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**THE ROLE OF REFLECTION IN LEADING  
THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE ADVANCED SKILLS TEACHER**

**Submitted by**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

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**March 2000**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis critiques the role that reflection plays in leading teacher professional development. It critically explores the reflective processes that five Advanced Skills Teachers use to create meaning for their practice and to direct their professional learning. The research inquired into how this activity has contributed to their ongoing professional growth by connecting important learning events of the past, to decisions made and action taken when dealing with current problematic curriculum issues. This is relevant as the research was set within *Brisbane Catholic Education* during a time of system initiated curriculum reform.

The theoretical framework for the research was primarily underpinned by critical social theory. It was also guided by an interpretative philosophy, in order to give some consideration to the personal dimension of experience. A case study approach was adopted as it promoted collaborative inquiry. This offered scope and flexibility to extrapolate and to critically explore the embedded values and thinking that underscored the teachers' decisions and actions. Most data were collected through a number of ongoing semi-structured and open-ended interviews. The emergent design for the research allowed for systematic, yet flexible and ongoing data collection, analysis and participant feedback. Other supporting data included folio documentation, artefacts, an inquiry project summary sheet and a research diary.

The research concluded that reflection plays an important role in enabling teachers to accept moral and professional responsibility for their own personal and professional development. However, this research has attested that there is no single model of what it means to be a reflective practitioner. Reflective practice and teacher professional development are highly idiosyncratic, complex and multi-dimensional phenomena that are clearly influenced by the interplay of a wide range of personal and contextual factors.

The research revealed that teachers utilise a variety of reflective forms and processes, through various modes, to serve context specific interests. It also concluded that it was the teacher's explicit awareness of the critical intent behind thinking and subsequent action that appeared to be important to professional growth. This intent was consistently framed around each teacher's moral commitment of care and responsibility to the students as persons and learners. It became the most salient impetus behind professional deliberations and generative efforts to improve practice.

Emotion tended to play a powerful, mediating role in this process. Moreover, reflection on the cognitive, affective and social dimensions of knowledge appeared to enable the teachers to consider the values and ideals that underscored decisions and subsequent actions. The research concluded that reflection involves highly interactive cognitive and sensory processes that enable the teacher to connect with the self, with the students and with others in and beyond the school community.

Reflective activity also seemed to enable the teachers to consider the consequences of dealing or not dealing with system initiated curriculum reforms, from the perspective of the students' best interests. The research revealed how the current emphasis on curriculum reform has influenced efforts to create a more holistic curriculum that gives attention to the person of the student. The modelling of reflective processes and the negotiation of aspects of the curriculum with the students provided worthwhile opportunities for these teachers, as well as their students, to articulate assumptions that underscored decisions and actions.

The engagement in introspective self-dialogue, social reflection and reflective collaboration with peers and students appeared to enhance personal and professional development. This research also concluded that administrative recognition and tangible support at the personal, school and system level provided conditions that were conducive to ongoing teacher renewal and development.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis represents the culmination of five years of study that has been both personally and professionally challenging and rewarding. I am grateful to each of the many, who supported, assisted and encouraged me throughout this study period.

I especially acknowledge the very high level of support, direction and guidance that was there for me at every step along the way from my supervisor, Assoc. Professor Denis McLaughlin. I pay tribute to his personal dedication, professional expertise, and his unfailing belief in the potential of his students to reach their goals and to make real their dreams. Thank you so much Denis.

I also wish to acknowledge *Brisbane Catholic Education* and in so doing to recognise the many and varied opportunities for personal and professional growth and development that have been afforded through my work. I am particularly grateful for having had the chance to work so closely with the teachers, who participated in and shaped the research. Special thanks are conveyed to them for their committed involvement and for their willingness to share their stories and reflective insights. I humbly acknowledge their passion for teaching, high level of mastery and dedicated care of their students.

I am also appreciative of the support so freely given by my friends and colleagues, especially those from within the Curriculum Team. In particular, I sincerely thank John McArdle and Mary Tsourounakis for their ongoing interest and encouragement and for somehow always being there, when I needed advice, critical feedback or just a friend.

Sincere gratitude is extended to Mary McNeill and to Rhonda Willmetts for their competent, patient and cheerful assistance with the typing, editing and final presentation of this thesis.

When undertaking study, one becomes very conscious of the need for family support. Warm and special thanks are extended to Mark and my boys, David, Troy and Andrew, for all of their love, care and co-operation and for seeing some humour in things that happened, while mum was doing her thesis.



## STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP AND SOURCES

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*All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics Committees.*

Signed: P.A. Hanifin  
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Date: 25/3/2000.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|      |  |
|------|--|
| ACER | Australian Council for Educational Research                      |
| ACSA | Australian Curriculum Studies Association                        |
| APA  | Assistant to the Principal Administration                        |
| APRE | Assistant to the Principal: Religious Education                  |
| AST1 | Advanced Skills Teacher 1  |
| AST2 | Advanced Skills Teacher 2  |
| BCE  | Brisbane Catholic Education                                      |
| CEC  | Catholic Education Centre  |
| CEO  | Catholic Education Office  |
| COF  | Choosing Our Future  |
| CYO  | Class Year Overview  |
| ELA  | English Language Arts (Inservice Program)                        |
| EYDN | Early Years Diagnostic Net                                       |
| IEP  | Individual Education Program                                     |
| KLA  | Key Learning Area  |
| LAP  | Learning Assistance Program                                      |
| LOTE | Language Other than English                                      |
| NCEC | National Catholic Education Commission                           |
| OBAR | Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting                           |
| QCEC | Queensland Catholic Education Commission                         |
| QLSP | Queensland Levels of Student Performance                         |
| QSCC | Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council               |
| RE   | Religious Education  |
| SEP  | School English Program   |
| SFT  | Standards Framework for Teachers ( <i>Education Queensland</i> ) |
| SMP  | School Mathematics Program                                       |
| SPS  | Student Performance Standards                                    |

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE RESEARCH DEFINED

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

The image of the teacher as a reflective practitioner is one that has received widespread acceptance and support (Beattie 1997; McMahon 1997). The corpus of literature on the concept of reflection is replete with scholarly accounts of the value that a reflective approach holds to enhance the quality of teaching and professional learning. Moreover, the reflective process is increasingly recognised as a cornerstone of teacher professional development (Gore 1991; *Education Queensland* 1998). This is significant, for it is axiomatic that the career-long development of teachers holds potential to improve the quality of a nation's education.

Whilst there is assent for the promotion of reflection in terms of teacher development, conceptual ambiguities surrounding these terms exist. Difficulties arise, as the notions of both reflection and teacher professional development signify meanings that are embedded in a particular philosophical base (Vaughn 1990). The support for reflection and teacher development is generated from varying ideological frames of reference that constitute contrasting and sometimes opposing beliefs and priorities about what is important for quality education (Popkewitz 1998).

Such a situation has created tension in the contemporary context of educational reform. Political agendas, emanating from a paradigm of economic rationalism, continue to be directed to the improvement of standards in education. Bids to establish centralised quality control have been made through the development of a national curriculum. Quality is somewhat narrowly defined in terms of employment related key competencies (Macpherson 1994:47). Paradoxically, running concurrent with the national agenda have been moves toward the



devolution of responsibility for decision-making. The contradictory mandates for both centralisation and devolution have certainly created an impasse for Australian schools (Macpherson 1994; Groundwater-Smith 1998).

As a potential means to political ends, reflection has been advanced in the processes of involving teachers in the implementation of a multiplicity of widespread educational reforms (Sachs 1997; Hargreaves 1997). Calls for teacher reflection, collegiality and self-directed professional development contrast with demands for conformity, reform and increased accountability. To be deemed as competent professionals, teachers receive mixed messages that they be reflective practitioners who are “integrated and specialised, standardised and variegated, local and global, inquisitive yet compliant” (Hargreaves 1997:106). Equally concerning is that under the guise of the new professionalism, teachers are being used to implement selected government policies, which appear to be posited on reductionist views of teaching (Sachs 1997).

There are claims, similar to that made by Macpherson (1994:49), “that teachers have been put in their place in a negative sense”. Teacher professional development is at times portrayed in somewhat narrow terms. In such situations there are deficit undertones that imply that it is “something” that can be “done” to teachers that will “fix” what is lacking in their work (Clark 1992:75). In a similar vein, reflection is promoted as a process that can be acquired through training and apparent contrived collegiality (*Standards Framework for Teachers, (SFT) Education Queensland* 1998). The underpinning rhetoric appears to be a mechanistic strategy of promoting supposedly quality education that can be determined by imposed government norms. Likewise, a narrow view of teaching is being promoted, which equates teacher effectiveness with student learning outcomes measured by national standardised frameworks and state-wide testing (Kemp 1997).

Such measures appear to dehumanise teaching (Day 1997). It is then not surprising to hear accounts of low teacher morale and high levels of confusion

and stress. This has come from feelings of frustration, disillusionment and professional inadequacy, as teachers attempt to cope with the contradictory mandates (Fullan 1997; Hargreaves and Evans 1997; Proudford 1998). Teaching is a caring profession and as such, involves far more than technical competence. The very nature of the teacher's role demands acceptance of a professional and a moral responsibility to provide students with a holistic education (Everett 1997). Cognitive purposes are important, but so too are the moral, emotional, social and creative dimensions of their work. These need to be honoured, for it is the teachers who are at the heart of the educational process (Day 1997). Thus, one can begin to appreciate that the concept of reflective practice cannot be separated from what teachers themselves value and consider as worthwhile for quality education. This suggests that it is the teachers' professional and moral purposes that should provide the main agenda for their continuing professional development. Clearly then, a need exists to redress the balance between the political rhetoric surrounding reflection, with that which represents the values underscoring the thinking behind the lived reality of reflective practitioners.

It is claimed that educational knowledge is construed discursively and that much of what is claimed to be known in education, comes from telling stories of educational experience (Gough, Alexander, Beavis, Maunder and Prior 1991). Therefore, within the career life histories of experienced reflective practitioners, who have been awarded Advanced Skills Teachers (AST1) status (BCE), there are stories to be told. There would be stories about personal and professional development, stories concerning significant experiences and stories that relate to educational reform. The meaning behind the promise of a reflective approach for teacher development may unfold, as these stories connect to form personal theories, which find expression in classroom practice.

This process of making sense of our experience, of reconsidering the meanings we have made and of identifying and choosing from among the possible options available to us in the future, is the process of inquiry. We tell the stories of who we are and live them out in practice, we learn to re-tell a new and more significant story, we learn to live this new story out in practice... and so on.

This is the cycle of inquiry in action, of reflective practice, and of personal and professional development (Beattie 1997:6).

This quotation helps to provide both direction and incentive toward efforts to inquire into the role that reflection has in leading teacher development from the perspective of the lived experiences of teachers. This is important, as in education there are some "stories that are privileged and others that are silenced" (Smyth 1995:5). Therein lies a challenge to critically inquire into the phenomenon of reflection through accessing and critically interrogating stories, which represent the teachers' critical conceptions of their own development in all aspects of the professional life.

## 1.2 THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

### 1.2.1 Brisbane Catholic Education

This study is situated within the context of the *Archdiocese of Brisbane, Catholic Education*. This authority employs both the author and the research participants. Within the text of this thesis, the *Archdiocese of Brisbane, Catholic Education* (*BCE*) is sometimes referred to as *system* or *Cath Ed*.

*BCE* is an agency of the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, Australia. As a system, *BCE* is not autonomous. It is clearly accountable to Catholic Church leadership and in line with its state vision, governed by gospel values (*BCE* 1996). *BCE* is responsible for providing a wide range of educational services, a larger part of which is administering to one hundred and twenty-eight schools. The Catholic school endeavours to be more than an educative institution. Parents are recognised as the primary first educators of their children and encouraged to be involved in the school community. Emphasis is on commitment to "an educational ministry that embraces and promotes life long learning; respects the richness of the past; seeks to meet the major challenges of the present (and) creates the potential for a better future" (*Catholic Education Council* 1993). Furthermore, all structures in organisation

and administration developed in the Catholic school must "support the curriculum, give priority to people and develop healthy interpersonal relationships" (*The Conference of Catholic Education Queensland* 1986).

The Archdiocesan system of schools continues to expand with a 2% increase of total enrolments numbering 46,994 students from Preschool to Year 12 in 1999 (Hutton 1999). Each school has a Principal and Assistant to the Principal - Religious Education (APRE). The larger schools also have an Assistant to the Principal - Administration (APA). Staffing schedules are based on student population. A teacher is identified as a supernumerary in a school, when the number of teachers exceeds that which is allocated in the staffing schedule. The supernumerary receives a priority transfer to another Catholic school. If there are no volunteers, a teacher with the least number of years of full-time, permanent employment with *BCE* is identified as the supernumerary. All other staffing transfers are voluntary. The staffing schedule also influences the level of funding for resources and teacher professional development that is made available to schools from the central office (*BCE Administrative Procedures* 1999).

Approximately 80% of funding for Catholic Schools come from Commonwealth (Federal) and State government grants. Fees, levies and other sources of income make up the "resource" gap. The *Queensland Catholic Education Commission* (QCEC) represents *BCE* and four other Queensland Dioceses, in negotiations with the State Government. The *National Catholic Education Commission* (NCEC) represents all Australian Catholic students at the federal level (*BCE* 1997). Though independent from tight state control on its policies and procedures, *BCE* is bound by the parameters of State and National policy making. Largely, this is due to the accountability models for state and national funds disbursement that have been instituted. Consequently, this creates tension and increasing challenge for the system to keep abreast with current trends and to meet political accountability measures. This must be done in a manner that concurs with the mission and vision of Catholic schooling.

The political pressures that affect state schooling increasingly beset Catholic schooling. Indeed, changes in the political scene and associated mandates have made curriculum policy decision making in the Catholic sector difficult (Brennan 1998). Teachers in Catholic schools have become more aware of the strengthening political influence, since the release of a report on a review of curriculum in Queensland, titled *Shaping The Future* (Wiltshire, McMeniman and Tolhurst 1994). This review recommended reformulation of the curriculum, thus making it more centrally planned and standardised. A student reporting framework using the mechanism of Student Performance Standards based on the National Profiles was adopted as a means of monitoring student learning outcomes.

The response to *Shaping the Future* (Wiltshire et al. 1994) made by BCE, in terms of its Catholic, Christian tradition came under the project title, *Choosing Our Future*. Twenty-five curriculum reform initiatives across the nine key learning areas were recommended for Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic Schools (Refer Appendix A). Many of the recommendations were linked by way of School Curriculum Program development. *Choosing our Future* initiatives were used to promote commitment to the enhancement of quality teaching and learning in Catholic schools, through ongoing renewal (BCE 1995). Such a process of renewal would involve individuals and communities making conscious efforts to heighten their awareness of their beliefs, current actions and possibilities for future action (Spry and Sultmann 1993).

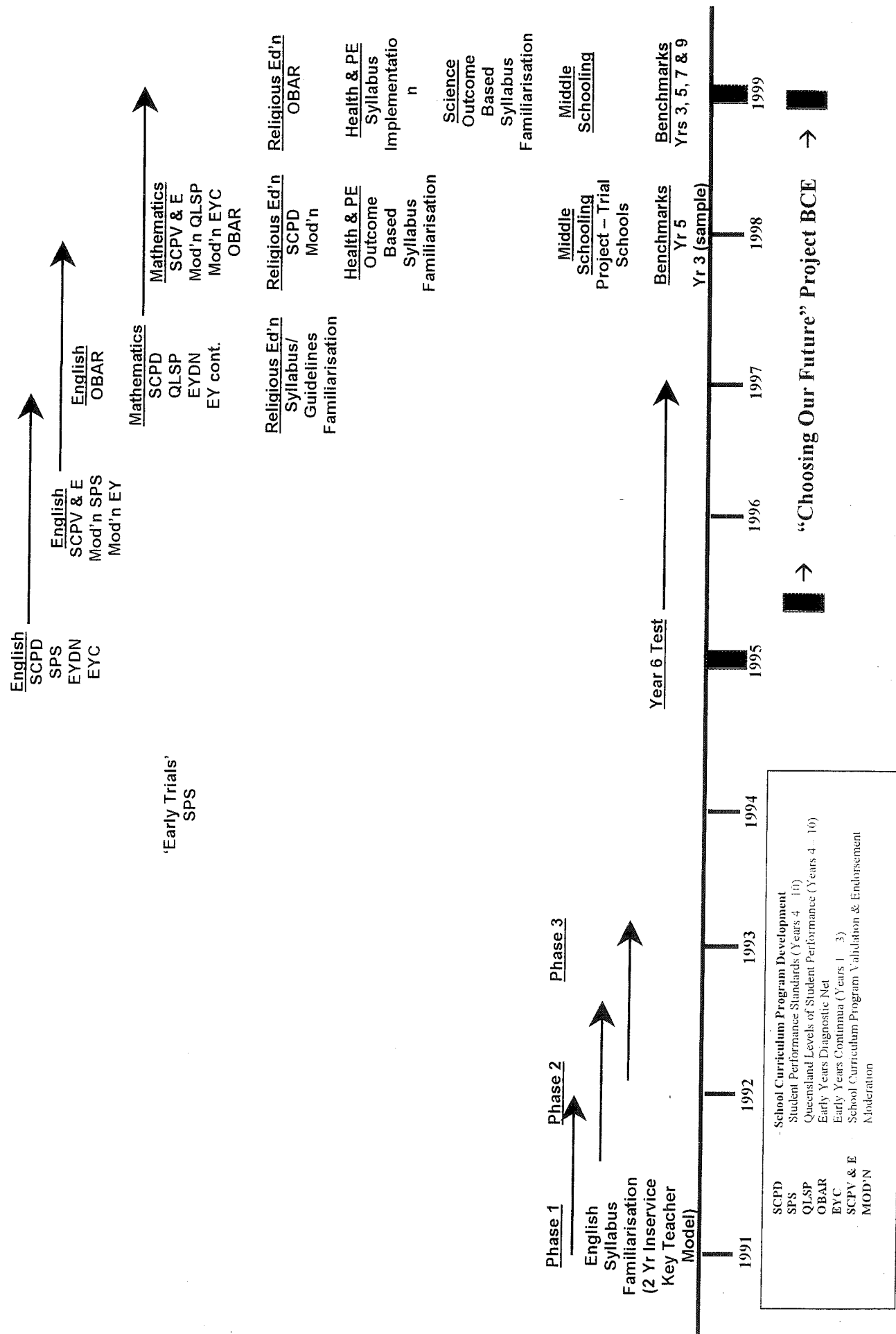
Projected curriculum reforms (1995-1998) were recommended for systematic implementation in all Brisbane Catholic Archdiocesan schools. At the time of data collection for this research, most school communities were responding to *Choosing Our Future* reform initiatives, which related to School Program Development in English and Mathematics and the use of standardised reporting frameworks. Some teachers were relied upon to provide school level support in regards to the co-ordination and implementation of these initiatives. Some roles of added responsibility included English Key Teacher; Mathematics Lead Teacher; Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting (SPS) Lead Teacher;

Religious Education Key Teacher; Early Years Key Teacher; as well as Moderation Facilitator and School Curriculum Program Validation Panel Facilitator and Presenter.

The *Choosing Our Future* curriculum initiatives were not the only political pressures for change facing teachers in Catholic schools. Concerned by the apparent falling standards of literacy and numeracy across the nation, the then Liberal Federal Minister for Schools, Vocational Education and Training, David Kemp (1995; 1996), both called for and implemented wide range testing of students in "the basics". Implicit in this action was the guised threat that any schools with a number of students failing these tests, may lose federal funding (*The Brisbane Courier Mail* 1996). Politically directed, standardised testing to determine student achievement against 'Benchmarks' continues in most Brisbane Catholic schools to the present.

**Figure 1.1** presents an overview of *BCE* curriculum initiatives from 1991-1999 that are relevant to this study. It also provides an indication of the rapidity and multiplicity (Fullan, 1997) of *Choosing Our Future* initiatives (*BCE*), recommended for implementation between 1995 and 1999.

Figure 1.1 Time Line – Curriculum Initiatives (BCE 1991 – 1999)



### 1.2.2 The Advanced Skills Teacher

The research participants, referred to as co-researchers are experienced Advanced Skills 1 Teachers, working in Catholic Primary Schools across the Brisbane Archdiocese. This research uses the AST1 status as a criterion in the purposeful sample selection of research participants. This gives credence to the claim that the co-researchers are experienced and supposedly reflective practitioners, who demonstrate exemplary performance as the AST status indicates.

The Advanced Skills Teacher 1 (AST1) award was first offered to teachers employed by *BCE* in 1991. This was an Australian initiative, negotiated with teachers' unions, aimed at offering teachers a professional career path within the classroom (Ingvarson and Chadbourne 1994). The award recognises evidence of sustained exemplary teaching and rewards by way of status and additional pay allowance. To be awarded AST1 status, the teacher would have documented and provided evidence of demonstrated exemplary performance against criteria, which were set and handed down by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. This came as a result of processes of negotiation between the employing authority and the teacher unions. Within Brisbane Catholic Education, the AST was defined in the following terms. "Advanced Skills Teacher shall mean an employee appointed as such who is an outstanding classroom practitioner who consistently demonstrates a commitment to excellence in teaching and who is committed to professional development" (O'Rourke 1991:2). Five criteria were set for AST 1 classification (Refer Appendix B). The documentation was then submitted for approval, by use of a panel mechanism comprising of the Principal, a peer from the school and a system representative (*Brisbane Catholic Education* 1991). The AST 1 classification had a limited tenure of three years after which re-application was necessary.

