interaction patterns but also be part of the whole school body.

Conclusion

Pastoral care is such an important and valid activity within secondary schooling and the need to provide pastoral care in schools is as great as ever, yet some schools continue to cut down tutorial, personal-social education and the number of pastoral staff employed (Best, Lang, Lodge & Watkins, 1995). I believe that pastoral care is essential for the development of the student's education as it allows them the opportunity to develop themselves both academically and socially. Within a rapidly changing social environment I believe that it is imperative that schools need a comprehensive and well-developed pastoral care system to be prepared for the expected needs of student relating to their individual and personal growth. At this point in time I feel traditional systems of pastoral care in secondary schools need to be adapted and changed to account for new situations students are confronting (Best et. al, 1995). However, I do acknowledge that schools cannot rely on pastoral care systems to answer every individual student's immediate needs.

It has been identified within this inquiry that pastoral care teachers are under an enormous amount of pressure to meet the needs of students with severe behavioural, personal and family issues. It has also been recognized that schools are having to play a major role in student's development as supports such as the family unit and the local community, are decreasing. Ideally, schools need to be aware of the serious problems that have arisen in schools and identify that teachers in pastoral care positions are under considerable amounts of pressure and resources within this area of schooling are limited. Schools need to clarify the role of pastoral care teachers within their own systems to provide teachers with adequate guidelines and support within their practice. No one expects teachers to know how to deal with students apparent needs in relation to sociological and psychosocial problems but what this study does identify is that professionals in and out of schools, welfare agencies and organizations need to become an integral part of teachers networks, interventions and supports for these students.

What concerns me is schools do not have the resources nor teachers either trained to deal with complex issues students are presenting within schools. Agencies within the community, employment services, educational institutions and health services need to work collaboratively within schools, so schools can offer more support to students who are in need. I believe that the area of pastoral care seems to be the most relevant access in school to carry out these services to children and their families as this area of schooling focuses specifically on student's welfare. This inquiry has been the beginning point of finding a way forward within this situation in schools by increasing the contact between teachers in pastoral care roles and social workers.

Appendix A

Detailed Description of the Structure and Purpose of the Year Centre

The Year Centre is designed to monitor student's academic progress and to provide pastoral care for the entire student body. This pastoral care structure has recently changed from a vertical (house) system, where students were divided into four colour factions, to a horizontal system, where students are divided into year groups. The Year Centre has a Coordinator, who is responsible for the overall running of the year groups, and works closely with each of the five Year Coordinators and Student Executive to deliver pastoral care to all students. The five Year Coordinators are each allocated a year group (8, 9, 10, 11 & 12) and are responsible for liaison between students, teachers and parents in all facets of the student's education. The Year Coordinators' role is to encourage students to achieve their academic potential, and promote a happy and healthy atmosphere in which to work.

The Year Centre was designed as a resource for students to provide access to their Year Coordinator, and gain support from teachers regarding academic or personal problems. Within this role, Year Coordinators duties include; identification of 'at risk' students, investigating of students progress, counselling students who may be experiencing difficulty with their school work, performing specific year roles, reporting to staff or parents on a students situation or progress, making parental contact between the school and the home and to provide recognition of the achievements of their year group. The form teachers duties are some what different in relation to pastoral care, and tended to be more at a organisational level, for example checking attendances, discussion of school rules, study techniques and homework programs and most importantly promoting the development of school ethos which is considered a fundamental component in relation to the delivery of pastoral care within the school. Carey (1993 a) suggests that school ethos is the lynch pin of any action a teacher or school takes on behalf of the student. Central to school ethos are issues such as support, approachable staff and pupil empowerment (Carey, 1993 a p. 18).

A similar structure as the Year Centre has also been adopted in other schools. Best's (1994) case study on teacher's supportive roles in secondary schools identified a similar pastoral care structure within a secondary school environment, referred to as the 'pastoral suite'. This pastoral structure was aimed at delivering pastoral care to all students, and bringing pastoral and support staff more closely together, as with the Year Centre. "It was hoped that closer physical proximity would encourage closer liaison, better communication and a greater consensus as to the purpose and practice amongst year coordinators and those providing special needs support" (Best, 1994 p. 176).

Although these structures have advantages for support staff, students and teachers, they can be identified as having several negative consequences for the delivery of pastoral care within the school environment. One of the major problems with this pastoral structure is that Year Coordinators are also

teachers in other subject departments, with offices in different buildings. Students at all times in the Year Centre or during class time cannot access them. This problem is no fault of the teachers, but it is a structural problem of this system that needs to be addressed. Appointing a full-time coordinator, who does not have teaching duties and is permanently located in the Year Centre, could compensate for this need. Another important point to consider is that this pastoral structure could act as a deterrent for students accessing the Year Coordinators, as they may feel uncomfortable approaching them in such a public space. However, this structure is extremely valid within the school system and I'm not recommending it be changed, I am just pointing to several issues that impede its delivery of pastoral care within the school environment.

Appendix B

Reflections of the Inquiry

The process of completing this honours thesis has been a learning opportunity of a lifetime. I have learnt so much about myself as a professional social worker and as a researcher. I have gained a considerable amount of knowledge both in my academic development and my articulation as a writer. However, even though I have gained many beneficial aspects I cannot say that the process has been easy. I have worked hard to produce this quality of presentation and at times it has been emotionally taxing. I have had a great amount of support from both my supervisor and my family, which has enable me to finish the research. Within this reflective journal I would like to take the time to explore the process of completing this paper and critically reflect on my own process as a social work researcher.

At times during I felt that the study was too big for an honours topic, which I believe related to an earlier process at the beginning of the study when I first set the boundaries surrounding this inquiry. I found it hard to narrow down the topic of the study and had to constantly refer to the research questions and objectives of the inquiry, which helped me to stay focused. During the process I read a large amount of literature that surrounded the research topic, and found it extremely hard to represent all the information that I had covered. I found it extremely difficult to remain in the required word count and had to continually remind myself that I was completing an honours paper and not masters. I also struggled with the notion of the researcher as hold power within the study and found it extremely hard to represent both my voice as the researcher and the voices of the teachers. I believe if the required word limit had a been larger I could have done more justice to the teachers stories.

In completing this inquiry I found that the method of interviews, which I had selected, was restrictive and found that I actually had more questions after the interviews than answers. I believe that conducting focus groups with teachers could have been beneficial which could have allowed school personal to be involved where I could have gained to different perspectives. However', I also felt that I would have been more appropriate to have several interviews within the teachers over a longer period of time. I felt the adopted method restricted the results that were obtained from the study. I also feel that the structure of the interviews should have been open-ended instead of semi-structured, which would have gained I believe a different set of results, however due to time restrictions this option it was not possible.

Another dilemma that I struggled with during completing this inquiry was the limited timeframe that I had to work in. I felt at times I was rushed and

that if I have had more time the work produced would have been of a higher quality. I think the timeframe effected the decision to adopt interviews, as the method would have been different.

I also found the research process to be not only an academic journey but also an emotional experience. At times I felt defensive of my research, however, I found in allowing many people to read my research as I proceeded I was able to obtain a variety of different perspectives which included social workers and teachers. This allowed me to position myself in the research and give adequate reasons why I had completed the research the way I have.

Being engaged in the research process has allowed me to discover my process as a writer and researcher. I was able to work in a collaborative approach with my supervisor, who taught me many things. I enjoyed the process of sharing my thoughts and learning how to structure them within an academic piece. I have gained an substantial amount of knowledge about schools, teachers in pastoral care roles and they way social work could be practiced within an school setting. However, I have also learnt what I can achieve as a person and the importance in believing in my own ability as a person and what I have to offer other professionals and what I can learn from them.

As a researcher I have gained an extensive amount of information in relation to working with participants and honouring them in the process. I have understood and experienced the process that involves completing research. I have made myself aware of the politics and stakeholders within research, and understand how one's research can become consumed with other agendas and my own. From using a critical analysis I have learnt to understand people and the research in both micro and macro levels, which is essential when practicing as a social worker. I have developed an understanding to see the issues from another person's shoes and try and understand what is happening for them. I believe that the research process has benefited myself as a researcher and as a professional social worker.