In 1997, the AST1 award was dropped by the State, in favour of the introduction of the Standards Framework for Teachers *Education Queensland*. *BCE* remained committed to the AST1 awards. In late 1998, the AST2 award was



introduced and the existing process, structures and procedures were streamlined. It must be noted however, that at the time of data collection for this research, all participants had been awarded the AST1 status, in accordance with the earlier procedures.

### **1.2.3 The Author's Role as Curriculum Education Officer**

In the initial stages of preparation for this study, the author was a full time practising teacher at a Brisbane Catholic primary school. Data were collected between April 1997 and November 1998, during which time the author was employed as a Curriculum Education Officer. During the period 1996 - 1997, the major role responsibility was the promotion and support for system initiatives at the teacher, school, regional and system level. This involved working with school communities within a defined district. In 1998, the role was restructured and responsibilities were extended to all schools across the Brisbane Archdiocese. The 'new' role was created to promote effective teaching and learning, through the provision of support for the professional development of teachers as reflective practitioners (*BCE 1998a*).

## **1.3 IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The research problem is identified as a need to enhance critical understanding of the role that reflection plays in leading teacher professional development from the inside perspective of the teacher's professional world. It has emancipatory intent in promoting a more holistic view of professional development, to that which is often portrayed in the context of educational reform. This is important, if teachers are to be supported as life-long learners and active proponents of their own professional development. The identification of the research problem concerning reflection and teacher professional development also has its own story. This too finds its meaning and relevance when contextualised within the career life history of the author.

In her first fifteen years of practice as a primary teacher, the author had not consciously conceptualised the term 'reflection', nor equated it with her own professional development. This changed significantly, as the result of a two-year secondment to *Australian Catholic University*, as a tutor to pre-service teachers in field experience units. These were set within a teacher education paradigm based on reflective practice. It was this interest in reflection that subsequently led to Masters' level research (Hanifin 1993) that documented deliberate attempts to promote a reflective approach in novice teachers' early field experiences.

The text of the author's further experiences indicates growing concern with how frequently the term, 'reflection' was used in conjunction with teacher professional development in politically generated educational reform policy documents and associated inservice sessions. Teachers seemed to be viewed as functionaries for political interests based on reductionist views of teaching. Moreover, the issue of where real ownership of the change impetus resided became arguable as Queensland experienced a change in government from National/Liberal to Labor. This served to emphasise the transparently, political nature of the educational reforms. Both political parties had policy directives aimed at reducing the cost base of schooling and tightening control over teachers through the curriculum process. Also concerning to the author was the apparent omission of the emotional dimension of teaching in the rhetoric for reform and teacher renewal.

Moreover, when working as an education officer and supporting schools with curriculum initiatives (refer to Section 1.2.3), the author became intrigued by the many ways that teachers addressed change. At times, she was able to work with teachers in classrooms to try to make sense of the curriculum reforms. It was these collaborative efforts, along with informal conversations, the sharing of stories and the exchange of ideas and views with others at network days, workshops, inservice and collaborative sessions, which impacted on the author's own ability to create meaning.

Thus, the research topic transpired in terms of the author's own professional interest in reflection. The research problem presented itself as a challenge to respond to the paradoxes inherent in the systemic reforms and contradictory political mandates. It represented a need to gain a critical understanding of reflection and teacher development, so as to provide more appropriate support for teachers in advancing themselves as life-long learners. Moreover, the research methodology was selected as a means of formalising and reflectively deliberating on the informal conversations and stories relating to the challenges and triumphs within the teachers' career life histories.

#### **1.4 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

Having discussed the political interest in teacher reflection, a challenge clearly exists to determine, in the Advanced Skills Teachers' own terms, the potential relevance that a reflective approach holds for teacher professional development in all of its dimensions. If teachers are to be self-directed, reflective life long learners (Everett 1997) and if this is to be supported in a meaningful and relevant way, then it is necessary for those outside of the classroom context to be cognisant of the thinking and values that underscore the teachers' ongoing quests for renewal. To be relevant these would need to be framed from within the contexts in which teachers operate.

The research problem represents a need to understand the role that reflection plays in leading teacher professional development from the inside perspective of the Advanced Skills Teacher's professional life. It has emancipatory intent in extending social consciousness of a more holistic view of professional development that is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon, which cannot be separated from what teachers value. An appreciation of this really is important, if teachers are to be supported and acknowledged as having the knowledge and capabilities to be self empowered, morally responsible and active proponents of their own professional development.

Therefore, from this perspective, the purpose for this research is to critically explore and interrogate the processes that five Advanced Skills Teachers (AST1) use to reflect on practice and to critique how reflective activity has contributed to their ongoing growth and development in the many dimensions of their professional lives. The research inquires into how reflection has led these teachers to make sense of the phenomena of significant events experienced throughout their careers and how it impacts on action taken when dealing with problematic issues concerning the *Choosing Our Future* (BCE) curriculum initiatives. In so doing, the embedded values that underscore decisions and actions are extrapolated and questioned. This is based on the premise that “curriculum design, curriculum planning and curriculum change are fundamentally about teachers’ actions” (Beattie 1997:7).

In very broad and general terms, reflection may be defined as a process of thinking about action (Freire 1985; Korthagen 1993). From a critical perspective, it is accepted that knowledge is tentative and emergent as past understandings are reconstructed, in order to generate new meaning to the experience and used to transform practice (Freire 1985; McLaughlin and Hanifin 1994). Therefore, from a career life history perspective (Kelchtermans 1993), the research seeks to critically explore those professional life experiences that the five Advanced Skills Teachers signify as being catalytic to their development and which led to the appreciation of new values (Dewey 1933). The research also aims to make explicit the Advanced Skills Teachers’ reflective understandings that encompass assumptions, beliefs and values (Smyth 1995) about their teaching, about themselves as teachers and learners and about the social milieu in which significant career experiences are situated. It is important to note that within this research, the career is not objectively conceptualised as “a chronological chain of acts, positions and social roles” (Kelchtermans 1993:301). Rather, it is viewed as “the moving perspective in which the person sees his [/her] life as a whole and interprets the meanings of his [/her] various attributes, actions and the things which happen to him” [/her] (Hughes 1958:16).

In critically exploring the teachers' experiences, emphasis is given to the way that meaning has been construed. This is important, for it acknowledges that the reality being constructed is temporal and embedded in meaning-making structures (Beattie 1997). In acknowledging "the indeterminacy in social and educational research" (Hargreaves and Fullan 1992:4) deliberate moves are made to relate the way teachers address current dilemmas with understandings and meanings that may have come from dealing with past problematic issues. In so doing, attempts are made to understand the reasoning behind the teachers' identification of further learning that is needed to inform future choices and decisions. This is relevant, when considering the notion that teachers work simultaneously in three time zones:

|           |   |                                   |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Yesterday | - | that which must be connected with |
| Today     | - | that which must be attended to    |
| Tomorrow  | - | towards which teaching must aim   |

(Holly and Walley 1989:285).

Working within these time zones acknowledges that reflectivity needs to be couched in a conception of ongoing teacher development, which assumes that teachers develop technically, cognitively, socially and emotionally throughout their careers (Zimpher 1988; Beattie 1997). Situating the research emphasis within the context of teachers' professional life histories, holds potential to provide some hermeneutic understanding of professional self development within the overarching critical orientation of the research (Bartlett 1989).

Understanding the way teachers think, act, feel and intend and how their practical knowledge develops over time and how it interacts with classroom phenomena will enable, it is hoped, teachers and researchers to collaboratively evolve more fruitful and mutually agreeable approaches to classroom change and improvement (Butt, Raymond and Yamagishi 1988:91).

The research aims to highlight both the emotive and cognitive dimensions of teaching. This may help to extrapolate what these teachers value (Beattie 1997). It considers their sense of professional identity and how (and if) they

overcome being “crippled by their own conscientiousness” (Campbell and Neill 1994:62), when addressing the current curriculum reforms and other dilemmas experienced throughout the career. The political rhetoric would have one believe that working through government imposed reforms has promoted a more positive sense of identity among teachers. This is exemplified in the following statement to teachers, by the then Acting Director General of Education, Robin Sullivan (*Education Views* 1998:2).

Teachers often believe that while more is expected of them, they are valued less. Traditionally teachers have been the least likely profession to promote their own good practices, but their recent experience of extensive change has led many to view their contribution to the profession more positively.

Critical exploration of the teachers’ representations of the formation of their professional identities becomes important. Therefore, it is worthwhile to acknowledge the capabilities of teachers in terms of self-empowerment (Macpherson 1994). Support for teachers to be self-empowered in taking an active stance in the development of a positive professional self concept and professional identity are significant challenges facing education today (Fullan 1997; Hargreaves 1998).

If there is any single process for the making of good curriculum it lies in the radical respect on the part of teachers for their own developing consciousness. It comes down to the need for the teachers to respect their own developing consciousness and that of each other (Leonard 1983:21).

In considering the purpose of this research, it is the critical and deliberative process, by which understandings are reached and action instigated that holds particular value. The aim, then, is to generate reciprocal influences through collaborative inquiry. Through the critical representation of the Advanced Skills Teachers’ narrative case stories, the research has emancipatory intent. This not only respects, but also raises political and social consciousness in terms of the teachers’ ability to reflectively take active control over their own professional growth.

## **1.5 EVOLUTION OF THE RESEARCH ISSUES**

### **1.5.1 The Process**

The three research questions below guide this study concerning the role of reflection in leading the professional development of the Advanced Skills Teacher. Though presented as separate entities, each question is closely linked and interactive with all others. These questions emanate from the research problem. They took form and were reshaped throughout the duration of the study. Close and ongoing collaboration with the co-researchers was essential, in order to deliberate and to develop shared, critical understandings. Consequently, the research questions represent the co-researchers priorities, as well as those of the author.

### **1.5.2 Research Question One**

**What experiences do the Advanced Skills Teachers identify as being catalytic to their professional development?**

This question provides the opportunity to critically explore each co-researcher's practice in its own terms and within the context of the career life history. The naming of significant episodes that have been catalytic to these teachers' advancement, facilitates critical exploration of the thinking used by the teachers to create meaning from the experience and the values that underscored actions taken. To acknowledge the temporal nature of the reconstructed knowledge, complementary consideration must be given to the social contexts in which the episodes were situated (Goodson 1995). Essentially this question opens possibilities to move beyond description to engagement in critical discussion on each teacher's understanding of their own professional development in all of its dimensions.

### **1.5.3 Research Question Two**

**How do these teachers describe the reflective processes that they use in their practice?**

This question works from the assumption that the co-researchers DO reflect on practice and that they DO assume responsibility for their own continued improvement. The question does not sit alone. The research interest in the reflective process is contextualised using significant episodes within each teacher's career life history and the inquiry project relating to current curriculum reform. Both provide meaningful contexts to critically explore the embedded values which underscore teacher's interactive thinking, by drawing on their personal practical knowledge and understandings concerning their own professional growth. This question seeks to critically investigate how the many forms of teacher reflection find expression through ongoing renewal in practice.

#### **1.5.4 Research Question Three**

**What forms of professional development support do these teachers identify as being important to their professional learning?**

It has been argued that "the seeds of development will not grow if they are cast on stony ground" (Fullan 1992:13). The process of teacher development and critical reflection is dependent on opportunities for support and the context in which it takes place. This question goes beyond identification of the forms for professional development and factors within the environmental context, to a search for a better understanding of and better appreciation for the ecology of teacher development.

### **1.6 DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH**

The research problem is to critique, so as to better understand how Advanced Skills Teachers reflect on their practice and to critically determine how this contributes to ongoing growth in all aspects of the professional life. To do so, there is explicit intent to critically explore the embedded values within the thinking that underscores the actions taken by these teachers in their attempts to change. Hence, the theoretical framework of the research is



underpinned primarily by critical social theory. Educational research that finds its orientation in critical theory aims to promote critical consciousness, in order to break down social inequalities and oppressive ideologies (Habermas 1971; Popkewitz 1984). The moral imperative in critical educative research is empowerment and emancipation. However, emancipatory intent does not necessarily guarantee an emancipatory outcome (Smith 1993). "The choice of a particular value system tends to empower and enfranchise certain persons while disempowering and disenfranchising others. Inquiry thereby becomes a political act" (Guba 1990:24). Therefore, the question of whose values and what values shall govern the research must be clarified at the onset.

The value systems of the five Advanced Skills Teachers are highly influential to this type of research. These are to be honoured as the research aims to explore reflection and professional development from the inside perspective of the lived reality of these teachers. It goes beyond description to active collaborative inquiry, in order to "interrogate" and to "reinterpret" or "transform understandings concerning ideas, practices and institutional arrangements" (Smith 1993:86-88) through dialogue and action. This is relevant for the function of critical theory is to better understand the relationship that exists between values, interest and action (Sultana 1995). Questions of ethics, morality and politics are raised with the emancipatory intent of advancing teacher empowerment through self-growth and individual effort, as well as through collective action in terms of enabling ongoing renewal. Critical theory emphasises extending consciousness of the self as a social being, through promoting insights into the processes, through which perspectives and values were formed (Popkewitz 1984; Sultana 1995). Any insights gained must be critically considered in terms of the socio-cultural context in which the phenomena were situated (Goodson 1992)..

Critical theory reflects a body of discourse that focuses on the possibility of individual and collective social transformation through authentic action (Freire 1973; Crotty 1998). Thus, a social reconstructivist perspective

becomes influential to the interpretation of learning, teaching and reflection within this study. From this position, learning is conceptualised as an active and life long process involving the construction of new interpretations of knowledge that are generated from past understandings (Freire 1973; Crotty 1998).

As it is important to give some consideration to the personal dimension of experience, this research is also guided by an interpretative philosophy (Bartlett 1989). This facilitates a holistic view of each co-researcher's career long professional development, as well as the promotion of professional self-awareness.

A case study approach using qualitative methods best serves the research purpose, which is to better understand the role of reflection in leading teacher professional development. This is appropriate, as the goal of case study is to convey understanding. A qualitative case study may be described as a holistic description and analysis of a phenomenon occurring in a bounded context or social unit (Miles and Huberman 1993). Within the context of this research, the case phenomenon is represented in terms of the reflective activity and professional growth of five Advanced Skills Teachers. This is bounded within the context or social unit of each teacher's career life history. Case study respects the contextual specificity of constructed meanings and offers flexibility and scope to more ably explore teacher development (Cohen and Manion 1980). Moreover, the utilisation of case study facilitates "a more holistic integration of the factors, events and thinking" that led to professional growth (Nisbet and Ross 1980:5).

The general research design may be described as the "creation of mixed methodologies" (Patton 1990:188). The procedure for data collection and analysis integrates elements of a life history approach using a professional biographical perspective (Kelchtermans 1993), with a *Model of Interpretative Theory and Qualitative Inquiry* (Bartlett 1989). These methods facilitate the critical exploration of the teachers' reflective activity and professional self-

development through the subjective experiences of the career. The research design also utilises processes of reflective deliberation ((McArdle and Spry 1996). This guides the inquiry into problematic issues concerning current curriculum initiatives (*BCE*).

The research design allows for systematic, yet flexible and ongoing data collection, partial analysis and participant feedback. Data are collected through a number of semi-structured and open-ended interviews, eventuating as a prolonged interview (Denzin 1970). Other data sources are relevant documentation, artefacts, inquiry project summary sheets and a research diary. The emergent nature of the research design allows the approaches and techniques to be used flexibly and at times interchangeably. This helps to contextualise the research focus on both the Advanced Skills Teachers' implicit theories and the interactive thinking behind their actions (Marland 1992). It also respects the collaborative, interactive nature of the research. The findings are presented in narrative form.

## 1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This research attempts to critique so as to better understand the role that reflection plays in leading teacher professional development from the perspective of the Advanced Skills Teachers' professional life world. In so doing, it appreciates the teacher as "a self in transition" (Carson 1995:161). This is significant, for the research process itself, as well as its findings, holds potential to provide knowledge about teachers' thinking, reflective activity and development through a critique on how professional lives are experienced and created. The research holds potential to combine realism and optimism (Hargreaves 1994). If reflection is to be seriously considered as being a cornerstone of teacher development (Gore 1991; *Education Queensland* 1998), then a need exists to understand the reflective processes from within the contexts in which teachers operate. Also teacher reflection must be studied holistically in terms of a general mode of professional learning (Marland 1992), if

it is to be represented as more than a means to implementing politically driven reforms. What is needed is a better understanding of what teachers value and "what moves teachers to do their work well" (Hargreaves 1997:108).

This research addresses these issues through giving consideration to the holistic development of the teacher as a person. This is important, for despite increased research into teacher thinking over the last decade, the teachers' critical perspective concerning their own cognitive development has tended to be overlooked (Clark 1992; Bradbeer 1994; Beattie 1997). Whilst the cognitive aspects of development and change have captured widespread scholarly interest, the emotional dimensions have tended to be cast aside (Fullan 1997; Hargreaves 1998). Moreover, teacher development tends to be studied from either a prescriptive dimension, which involves mediated interventions designed to support teacher development or from the descriptive dimension, which involves professional involvement and the development of implicit personal theories through experience. This research attempts to critique the notion of reflection in terms of teacher development in a holistic way. There is explicit intent to explore both the prescriptive and descriptive dimensions of development from the multifaceted perspective of the teacher's life history. This presents the challenge to engage in research that is both complex and broad in its scope, as teacher development has many and varied inter-related themes (Groundwater-Smith 1998).

Though teachers often informally swap stories and anecdotes about their practice that integrate inter-related themes, they have few formal opportunities to share their knowledge and deeper understandings of their work (Beattie 1997; Sachs 1997). This also adds to the significance of the study, for there is growing scholarly concern that educational research relating to teacher development does not give sufficient attention to teachers' ability to empower themselves to take action in terms of their own development (Groundwater-Smith 1998). It is suggested that what is needed is "a focus that listens above all to the person at whom development is aimed" (Goodson 1997:42). This research attempts to re-dress the

balance. It offers not only a forum for teacher voice in the naming of challenging problems in education, but also the opportunity to generate critical understanding concerning teacher development, from the first hand knowing of teachers themselves.

This is potentially worthwhile, for historically, teachers have not been encouraged to take a pro-active role in their own learning (Hart 1976; Calderhead 1993). Policy, educational reform and curriculum directives have been and continue to be, more often than not, developed by experts and handed down for implementation by (Hargreaves and Evans 1997). The personal and professional needs of teachers have tended to be defined, in large, by external political forces and needs of the system. Teachers are inclined to be cast in dependency situations by external forces and at times by themselves. "In an educational world where the activists in education are more likely to be governments than educators, it is essential that the professional voice be strengthened" (Groundwater-Smith 1998:33). This provides a strong case for teacher voice in educational decision-making.

The current politically motivated rhetoric that encourages teachers to be reflective, self-directed professionals appears at a superficial level to be a good idea. However, the current situation exemplifies what may happen when "bad things happen to good ideas" (Hoffman 1998:102). Many teachers are battling against becoming technical implementers of others' agendas (Hargreaves and Evans 1997; Groundwater-Smith 1998). There are also increasingly alarming signs that teachers are showing signs of "inertia, indifference and impotence" (Macpherson 1994:46). Sweeping reforms and policy changes appear to have impacted negatively on teachers by undermining sources of their emotional as well as intellectual strength (Fullan 1997:23). The educational debate has not always recognised the needs of teachers, nor has it acknowledged many of their achievements.

However, some positive things have happened in spite of the prevailing impasse. This perhaps is where the more important significance of this

research lies. Critically inquiring into the phenomena of reflection and professional development in the teachers' own terms, provides opportunity for teachers to voice their beliefs and values. This may offer hope in the promise of a reflective approach for teacher growth. Such hope may well reside in better understanding the paradoxes and complexities of situations that teachers confront and how these interact with the values, motivations and purposes of the personal and professional self. Current literature relating to educational reform is emphasising that hope must be generated if it is missing (Darling-Hammond 1995; Beattie 1995; Fullan 1997).

It has been suggested that a lacuna exists in identifying the "often neglected and misunderstood way" that teachers do reflect on their practice (Louden 1992:178). The research emphasis has tended to be on promoting reflection in teacher education programs or on determining levels of teacher reflective activity. Thus, there continues to be an "urgent need" in the world of scholarship to explore the reflective activity of teachers (Burroughs-Lange, Downing, Francis & Sellars 1994: 57), as well as to investigate the influence of a reflective approach on later career development (Korthagen 1993:140).

The teachers' perceptions concerning the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of effective teaching and the development of their own personal and professional selves may provide insight into what teachers value. This is important, for the concept of the reflective practitioner cannot be separated from what is worthwhile and what is valued in teaching. Within the specific context of *BCE* and in the light of the gospel values, by which it is governed, such value systems become particularly relevant. Understanding the teachers' position in relation to their own learning and development becomes important. For within Catholic Education, "self directed professional development" is not presented as a 'way', but emphasised as "the way" (Everett 1997:53).

Telling the story of the curriculum from the critical perspective of teachers, through advancing teacher voice can be a "powerful, passionate and persuasive experience in itself" (Macpherson 1994:50). The stories of the Advanced Skills

Teachers hold potential to raise social consciousness concerning the teachers' ability to be self-empowered (Smith 1993). This may provide a means through which others, who are dealing with similar reform issues might participate both critically and imaginatively. This is contextually relevant, for "to teach is to live in the flux of change" and "in the play of competence and vulnerability" (Carson 1995:160). This study is significant for it does not deny this vulnerability, nor this flux. Indeed, with its focus on the reflective activity of Advanced Skills Teachers, it explores possibilities, not answers. Thus, there is inherent potential within the study to generate meanings for others that are appropriate to their own lives and situations.