Appendix C

Understanding of Pastoral Care through a Model Schema

Best (1999 a) model of five pastoral tasks that pastoral care teachers engage in when working within the school. These include:

- *Reactive pastoral casework* undertaken on a one-to-one basis in response to the need of students with problems of a social, emotional, physical, behavioural, moral or spiritual basis;
- *Pro-active, preventative pastoral care*, often in the form of presentation or activities undertaken in tutor or form period and assemblies, which anticipate critical incidents' in students lives and are aimed at pre-empting the need for reactive casework;
- *Development of the pastoral curricula*, aimed at promoting personal, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and well-being of children through distinctive programs, tutorial work and cross-curricula activities;
- *The promotion and maintenance of an orderly and supportive environment* by building community within the school, through extra-curricular activities, the 'hidden curriculum' of supportive systems and positive relations between all member, and the promotion of a pervasive ethos of mutual care and concern;
- *The management and administration of pastoral care* in the form of planning, motivating, resourcing, monitoring, supporting, evaluating, encouraging and otherwise facilitating all the above.

Appendix D

School Letter

April 19, 2002

Newton Moore Senior High School
Hotchin Street, Bunbury
WA 6230
Phone: (08) 97958777

Dear Principal,

I am writing to your school regarding gaining permission to conduct research and collect data within your school for my Honours Thesis, which is part of my Bachelor of Social Work Course at Edith Cowan University. During the period between June and August last year I completed my third year social work practicum with, and in conjunction with the Year Centre Coordinators. The placement presented diverse and relevant learning experiences in relation to the nature of social work practice in schools. It allowed me to develop my professional practice framework within the school environment and my professional identity as a social worker. In addition it provided the opportunity to develop professional understandings of other professions, focusing mainly on teachers pastoral care roles within government secondary schools. During this period I had the opportunity of observing teachers in their pastoral care roles and developed good working relationships with the five Year Coordinators.

This study is designed to explore teacher's perceptions and understandings of their pastoral care role and how this role shapes their interactions with students in a secondary public school. The study assumes that teachers in pastoral care roles construct subjective meanings, motivations and interpretations, which they place on their actions. To gain an accurate understanding of the phenomena of pastoral care and how it is practiced in schools I need to seek an account of how teachers involved construe their own actions and those of students and other staff. The study also attempts to highlight and identify how the organizational context of the school affects teachers with pastoral care roles and discover how social work can complement this position within the school.

This research intends to clarify the teacher's role in relation to pastoral care within the school and contribute to building knowledge around the phenomena of pastoral care in the secondary schooling environment. The aim of the study is to highlight what pastoral care means for teachers and why it is needed in schools and to discover how teachers and social workers can work together in schools or within the community to find a common ground within pastoral care. What this study will be aimed at is highlighting teachers pastoral care roles and creating boundaries within this role and identifying how it could be

practiced using other professionals, such as social workers to complement the already existing pastoral structures in schools. Therefore, the research question for this particular study is as follows:

What are teacher's perceptions and understandings of their pastoral care role and how can teachers and social workers work together in schools to find a common ground of professional practice within pastoral care?

The objectives that hoped to be achieved throughout the research are:

1. To discover teacher's perceptions and understandings of their pastoral care role;
2. To structurally examine the organizational context of the school and education polices and how they impact on the delivery of pastoral care in schools; and
3. To continue the development of my own personal discourse and raise awareness of issues surrounding students and teachers regarding pastoral care in schools;
4. To discover a common ground between the teaching and social work professions and how they can compliment one another within the school environment.

During the period between August and late September 2001 I am requesting for five teachers with a specific pastoral care role (Year Coordinators) within the school to be involved in an interview. The interview will be aimed at gaining their perceptions and understandings of pastoral care and whether they believe that social workers and teachers could work together in schools to find a common ground within pastoral care structures. The interview format is a semi-structured interview that will be approximately between 30 – 45 minutes in length and organised at an appropriate time within school hours. The interview will be audio taped, with the participant's permission and informed consent gained from all the teachers involved in the study. As the interview is semi-structured there will be prompts and questions relating to the research, which I have included. Please feel free to add any input into the research, as it would be openly welcomed.