When individuals share the stories of their own experiences they can both examine and interrogate the stories they tell in their practices choose from other available options and imagine new possibilities. New awareness can be acquired, new perspectives discussed and understood, new ways for thinking can emerge and new practices and programmes can follow (Beattie 1997:10).

The research also offers possibilities for more informed professional practice for both the author and the co-researchers. Opportunity is provided for the Advanced Skills Teachers to reflect on their life history, experiences, beliefs, ideals and practices, as they engage in collaborative inquiry concerning current, challenging reform issues. This becomes worthwhile, for as Freire (1985:89) maintains, "once contradictions are apparent, teachers {and consultant researchers} have two choices; they can become shrewdly clear of their need to be reactionary, or they can accept a critical position to engage in action to transform reality" {Writer Parenthesis}.

From a personal perspective, the study is practically relevant as it connects the author's work as a teacher and as a consultant to a world of research. It provides opportunity to gain more holistic, critical insights into reflective practice and teacher professional development. This research is also significant from the notion of working simultaneously in the three time zones of the past, present and future (Holly and Walley 1989). It connects the author's earlier study, concerning the promotion of reflection with novice teachers (Hanifin 1993) to the

other end of the career life continuum, namely that of the experienced, Advanced Skills Teacher. This may provide further critical insights to improve future practice.

It is anticipated that the insights gained may raise social consciousness of key considerations concerning actions that might promote reflection through supporting and acknowledging teachers as active proponents for their own development (Proudford 1998). There is hope that this would be useful to the world of scholarship generally, each Advanced Skills Teacher's understandings of the professional self, as well as the author's continuing work as a consultant and her future classroom practice.

## **1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

This research is concerned with promoting a better understanding of the role of reflection in leading teacher professional development. It is acknowledged that this study is limited in its scope, as it focuses on only five Advanced Skills Teachers, within the context of one education system, namely *BCE*. Limiting the sample to five makes the study more manageable and allows for information-rich cases to be explored (Merriam 1998). Moreover, with due consideration to the constraints on this study, the small purposeful sample offers an effective means to better understand the complex phenomena of reflection and teacher professional development. This research has explicit intent to critically understand the particular in depth, that being the role that reflection plays in leading teacher professional development. It is emphasised that this research does not have interest in discerning what might be true of the many. Any findings presented are specific to the cases and do not claim to represent a wider population. The research seeks its response in the readership. Therefore, its external validity relies on reader user generalizability through case to case transfer.



It also must be noted that a deliberate decision was made not to collect data by way of teacher or student observation. This particularly pertains to the inquiry project concerning the *Choosing Our Future* reform initiatives (BCE). It is recognised that it is more relevant to the research purpose to focus on explicating the teachers' way of knowing and the value systems that underscore decision-making. Thus, emphasis is on the teachers' thinking behind the action, and not on the observation of the action itself. Moreover, there is a need for the author as the researcher to respect the notion of being a "guest in the private spaces", of the co-researchers' world (Stake 1994:244). Hence, priority is given to moral, ethical sensitivity over the collection of potentially vulnerable data, regardless of its usefulness to the research interest. This decision follows the advice of Goodson (1993:9): "To place the teachers' classroom practice at the centre of the action is to put the most exposed and problematic part of the teachers' world at the centre of scrutiny and negotiation".

It is also acknowledged that research of this type may "involve relationships that are intensive and ultimately rewarding yet not easily replicated" (Hargreaves and Fullan 1992:12). The selected research topic and methodology respond to the author's own professional dilemma and working context. The research is designed to involve the author and teachers in intensive and professionally rewarding relationships and it is acknowledged that the sample of five Advanced Skills Teachers is small. Of importance, however, are the mutual benefits for both the author and the teachers for their own learning. Emphasis is given to self-empowerment through individual and collective action by the teachers and the author to transform their own social reality as active proponents for their own professional growth.

The data presented in the narratives are edited to keep to the topic of the research. Therefore, phenomena related to the Advanced Teacher Skills Awards are deliberately limited in scope. Dimensions of the co-researchers' lives beyond the boundaries of the case are not explored. Particular events and/or activities, schools and people named in the stories, are provided with pseudonyms in order to maintain a professional ethic. To protect the identity of

the co-researchers, some data, which may provide greater insight into specific issues of each case, are not used in the construction of the narratives. Moreover, no information is included in any case narrative without the Advanced Skills Teachers' scrutinised consent. It is emphasised again that the findings of the research represent the priorities of these teachers, as well as those of the author. In acknowledging the delimitations, the study does however, attempt to promote a better understanding about the role of reflection in leading teacher professional development in all of its dimensions, through giving priority to teacher voice (Hargreaves 1996).

## 1.9 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

A brief outline of the structure of this thesis, *The Role of Reflection in Leading the Professional Development of the Advanced Skills Teacher* is provided. Apart from this introductory chapter, which has introduced and contextualised the research, this thesis has four other chapters.

**Review of Literature**, synthesises relevant literature in the field concerning reflection, teacher development and current educational reform. The review of literature provides a means to develop an understanding of the research problem and a basis for conversation in the critical discussion of findings.

**Design of Research**, makes explicit the critical research orientation and outlines and describes its qualitative nature and emergent design. Details regarding the methods and approaches used for the collection and analysis of data are provided.

**Presentation and Analysis of Findings**, presents each of the five co-researcher's case narratives, which represent a synthesis of the analysed data. A critical discussion of the findings is also provided.

**Review and Conclusions**, provides a concluding review and addresses the research questions. Conclusions and implications for the profession as well as areas for further research are presented.

**Appendices (A-C)** hold relevant documentation that supports the main body of the text. These may prove to be useful for further reference or clarification.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE REVIEW

##### 2.1.1 Purpose of the Research

The research problem represents a need to critically understand the role that reflection plays in leading teacher professional development from the inside perspective of the Advanced Skills Teacher's professional life. It has emancipatory intent in extending social consciousness of a more holistic view of professional development that is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon, which cannot be separated from what teachers value. This is important, if teachers are to be honoured and supported as having the knowledge and capabilities to be self empowered, responsible and active proponents for their own professional development. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to critically explore and to interrogate the processes that five Advanced Skills Teachers (AST1) use to reflect on practice and to critique how reflective activity has contributed to their ongoing growth and development in the many dimensions of their professional lives. The research inquires into how reflection has led these teachers to make sense of the phenomena of significant events experienced throughout their careers and how it impacts on action taken when dealing with problematic issues concerning the *Choosing Our Future* (BCE) curriculum reforms. In doing so, it aims to extrapolate and question the embedded values that underscore decisions and actions.

##### 2.1.2 Conceptualisation of the Literature

The assumption that reflection plays an integral role in teacher professional development guides this review of literature and is reflected in the conceptual framework. In presenting the review, attempts are made to critically explore reflection from a holistic perspective that encompasses the 'what', 'how', 'when' and 'why' surrounding the many facets of teacher professional

development. Any critical exploration of the complex phenomenon of reflection and the equally complex phenomenon of teacher professional development must respect and acknowledge the many dimensions, which are a part of and which impact on the teacher's career long personal and professional growth. It is important then, that the literature be reviewed broadly. The themes presented and the main issues that they address are evolutionary and portray a process, rather than represent a blue print. This review must therefore be quite complex in its orientation. A guide to the conceptual framework from the literature review is provided in Figure 2.1. In order to complement this representation, the main inter-related themes that emanated from the research problem are bolded for reasons of clarity in the body of the text that follows.

In presenting this review, it is recognised that conceptual ambiguities surrounding the phenomena of reflection and teacher professional development exist. These terms often signify meanings that are embedded in a particular philosophical base (Vaughn 1990). Thus, any support for the promotion of reflection in terms of teacher development tends to come from varying ideological frames of reference that constitute different and sometimes opposing beliefs and priorities about what is important for quality education. Thus, it becomes essential to note that the conceptual framework for this research is underpinned by critical social theory (Refer to Figure 2.1). Its function is to promote critical consciousness of the relationship that exists between values, cognitive interest and action (Sultana 1995) in order to break down social inequalities and oppressive ideologies (Popkewitz 1984). The conception of learning as both a social and a personal process is derived from critical social theory. A social reconstructivist perspective gives emphasis to social and critically reflective processes (Freire 1971). From this orientation, knowledge is viewed as dialectical, involving the interplay between subjective views of the world and the historical and cultural frameworks in which they are located.

The review identifies and conceptualises what **teacher professional development** may represent. The literature is considered in terms of

clarifying and determining what this phenomenon suggests for professional self-empowerment through individual and group effort. The review critically considers life long, self-directed learning and the moral nature of teaching and pressures for change. Particular attention is given to contextually significant issues, which pertain to the implementation of those **current curriculum reform initiatives**, which the Advanced Skills Teachers identified as significant through the inquiry process.

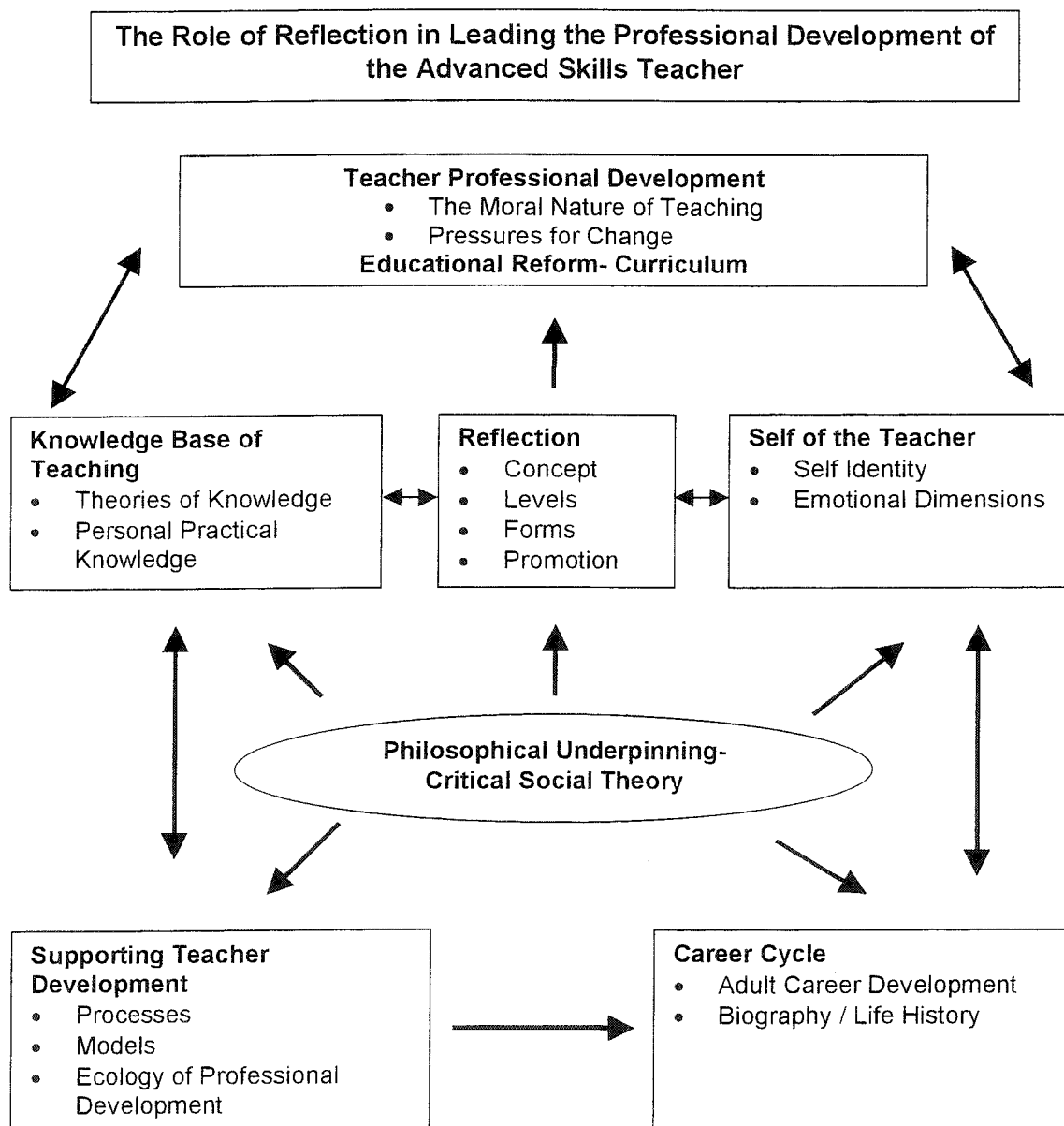
Literature associated with **teacher reflection** is also broadly reviewed to consider its meaning, levels and associated cognitive interests, forms and promotion. The implications that a reflective stance hold in terms of teacher development generally and specifically in the context of curriculum reform are explored. The general theory that underscores **the knowledge base of teaching** and **the self of the teacher** is reviewed to gain insights into the research problem from both the cognitive and the affective perspective. The dynamics concerning development in both domains are considered in terms of being influential to and influenced by the reflective process. Furthermore, these insights are considered in relation to the variables of **the career cycle** and the life history of the teacher. This enables the critical review of various models and processes that provide **support for teacher development** to be contextualised within the career life of the teacher. This is linked to literature that relates to the ecology of teacher development.

Together, these themes provide an integrating dynamic for the development of the conceptual framework. An overview of the conceptual framework that guides the review is provided in Figure 2.1. It offers direction, as it helps to paint the 'big picture' from the literature embedded in the research purpose. The inter-relatedness of these themes along with the specific links that connect them is highlighted.

The organisational sequence of the main themes presented in the review of literature is outlined in Table 2.1. It is again emphasised that though these themes are presented in a linear manner, all relate, as previously described. Insights from the literature into the role that reflection plays in leading teacher

development are framed from many of the dimensions, which encompass the professional life of the teacher and the many factors that have impact on it.

**Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework from the Literature Review**



**Table 2.1 Organisational Sequence of the Literature Review**

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 2.1 | Introduction to the Review                  |
| 2.2 | Teacher Professional Development            |
| 2.3 | Reflection                                  |
| 2.4 | The Knowledge Base of Teaching              |
| 2.5 | The Self of the Teacher                     |
| 2.6 | The Career Cycle                            |
| 2.7 | Supporting Teacher Professional Development |
| 2.8 | Conclusion to the Review                    |

## **2.2 TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.2.1 Teachers as Self Directed Life long Learners**

"Who can be a teacher without first being a learner?" (Treston 1995:81). Such a question relates to the emancipatory intent of this research, which is to promote and support teachers as active proponents for their own development. Therefore, inherent in the theme of teacher professional development is the notion of the teacher as a self-directed, life-long learner. This provides a positive starting point to define the meaning and relevancy of ongoing development in terms of the moral nature of teaching and the various pressure sources for change, which teachers face in their professional lives.

Within *Brisbane Catholic Education*, learning is promoted as being a "life long and life giving process" that leads to wholistic development and growth (*Vision Statement for the Brisbane Catholic Archdiocese* 1992:1). Teachers are promoted as life-long learners, as a part of the broader culture of Catholic Education. "To learn, to develop professionally, is to be open to new mindsets, knowledge, skills, appreciation of values and ways of being (*Queensland Catholic Education Commission* 1996:4). Life-long learning has also been strongly advocated in the wider society in response to the 1990's



context of change and global societal transformation (Chapman and Aspin 1997). Its relevance is clearly described in the following extract (*Conference of Rome - World Initiative on Life-Long Learning* (1995 cited in Candy 1997:13).

Life-long learning is the development of human potential, through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding that they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environment.

This view concerning life-long learning focuses on supporting the development of human potential and encouraging individuals to take action to further learning. It also emphasises the influence that contextual circumstances have on what is learnt and how it is learnt. This directs attention to development and growth in both the cognitive and the affective knowledge dimensions. Thus, the promotion of teachers as life-long learners has definite implications for the way that teacher professional development is conceptualised and supported.

This is important, as the term teacher professional development is a broad one that refers to the career long personal and professional growth of the person after qualifying as a teacher. This incorporates both a descriptive and prescriptive perspective (Kelchtermans 1993:1). The descriptive perspective refers to the implicit professional learning that evolves throughout the career. This will be explored in Section 2.4. The prescriptive perspective entails forced or mediated interventions to direct or to improve professional practice (Kelchtermans 1993; Day 1993). The following definition of teacher professional development provides an appropriate set of parameters to explore the relationship between reflection and teacher development.

Professional development consists of all those conscious and planned activities, which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group, or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral

purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge and skills essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives (Day 1994:109).

It is axiomatic that teacher professional development, with all its varied forms and types of educational activity is considered to be "a fundamental factor for the improvement of the educational process" (Day 1994:108). Indeed, the normative starting point for ongoing development is the teacher's inherent want to promote learning (Buchmann 1993). However, one of the paradoxes of teaching as a profession, is that whilst student learning is emphasised, support for teachers as life-long learners is often muted (Sachs 1997). The following viewpoint then, warrants critical consideration.

If we need to encourage students to be self-directed life-long learners, we need first to encourage and support our teachers to be life-long learners as well. Teachers (and indeed all school personnel) need to model self-directed learning, take initiative to find answers, continue to grow, change and take a proactive stance in creating a positive future (Wheldon 1997:44).

The view of teachers as life-long learners would suggest that teacher professional development be couched in a conception of ongoing growth and development, within the immediate and broader social context of practice throughout the career (Wheldon 1997). Any moves to improve teaching warrant consideration of relevant factors, such as the teacher's stage of life and career, personal maturity, the self identified needs of the teacher, the contextual demands of specific situations, the interests and needs of the school, as well as system demands. The simplistic notion of offering prescriptive solutions for professional development in relation to reform implementation often fails take account of other existing and over-riding professional development needs. Of concern, is the rhetoric that casts teachers as being dependent on others to direct their professional learning (Clark 1992; Popkewitz 1998). The following caution particularly pertains to imposed reform initiatives that emphasise system priorities in regards to curriculum renewal.

The term teacher development is Orwellian. No one could be against teachers developing. But there is a critical difference between developing and being developed (Holmes 1989, cited in Hargreaves and Fullan 1992:12).

A challenge clearly exists to provide support for meaningful, ongoing teacher development that supports teachers to accept responsibility for their own development. Three major thrusts that work toward comprehensive development processes and achievements are:

- successful induction into teaching positions and tasks throughout the career after basic academic and pedagogical preparation;
- continuing personal and professional renewal in knowledge and teaching skills;
- the redirection of tasks and expertise as the changeable society dictates (Burke 1987:vii).

Development may be viewed as continued improvement that occurs through varied means such as saturation, advancement in knowledge and skills, collaboration, expansion, evolvement and progression. It is the reinforcement and interaction of three action thrusts - induction, renewal and redirection that make development the appropriate designation of continuing improvement (Burke 1987).

However, when discussing support for teacher development, care must be taken to ensure that teacher professional development is not promoted, nor perceived from a narrow, prescriptive perspective as being only sporadic inservice, training or random university course work (Carson 1995; Sachs 1997). This particularly pertains to instances when teacher development is extensively promoted within the context of educational reform. The enforced dimension may carry "a great deal of negative undertone" when it is implied as a process "done to teachers," so as to improve certain "deficit" aspects of their practice (Clark 1992:75). Indeed, ultimately, that responsibility for development must rest with the teacher (Tom 1987; Everett 1997).

This issue warrants recognition, as teacher development involves a process of self-understanding, which is grounded in the life of the teacher (Connelly and Clandinin 1990; Kelchtermans 1993). As such, it is considered to involve far more than the acquisition and development of knowledge and skills (Beattie 1995; Hargreaves and Fullan 1997). Development is viewed as a process of growing into the social role of teaching, in a manner, which enhances the self and others. However, this view tends to raise concerns that teacher self development may hold the risk of being politically naive (Hargreaves 1994). Teachers may not be cognisant of potentially worthwhile information that could extend the choices, contingencies and options that are available (Hargreaves and Fullan 1992; Goodson 1992). Moreover, the teacher's awareness of controlling outside forces may be impeded without due consideration to the broader socio-cultural contexts (Popkewitz 1998). This in turn may lead to bureaucratic procedures of technical control (Holmes 1989; Hargreaves and Fullan 1992). There is also concern that promoting reflection on personal images of teaching and learning, as entities unto themselves, may rapidly degenerate personal practical knowledge into "particular and parochial language" (Hargreaves 1994:74). Hence, professional development must involve "more than experience itself" (Day 1994:110).

This is the position taken within *Brisbane Catholic Education* with self-directed professional learning strongly advocated and promoted in its policies (Everett 1997). An independent survey among stakeholders within *BCE* concerning their perceptions about teacher professional development (Crowther and Postle 1994) indicates a prevailing view that it is a personal responsibility. This finding is interpreted as being "alarming" (Day 1994:124). However, the point must be made that self-directed professional development does not presume empty personal freedom, which is divorced from renewal directed through school or system priorities (Everett 1997: 53).

This position suggests that teachers have not only a professional and moral obligation to develop professionally, but to do so in a manner that contributes to the professional milieu, which nurtures development. This is necessary, for

teachers are at “the heart of the educational process,” and as such stand at “the interface between the transmission of knowledge and values” (Day 1994:108).

### **2.2.2 The Moral Purpose of Teaching**

Teaching is a helping profession and as such a moral one (Tom 1987; Buchmann 1993). Morality concerns values that underscore decisions for supposedly better alternatives. It also presumes ethical judgement and behaviour, which operate from principles of respect for the rights and interests of others (Buchmann 1993; Haynes 1998). “A teacher is one who helps to shape what a person becomes, so the moral good of every learner is of fundamental importance in every teaching situation” (Sockett 1993:13). It is this respect that defines the moral sphere (Kohlberg 1981 in Haynes 1998). In Catholic Schools, this must be authentic and relevant, with all aspects of school life supposedly governed by gospel values (*Brisbane Catholic Education* 1996). The operating principles of social justice, participation, stewardship and responsiveness are meant to underpin all educational practices and their related challenges (*Catholic Education Council* 1992).

By means of the curriculum and through the ministry for teaching, the Catholic School furthers its mission to be a community whose aim is the transmission of values, and whose work lies in the promotion of a faith-relationship with Christ who gives all meaning to life (*Brisbane Catholic Education* 1996).

This implies that any efforts that support teacher professional development must consider the teacher’s moral purposes as well as content knowledge and pedagogical skills (Day 1994). Indeed, one of the prime concerns for education in the post-modern world is that value-based questions, relating to the “why” surrounding the moral, aesthetic, educational and political issues are often reduced to technical questions, relating to the “how” (Sultana 1995:18). This suggests the need to move beyond views of teaching that come from a technical paradigm, to one that has a more holistic understanding of it, in terms of its moral, emotional and political dimensions. Moral frameworks and micro-political awareness are deemed to be crucially

important in the contemporary fast paced society "where how things *appear* is often accorded priority over how they actually *are*" (Hargreaves 1994:75, author emphasis). This could well apply to political claims of supposed improvements in the quality of educational and student learning outcomes, purported to come as a result of teachers' acquisition of improved knowledge and skills by edict (eg Sullivan 1998).

What is missing in this political rhetoric is any serious consideration that analysis, judgement and moral sensitivity are important qualities of teaching. The interactive relationship between knowledge and practice and the analytic and normative decisions made in teaching demand acknowledgment. For the teacher, making such decisions is not always easy. Trying to act "rightly" often creates tension and may be even more difficult than "performing well" (Buchmann 1993:40). This suggests that teachers must be supported in a manner that enables them to critically consider decisions and actions that are embedded in the normative dilemmas that they repeatedly face in their work. Moral growth may become possible through dialectic reflection on the subjective and objective aspects of understandings that are reached (Haynes 1998).

This also implies the need for teachers to critically reflect on their own underlying assumptions and value systems in terms of decision made and subsequent action taken (Smyth 1995). The provocative suggestion that "the values that govern a decision may be very different from those that announce themselves in the act" (Haynes 1998:10) raises a pertinent issue. From this perspective, it is the moral intention behind deliberative decision-making that assumes importance. It also suggests the need to explicate the intentions of others when faced with pressures for change. This becomes necessary for "moral acts should be justifiable because as a social act they are always negotiable" (Haynes 1998:10). In encouraging teachers to be innovative and self directed, the notion of explicating the intent and considering this against action taken appears plausible.

Professionals do not live and (and improve) their moral lives by simply following their inclinations or being innovative. They must clarify and sort out the contents of their minds to determine what they ought to keep in mind and hold their attention steady in contemplating worthy objects of attachment that provide a generative background for action (Buchmann 1993:7).

This statement illuminates the role that reflection may in have in developing teachers' ability to assume a moral stance. The utilisation of various processes such as personal reflection, collaboration and critical dialogue with others may also enable teachers to be cognisant of the moral intent underscoring decisions made and to critically evaluate actions taken from this perspective (Eraut 1993; Day 1994).

The building of relationships within a community and being of assistance to others is considered to be morally important (Sockett 1993). From this stance, "an ethic of care takes fidelity to persons as primary" (Noddings 1986:510). Attention is directed to issues such as the maintenance of community, the growth of individuals and the enhancement of subjective aspects of relationships, rather than to the subject of themselves. This notion is relevant to this research, as there is growing concern, that the current moves toward curriculum reform have given such high emphasis to cognition that as a result care for persons and respect for other's ideas have been marginalised (Day 1997; Hargreaves 1997). From another dimension, the culture of the professional group context may often define the worth of what is to be learnt and the manner by which it is to be learned (Olsen 1986). Thus, caring brings with it ethical conflicts that do require teachers to make reflectively considered choices for their own practice and whole school renewal. The caution that the "abandonment of caring" may be the "unintended consequence of unconscious conformity to unreflective traditions" is sobering (Colnerud 1997:635).

The eventuality of this happening, however, may be counterbalanced through the development of an ethic of responsibility. This takes further, the notion of care. Care is considered to be more than "a matter of logic or justice", but "a matter of caring within a circle or web of responsibility" (Gilligan in Haynes

1998:20). The morality of responsibility has primary emphasis on nurturing quality relationships that connect teachers to others. This is important, as teaching takes place in a communal world with shared meanings and commitment to values (Hargreaves and Fullan 1998). This gives credence to the view (Everett 1997) that self-directed learning does not mean empty, autonomous, personal freedom.

There is a need to affirm that education is continually about human beings interacting responsibly with each other rather than those with power controlling others or those without power acting like automat with neither time nor incentive to make autonomous decisions (Haynes 1998:2).

It is not within the scope of this review to explore the philosophical theories of ethics. However, a triadic taxonomy of ethics proposed by Haynes (1998) provides insight into how teachers experience tension in making ethical decisions. Whilst Haynes (1998) uses student social dilemmas to contextualise her argument, the ideas that she puts forward hold relevance for other dimensions of teacher decision making. These particularly pertain to politically forced pressures for curriculum change, which impact significantly on the direction of teacher professional learning. The following three aspects of ethics are suggested as being jointly necessary to consider ethical action.

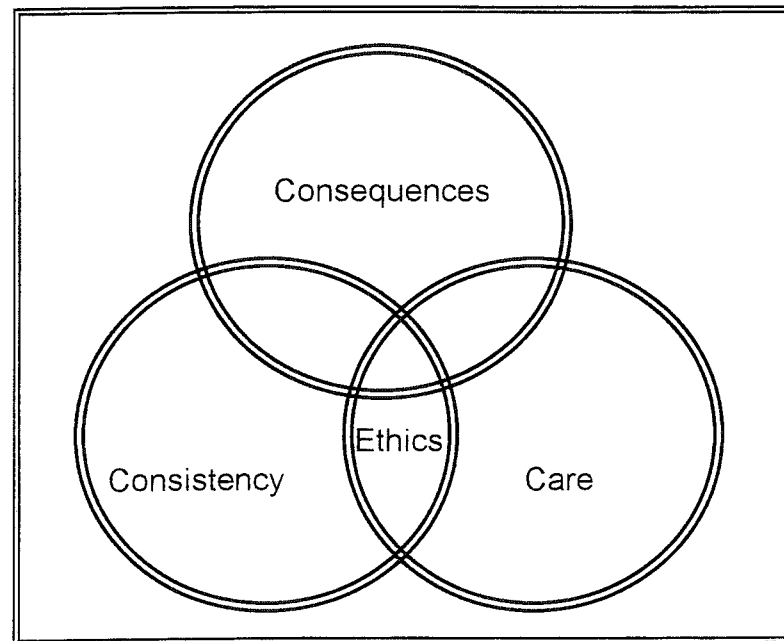
1. Consistency: a "subjective" aspect in which one internalises practice to see it as intentional. Here ethical action is deliberate, chosen, shaped and made justifiable by the personal coherence of internalised rules, meaning and values.
2. Consequences: the "objective" aspects of ethics which sees practice as externalised individual or social behaviour, in terms of its causes and consequences.
3. Care in which the carer attends to the cared for in a special mode of non-selective attention or engrossment which expands outwards across a broad web of relations. It is holistic and responsive making of reciprocal connections in order to help others in a special act of receptivity (Haynes 1998:11-12).

Connections, as well as tensions between each of these aspects exist. They are, as Haynes (1998:25) suggests, "necessary components of a dialogical and relational process of moral growth". The interconnectedness of each of



the aspects for ethical decision making is emphasised using the metaphor of Lucan's (1974) Borromean Knot. This representation is presented in Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2 The Borromean Knot of Ethics (Haynes 1998:26)**



The representation of the Borromean Knot of Ethics assists one to appreciate the need to move from prescriptive measures of accountability and enforced efforts to improve teacher practice. Rather, it affects more negotiated responsibility for the provision of opportunities for students to engage in quality learning. What must be emphasised is that any decisions reached must first and foremost consider the needs of the students. The students' best interests must be the focus of dialogue in debates on educational issues. This necessitates movement beyond ideologies, to the development of a critical understanding of and an appreciation for the complexity of teaching and learning. This gives strong credence to the call to integrate the promotion of the ethical dimension of teaching into efforts that support teacher professional development (Colnerud 1997).

The autonomy of the self, not only in teaching is always tightly bound up with justice for each individual, the knowledge of the consequences of one's actions and solitude for the other.

Teachers can exercise professional judgement and provide a moral model for students if they are aware of these three aspects of ethics (Haynes 1998:170).

If moral purpose has an inherent theme of change and improvement through ongoing renewal, then teachers may find increased scope to become agents of student change (Day 1994). This is important, as the continued enhancement of student learning is recognised as being at the core of teacher development (*Brisbane Catholic Education* 1998 a). Consequently, the development of moral responsibility may enable teachers to be astute to their students' needs, to be professionally accountable and to make conscious efforts in relation to ongoing professional development. Moreover, it may assist the teacher to assume an ongoing, generative approach to change that requires different types of learning for different purposes,

### **2.2.3 Kinds of Learning**

Teacher change is considered to be a necessary outcome of authentic professional development. However, this is not predictable as it is dependent upon past personal and professional experiences, disposition, willingness, abilities and the social context (Day 1994). This is exemplified in the findings from a Queensland research project into the acquisition of teachers' professional knowledge (Burroughs-Lange et al. 1994:56). The research concludes that teacher education needs to exist as a continuum, which engenders competence. Therefore, different kinds of learning would be appropriate for different purposes at different times throughout the career (See Section 2.6).

As the research scrutinises the reflective processes in relation to the professional development of the Advanced Skills Teachers, it becomes useful to identify and to make distinctions between three types of learning, namely specific learning, general learning and developmental learning (Gear, McIntosh and Squires 1994). Specific learning relates to a specific case or identified need arising from particular aspects of the curriculum, or a particular group of students. General learning has greater focus on pedagogy and changes in curriculum. This is necessary, as teaching must be relevant

to the students' world (Hargreaves 1994). Developmental learning is suggested as evolving well beyond the initial problem and may take new and unanticipated directions through ongoing innovative efforts. Thus, it involves deliberative inquiry and requires reflective dialogue and action. It is described as having the potential to be "dynamic, progressive and cumulative" (Candy 1997:14). Whilst developmental learning may or may not be self-initiated, it does become self-directed.

As teachers engage in different kinds of learning, it is feasible to assume that the context of teaching provides a strong focus, as well as a condition, for efforts to improve the quality of teaching (Hargreaves and Fullan 1992). Thus, when considering the kinds of learning teachers need, teacher development and educational change, context must assume importance. Context encompasses the culture of teaching and the immediate and broader social context in which the teachers' work is situated (Goodson 1997). Contextual circumstances would influence the kind of learning teachers engage in for specific purposes. Indeed, in the implementation process, the teacher would adapt its essence to his/her particular context. From another dimension, the context could also have either a positive or debilitating effect on the effectiveness of professional development. It may also be highly influential to the teachers' development of a moral stance in terms of the ethical dimensions of care, consistency and consequences (Haynes 1998) that were previously discussed and which are represented in Figure 2.2.

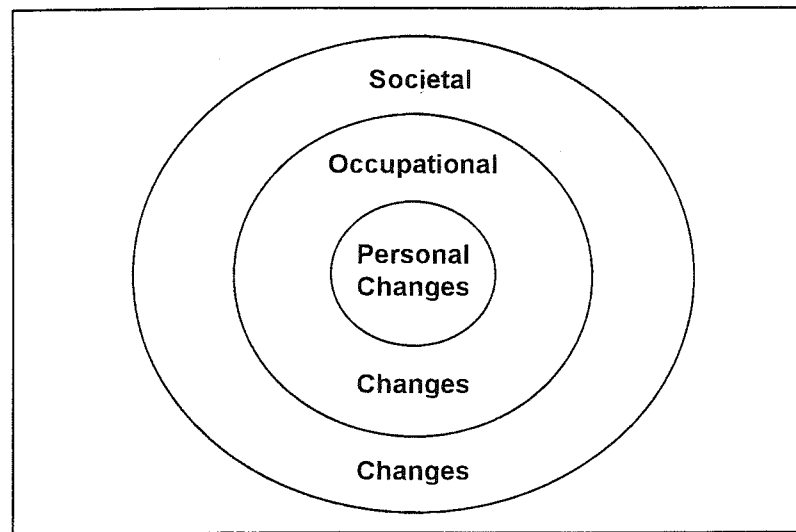
As change is one of the few "constants" in life (Houston and Clift 1990:219), it must be recognised that teachers face various pressures for change from different dimensions throughout their professional lives. The quality of education could perhaps be enhanced if attention is directed away from factors that initiate change and focussed on principles that support teachers and make it possible for them to be life-long learners (Sherin 1997; Franke, Carpenter, Fennema, Ansell & Behrend 1998). This presents a challenge to recognise the need to find a balance between personal, school and system professional development priorities.

### 2.2.4 Pressures for Change

In education today, finding that balance is important, as there is a sense of urgency for change that has come largely as a result of technological advances and the impact of global societal transformation. "There have been such huge changes and advances in the past few years that anybody who is prepared as a professional cannot be considered to be prepared in any final sense, but must continue to go on learning throughout his or her professional life" (Candy 1997:12). Moreover, heavy demands continue to be placed on the teacher for accountability for student cognitive learning, as well as the development of social skills and values (Wiltshire et al. 1994; Macpherson 1994). The metaphor for change, of "turning over a new leaf" (McCullough 1997:9), to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, provides an image of a hope-filled future. It is claimed that such images could be effective in developing a meaningful vision for renewal or for radical, holistic reform. However on the down-side, they may "idealise the future" and "dismiss or telescope problems of the past" with simplistic solutions (McCullough 1997:19). Thus, there can be a tendency to "build castles in the air that contrast starkly with the intractable dilemmas of the imperfect present" (McCullough 1997:17). This then suggests that in efforts toward change and renewal, a need exists to connect with the past, and plan for the future in a positive, yet critically reflective way whilst in the present. Consideration of the "genealogies of context" (Goodson 1997:42) would be useful. Practices could be critically evaluated and alternatives explored in terms of their contextual appropriateness and relevance.

Change is essential for growth and development, as it exerts pressure, which demands and forces new learning, be it self initiated, circumstantial or imposed. The conception that pressure for learning may come from personal, occupational or societal sources can tend to be dismissed or overlooked in the context of imposed reform. The complexity of teacher development, in relation to the various change pressure sources that teachers face is visually represented in Figure 2.3.

**Figure 2.3 Continuing Learning Pressures (Candy 1997:12, adapted from Wentz and Harrison 1994)**



This figure illustrates the need for different types of learning in response to pressure sources that would be required throughout the career. Personal dimensions may encompass changes as a consequence of teaching a particular year level, different groups of students, composition of classes, school transfer, career direction and lifestyle. Occupational change may be enforced as a result of changes in school administration, policies, the curriculum and organisational matters. The impact of Australian and world wide societal forces also results in pressures for change (Candy 1997).

Using the representation of the above three circles, Candy (1997:12) explains that if each of the three circles had a common pivotal point, with each rotating around a shared axis, then any specific kind of learning might occur, when different pressures line up. This representation emphasises that teachers may need different modes of professional development, for different kinds of learning (Gear et al. 1994), which respond to particular pressure sources for change. Emphasis is placed on the need for individual teacher effort as well as for school, system and profession wide efforts; in relation to responding to the changing needs inherent in education. The image of each of the pressures for change sharing a rotating axis highlights the impact that societal changes may have on both the occupational and personal life of teachers. This also facilitates a better understanding of how imposed reform

may affect those within school communities. Moreover, it gives credence to the claim that teachers need to understand the genesis of the reforms (Proudford 1988), as well as the political motivation and forces, which underscore and drive them (Smyth 1995; Popkewitz 1998).

Such suggestions appear credible, when considering how Candy's (1997:12) representation of the three pressures for change - societal, occupational and personal - may well line up and converge. The understanding of this phenomena could empower those in school communities to make informed, critical decisions concerning renewal, without individuals feeling that they are "helpless, as the puppets of a greater force", or "the embattled victims of bureaucratic and technical control" (Apple and Juneck 1992:20). Knowing the pressures and reflecting on the ethical aspects of consequences, consistency and care (Haynes 1998) may enable ethical decisions to be made. This would direct attention to principles that support their learning needs as life long learners, rather than on factors that initiate change. Indeed, it may well promote more of an emancipatory approach to educational policy change that is becoming necessary in contemporary education.

### **2.2.5 Professional Development and Curriculum Reform**

This perception appears rather plausible, when considering the moral nature of teaching and the notion of teachers as agents of student change. However, teachers need to develop skills in the use of analytic tools related to "curricular commonplaces of subject matter, learners, and the social milieu" to assist them to engage in curriculum decision-making (Ben-Peretz 1990:6-7). As well, a dynamic view of subject matter that accents that "bodies of knowledge are in a constant flux, growing and changing" (Phillips and Soltis 1985:59) becomes crucial. What is needed is an interactive stance that regards curriculum content and the learner as being far more than "simply two limits which define a single process" (Dewey 1964:11). This could enable the making of ethical, informed decisions in terms of working with or rejecting imposed reforms. In the implementation process, the teachers' rejections of any change or adaptations of the essence of the particular reform/s to

specific classroom contexts would then be based on critical awareness of the curricular commonplaces (Goodson 1992).

This is important as it must be noted that legislation only provides a framework for educational improvement. For, "if a teacher "can't or won't do it, then it simply can't or won't be done" (Hargreaves and Evans 1997:30). This was also recognised in the *UNESCO Report on Education for the Twenty-First Century*, which states that "no reform can succeed without the co-operation and active participation of teachers" (Delors 1998:29). Essentially then, it is the teachers who are the "indispensable agents of educational change" (Fullan and Hargreaves 1996). This then provokes response to the contentious question of curriculum ownership:

Teachers are, whether the government wishes it or not, front line operators in the construction and development about curriculum discourse. The debate over what shall constitute the curriculum at any moment cannot proceed without them. Teachers are inevitably, whether they wish it or not, caught up in the continuous struggle to define and redefine relationships between certain forms of power and certain forms of knowledge which shape our conceptions of the past, of the present and of the future (Bates 1991 in Macpherson 1994:49).

Thus, the centrality of the teacher in reformulating the curriculum and as curriculum decision-makers cannot be ignored. Consequently, as teaching has a strong moral dimension, implications of a moral order, with regard to teacher decision-making need to be further understood in terms of the genesis of the reforms (Proudford 1998) and the genealogies of context (Goodson 1992). Moreover, the possible implications that any decision-making may have for the students must be critically considered.

The current curriculum reforms come as a consequence of the globalisation of world markets and the rapid use of new technologies. These have contributed to moves to make schooling more vocationally oriented (Billett 1998). Governments have mandated policy processes in many Western countries, in attempts to centralise control of the curriculum. In Australia, running concurrent with these efforts, have been moves by the State

government to devolve responsibility relating to curriculum decision making at the local level (Macpherson 1994; Proudford 1995). This has become problematic as teachers have been forced to deal with contradictory mandates with inadequate levels of support (Macpherson 1994; Proudford 1995; Groundwater-Smith 1998). Moreover, any devolution of decision making responsibility to the local level appears to have been in name only, as funding, support structures and time for teacher professional development have been limited (Macpherson 1994). What becomes concerning is that this current state of affairs appears to be consistent with the findings of an earlier study relating to teacher change and curriculum implementation in Queensland schools (*Ministerial Consultative Council on Curriculum* Bailey, Berrell and Gibson, 1991:49-51). These findings indicate that major barriers to change and curriculum decision-making are the lack of time, lack of established processes for professional development and limited incentive, due to the perceived hierarchal structures and role/task clarification.

Thus, it appears that little has changed apart from the intensification of the teacher's work, as they face a multitude of changes (Hargreaves 1997) and paradoxes relating to pedagogy, assessment and reporting and the implementation of new syllabuses in the Key Learning Areas. It becomes useful to explore some of the varied conceptions as to what constitutes the curriculum, as the philosophical stance taken would also influence the view of the teacher's role in curriculum decision-making (Macpherson 1994). The *Australian Curriculum Studies Association* (1992:1) provides a definition of curriculum as "the product of social, historical, political and economic forces" which involves "the selection, interpretation, representation and assessment of culturally based knowledge, skills and values." Within the report, *Shaping The Future* (Wiltshire et al. 1994), curriculum is considered as "the totality of the experiences provided by the school for its students" (Wiltshire et al. 1994:15). Moreover, key elements in curricular considerations are identified as the primacy of values and the centrality of knowledge (Wiltshire et al. 1994:19-21). Another more flexible perspective that addresses the dimensions of context, issues, conceptions and practice in relation to curriculum is provided by Macpherson (1994:54).