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality in relation to the school and participating teachers, pseudonyms names will be adopted throughout the data analysis and final completion of the thesis. Ethics clearance has been gained from the Edith Cowan University Ethics Board and it has been anticipated that there are no perceived risks to the participants and the school being involved in this study. After the data has been collected and collaborated I would invite these teachers to view the transcripts, results of the research and the final thesis before submission. I value the participants and schools contribution to the research study and would be more than happy to be involved in a debriefing with the participants and school administration after the data has been analysed. I realise that the schools and the participant's contribution to the research is invaluable.

If you want further information about the study please do not hesitate to contact myself on (08) 97916784 or my Supervisor, Dyann Ross (08) 97807743 or (08) 97218292, Social Work Lecturer at Edith Cowan University. If I do not hear from you within the week I will contact you by phone at the school to discuss the possibility of conducting the research within the school.

Yours Sincerely,

Kirsty Shalders

Appendix E

Participant Letter

April 19, 2002

Newton Moore Senior High School
Hotchin Street, Bunbury
WA 6230
Phone: (08) 97958777

Dear Participant,

I am writing this letter to you requesting for your participation in my Honours Thesis, which is part of my Bachelor of Social Work course at Edith Cowan University Bunbury. During the period between August and June last year I completed my third year social work practicum with,, and in conjunction with you, the Year Coordinators. The placement presented diverse and relevant learning experiences in relation to the nature of social work practice in schools. It allowed me to develop my professional practice framework within the school environment and my professional identity as a social worker. In addition it provided the opportunity to develop professional understandings of other professions, focusing mainly on teachers pastoral care roles within government secondary schools.

During this period I had several conversations with yourselves, the Year Coordinators regarding your role in the school as pastoral carers and how social workers could work with teachers in pastoral care roles to complement pastoral care in secondary schools. Many of the conversations were also around the role definition, role expansion of pastoral care and the how the lack of resources, funding and time were a major issues in relation to how this role could be practiced in schools. I believe that there is an opportunity for teachers and social workers to work together in schools or in conjunction with social service agencies to find a common ground within pastoral care and strive towards the common goal of supporting students within their secondary schooling.

After the placement I have had several thoughts and questions surrounding pastoral care in schools and would like to continue those conversations with you, the Year Coordinators. My Honours Thesis is focused on teacher's perceptions and understanding of their pastoral care role and whether they see there is a role for social workers in relation to pastoral care in schools. This study assumes that teachers in pastoral care roles construct subjective meanings, motivations and interpretations, which they place on their actions.

To gain an accurate understanding of the phenomena of pastoral care and how it is practiced in schools I need to seek an account of how teachers involved construe their own actions and those of students and other staff. The study also attempts to highlight and identify how the organizational context of the school affects teachers in pastoral care roles and discover how social work practice can complement this position within the school.

Research Design

This research intends to clarify the teacher's role in relation to pastoral care within the school and contribute to building knowledge around the phenomena of pastoral care in the secondary schooling environment. The aim of the study is to highlight what pastoral care means for teachers and why it is needed in schools and to discover how teachers and social workers together in schools or within the community can find a common ground within pastoral care. Therefore, the research question for this particular study is as follows:

What are teacher's perceptions and understandings of their pastoral care role and how can teachers and social workers work together in schools to find a common ground of professional practice within pastoral care?

The objectives that I hope to achieve through the research are:

1. To discover teacher's perceptions and understandings of their pastoral care role;
2. To structurally examine the organizational context of the school and education policies and how they impact on the delivery of pastoral care in schools;
3. To continue the development of my own professional discourse and raise awareness of issues surrounding students and teachers regarding pastoral care in schools; and
4. To discover a common ground between the teaching and social work professions and how they can compliment one another within the school environment.

During the period between August and early September 2001 I will need several teachers with a specific pastoral care role within their school to each be involved in an interview. The interview format is a semi-structured interview that will be approximately between 30 – 45 minutes in length and organized at an appropriate time within school hours. The interview will be audio taped, with participant's permission and informed consent will be gained before interviewing can continue. I realise the sensitivity of the information recorded during the interviews and on the transcripts and I assure you that this information will be destroyed once the data has been analysed and correlated. As the interview is semi-structured there will be prompts and some questions (included with letter) relating to the research, which will direct some parts of the interview. I have additional information available regarding my position in relation to the research and this is available to you before you make a decision regarding your participation in the research or before the interviews commence.