Curriculum is a praxis, a dynamic interplay of theoretical concepts and professional work within a critically reflective mind set. As a praxis, curriculum has no particular starting point, it is a constantly –evolving and living organism made up of an interacting set of ideas, people, space, time and resources. It is the set of learning environments to which learners have access; of learning experiences which learners experience; and of learning outcomes which learners achieve, all within the immediate contexts of an individual teacher's (or curriculum practitioner's) and an institution's mission/policy/vision (including its organisational arrangements) as well as the broader contexts of community and society.

This “inside-out” perspective on curriculum appears to represent much of the contemporary curriculum literature, which gives emphasis to reflective teaching and a learner centred view of curriculum (eg. Clandinin and Connelly 1995; Beattie 1997). It is interactive, dynamic and constantly evolving in order to optimise learning opportunities for all students (Macpherson 1994). As such, the curriculum responds to the needs and interests of the students and is relevant to life in society.

This presents a challenge, for as Haseman (1999) points out, “life outside school is seldom like school assignments and never like the single correct answers to problems encountered on a multiple choice test”. The need to make the curriculum more relevant to the students is highlighted in the report to *UNESCO* (Delors 1998 22-23). The report recommends that education for the twenty-first century must give emphasis to the following four pillars of life long learning - learning to live together; learning to know; learning to do; learning to be. This indicates that teachers need to find ways to support students in their cognitive development, as well as in their social, moral, emotional and spiritual growth (Treston 1995; Adalbjarnardottir and Selman 1997).

Thus, the need for ethically responsible decision-making is emphasised. The suggestion inherent in the literature for teachers to tell the story of the curriculum from the perspective of their lived reality is particularly relevant to this research (Macpherson 1994; Beattie 1995). Through such activity, teachers may develop skills and processes to actively participate in curriculum decision-making (Sachs 1997; Groundwater-Smith 1998).

It is only as teachers are put in their place in a positive sense that we will begin to understand the complexities of curriculum-decision making in which teachers as curriculum practitioners engage. It is only when we begin to understand these complexities that we will have a strengthening bond between the rhetoric of curriculum policy (as seen in the national agendas) and the reality of curriculum practice (Macpherson 1994:50).

System efforts toward promoting the implementation of *Choosing Our Future* initiatives (Brisbane Catholic Education 1995) have prioritised supporting teacher professional development in relation to School Program Development. This direction came in response to the following extract from *Shaping our Future* (Wiltshire et al. 1994:197). "The school-based curriculum model for program writing should be retained, but should respond to comprehensive and definitive centrally accredited syllabus documents". However similar moves elsewhere raise questions as to whether teachers are being deskilled to become technical implementers of government based policies and narrowly defined syllabuses (Macpherson 1994).

*Shaping the Future* (Wiltshire et al. 1994) and in response *Choosing Our Future* (BCE), emphasises student development of knowledge and skills to shape the future through a curriculum, which promotes self-directed life long learning. However, the centralised approach to curriculum development, in response to the needs of business and industry, that places emphasis on the assessment of predetermined outcomes, may be at odds with this intent, if implementation assumes a technical aura (Sachs 1997; Proudford 1995). Thus, caution is required to ensure that school development plans and programs actually do assist the teacher. There is a risk that these may turn "the passion of teachers' purposes" into "rigid planning formulas" (Wallace 1991 in Hargreaves 1997:107). This would be unfortunate as it is often the teachers' developing knowledge about their students and their own intuitive understandings and ideas that become most influential to their planning approach (Meiers 1996; Brisbane Catholic Education Convocation 1998). Research by Hargreaves (1997:109) with a sample of teachers, who keep current with modern educational trends, concludes that teachers do not plan in

a linear, lock step way. Rather, they plan flexibly, seek ideas and at times input from others and then refer back to the desired outcomes as a general checklist.

Within the context of this research, it is necessary to explore the notion of outcome based assessment and reporting, as this is a curriculum initiative that the Advanced Skills Teachers have faced as a pressure for change.

At all levels of the education system teachers are being challenged to attend closely to assessment and reporting procedures - to assess students against a wide range of learning outcomes, to monitor student progress against developmental frameworks, and to provide evidence supporting their judgement of student achievement (Forster 1998:1).

Within the teaching profession and the wider community, there is little doubt that there is heightened awareness of the complex lines of accountability associated with the assessment and reporting of student learning outcomes (Meiers 1996). Indeed, moves to the use of outcomes and performance assessments in Australia reflect the educational trend throughout the Western world. It has been claimed that there are a number of unanswered questions about performance assessments and their implications for teaching and learning (Borko, Mayfield, Marion, Flexer and Cumbo 1997). Outcome based assessment and reporting involves the dual processes of describing student outcomes in terms of the learning that students should demonstrate as a result of planned learning experiences (*Education Queensland* 1996). This is achieved through development of accountability mechanisms, which directly reflect student performance on those outcomes (Willis and Kissane 1997:1).

In Queensland, frameworks are structured to address issues such as comparability and consistency within and between all schools in terms of a common standard. This requires common language for reporting student achievement of a common body of content knowledge that students typically have opportunities to learn through Years 1 to 10 (*Education Queensland* 1996). The outcomes based approach holds promise for more student-centred, inquiry based learning that is relevant (Griffin 1997). However, this becomes difficult to achieve, when outcome based approaches in the form of

assessment and reporting frameworks are super-imposed on existing objective based syllabus documents (Carr 1996 b; Hanifin 1998). History reveals that this became the case in Queensland, with the key learning areas of English and Mathematics (*Queensland School Curriculum Council* 1997). Compounding this difficulty was the introduction of outcome based frameworks occurring simultaneously with the introduction of state wide testing. This became problematic due to what appeared to be contradictory mandates (Proudford 1995). Moreover, when the use of outcome based reporting frameworks were first being promoted, teachers within *Brisbane Catholic Education* were also endeavouring to implement the 'new' English syllabus (1994), along with other programs.

What is most needed for successful implementation of a new syllabus, especially one that involves a major paradigm shift, is long-term consistency of support. This cannot be provided if systems are trying to implement programs based on conflicting paradigms, however good each the programs is in its own right. It is asking too much of teachers to expect them to implement several assessment programs at the same time when these programs are not in total accord (Carr 1996 b:41).

*Student Performance Standards* (SPS) in English and Mathematics were adapted from the *National Statements and Profiles* (1994) to operationalise the *National Goals of Schooling*. In 1995, *Education Queensland* introduced the trial use of *Student Performance Standards in Mathematics*. The reports of teacher stress, due to heavy workloads and the speed of change, as well as confusion caused by the apparent mismatches between the syllabus and SPS documentation, resulted in intervention by the *Queensland Teachers' Union*. This, along with a change in government saw SPS, being put on hold, whilst its implications were explored by the newly formed *Queensland School Curriculum Office* (1996). Subsequently, the SPS framework was streamlined to provide more holistic statements of expected student achievement. The intent was to provide teachers with greater freedom with regards to practice and reporting. This framework is now referred to as *Queensland Levels of Student Performance*.

*Brisbane Catholic Education* prioritised the introduction of SPS for Yrs 4-10, as continuation of the school renewal process in English (*Brisbane Catholic Education* 1995). Mathematics and Religious Education followed (cf Figure 1.1). Teachers of Yrs 1-3 did not use the SPS frameworks. Instead, they referred to the developmental phases of the *Early Years Continua*. This appeared to be a more effective way of mapping data that were indicative of students' progress in literacy and numeracy, in order to identify areas in need of further support.

The experience of working with the implementation of these initiatives suggests that teachers need tangible support and time to rethink and to reflect on priorities for classroom assessment. "Expecting teachers to teach cognitively using complex authentic assessments without support will not lead to desired outcomes" (Borko et al. 1997:276). Within *Brisbane Catholic Education*, teacher professional development activities that support these initiatives include whole system inservice, use of the Key Teacher model cluster meetings, networks, seminars and curriculum support at the school and classroom level.

A review of SPS conducted by the *Office of the School Curriculum Council* (1998) indicates that teachers in Brisbane Catholic Education experienced a greater sense of confidence and security concerning the implementation of outcomes based assessment and reporting than did their colleagues in other sectors. This may have been partially due to the clear connection made between previous curriculum reform initiatives and new syllabus development (*Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council* 1998).

*The Brisbane Catholic Education Teacher Convocation Report* (BCE 1998), however indicates that some teachers have experienced feelings of stress due to the multiplicity of changes and excessive paper work relating to planning assessment. The report revealed that the greater majority of teachers prefer to focus more on teaching and student learning, rather than on rigid planning and comprehending the terminology within the Student

Performance Standards framework (SPS) and the Queensland Levels of Student Performance (QLSP) assessment frameworks.

A national study conducted by *The Australian Council of Educational Research* (1997), into the use of standardised frameworks identifies the following as essential pre-conditions and factors for successful implementation:

- congruence of the state or territory's curriculum to the version of the profiles with which teachers have been issued
- teachers' belief that the profiles approach is "there to stay" in their system and school
- presence of a "teacher leader" within their school
- sufficient time for teachers individually and in collegial groups, to talk through necessary changes
- useability of documentation from the system
- reluctant and tardy recognition of teachers' professional work and efforts
- teachers' age, pedagogic confidence, training and sense of trust in their colleagues
- a school's population and community support
- how much flexibility teachers perceive is possible or allowed them in their interpretation of the profiles in relation to all stages of the teaching and learning process, including assessment and reporting.

Moreover, the national trial into the use of an outcomes approach indicates that a paradigm shift is necessary, in relation to how teachers assess, record and report student achievement (ACER 1997). As this process is "complex", changing to an outcomes philosophy is "difficult and fundamental" (Willis and Kissane 1997:6). Problems are intensified as the conceptualisation of outcomes based education (OBE), brings forth many interpretations, which influence the intentions of stakeholders at different levels of the education system (Griffin 1997:1). The paradoxical nature of outcomes is captured in the following extracts expressing different viewpoints, presented by *The*

*Australian Council of State School Organisations and Australian Parents Council* (1996:4).

On the one hand, "outcomes" as descriptions of intended and actual learning can help recognition of achievement and where this fits on an individual learning continuum... Their implementation can lead to procedures, which reflect the integrity of the curriculum, enhance student engagement and help parents to remain informed about children's progress.

On the other hand, the "outcomes" approach can lead to the breaking down of complex learnings into a myriad of disconnected parts, all of which require assessing. When this form of "outcomes" is injected into state-wide curriculum syllabuses, significance is lost, over-assessing occurs, and teaching is prescribed, rather than informed by the child's needs and the teacher's experience.

Investigative studies into the implementation of outcome frameworks (*Queensland School Curriculum Council* 1998; Griffin 1997; *Australian Council for Educational Research* 1997) reflect a common concern, that as a consequence of the introduction of outcome based frameworks, learning is becoming fragmented. Findings suggest that teachers are over assessing and overusing checklists, thus giving emphasis to "atomistic approaches to every outcome" (Griffin 1997:9). This unfortunately, represents an "impoverished" view of outcome based education (Willis and Kissane 1997:30). Over assessment continues to be problematic as teachers grapple with the frameworks (Griffin 1997; Hanifin 1998). Although the rhetoric of outcomes based assessment and reporting reflects accountability and supposed quality learning, that quality is often narrowly defined as to imply its possible negation.

Knowledge is often spoken of as an industry. It is no longer acceptable for teachers to speak of the "unknowable" consequences of teaching and learning. The output is to be measurable in quantifiable terms, hence the demand for precise level-related outcomes (Eltis 1995, in Groundwater-Smith 1998:33).

Whilst many systems appear to consider that outcome based implementation is occurring, research by *ACER* (1997) indicates that classroom approaches do not appear to be consistent with such an approach. These reports suggest

that there is inadequate support to promote understanding about the nature of changing to an outcome-based approach for all stakeholders in schools.

This gives credence to the view that system-wide initiatives may have "overt or covert" aims of teacher professional development (Burroughs-Lange et al. 1994:47). At the classroom level, the main focus for teacher development appears to promote awareness of how to provide opportunities for the students' demonstration of specifically predetermined knowledge and skills (Meiers 1996). There is concern from proponents of outcome based education (eg. Slavin 1994; Griffin 1997) that the use of outcomes has inherent dangers in becoming behaviourist in approach, if some intangible human aesthetics that cannot be observed or measured, are missing. This may well represent "an impoverished view of learning, because performances are a means through which competency is inferred" (Willis and Kissane 1997:10). The value of incidental learning appears to be down played and that multi-dimensional, constantly evolving curriculum, which represents a "dynamic interplay" between the interacting set of "ideas, people, space, time and resources," set within a critically reflective paradigm" (Macpherson 1994:54) may be missed.

However, this result need not occur, if assessment using an outcomes approach is focussed on how the student has changed as a result of learning. From this perspective, the teacher becomes the facilitator, through the establishment of an inquiry approach to learning. This requires definite moves away from traditional timetabled, whole class instructional approaches. Focusing on key outcomes may help to free the curriculum and to streamline instructional strategies for enhanced student learning (Griffin 1997; Willis and Kissane 1997).

Problems arise as an outcomes approach assumes that a generic set of outcomes is able to be defined and interpreted in a similar way by all stakeholders (Proudford 1998). This becomes quite problematic, when these outcomes are not developed by the teacher to suit the needs of the particular learning context, or a specific group of students. The difficulty is exacerbated



when involvement is imposed and there is a lack of ownership at the school level.

Imposed reform may, however, provide a catalyst for further development and learning. A study into expert teachers' perceptions of their own professional development (Burroughs-Lange et al. 1994:39-52) suggests that teachers are able to engage in higher order learning, as they make connections to their personalised knowledge. This involves being uncomfortable with uncertainty as they adapt what they do and explore alternatives. For some, writing school based programs, also appears to provide the catalyst for more higher ordered learning. The findings indicate that teachers re-evaluate their teaching philosophy, when taken for granted views and procedures are challenged. This often requires small-scale changes and a phase of trial and error. The conclusions drawn from this study appear to be consistent with the research of Huberman (1993) (See Section 2.5.4). Both studies indicate that teachers rarely make explicit reference to political influences and parallel little evidence of reflection at the critical level. Rather, reflective activity appears to be at the "what works level" (Burroughs-Lange et al. 1994: 57). This conclusion concurs with the findings of more recent research (Proudford 1998:139-149) that investigates some Queensland teachers' experiences in relation to the use of outcomes based assessment and reporting (SPS) and the development of school programs. This research also concludes that little time is made available for teacher reflection and confirms the general need for appropriate structures to be in place to promote it (Houston and Clift 1990; Day 1993; Beattie 1997).

However, other studies into reform implementation in Australia (Sachs 1997; Groundwater-Smith 1998) conclude that teachers within school communities are better able to take responsibility for their own learning, when they assume a critical stance. This might occur through a process of inquiry and reflection within the school itself. One study (Groundwater-Smith 1998:31-33) utilises a facilitated practitioner approach to inquire into how some teachers in Queensland schools deal with curriculum reform - namely student learning outcomes (SPS). Talking circles that give priority to reflective

dialogue were convened locally and nationally. Findings highlight the need for shared ownership of initiatives involving change at the school level; communication with all members of the community; time and scope to experiment and to dialogue. The need to go slowly is also emphasised (Groundwater-Smith 1998:31). In summary, this research confirms the view that teachers do have the intellectual capabilities of transforming the conditions of schooling, given the appropriate opportunities.

There is growing concern that the national agenda does not provide optimum conditions for such opportunities (Sachs 1997), nor does it address the impasse at a contextual level, which comes with teachers viewing themselves as "just curriculum implementers" (Macpherson 1994:54). Rather than allowing teachers to make curriculum decisions, the current context is advanced as an opportunity for teachers to be empowered to engage in curriculum decision-making. This does not occur by prescriptive means. This could be realised through providing conducive conditions that nurture teacher development (Fullan 1992:14). These would free time, create space and provide opportunity for teachers to critically reflect, as they engage in curriculum decision-making in their own classrooms, or within the school, the system or the wider community. Indeed, "time is an inescapable bartering component of teaching and learning" (Woodilla, Boscarden and Dodds 1997: 296). Thus, time would need to be prioritised for reflective activity.

Moreover, the notion of teachers working from an ethic of moral responsibility (Haynes 1998) would suggest active inquiry into alternative approaches that may enhance the quality of teaching and learning. This provides that sense of hope that is necessary when working through educational reform (Hargreaves 1998). The motivational words of Haseman (1999:9) to teachers working with the new outcomes based syllabus in The Arts, provides incentive to create space and in so doing, to bring the curriculum to life: "So as you embark on your task of curriculum design do so playfully and leave some things provisional, leave room for yourselves and your students to wonder". From this perspective, time becomes a resource that is manipulated into the management of the classroom in efforts to enhance student learning.

The image of “playing” with the curriculum evokes a sense of excitement and anticipation of what might be possible. Thus, critical reflection on the reforms may promote alternative ideas and generative efforts to change. Critique could then be united with the possibility of future action.

### **2.2.6 Implications for the Research**

The literature reviewed thus far indicates that in the fast changing, contemporary world, teachers need to be self directed, life long learners. This is necessary, for teachers have a professional and a moral responsibility to provide quality opportunities for student learning that also nurtures them as life long learners. It has become clear that teacher professional development involves far more than experience itself, or the attendance at sporadic inservice offerings. Rather, it implies the ongoing development of knowledge and skills throughout the career. The need for self-directed efforts, both individually and as a part of a group becomes particularly evident, when considering the convergence of the pressures for change from the personnel, occupational and societal sources. These are a part of the reality of teaching. Clearly, different kinds of learning would be needed for different purposes. Therefore, when conceptualising teacher professional development, relevant factors such as the stage and life of the career, the needs of the teacher, as well as the classroom, school, system and societal contextual demands deserve consideration.

The moral nature of teaching has implications for the conceptualisation of teacher professional development in its broadest sense. It directs the teachers' making of informed choices in terms of their own professional development, against the many pressure sources for change. This may be achieved through a dialogical process of growth, through critical reflection on underlying assumptions and beliefs, as well as through collaborative interaction with others in the community. Moreover, the notion of ethical decision making through the reflective process, which gives considered attention to the ethical dimensions of care, consistency and consequences (Haynes 1998) of actions in terms of decisions reached and actions taken, appears to be worthwhile. Such activity may enable teachers to accept responsibility for choices made, not only in

terms of their own practice, but also in terms of their professional learning. When considering the complexity of problematic issues that surround the plethora of current curriculum reforms, such principled, directed action both individually and collectively appears to be needed. As change is a constant in life, teachers may then benefit through being alert to opportunities to reflectively consider alternative ways to enhance learning for themselves and in so doing, for those they teach. The promise of a reflective approach for teacher professional development is explored in the following section.

## **2.3 TEACHER REFLECTION**

### **2.3.1 Defining Reflection**

Reflection, like teacher professional development is also a very complex phenomenon. This section therefore, focuses on conceptualising reflection in its broadest sense. This appears to be necessary when considering that the rhetoric of reflection is often used to guise the promotion of politically imposed reforms. In such instances, reflection tends to be narrowly defined in terms of the specific strategies that are purported to promote it. This section attempts to define the meaning of reflection within this research and gain insight into its role in leading teacher development, rather than describe specific strategies that might support it. These will be critically explored and contextualised within the themes that present throughout this review in Section 2.7.

Reflection is often defined as a means of thinking about problems of practice, that leads to "a search for new information" (Dewey 1933, in McMahon 1997:200). However, the question "what is reflective practice?" appears to be consistently posed. It is a term "that is not monolithic" (Johnson 1997:819). It is not unexpected then, that as a concept, reflection is described as "difficult" (Wildman and Niles 1987), "fuzzy" (Tom 1987), "problematic" (Ross 1989), "knotty" (Bullough 1989), "complexing" (Carson 1995) and "slippery and chaotic" (Smyth 1989). Reflection is "a complex thought process that no conclusions can be reached about" (McMahon 1997:211). This becomes

problematic when its rhetoric is associated with the new professionalism and promoted in line with politically imposed curriculum reform.

There is little doubt that tension is compounded by the ambiguity surrounding the term 'reflection', for it can and does signify a wide range of meanings that are embedded in particular philosophies. Thus, it is important to be aware that in promoting reflection, the term will by definition, mean different things for different purposes and settings (Vaughn 1990; McMahon 1997). It appears that some clarity of the meaning of reflection is necessary for those involved in its promotion and for those researching its impact.

Reflective thought was at first, widely proposed to be "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey 1933:9). Another characterisation of reflection is presented as "a process of restructuring a mental representation of experience" (De Jong and Korthagen 1989 in Korthagen 1993:135). Reflection is also considered to be "a specialised form of thinking that is stimulated by surprises or puzzles" (Grimmett 1988:6). A further approach questions any conception of teaching that links reflective activity only with problem solving, "without an unequal understanding of the totality and the unity inherent in the teaching context" (Houston and Clift 1990:212). From an emancipatory or ethical stance, reflection is promoted as a way of thinking about educational matters that involves the ability to make rational choices and to assume responsibility for those choices" (Ross 1987:1). Some critical theorists (Gore and Zeichner 1995; Popkewitz 1998) contend that this must extend to examination of the moral, ethical and political issues that are embedded in one's practice. Another broader view that embraces hermeneutic processes, articulates reflection as "the open active communication channel between the social context and the inner self" (Butler 1992:223). From this stance, reflection is suggested to be "an evaluative dialogue that enriches the self and enhances professional practice" (Butler 1992:223). Thus as a concept, reflection does indeed have "definitions embedded in particular ideologies" (Smith and

Hatton 1992:4). Moreover, it appears that "the language of reflection is central to its practice" (Houston and Clift 1990:210).