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality in relation to participants and the school, pseudonym names will be adopted throughout the data analysis and final completion of the thesis. Ethics clearance has been gained from the Edith Cowan University Ethics Board Committee and it has been anticipated that there are no perceived risks to the participants and the school being involved in this study. After the data has been collected and correlated I would like to invite the participating teachers to view the transcripts, results of the research and the final thesis before submission. I value the teachers involved in the interviews and schools contribution to the research study and would be more than happy to be involved in a debriefing with the participants and school administration after the data has been analysed. Your participation within the study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any point in time during the research. I realise that the schools and the participant's contribution to the research is invaluable.

If you want further information about the study please do not hesitate to contact myself on (08) 97916784 or my Supervisor, Dyann Ross (08) 97807743, Social Work Lecturer at Edith Cowan University. I'm hoping you're interested in being part of my research. If I don't hear from you by the 14th of August, I'll be at the school between the 15th August and early September and will drop in or contact you by phone at the school.

Yours Sincerely,

Kirsty Shalders

Appendix F:
Informed Consent Form

***A Study in Teacher's Perceptions and Understandings of their
Pastoral Care Role and how Social Workers can Work along side
Pastoral Care Teachers within Secondary Schools***

I _____ have read the information above/letter (or, have been informed about all aspects of the above research project) and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at any time.

I am also aware that the interviews are going to be audio taped.

I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published provided I am not identifiable.

Signature _____

Date: _____

The Interview
between _____ [participant] and
Kirsty Shalders [interviewer] was conducted on
_____ 2001 at
_____ am/pm.

Appendix G:

Discussion paper in relation to the following research study

A study in Teacher's Perceptions and Understandings of their Pastoral Care Role and an exploration of how Social Workers can Work along side Pastoral Care Teachers within Secondary Schools

The following discussion highlights some of the issues I would like to discuss with you during the interviews and shows my positioning surrounding issues relating to pastoral care in schools. I would also like to invite you to have input in the discussion topics in the interview and any other ideas that you may have surrounding the following information.

My Ideological Positioning

I believe that school environment should enhance and promote opportunities for personal development and exploration, acceptance and valuing of social and cultural diversity, positive peer relationships, self-worth, social competency, coping skills and resilience, which should be considered to be central components of pastoral care the development of the whole student. Pastoral care should be person centred and concerned with physical, emotional and social aspects of students' well being. Schools need to focus on building relationships with and between students and teachers, which will enhances students interpersonal and communication skills. Pastoral care in schools should provide opportunities for students to achieve an understanding of themselves and a realisation of their potential.

Teacher and School Interventions

Best's (1994) study found that teachers, pupils and school staff are faced with complex and often distressing causes to which they are being expected to respond in a supportive and professional way (p. 177). When examining the research surrounding teachers pastoral care roles, it has been suggested that some teachers felt least able to intervene in students problems that were surrounded child/sexual abuse, major problems with parents, students involved with drugs and alcohol abuse, divorce and family substance abuse. These problems are obviously well outside the resources, time and energy, as well as training, of an average teacher or even teachers with a pastoral care role in schools. Yet it would be difficult for teachers to close their eyes to such difficulties in individuals with whom they are confronted with day after day. It has also been demonstrated within the literature that many schools don't have the availability of other professionals within the school environment, and they are not always easily accessible when issues arise with students during school hours. Pitcher and Poland (1992) suggest that without a satisfactory level of support staff or teachers with training in particular issues that adolescence experience these problems and crisis interventions in schools without help will lead not only to an impediment to student's progress but also to teacher burnout and ultimate loss of teacher staff.

Expectations on School to Provide Pastoral Care

Due to the decline in the importance and authority of the family and the problems students are now presenting with, schools and teachers have had to take on a number of functions that go beyond their teaching task. The teachers' role has expanded; they are not just responsible for the academic development of pupils they are also expected to play a wider role encompassing pupils' psychosocial needs (Cleave, Carey, Norris, Sloper, While & Charlton, 1997). Over time, schools are being expected to take on more casework with young people and therefore an extension of teacher's pastoral care role within the school environment is occurring.

During my placement I observed that teachers were being expected to deal with a wide variety of problems that young people are facing. In today's society, with television and the print media, high pressures are placed on adolescent in terms of socioeconomic expectations. It can be suggested that young people are under pressure in a society, which has rapidly changing customs and values. Adolescence is a time of change where the young person is facing new experiences and they need additional support during this period which pastoral carers are being required to offer.

Current literature suggests that the variety and complexity of the problems encountered in education setting is increasingly considerably. It has even been suggested that school has become potential intervention site for almost every social problem-affecting children. Problems such as suicidal ideation, depression, drug and alcohol involvement, or psychiatric treatment are some of the students are now displaying in schools. I was involved with the RAP Program last year in the school which highlighted that several students, especially females were not coping with stresses, problems, in their schooling and home life and needed additional support within the school environment. It was identified that several students were identified as having issues relating to their mental health and self-concept. Research has shown that there has been a dramatic rise in the number of severely and profoundly depressed high school students, amounting to between 6% and 8% of high schools students at any point in time (Frymier, 1988 p. 90).

As the need is increasing for teachers to become involved in crisis situation and pupil's personal problems, there needs to be adequate training and skills and knowledge to serve this need. More attention needs to be given to the apparent gap that has develop between the training and performance expectations of teachers, regarding their pastoral care roles. On many occasions teachers with pastoral care roles will often become involved in many circumstances with students, which involves immediate intervention. Obviously, pastoral care staff need training if they are to help students and parents satisfactory and need to be recognised as experts in their field. Allder (1992) suggests that there seems to be a widely held belief that anyone who has taught for more than a certain number of years, who has had a variety of different responsibilities, and who has perhaps engaged in bringing up a family, can 'do' pastoral work. It is obviously open to debate whether or not educational establishments as a whole recognize the existence of expertise in pastoral work and the pastoral curricula in schooling (Allder, 1992 p. 4). The literature surrounding teacher pastoral care roles has revealed that this role is undervalued, under resourced, ill-defined in schools and no formal training is needed or provided for these positions. Marland (1989 a) suggests that essentially we have a profession untrained for its central daily tutoring task. He also suggests that there are few other aspects of the work of secondary schools or of other educational institutions for which so little training is available.

Conclusions

Most teachers involved in secondary schooling seem willing to take on the complex set of academic, disciplinary and welfare responsibilities, which make up the provision of institutionalized pastoral care (Ribbins & Ribbins, 1983). But as it has earlier been demonstrated that many teachers do this with some anxiety that they lack both the essential knowledge and the necessary interpersonal skills to carry out these responsibilities. What this study will be aimed at is highlighting teachers pastoral care roles and creating some boundaries within the role and identifying how it could be practiced using other professionals, such as social workers to complement already existing pastoral structures in schools. Pastoral care is such an important and valid activity within secondary schooling even more so now within the changing social environment we live in today and students need to have support during their secondary schooling. Students need to be able to develop themselves both academically and socially, which is the central purpose of pastoral care in schools. "If schools are busily galloping off in one direction, employment services in

another, health services in another and social work organisations in another, and families in yet another, there must be a complex social, psychological and organisational problem to be studied” (Rose & Marshall, 1974 p. 2). Agencies within the community, employment services and health services need to work collaboratively with schools so teachers can offer their students more support within their schooling and the area of pastoral care seems to be the most relevant and appropriate access in schools to carry out these services.

I hope the information provided has given you more understanding in relation to my research topic and myself as the researcher. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss some of the issues that have been highlighted within this paper.

Yours Sincerely

Kirsty R. Shalders

Appendix H: Interview Format

A study in Teacher's Perceptions and Understandings of their Pastoral Care Role and an exploration of how Social Workers can Work along side Pastoral Care Teachers within a Rural Government Secondary School

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Introductions:

- Sign informed consent
- Audio taped
- Questions
- Time constrains

Demographics:

Gender: Male Female

How long in teaching profession (teaching experience):

How long in a pastoral care position: _____

How long in the secondary school system: _____

First Part of Interview:

- Perception of pastoral care role - (elements or components, What do they understand this role to be and what does it entail?).
- Boundaries and guidelines of pastoral care role (Dealing with students personal and family issues).
- Needs and support for role – support networks (other teachers, other pastoral care teachers, support staff, caring for the carer)
- Training in pastoral care role (more-less, university level, in-service, availability, adequate training, gap between training and performance expectations)
- How do they practice their pastoral care role, give examples. (Identify case examples that you felt were beyond this role or you felt you did not have the expertise to handle and examples of what you did or what worked well).
- Evolution of the role in schools – changes in responsibilities etc.
- Recognition of role.