This brings forth suggestions of a need to "broaden the spotlight on reflection" and to "contextualise studies into teacher cognitions," to see how its development "fits" into a more general mode of professional learning (Marland 1992:6). From this more holistic perspective, terms such as cognition, metacognition, understanding, constructivism, reflection and purposeful inquiry should not be conceptualised, practised or researched discretely. The plea from Beare (1989:23) a decade ago, for "a new spirit to interpenetrate the whole of school, to infuse the curriculum and to re-connect us toward the basic human activity of creating meanings," continues to be relevant. It raises the critical issue of the need to conceptualise teacher reflection from a broader, more holistic perspective. Rather than perceiving the process of reflection as a "method" or "technique" that one can be trained in to reach a professional standard (*SFT, Education Queensland* 1998), it could be viewed as a developing way of life that enables teachers to attend to the moral implications of their role.

From this perspective, it may offer a worthwhile and continuing means for teachers to take action, in terms of their own development, so as to improve the quality of their teaching. If reflective activity identifies the evolution of the "unknown to the known" (Butler 1996:269), reflection could be identified as a form of transformational learning (Mezirow 1977). Reflective practice then, would be characterised by ongoing growth and change, rather than responses to problematic situations. Therefore, rather than trying to give reflective practice a definitional shape, it may be more relevant "to allow meaning to unfold through one's own reflective work" (Carson 1995:151).

Activity changes the shape and meaning of one's reality (Wheatley 1992:151). "I do therefore I am", therefore, is more real than, "I think therefore I am" (Handy 1997:87). This comment gives emphasis to the argument that reflection, critical awareness or enlightenment on its own is not

sufficient - it must be accompanied by action (Smyth 1987). Informed thought and committed action are linked.

Reflection without action is verbalism, action without reflection is activism {and that we need to} open up dialogue in a way that enables questions to be asked about taken for granted views (Freire 1974:43) {Writer parenthesis}.

Change, be it personally motivated or imposed, brings with it uncertainty and conflict. Dealing reflectively with this conflict may assist us to "learn what our ends and purposes are" (Butler 1992: 225). As uncertainty is not comfortable, the general human tendency is to try to quickly move out of thought confusion (Wheatley 1992:149). However there is no 'quick fix' for systematic reflection does requires time and effort (Wildman and Niles 1987:29). Time, opportunities and support structures are needed to support teachers in the development of skills in reflection, so that they are able to "rethink priorities for practice" (Borko et al. 1997:276). It is claimed that reflective practice requires the development of dispositions of "open-mindedness, whole heartedness and responsibility" (Dewey 1933 cited in McMahon 1997:200). Thus, the development of reflection needs to be couched in a conception of teacher development, which assumes that teachers need to continue to develop technically, cognitively, socially and emotionally throughout their professional life.

### **2.3.2 Levels of Reflection**

This conception of teacher development influences how the teachers' reflective activity might be described. Within the notion of reflection are different levels of reflectivity (Habermas 1971; van Manen 1977). The levels suggested by van Manen (1977) correspond with the associated cognitive interests of three forms of knowledge identified by Habermas (1971). These levels indicate that there are different ways of examining educational phenomena. These are:

- empirical-analytic (technical)
- hermeneutic-phenomenological (interpretative)
- critical theoretical (critical)

Each of the different interests may represent the goal of reflection. This would encompass the purpose and reason for engaging in reflective activity. This could also be identified as the intent for the activity. What must be emphasised, however, is that these levels are not definitive. Whilst the limits of each way of knowing for practical action, does need movement to a higher level, the levels are not mutually exclusive choices (van Manen 1977; Loudon 1992; Butler 1992). "Moving from one orientation to another is usually experienced as a transition between two worlds -a shift from one reality to another" (van Manen 1977:212 cited in Valli 1992:214). It must also be recognised that the level of reflection would be context dependent (Johnson 1997). This notion appears to be influential to the position taken by the *Queensland Catholic Education Commission*.

In essence, all students, staff members and parents associated with a Catholic school live in a culture, which strives to encourage the individual to be autonomous, reflective, goal-oriented and review-conscious. Autonomy in an individual or organisation does not, however, imply acting alone or in isolation. Rather, true autonomy sees the locus of decision as being in the self and acknowledges that decision-making may well encompass the spectrum of action, from solitary to highly collaborative. The onus for the decision rests with the individual person or organisation who is ultimately responsible for the actions taken (Everett 1997:53).

The level and quality of reflective activity demonstrated might be influenced by the stage in the person's life (Huberman 1992; Hatton and Smith 1995). It is also possible and probable that teachers would consciously or unconsciously utilise different modes of reflection for different purposes in the course of their day to day practice. It also needs to be considered that various types of reflection are actually within domains of thought. Thus, teachers may "articulate reflections that shift from one to the other, indicating multiple types within a single comment" (McMahon 1997:201). This provides a caution for those researching the impact of a reflective approach, to ensure that the spectrum of reflection is discerned and the intent behind the movement to different levels is acknowledged.



A collaborative research project (Louden 1992:209-210) that inquires into the reflective activity of one teacher over a year, reveals that distinctions between interests and form are not clearly defined. One interest may be dominant without others being abandoned. This research also concludes that there might even be movement from one form to another within a single conversation. Rather than connect a single interest with a single form, it may be more appropriate to consider the range of interests and forms as being complementary. It appears that each of the interests may be served by each of the forms (Louden 1992). Therefore, when considering the current Queensland (and world-wide) political interest in promoting teachers as reflective professionals (eg. *SFT, Education Queensland* 1998), it becomes useful to briefly peruse these level categories and interests.

### **2.3.3 Interests of Reflection**

Reflection with a technical interest could be described in terms of control by discovering or attending to rule like regularities in an objective world (van Manen 1977). It is considered to be a powerful force in education. In the current context of educational reform, the technical interest stands behind much of the political push for the implementation of curriculum changes. Reflection at the technical level has concern with the development of technical skills and technical applications of educational knowledge. There is also fealty within the teacher's practice to some set of predetermined, empirically or theoretically derived standards (Louden 1992:182). Thus, one can begin to understand the political motives behind promoting teacher reflection, under the guise of reform, in moves to centralise control of the curriculum (Macpherson 1994; Sachs 1997; Popkewitz 1997).

Reflection at the interpretive level has its basis in the historical hermeneutic sciences. There is concern with practical control through understanding and communication. Knowledge is regarded as "informing" the teachers' practice as they "deliberate among competing alternatives for action" (Grimmett et al. 1990:22). Reflective activity is focussed on the practical through "analysis and clarification of multiple aspects of experiences" and "decision making is based on curricular commonplaces" (McMahon 1997:200). Reflection at the

interpretative level has a both practical and a personal interest. Each directs considered attention to underlying assumptions of action and the worth of competing educational goals. Reflection with a personal interest connects biography and experience. From the other dimension, reflection with a problematic interest has concern with resolutions of the problems of practice. Indeed research, which has attempted to investigate teacher reflective activity often indicates that teachers tend to reflect at the "what works level" (Burroughs-Lange et al. 1994:54).

The literature reveals that research efforts have tended to focus on either exploring or promoting reflection with attention to either the personal or the problematic interest. Perhaps what is needed is a more reconciling perspective between these interests. This calls for a "broadened sense of purpose, moving from a sole focus on practice to develop theory and research knowledge about the full range of the teacher's working life" (Goodson 1997:42). This may provide insights into how to best support teachers as reflective practitioners, both individually and collectively, in their ongoing quests for growth and renewal.

Reflection at a critical level would involve the consideration of moral, ethical and political meanings behind actions and the social, economic and political conditions of education. It comes from the assumption that reality is socially constructed and that teachers have the power to act, in order to influence the conditions in which they are placed. Critical reflection questions taken for granted thoughts, feelings and actions. It "exposes" the teachers' assumptions and those of others "to constant scrutiny" (Haynes 1998:7). The social conditions in which practices are situated must be also be considered (Gore 1987; Bullough and Gitlin 1995). Without this, teachers could "render themselves incapable of setting or effectively participating in agendas at the macro-level, leaving them for others to complete" (Bottery and Wright 1996: 96). From this perspective, the history and circumstance of the teaching role and the social and cultural contextual aspects are extrapolated through the reflective process (Conle 1997). This holds potential to broaden the teachers' outlook beyond the classroom and school context.

However, time must be prioritised to critically consider the moral, ethical and political implications of politically driven reforms. This is important, as the teacher's reflective awareness of their subjective and social realities may be made more explicit through engagement in critical reflection. Reflection from this perspective is dialectical. Knowledge, drawn from research or practice is used as a source of information to "metaphorically" apprehend and transform practice in the reconstruction of classroom experiences" (Grimmett et al. 1990:22). From this perspective, knowledge is used to transform practice as past understandings are reconstructed, in order to generate new approaches to the problem. It is claimed that the "reflective teacher must have enough intellectual awareness to stand aside from personal subjectivity and analyse the possible different responses to the situation" (Haynes 1998:1). This suggests that the teacher's moral growth is facilitated through ongoing dialectic reflection on the subjective and objective aspects of understanding. Moreover, reflection from a critical perspective moves beyond intellectualising the issues to concrete action for change (Smyth 1989; Crotty 1998).

Other theories that have concern with reflective practice also provide insight into the purposes for reflection. Significant, is Schon's (1983) research that has a practical interest in reflection. Its conclusions challenge the dominant technical rationality associated with professional thinking. This research investigates how professionals across occupations solve problems of practice, ie through reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. It involves observing how unexpected problematic situations are solved and how action is re-thought either "in the stream of the action, or after the action" (Schon 1983:15-16). Reflection-in-action, a phrase coined by Schon (1983) involves hearing or seeing a situation differently. It is limited to the "action present", which is defined as "the zone of time on which action can still make a difference to the situation" (Schon 1983:62). Reflection-in-action is described by Schon (1983:18) as "a reflective conversation within the situation".

When someone reflects-in-action, he/she (sic) becomes a researcher in the practice context. He/she is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case. The (sic) inquiry is

not limited to a deliberation about means, which depends on a prior agreement about ends. He/she (sic) does not keep means and ends separate, but defines them interactively as he/she (sic) frames a problematic situation (Schon 1983:68).

Reflection-on-action, another phrase used by Schon (1987:26-31), is precipitated by an unexpected result during a routine action and takes place after the action. It involves a more deliberative application of thought to a problem in order to create meaning and find new direction. The review of teaching is distanced from the action. This involves the process of "reframing", whereby teachers learn through experience (Schon 1987:32). In terms of action taken to direct teacher professional development, its use can be explained this way.

Reframing facilitates the use of pedagogical knowledge acquired in courses, workshops and conferences. Reframing also mediates between theory and practice, revealing new meanings in theory and new strategies for practice (Russell and Munby 1989:166).

To achieve this, teachers need to raise their intentions and practices to an explicit level through reflective discourse with others. The suggestion by Haynes (1998) that the values that influence decision-making may not always be announced in the act emphasises the need to critically evaluate espoused theory against the action theory. Thus, reflection-on-action may imply inquiry into the schemata, which underscore the intentions for the action. This highlights the value of a reflective approach for the development of moral and ethical responsibility. Reflection on action presents one of a number of types or forms of reflective activity that could be utilised for this purpose.

#### **2.3.4 Forms of Reflection**

Reflection has dimensions of both interest and form (Louden 1992:178-215). Form refers to the characteristics of the reflective act that may be appropriate to situations. The different forms may rely on tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge, or both. The typology of a conceptualisation of reflection, developed by Louden (1992), provides insight into how changes in teachers' understanding and actions may take place. The conceptual framework includes the two complementary dimensions of reflection, referred to as "interest" and "form".

This framework draws on his findings from intense collaborative research with one teacher and is influenced by the research of Habermas (1971) and Schon (1983). It becomes useful to the purpose of this study to explore the forms identified in Loudén's (1992) conceptual framework and to connect these to other relevant literature in this field. These forms are identified as introspection, replay and rehearsal, spontaneity, and inquiry.

#### **2.3.4.1 Introspection**

Introspection involves reconsideration of one's thoughts, feelings and values about some phenomena (Louden 1992). It is a process of internally exploring an issue, in order to clarify meaning in terms of one's own self. This "inward looking perspective may be described "as getting in touch with ourselves" (Beyer 1991:822). This may in turn lead to a change in perspective and more directed principled action. The idea of introspection, as contemplation may be conceptualised as being a quiet absorbed thinking that guides and provides a source of value for one's life.

Contemplation sets aside ties to self-involved willing and feeling, to given ways of thinking and schemes of action, substituting a careful attention that neither exploits the object of thought nor takes it for granted. This process of thinking engages the emotions and the will only in so far as these dispose one towards peace and purity of heart, and help one direct one's attention to worthy objects. Via fidelity – faithfulness to others, and to what there is – truth and goodness converge in a contemplative experience that need not be other-worldly (Buchmann 1993:9).

However, in considering the isolated nature of teacher's work, there is concern for teachers, who are only predisposed to engage in this kind of introspected, personal reflection (Eraut 1993; Day 1994). Not having or making the opportunity to explain or to justify actions and the thinking behind decisions may have less than positive consequences for the teacher and the students. They may, in fact, "hide from themselves" and paradoxically, become "a slave to the system rather than be its master" (Handy 1997:85). Moreover, in considering the moral nature of teaching, actions must be able to be justified with others and negotiated openly. It is claimed that "we can't

discover ourselves by introspection . . . to be shut up in the solitude of one's (own) heart is not something to be desired" (Handy 1997:85).

Students also may suffer, if only the self-interests of the teacher are served (Buchmann 1993; Hargreaves 1997) (cf Section 2.5.5). Whilst introspection often has a personal and practical interest, it may meet a critical interest, if thinking is transformed through confronting any constraining psychological and cultural assumptions relating to some phenomena. Such reflective activity has been identified as a process of "perspective transformation" (Mezirow 1981). Whilst this type of reflection occurs well outside of the action, it can bring one closer to taking action.

#### **2.3.4.2 Replay and Rehearsal**

The reflective forms of replay and rehearsal are also used outside of the action. Teachers may replay events or rehearse alternative courses of action with little conscious effort. However, replay and rehearsal may involve discourse (written or spoken with colleagues) about events, past experiences, values and possibilities for future action. This form of reflection stands some distance from the "stream of action" (Schon 1983; 1985). Some research findings indicate (eg. Louden 1992; Huberman 1992; Borko et al. 1997) that because teaching is so "busy", there is rarely opportunity for teachers to discuss their actions, whilst still in "the action present" (Schon 1983; 1985). Replay and rehearsal could have any one of the different cognitive interests that demonstrate different levels of reflection. For example, if reflection "involves the use of analytical knowledge that directs practice" (Grimmett et.al. 1990:22) or if teaching is reviewed in "comparison to the ends that were sought" (Shulman 1987), then a technical interest would be probable. This may be the case as teachers grapple with the plethora of curriculum changes, and reflect on how closely their actions conform to some external source that has mediated the action. Within the context of this research, examples include some approaches teachers have taken to complete the evaluation sections on unit and class year overviews, which are in line with five part planning framework; the prescriptive use of "handed down" commercially or system produced units of work or the rigid use

of outcome frameworks for planning, assessment and reporting (Hanifin 1998, *BCE Moderation Report* 1998).

A personal interest may be apparent in replay and rehearsal through consideration of one's biography (Clandinin and Connelly 1986 Kelchtermans 1993). This helps to shape understandings about the past, present and future in order to create meaning. Moreover, reflective activity may be centred on critical incidents or critical phases that have impacted significantly on the teacher's life. The telling of stories is encouraged as a means for teachers to recapture events and to learn from the experiences (Fenstermacher 1997; Anderson 1997). Thus, teaching may be understood in terms of its "moral, emotional and political aspects", in order to "move beyond the "rationality of technological views of teaching" (Kelchtermans 1997:125-126). Therefore, the teacher's reflections on his/her autobiography may lead to greater consciousness of the moral and ethical responsibilities associated with teaching (Colnerud 1997; Conle 1997): "A teacher's subconscious ideology becomes an important consideration and bridges the gap between technocratic rationality and critically reflective teaching" (Johnson 1997:820).

The value of sharing stories appears relevant to the current situation where politically imposed top-down initiatives are expected to be handled from the bottom up, in a professional and reflective manner. It has been previously noted that as a consequence, many teachers have indicated that they have felt stress through efforts to cope or to 'get it right' (eg Hargreaves and Fullan 1998; Proudford 1998; *BCE Teacher Convocation* 1998; *BCE Moderation Report* 1998). This indicates that time and space are needed for teachers to reflectively consider experiences and ideas of their own and others. This could be effected through stories, which provide a medium for the reflective forms of replay or rehearsal. However, there must be appropriate conditions, which recognise teachers as learners and support them to be risk takers.

We are great weavers of tales, outdoing one another around the campfire to see which stories best capture our imaginations and the experiences of our lives. If we can look at ourselves truthfully in the light of the fire and stop being so serious about

getting things "right" - as if there were still an objective reality out there- we can engage in life with a different quality and a different level of playfulness (Wheatley 1992:142).

Moreover, the critical interest of replay and rehearsal may become apparent through, for example, consideration of the implications of actions for students and the consideration of moral and ethical consequences (Buchmann 1993; Bullough and Gitlin 1995). The use of stories, which consider the life history and political and social contexts surrounding one's experience may also promote reflection with a critical interest (Carr 1986; Goodson 1992).

#### **2.3.4.3 Spontaneity**

Spontaneity is tacit reflection, or reflection-in-action, which takes place in the "stream of the action" (Schon 1983:62-63). It is essentially, "a seizing of the moment and changing the direction of action" (Schon 1983:62). This process involves spontaneous adaptations to changing circumstances. The teacher spontaneously reads a situation and responds to the students through adjusting to changing circumstances. It is described as "the split-second overt manifestations of a covert dialogue, ongoing between the teachers' knowledge and their actions" (Cole 1987 in Louden 1992:204). In such instances, tacit knowledge is embedded in practice and "the knowing is in the action" (Schon 1983:49). Spontaneity opens possibilities for "choice, the unexpected and for surprise," as "the resultant action, will seldom be precisely what we had in mind" (Dewey 1933 in Green 1987:198). However, once activities become everyday routines, there is a danger that the teacher will no longer think about their actions or the effect that they may be having on themselves or their students. Unconsciously conforming to established routines may lead to burn out and may have less than positive consequences for students (Colnerud 1997).

#### **2.3.4.4 Inquiry**

Inquiry is a form of deliberative reflection that involves movement between collaborative discussion and action. It can be explained this way.

Reflection as a process can be solitary or collaborative, deliberation on the other hand is always collaborative, and



involves sustained interactions and feedback, the constructive criticism, the exchange of values and ideas and the development of shared understandings (Beattie 1997:3).

Inquiry may proceed with a technical, personal or problematic interest and may move between all three levels of reflective activity. The inquiry process may utilise instrumental processes of, for example, action research, narrative inquiry, life history research, and other types of collaborative research (Casey 1995). Deliberative inquiry represents a spiral discovery of meanings through critical reflection, back tracking, review and revision. The process of reflective deliberation involves collaborative, critical discussion and the interchange of viewpoints concerning problematic issues. Within the context of this research, the process of reflective deliberation is used as the Advanced Skills Teachers inquire into a problematic issue, concerning the *Choosing Our Future* curriculum initiatives (BCE) (See Section 3. 6.5).

Reflective deliberation facilitates the examination of social and cultural aspects of teaching. Social self-reflection is advocated as a worthwhile process that promotes the teachers' critical awareness of their practice against values and beliefs that are held and the history and circumstance of their experience. Social reflection may be promoted through convening talking circles (Proudford 1998), networks (Sachs 1997) and a community of learners approach (Bullough and Gitlin 1995; McArdle and Spry 1996). It also may be promoted within the school community through the use of reflective models of professional growth. Models that may promote social reflection through inquiry will be discussed in Section 2.7.

However, the notion of social reflection tends to bring forth some debatable issues that relate to the supremacy of the teacher's voice over formal theoretical knowledge. One argument, representative of highly political, critical theorists, is provided by Popkewitz (1998:8). "Voice naturalises the distinction between state and civil society through the positioning of official knowledge as different from knowledge that is lived". It is also suggested that teachers need access to the academic rhetoric for their own power (eg Carr 1989; Bottery and Wright 1996). From a practical perspective, proponents of collaborative inquiry

(eg Louden 1992; Clark 1992; Bradbeer 1994), assert that practice must be studied in its own terms, rather than in terms of theory generated in the disciplines and then applied to practical situations. The development of the teachers' voice is also considered as being crucial to the development of curriculum practices and programs, professional development and educational change (Macpherson 1994; Sachs 1997). However, the value that is placed on teacher voice may well depend on the underlying assumptions of the interpretations presented (Hargreaves 1996:12). This suggests that strategies need to be developed, which acknowledge and advance the knowledge and capabilities of teachers in efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The issue of voice is of major significance in teachers' ability to engage in the critical analysis of the social, cultural, gender and knowledge hierarchies which shape their lives and those of their students and which are reflected in the school curriculum and in the ways in which they enact it (Beattie 1997:10).

There does, however, lie a balance between the two apparent extremes of teacher personal knowledge and formal theoretical knowledge. Rather than competing for supremacy of one form of knowledge over the other, can legitimately be given credence as contributing to teacher development, teacher power and effective practice.