Second Part of Interview:

- How do pastoral teachers perceive and understand what social work is?
- Do you see a role for social workers in schools? (Need for additional support staff for students)
- Do you believe that there is an opportunity for social workers to be included within current pastoral care structures, if so what could this look like?
- Do you believe there is an overlap in knowledge between teaching and social work?
- Could we as professionals learn from one another and work in conjunction to improve students schooling opportunities?
- Can you see an opportunity for interagency collaboration with agencies, community and schools? (Explore possibilities for relationships with schools)

- Future of pastoral care
- Limited interprofessional understandings and conversations between teachers and social workers in schools (This is my assumption or hunch of what is happening).

Appendix: I

Interview Procedure

The participating school within the research was firstly sent a letter detailing the research, and asking specifically if the research could be conducted within the school. This was addressed to the Principal who had the overall decision whether the research could be conducted within the school (Refer to Appendix D). After the Principal had given permission to proceed with the research, separate letters (Refer to Appendix E) were sent out to each of the participants to ask whether they would be interested in participating within the research. It was explained that the interview would focus on their pastoral care role, and how the social workers could be integrated into the school within pastoral care structures. The participants were sent out the interview format prior to the interviews commencing, to ease any anxieties concerning the topics that were most likely to be discussed. A discussion paper was also (Refer to Appendix G) available to all participants who wanted a more detailed account of the literature surrounding the research topic. After four teachers agreed to be involved in the study, interview times were arranged with each of the teachers.

The process undertaken in the interviews included firstly, introductions, explaining the process or outline of the interview, signing of informed consent forms, and the collection of demographics or teaching experience details and any questions that were asked prior to commencement. Each interview was then carried out with all participants and ended with discussions about any concerns with regard to the research topic.

Each interview was then transcribed and returned to each participant to check that the information collected was correct and to check whether any changes needed to be made to the transcripts. All participants were also given a thank you letter (Refer to Appendix J & K) for their participation within the study, and details were given in relation to the viewing of the final copy of the thesis.

Appendix J:

Thankyou Letter to the School

April 19, 2002

Newton Moore Senior High School
Hotchin Street, Bunbury
WA 6230
Phone: (08) 97958777

Dear Principal,

I am writing this letter to thank you for the schools participation in the interviews that were conducted in conjunction with my Honours Thesis. The school has been extremely accommodating and supportive, I really appreciate your input in the research and I have once again thoroughly enjoyed working with the pastoral care team within the school. I appreciate the time that has been given by the teachers to involved in the interviews and for your support and cooperation.

When I have completed the results section and the final thesis I will forward a copy to you prior to the final submission so you are able to put forward any other information or have any additional feedback about the study. I look forward to hearing your feedback after the final copy of my thesis has been completed. Thank you once again.

Yours Sincerely,

Kirsty R. Shalders
Edith Cowan University
(08) 97916784

Appendix K:

Thank you Letter to the Participants

April 19, 2002

Newton Moore Senior High School
Hotchin Street, Bunbury
WA 6230
Phone: (08) 97958777

Dear participant,

I am writing this letter to thank you for your participation in the interviews that were conducted in conjunction with my Honours Thesis. I have included a copy of your interview transcript so you have the opportunity to change any details and add any additional information. The school has been extremely accommodating and supportive, I really appreciate your input in the research and I have once again thoroughly enjoyed working with the pastoral care team within the school. I appreciate the time you have given to involved in the interviews and for your support and cooperation.

When I have completed the results section and the final thesis I will forward a copy to you prior to the final submission so you are able to put forward any other information or have any additional feedback about the study. I look forward to hearing your feedback from the interview transcripts or the final copy of my thesis. If you have not contacted myself by the of September, I will assume that you do not wish to make any changes to the interview transcripts.

Yours Sincerely,

Kirsty R. Shalders
Edith Cowan University
(08) 97916784

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