There is also concern in relation to inquiry, as to whether the end in view of reflection is emancipatory, educational and social change, or if indeed inquiry, under the guise of action research is technical in nature and being used to suit others' agendas (Gore and Zeichner 1988:203). This pertains to the context of this research, which does indeed reflect a pragmatically changing environment, where the Advanced Skills Teachers are expected to work with imposed reforms through problem solving orientations. Therefore, the following warrants consideration.

The assumptions and implications of action research need to be placed within the social field in which it is realised rather than as an independently scrutinised practice to change teaching and teachers Popkewitz (1998:26).

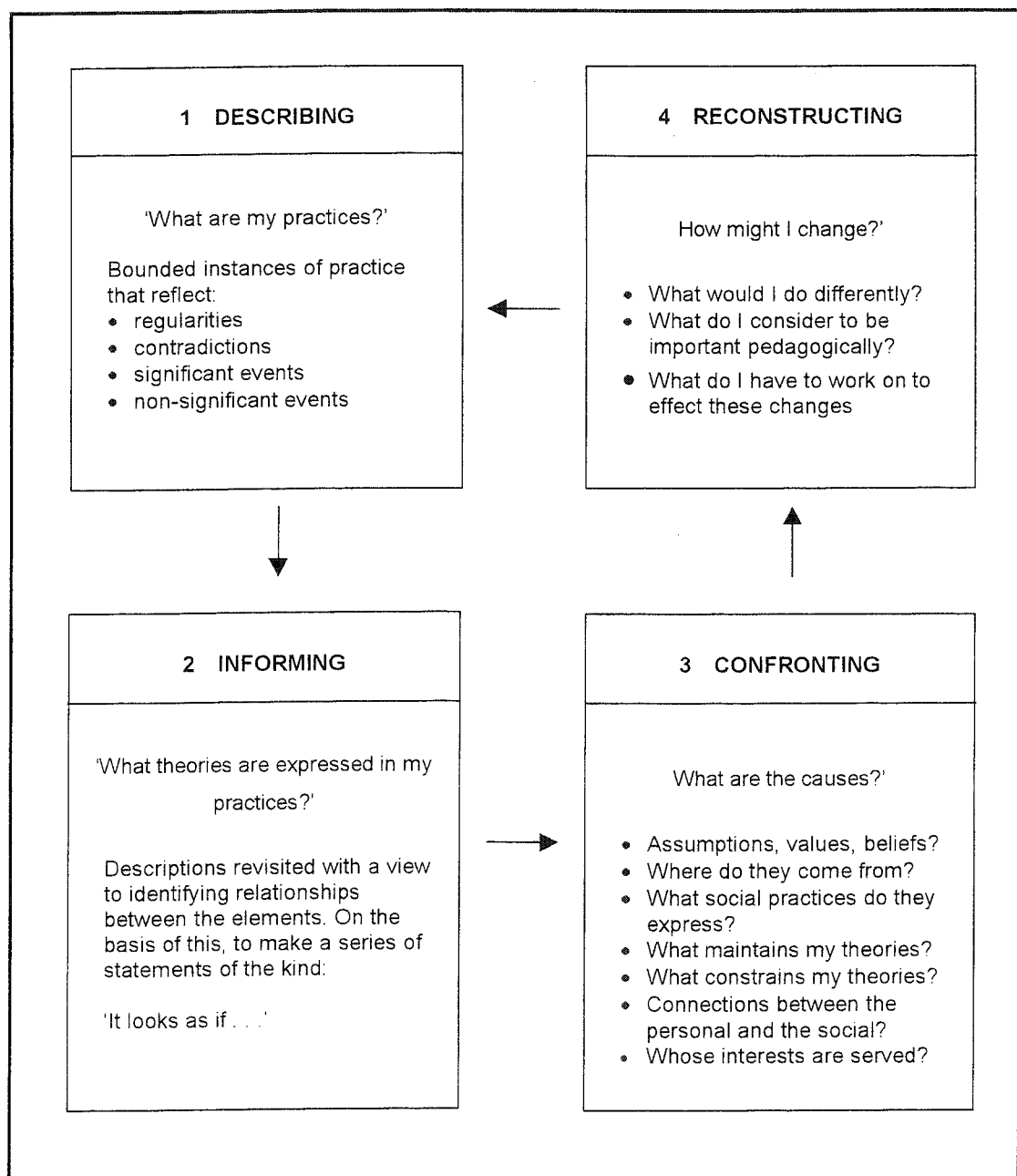
Thus, when discussing inquiry and the nature of a critically reflective stance, it is important to recognise and endorse the historical, political, theoretical and moral nature of teaching (Day 1994; Smyth 1995; Beattie 1997). Without due consideration to these or to contextual factors, inquiry may indeed assume the aura of technical process.

### **2.3.5. The Promotion of a Critical Perspective**

The promotion of a critically reflective perspective suggests that support for professional development must relate to more than the mastery of new techniques. It directs that the promotion of a critical reflective perspective would be concerned with questions, which relate to the “why” as well as the “how” of constructed knowledge. As such, there is an exploration on how understandings are reached and why they are interpreted in a certain order. This then promotes deeper awareness of “taken for granted” and unquestioned understandings and assumptions that exist within the context of a teacher’s practice (Smyth 1989: 4). This knowledge holds potential to assist the teacher to be self empowered in taking deliberative action in their practice and in attending to their own identified learning needs.

Critical reflection may be promoted in a number of ways. Collaborative and deliberative inquiry, discussed previously, is claimed to be worthwhile to the advancement of teacher. A process proposed by Smyth (1989:5) to promote reflective deliberation is adapted for use within the context of this study. It involves engagement in four forms of action, namely, describe, inform, confront and reconstruct. The process enables teachers to reconstruct experiences through critical reflection on practice. Figure 2.4 overviews these four forms of action.

**Figure 2.4 Critical Pedagogy of Classroom Practice (Smyth 1989:5)**



This process is a useful means of extrapolating the values and beliefs that underscore teachers' actions. A teacher's practice and approach to professional development is determined to a large extent by personal theories. However, espoused theory may not correlate with what is actually done, ie the theory-in-use. Support for teachers as reflective practitioners is provided through critical engagement in the four forms of action through use of a model such as Smyth's (1989). This holds potential to minimise the

dichotomy between espoused theory and theory in action and could enable teachers and those who support them, to act more knowingly and effectively. With the current emphasis on standardised testing and outcome based assessment, such a model may assist teachers to come gain greater control over the curriculum. This becomes particularly relevant in view of the moral nature of teaching, for it forces consideration of value based questions that surround the 'why' of decisions made and action taken.

### **2.3.6 Implications for the Research**

The literature reviewed on teacher reflection has provided a broader understanding of what reflection might mean and imply in terms of leading teacher professional development. Reflection appears to be far more than a means of solving problems or thoughtfully implementing new curriculum approaches and strategies. The literature provides a reminder that reflection does have many forms, which may be solitary or collaborative and which serve different cognitive interests at the technical, interpretative and critical level. These are often reflected in the purposes or goals for the reflective activity. It becomes apparent that the different kinds of reflective activity would link with the various kinds of learning needed to respond to the various pressures for change that were explored in the previous section. Engagement in critical reflection however, is worthwhile, as it provides a means of questioning both the subjective and objective aspects of understanding in terms of its associated moral implications. This directs decision making, which may led to informed principled action.

This is important, as the reflective process exposes underlying assumptions and gives attention to the "why" surrounding knowledge that is constructed and reconstructed. In order to understand how the reflective process may have contributed to the development of the Advanced Skills Teachers' knowledge and skills, exploration of the knowledge base of teaching warrants further review.

## 2.4 THE KNOWLEDGE BASE OF TEACHING

### 2.4.1 Theories of Knowledge

Underlying each individual's decisions, planning and practice are "perceptions, theories, assumptions and ideas about the learner, the teacher, the subject knowledge and teaching and learning" (Smith and Lovat 1990:viii). Together these theories create socially constructed and individually constructed realities through which the world is filtered and personal knowledge bases are generated (Anderson 1985). This knowledge base consists of both personal and generalised theories.

Generalised theories, may also be termed as "formal theories" (Taylor 1992) or "public knowledge" (Butler 1992). These have been learnt through socialisation and enculturation and include influences by the social science disciplines such as sociology, philosophy and psychology (Biggs 1991). Personal theories are formed through experience without being explicitly formalised and are generally "intuitive, routinised and tacit" (Eraut 1993:26). These theories are sometimes referred to as "implicit knowledge" (Clark 1986 in Eraut 1993); "practical theory" (Sanders and McCutcheon 1986) or "craft knowledge" (Tom 1987; Marland 1993). In this thesis, the term, "personal practical knowledge" (Elbaz 1983; Clandinin and Connelly 1986; Elliott 1986; Butler 1992; Beattie 1997) is utilised when making reference to personal theories.

Teachers generally enact their teaching decisions with some kind of explicit or implicit theory of learning and teaching (Biggs 1991). Thus, there appears to be a need to "strike a balance between theory, critique and practical matters" (Goodson 1997:32). This view is expressed in the following terms.

Knowledge and understandings are not out there waiting to be discovered but socially, historically and culturally constructed, and thus dynamic new meaning resides in the gap between theory and practice and learning is finding patterns that count (Harste 1991, in O'Toole 1991:224).

Critical teacher research has concern with theoretical bodies of knowledge "at the level of social vision and its connection to educational purpose-social theoretical questions of ethics, justice and democracy" (Kincheloe 1991:82). The total rejection of research derived theoretical bodies of knowledge "may fail to move beyond an uncritical and unreflective implementation that is defined by others" (Goodson 1997, cited in Hargreaves and Evans 1997:14). When considering the notion that teachers work simultaneously through three time zones, it could be assumed that formal theory could well provide insights and directions for the present and future against a backdrop of the past. However, from another perspective, the personal practical knowledge of teachers is considered to be too rich to be ignored (Connelly and Clandinin 1990; Kelchtermans 1993; Beattie 1997). This gives credence to the claim that "critical analysis is only possible when both theory (organised knowledge) and practice (organised action) can be treated in a unified way as problematic – as open to dialectical reconstruction through reflection" (Carr and Kemmis 1986:42).

However, the teachers' ability to engage in the analytical processes of reflection needs to be couched in a view of ongoing development. Within the context of this research, it is presumed that the depth and defining characteristics of the Advanced Skills Teachers' knowledge and reflections would indicate development and change, through lived experience in their changing social and cultural world. The following quotation has relevance for this research, with its focus on the professional learning of experienced, Advanced Skills Teachers.

So experienced teachers preserve and build a sense of their own competence (and therefore confidence to act decisively and enhance job satisfaction) by developing a concept of professional practice which is both knowledgeable and malleable – that is firmly rooted in theory and experience whilst remaining infinitely adaptable to a situation which is conceived of as having similarities to and differences from what is known (Burroughs-Lange et al. 1994:51).

Thus, it may be implied that personal practical knowledge has its value in directing principled action, rather than the making of theoretical conclusions (Beattie 1997).

#### **2.4.2 Personal Practical Knowledge**

Personal theory, shaped through experience, is reflected in the teacher's beliefs about learning and learning processes. Personal practical knowledge may be described as "principles or propositions" that "undergrid and guide teachers' appreciations, decisions and actions" (Sanders and McCutcheon 1986:54).

The multiple aspects of classroom and personal experience appear to be the prime source of the teacher's practical knowledge. The metaphor of "the professional landscape", is used by Clandinin and Connelly (1995:4) to describe the personal practical knowledge of teachers. The "landscape" represents the "interface of theory and practice in teachers' lives" and involves a composition of "relationships among objects, people and places" that are "derived from experiences and expressed in practice" (Clandinin and Connelly 1995:63). Reflective activity may assist the teacher to "control and define life on the landscape" (Clandinin and Connelly 1995:63). This would require development in the teacher's ability to make decisions concerning sources of knowledge, which may be competing and conflicting (Anderson 1997). Indeed, within the current context of curriculum reform, teachers are facing a multitude of curriculum issues, which do conflict and compete for attention.

It is therefore useful to consider the benefits of reflecting on one's own knowledge and actions, which find expression in practice. One study (Marland 1993) into the "craft knowledge" of a sample of Brisbane Catholic secondary teachers, concludes that teachers' conceptions of effective practice, are embedded in a system of beliefs, values, knowledge and structures. This confirms the findings of similar research efforts (eg. Brown and McIntyre, 1988; Day 1992; Clandinin and Connelly 1995). This research concludes that teachers rely on student activities, as the main criteria for evaluating their practice. Teaching tends to be conceptualised in terms of the



impact of their tactics and actions, desirable and undesirable student states, as well as the conditions affecting such states (Marland 1993). These conclusions are consonant with similar studies conducted in the United Kingdom (Brown and McIntyre 1988), as well as in Australia (Khamis 1993). The findings clearly support the notion that reflective practice is grounded in the repertoire of values, knowledge, theories and practices, which form an appreciation system (Freire 1973; Schon 1985).

By reflecting on the patterns of our experience and on the meaning-making structures we have used to construct our knowledge, we can come to new understandings of what we know, and to reconfigure the patterns, and the pasts and the futures of our lives. We acknowledge that our experiences exist in time, that they have a past, present and imagined future, and they can be temporal or permanent dependent on the effect that have on us (Beattie 1997:5).

From this perspective, learning is a process of constructing new knowledge on the basis of past experiences and prior knowledge. It is a life long endeavour as individuals socially and individually construct new interpretations of knowledge through reflective experience (Freire 1973). Within this process, beliefs, values and attitudes are "intrinsically inter-woven" into the learning process (Biggs 1991:3). The learner is active in structuring the content of learning and internalising it in order to make meaning, to reinterpret knowledge and to view the world differently (Freire 1972). The engagement in such cognitive acts become both "transformative" and "informative" (Neisser 1976:11)

#### **2.4.3 Establishing a Knowledge Base of Teaching**

Advocates for professional reform (eg. Shulman 1987), have endeavoured to explicate the forms of knowledge held by teachers, in order to build a knowledge base of teachers' personal practical knowledge. However, cautions are expressed that this needs to deal with the purpose of education, as well as the methods and strategies of educating (Gore and Zeichner 1995). This is important, for clearly, teaching is both effective and normative and it is concerned with both means and ends. Processes of reasoning underlie both (Buchmann 1993).

A difficulty encountered with studies into teacher practical knowledge is the identification of the different domains of this knowledge, which is often implicitly held. Five content categories of practical knowledge are suggested by Elbaz (1983) as:

- knowledge of curriculum
- knowledge of milieu
- knowledge of instruction
- knowledge of subject matter
- knowledge of self

In proposing a taxonomy of professional knowledge, Shulman (1987:13) endeavoured to work with practitioners to develop codified representations of "the practical pedagogical wisdom of able teachers". A set of categories proposed appears similar to those proposed by Elbaz (1983), except for the addition of knowledge of pedagogical content. This is described as "that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers and their own special form of pedagogical understanding" (Shulman 1987:8).

However, there is criticism that attempts to describe such a knowledge base generally tend to disregard the professional knowledge of teachers (Gore and Zeichner 1995). To be authentic, knowledge must be more than receiving information. It needs to be used "against the yardstick of personal experience for it to be a positive construction" (Groundwater-Smith 1998:256). Without this, teaching could become little more than a technical exercise. From another perspective (eg Gore and Zeichner 1995; Hargreaves and Evans 1997), care must be taken not to uncritically accept everything that is said or done, solely because it comes under the umbrella of personal knowledge

Other criticisms raised in the literature relate to the codifying of teacher practical knowledge. This may not be plausible as there are too many contradictions and inconsistencies due to the nature of heterogeneous teacher cultures (eg Eraut 1993). The process by which teachers develop

professional knowledge and advanced skills is complex, developmental, idiosyncratic and subject to a variety of influences (Burroughs-Lange et al. 1994; Day 1993). Hence, it becomes difficult to codify the teacher's practical reality because of the temporal nature of educational phenomena. In advocating for the establishment of a knowledge base of teaching, Shulman (1987:11) also adds similar words of caution: "We must be careful that the knowledge base of teaching does not produce an overly technical image of teaching that has lost its soul".

There are many ways by which teachers' knowledge could be categorised. This in itself is not a problem, but rather, as Elbaz (1993:210) correctly points out, "an epistemological one that involves deciding how one wants to conceive teachers' knowledge". This gives a reminder of the need to consider the ideological frames of reference that underpin any research on teacher cognition. It also suggests to those who support the "expert teacher" theme, to be cognisant that the implicit or tacit knowing of teachers deserves as much recognition as explicit knowledge (Elbaz 1993:122).

#### **2.4.4 The Value of Reflective Practice**

The formalistic beliefs and personal practical knowledge of teachers is claimed to have a strong influence on pedagogy and teaching methods (Eraut 1993; Huberman 1993). This viewpoint is exemplified in research (Pjares and Graham 1998) that investigates the influence of personal practical knowledge on teachers' assessment practices. The findings indicate that teachers may be more inclined to rely on personal feelings and generalised theories when assessing student's work. Assessment feedback to students can tend to relate to the affective dimension in terms of self-esteem and creativity, rather than to the task itself. However, this research indicates that the students prefer honest criticism and constructive, critical comment. These findings suggest that the relationship between "the nature of caring" and "the truth of instruction" in the teaching conversation is problematic (Pjares and Graham 1998:856). This strongly suggests the need for teachers to give careful, critical thought to how their students' interests

may be affected by decisions that are solely based on personal or generalised theories.

We cannot store up generalisations and constructs for ultimate assembly into a network.....Formal principles and personal theories as to what is right for a given situation must be answers to enigmas as instruments that can be used if the context is appropriate (Pjares and Graham 1998:857).

This issue brings forth the need for teachers to establish moral frameworks for practice. Engagement in critical reflection may assist the teacher to see contradictions in practice, in relation to decisions that affect students' learning. It is therefore important for teachers to view themselves as co-learners with the students (Bullough and Gitlin 1995). This requires standing aside from personal subjectivity and reflectively considering alternative courses of action that might be taken (Haynes 1998). Professional knowledge and understandings may then be transformed through engagement in "authentic activity", within a context that has specific meaning and purpose (Brown, Collins and Druid 1989:874). Such authentic activity involves construction of knowledge through action and reflection on that action (Schon 1983). Through this cyclic process of pedagogical thinking and action, knowledge is used to transform practice. This may lead to new understandings of:

- action situations;
- self as teacher, in terms of the cultural milieu of teaching;
- taken for granted assumptions about teaching;

(Grimmett et al. 1990:27).

From a moral perspective, reflection may assist the teacher to consider whose interests are really being served in their decision making and subsequent actions (Valli 1990; Adalbjarnardottir et al. 1997). In so doing, the purposes of teaching may be more ably addressed, since as educators, teachers do "learn with the students" for whom they "make possible the conditions to learn" (Freire 1985 in Hanifin 1993:1).

### **2.4.5 Implications for the Research**

The theme of the knowledge base of teaching emphasises that knowledge is constantly in a state of flux. Therefore, within the context of this research, it could be presumed that the depth and defining characteristics of the Advanced Skills Teachers' knowledge and reflections would indicate development and change, through the lived experiences of the career life. Teachers continuously construct and reconstruct knowledge on the basis of past experiences and prior learning. Embedded in this personal practical knowing are beliefs, assumptions and values. Critical reflection appears to play a vital role in enabling the teacher to reflect on the subjective and objective aspects of their knowing, so as to be in a more informed position to take decisive, principled action in terms of improved practice or further learning.

The literature implies that teachers need to be engendered in a sense of their own competence and learn to be comfortable about holding a tentative knowledge base, in the face of the various pressure sources for change. Uncertainty would be a legitimate function of teachers' roles as they attain and develop increasing expertise, through the development of broader and deeper professional knowledge. However, this would require the teacher to have developing confidence in the sense of a professional self. This suggests that attention must be given to the affective dimension of teacher development.

## **2.5 THE SELF OF THE TEACHER**

### **2.5.1 The Affective Dimension**

The previous section indicates that the development of knowledge through the reflective process, requires an understanding of the self as the teacher (eg Elbaz 1983; Grimmer et. al. 1990). However, the affective dimension of teacher development is often overlooked (Beattie 1997; Fullan 1997). This implies exigency for greater hermeneutic understanding of teaching, through movement beyond the confines of socially constructed ways of seeing intelligence (Kincheloe 1991). Therefore, in order to consider the role that

reflection plays in leading teacher development from all dimensions of the teachers' professional life, it is vital to explore the affective domain. From a holistic perspective, "the lived experience of becoming knowledgeable is cognitive, social and sensory" (Groundwater-Smith 1998:256). Hence, any such moves would emphasise and encourage development of the imaginary, the intuitive and the emotive dimensions of teaching (Bradbeer 1994; Beattie 1997; Hargreaves and Fullan 1997). Without this, teacher professionalisation:

runs the risk of abandoning the distinctive and desirable characteristics of the female teacher (nurturing, emotionally supportive, person centred and context focussed), in order to take on the frequently undesirable characteristics of the dominant male professional (competitive, rationalistic; task centred and abstracted from context). Indeed it appears that there is little reference to such traits in the descriptors given to teaching as a profession (Labaree 1992:1332).

Shifting the emphasis to a more affective modality may facilitate the establishment of a moral framework for practice. This is necessary, for it is claimed that "a neglected part of teacher development lies not in deeper professionalism itself, but in deeper personhood" (Bradbeer 1994:11). Therefore, when conceptualising teacher development, it becomes important to give attention to the self of the teacher.

### **2.5.2 Teacher Identity**

The "self" may be defined as "the social, yet reflective product", which is "shaped by the responses of others, but capable of initiating behaviour and reflecting upon it" (Nias, 1985:105). From this perspective, the moral, emotional, social and creative dimensions of the teacher's work must be considered. In so doing, it is equally important to contextualise any understandings reached in relation to the broader context in which the self is situated (Goodson 1997).

Work tends to be a major contributor to the development of a person's identity, as it is a significant strand in people's self-description (Handy 1997). As teaching is highly interactive, the teacher's own well developed individual identity and sense of connection to others beyond the self may well impact

on his/her professional life. There is evidence that through the very nature of their work, teachers “construct themselves as beings” (Pearce and Pickard, 1987:42). This involves both the internal self “values and experiences” and the external self, “a comprehensible engagement with other teachers, children, parents”, whose views either tally with or deny aspects of an individual’s sense of being (Nias 1989:67). Teacher action is considered to be “ineluctably personal” as “teaching affects the inner self and the self as it appears to others in the course of one’s life” (Buchmann 1993:7). Hence, the importance of interaction with others in the professional growth process should not be under-estimated.

This notion supports the image of “a dynamic, interactionist and constructivist notion of self” (Kelchtermans 1993:200). The self is socially constructed over time, through inter-subjective processes of interpretations of interactions with others (Nias 1989). The professional self is constituted by values, knowledge and views a teacher holds about his/her professional activities. The embedded beliefs and implicitly held views of teaching and learning are influential to the way that teachers construe the nature of their jobs. Of all the judgements and beliefs that each teacher owns, none is more important than the ones they have about their “selves”. Teachers become what they think and believe about themselves” (Butler 1992:225). This suggests that if teachers are to understand their students, they must first know themselves (Sarason 1982). This may enable them to empathise with others and in so doing to be role models for the students. Indeed this notion is promoted in the following extract from the *UNESCO Report on Education for the Twenty-first Century* (Delors 1998:93).

If one is to understand others, one must first know oneself. To give children and young people an accurate view of the world, education, whether in the family, the community or at school, must first help them discover who they are...Developing such empathy at school bears fruit in terms of social behaviour throughout life.

As teaching purports to be a caring profession, teachers need to be encouraged to give some consideration to their own proper self-interest. This brings forth acceptance of “the fact that it’s proper to be concerned with

ourselves and the search for who we really are, because that search could lead us to realise that self respect, in the end, only comes from responsibility for other things" (Handy 1997:87). Such a conception identified as "proper selfishness" (Handy 1997:87) may be linked with Covey's (1989:288) notion of "sharpening the saw". This is identified as the *Principle of Balanced Self Renewal* in relation to the physical, spiritual, mental and socio-emotional dimensions of one's nature. The balance between school and home/life personal interests is considered to be a necessary condition for career long professional satisfaction and continuing self-motivation for ongoing development (Huberman 1993; Csikszentmihalyi 1996). The person's self-investment is important in order to be able to "deal with life and to contribute" (Covey 1989:289).

When considering the convergence of the pressures for change from the personnel, occupational and societal dimensions, the possibility of stress and overload became evident. This indicates that it is necessary to give consideration to the teacher as a person, when promoting professional development (Fullan 1997; Hargreaves 1997; Haseman 1999).

### **2.5.3 The Emotional Dimension of Teaching**

Teaching and learning are "profoundly emotional activities" (Fried 1995 cited in Hargreaves 1997:109). As such, teaching is considered to be a passionate vocation.

Good teaching is not just a matter of being efficient, developing competence, mastering technique and possessing the right kind of knowledge. Good teaching also involves emotional work. It is infused with pleasure, passion, creativity, challenge and joy (Hargreaves 1997:108).

Emotions are associated with both the highs and the lows experienced in the teaching role (Huberman 1992). The emotional labour associated with teaching (Hochschild 1983), goes well beyond "acting out feelings," to "consciously working oneself into experiencing the necessary feelings required to do one's job well" (Hargreaves 1997:109). Equal priority, therefore, must be given to care for people, things and ideas as much as cognitions (Noddings 1992). This is important, as "professional cultures of



teaching are built on emotional, as well as intellectual strength" (Hargreaves 1997:4).

The provision of care for students is considered to involve a large degree of teacher commitment (Hargreaves 1997; Fresko, Kfir and Nasser 1997). Indeed, in a teacher "tender best-benefit" analysis of the occupation, Mayes (1998:785) concludes that extrinsic monetary and professional rewards and prestige figure less prominently than those that are of a more intrinsic or emotional nature. Findings from similar studies concur with this conclusion (Little 1990; Acker 1995).

It is axiomatic that the student/teacher relationship is pivotal for student growth and learning (Nias 1989). "Bringing subjects alive and opening hope to the young, is a function of teachers' own sense of their life and hope" (Bradbeer 1994:12). Teachers tend to refer to teaching in terms of care, affection and love. This frame of reference often provides the "normative starting point - not the conclusion - of practical deliberations" (Buchmann 1993:2). Moreover, when caring for students, teachers often look beyond the insistent self, so as to cultivate virtues such as "generosity and kindness, courage and hope, sobriety and gentleness" (Buchmann 1993:2). Indeed, it is this concern for the students, rather than the program or syllabus that has such a strong influence on the establishment of teacher identity (Nias 1989; Hargreaves 1997). This also impacts on how teachers frame problematic issues (Burroughs-Lange et al. 1994). The inward focus to self can be honourable, if indeed the focus has concern with gaining self-satisfaction, as a result of responding to the needs of the students (Buchmann 1993:17).

If a professional version of inwardness is for teachers to teach and leave everything alone that interferes, rather than helps with that central task, expectations and reforms directing teachers' thoughts and actions away from the classroom may be confounding professional development with changing one's vocation (Buchmann 1993:17).

This view is consistent with conclusions that are drawn from the *Brisbane Catholic Education Teacher Convocation* (1998:11-13). Key "thrills and spills"

of teaching in a Catholic school in the 1990s were identified by teachers using images in the form of drawings to reflect on their world. It comes as little surprise then, that the “thrills” of teaching centre mainly on the emotional side of caring for students, facilitating learning and forming relationships with others. The following responses are representative of the main “thrills” identified:

- appreciative students
- getting the message across - seeing “the penny drop”
- the challenge of helping students
- joy of watching students achieve
- support/friendship of colleagues
- positive feedback years later
- working with children
- appreciative parents

*(Brisbane Catholic Education 1998:12)*

#### **2.5.4 Professional Satisfaction**

The emotional dimensions of teaching appear to contribute significantly to the teachers’ sense of their own professionalism and job satisfaction. Teachers tend to gain a larger sense of professional satisfaction through attending to students’ needs (Noddings 1992; Mayes 1998). This notion is clearly evident in Huberman’s (1992) much cited research, which links teacher development with the career cycle (See Section 2.6). Huberman’s (1992) study was conducted with Swiss high school teachers during a time of legislated structural reform. Whilst it is acknowledged that this research occupies its own place in time and had its contextual determinants, aspects that relate to how teachers address change is relevant to the context of this thesis. Concern is expressed by Huberman (1992) that teachers in mid career or later, may become depressed and/or their continued professional development adversely affected, as a result of facing politically motivated curricular reform or other imposed constraints. This concern is also reflected in other research, which indicates the manifestation of teacher stress, burnout and disillusionment, as a consequence of current educational

reforms (eg. Macpherson 1994; O'Donohue 1995; Fullan 1997; Proudford 1998).

Using terminology provided by participants in his study, Huberman (1992:129) coins phrases such as "positive focusing, defensive focusing and disenchantment", when categorising how teachers coped with change. The positive focusers are those who "tinkered actively" within their own classrooms, to "cultivate their own gardens", so to speak. This tends to involve caring for and responding to the interests and learning needs of the students by working toward instructional mastery, investing in classroom experiments and pursuing curriculum and pedagogical interests. The teachers in this study did experiment with some aspects of the reform agenda, but in their own time and space. When "stale", these positive focusers would make "slight spontaneous role shifts," by "drawing on what diversity there was within the bounds of classroom instruction" (Huberman 1992:131). The findings indicate that the experience of achieving significant results in terms of student learning brings intrinsic reward and a deep sense of personal career satisfaction. Furthermore, with this comes positive and close relationships with the students and parents, a learner centred curriculum and "exceptional results" (Huberman 1992:131).

Moreover, Huberman's (1992) research suggests that when life in the classroom goes well, the positive focusers tend to exhibit self-pride in terms of personal efficacy. It is this sense of accomplishment that appears to drive the "quest for further experimentation" and "a more active scanning of the environment of new skills or materials" (Huberman 1992:137). When problems or difficulties are encountered, the cycle of experimentation and scanning increases. In these times of uncertainty, the positive focusers reach out to others for assistance and clarification. They "typically transform these inputs into a more private and personally congenial form" (Huberman 1992:136).

These findings prompt consideration of Carson's (1995:160) suggestion that becoming competent in the skills and knowledge of teaching as a "craft" is far

more than gaining technical competence. It appears to be important to building positive teacher identity. Another relevant finding of Huberman's (1992:137) study is that teachers who invest heavily in large "landscape reforms", tend to exhibit signs of bitter engagement later in the career. Findings suggest that this could partly be the result of "burn out" or disenchantment caused by the demise of such projects.

Huberman (1992:138) also expresses concern that the "inward turning cathexis" that the "positive focusers", who "tinker" and "tend their own gardens" may in fact have a "narcissistic entitlement." Thus, in view of this concern, but mindful of the positive effects of "tinkering," Huberman (1992:135-138) advocates that a craft model of career professional development might hold worthwhile possibilities for teachers. This is further explored in Section 2.7.3.

#### **2.5.5 Narcissistic Concerns**

An over-emphasis and reliance on the self may be a narcissistic one of self pre-occupation. Caution is required as a total focus on self may delineate power from teachers (Hargreaves 1994:72), through what is termed "persistent self referentialism" (Nias 1989). This concern has some credence, when considering the view that personal dispositions influence the teacher's construction of their professional selves (Pearce and Pickard 1998; Handy 1997).

Narcissistic tendencies are often emotively driven (Pjares and Graham 1998). Emotion may be a "response to individual interpretations of events, as well as a generator of subsequent cognitions, emotions and behaviours" (Lazarus 1991, in Stough and Emner 1998:343). Through the reflective processes, teachers become more self aware of their emotions and how these impact on their practice and interactions with others (Stough and Emner 1998). The research of Pjares and Graham (1998:857) discussed previously, provides one example of how the emotions associated with caring for students' self esteem can be "troublesome" if they are not related to moral truth.

This highlights the need to consider the moral nature of teaching (Tom 1987). It is therefore important for teachers to develop in ability to reflect on the “why” concerning their decisions and actions (Smyth 1989). This may assist them to critically consider any narcissistic motivations in terms of their inherent benefits for the students: “Professional autonomy is a requirement of practical judgement in the service of given goals, which frequently involve the good of others” and that any “benefits ought to be a touchstone of professional decisions and satisfactions alike” (Buchmann 1993:7). Thus, from this perspective, Haynes’ (1998) notion of the need for teachers to consider the ethical aspects of consistency, consequences and care in decision-making seems very credible.

When approaching teacher development as a process of self-development, giving consideration to these concerns would be worthwhile. This would ensure that attention is given to supporting teachers to further their appreciation for the need to establish moral frameworks for practice (Day 1994). Such support needs to be continuing, because caring for students and experiencing guilt through moral concern may cause teacher anxiety (Hargreaves 1997).

#### **2.5.6 Teacher Anxiety**

Teachers who are aware of their personal abilities, weaknesses, strengths and professional needs, are able to generate self-confidence throughout their careers (Sarason 1982). The ability and disposition to achieve this, becomes necessary, for anxiety can be a major pitfall in the way of professional development (Csikszentmihalyi; 1990; Fullan 1997). Teachers are more inclined to be innovative, if they are not anxious about possible career ramifications as a consequence of their risk taking (Olsen 1986; Dixon and Ishler 1992).

It is out of anxiety about reputation most of all that people resist the insights that could free them from the fantasies that they have about how they ought to conduct themselves, and about the real nature of the difficulties that face them. These anxieties are related to the hazards that threaten careers in education...It may seem odd to say that anxiety is a problem for professional development,

but people would do many things they ought to were they not anxious taking risks (Olsen 1986:23).

From another viewpoint, anxiety can have positive effects for the teacher (Sarason 1982). Some anxiety could motivate growth by creating an optimum level of arousal and thereby stimulate production of unique solutions. This requires the development of a strong sense of confidence in professional self-concept and tangible support for ongoing personal and professional development.

### **2.5.7 Tensions created by Current Educational Reforms**

The multiplicity of reforms, the push for accountability and increasing societal demands have generated concern that many teachers are losing the passion for teaching (Hargreaves and Fullan 1998). It is becoming increasingly apparent that "menus of reform tactics overwhelm authentic inquiry" (Darling-Hammond 1995:161). Top down reforms often imply a technical approach, with an emphasis on value neutrality (Popkewitz 1997). With this comes the implicit assumption that pedagogical change takes place in "a sociological vacuum" (Tabulawa 1998:251). However, what is often overlooked is that teachers see their students as particular lives, in a way that could not be envisaged by any government or system (Cairns 1994).

Research (Adalbjarnardottir et al. 1997) into the impact of an outcomes approach in terms of the students' cognitive learning indicates that it is essential to give attention to the students' social and moral development. This requires consideration of any observations of student learning outcomes from a developmental perspective. Therefore, if teachers are to keep their "eyes on the child, rather than on rules and procedures" (Darling-Hammond 1995:116), there must be movement beyond technical control.

Teachers may also feel tension when attending inservices or developing school programs if they are absent from the classroom for lengthy periods of time. Teacher anxiety has increased since the introduction of the multiplicity of reform demands (*BCE Convocation Report* 1998). It appears that while there has been little time to teach (Dummett and Wells 1994; Smyth 1995),

there has been even less time for teachers to reflect (Day 1997; Proudford 1998). This is regrettable as the multiplicity of change initiatives could prove to be counterproductive to student learning, as new programs are set on top of old ones. This problem is compounded if individual teachers and school communities do not make time to consider the consequences for the students or to rethink priorities for their practice (Borko et al. 1997). This complication of dealing with "old ways" and "new ways" of implementing the curriculum may erode the teachers' sense of morale and professional satisfaction (Mandzuk 1997:448). This situation may cause those teachers who invest themselves emotionally, to be "racked by guilt" (Hargreaves 1997:109) through feeling that they are not doing enough for their students. The costs of such emotional labour may be that teachers over-extend themselves, burn out, become cynical or leave teaching.

Findings of research (O'Donoghue 1995:40-43) that explores the teacher's perspective concerning educational reforms, introduced in Western Australia indicates that teachers are not opposed to change 'per se'. This research reveals that stress is caused by calls for the implementation of too many reforms, far too quickly, without appropriate conditions or structures that support the change process. Also the dehumanising language emanating from the mandated student outcome assessment documentation causes concern. The study concludes that this is problematic as the use of these documents is not consistent with the dimension of caring, which these teachers consider as being essential to the teaching role.

Indeed, these findings concur with the research (Stough and Emmer 1998:360) that investigates how teachers and students cope with standardised state-wide testing. This research indicates that teacher anxiety is manifested through concerns relating to the moral implications of administering the tests. Findings suggest that the feedback process tends to be charged with emotion for both teachers and students. This emotion can influence the teachers' instructional planning and interactive decision-making.

There is also scholarly concern that those teachers attracted to reform initiatives may “burn out,” or become exhausted in the face of “apathy and resistance” from others (Fried 1995, in Fullan 1997:218). Some teachers may also be “crippled by their own conscientiousness” (Campbell and Neill 1994:62) when dealing with the multitude of demands. However, if teachers naively accept all changes that come their way, then they may tend to do so in a “naïve” manner. This too, could effect consequences of overload and dependency (Fullan 1997:224).

Thus, the teacher’s role of agency in the pedagogical change process must not be overlooked (Tabulawa 1998:251). A technical approach to curriculum implementation could lead to teacher de-skilling (Macpherson 1994; Sachs 1997). Oversimplifying the process, through the prescriptive use of “how to” materials also becomes problematic (Apple and Jungck 1992). The compliant acceptance of reforms may lead to a situation of appearing to play the game for fear of career ramifications (Dixson and Ishler 1992).

However, in contrast, teachers may be victimised through their own lack of professional responsibility, if all reforms are rejected, because they seem to be irrelevant, incoherent or even politically imposed (Fullan 1997:224). Teachers do have a moral responsibility to continually develop their professional knowledge and skills and to critically consider implications for pedagogic change (Colnerud 1997; Tabulawa 1998). In so doing, it is important that they also “quarantine time” for both themselves and their students so that they are able to work through the change process effectively and reflectively (Smyth 1995:7). Teachers also have the power to critically evaluate top-down pressures for change. This may be achieved through consideration of the following points for affirmative action (Dummett and Wells 1994:11):

- we can think critically;
- we can learn to say no;
- we can reject jargon;
- we can resist corporate and military language;
- we can take control of our professional development;
- we can keep a log;



we can start a register of tasks;  
 we can celebrate and share successes;  
 we can support each other.

In the process of change and school renewal, teachers must feel that they are able to express discontent, frustration and confusion (Binney and Williams 1995). Thus, dissent needs to be "legitimised" (Fullan 1997:222) in order to promote hope for a better future: "Hope is not blind. It recognises that disagreement and matters of power are central to working through the discomfort of diversity" (Fullan 1997:231). However, the development of this kind of approach to school renewal activities would be largely dependent on the existence of collaborative school communities that are characterised by collegiality and trust (Farson 1996). It is further contended that working through the discomfort of diversity and negative emotions may bring more long term effective results, than that which might be achieved by working within "balkanized cocoons of like-minded individuals" (Fullan 1997:230). This requires emotional intelligence, which allows one to confront those in authority and to be confronted by others (Goleman 1995).

### **2.5.8 Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence is essentially the combination of the head (cognitive intelligence), with the heart (emotional maturity and empathy in decision making). Emotions may form and narrow the range of choices in decision-making, especially those of an ethical or moral kind (Damasio 1994). Integral to this development are the elements of emotional intelligence, namely "self-control, zeal, persistence and the ability to motivate oneself" (Goleman 1995:xii). Furthermore, emotional intelligence demands insight into the "intimate two-way link between emotion and hope" (Fullan 1997:221). This helps teachers to cope with any anxiety that they may feel within the teaching role.

Hope is linked with an awareness of reality. However, it is not a "Pollyannaish" (Fullan 1997:217) view of reality. Rather, it is an awareness of the "big picture" of what might be possible (Gardner 1995:285). Within the concept of the teacher as a life long learner, learning needs to be "tempered

with its realities" (Mandzuk 1997:448). Such realities often present themselves as competing and conflicting norms of doing and thinking, acceptance and debate, as well as dependency and autonomy (Mandzuk 1997). Dealing with these through the reflective process, may lead to inner knowing that one has the capacity to exert control over the lived reality of one's own life. This could incorporate a discipline of personal growth and learning, which has been described by Senge (1992) as personal mastery. "People with high levels of personal mastery are continually expanding their ability to create the results in life they truly seek" (Senge 1992:141). People with high levels of personal mastery would be reflective in their thinking. This would enable them to connect with the past, attend to the present and work toward the future. The following quotation holds relevance in the current context of curriculum reform:

The fact that our primary value concerns our need to help ourselves change and learn, for us to feel that we are growing in our understanding of where we have been, where we are, and what we are about, and that we are enjoying what we are doing...To help others to change without this being preceded and accompanied by an exquisite awareness of the process in ourselves is "delivering a product or service" which truly has little or no significance for our personal or intellectual growth (Sarason 1982:122).

As this research focuses on investigating the reflective processes that Advanced Skills Teachers use to create meaning and to further their own development, it becomes useful to consider some attributes that could be afforded to reflective practitioners. Such teachers would appear to approach problem solving creatively, as they consider alternative ways to work through issues. "Creative and reflective practitioners do not accept change at face value, nor do they race in to find ordered solutions in the chaos" (Csikszentmihalyi 1996:365). They would also be seen to have courage in the way that they are able to confront those in authority (Gardner 1995; Farson 1996) and would consider following their intuitive instincts (Binney and Williams 1995). Furthermore they:

look at the situations from various angles first and level the formulation undetermined for a very long time. They consider

different causes and reasons. They test their hunches about what is really going on, first in their own mind and then in reality. They try tentative solutions and check their success and they are open to reformulating the problem if the evidence suggests they started out on the wrong path (Csikszentmihalyi 1996:365).

It is the juxtaposition of vision and the big picture of current reality that generates creative tension, which is imperative for personal mastery (Senge 1992). A further profile of those with a high level of personal mastery is as follows:

They have a special sense of purpose that lies behind their visions and goals. They see "current reality" as an ally, not an enemy. They have learned how to perceive and work with forces of change rather than resist those forces. They are deeply inquisitive, committed to continually seeing reality more and more accurately. [They] live in a continual learning mode. They never "arrive".

Personal mastery is not something you possess. It is a process. It is a lifelong discipline. People with a high level of personal mastery are acutely aware of their ignorance, their incompetence, their growth areas. And they are deeply self-confident. Paradoxical? Only for those who do not see that "the journey is the reward" (Senge 1992:141).

This profile suggests that the development of a sense of hope must start first with the individual self, before it infiltrates to the group or organisation (Senge 1992:139; Fullan 1997:225). This is a feasible assumption as teacher development has an unpredictable dimension (Fullan 1997). "Each teacher's development is unique, affected by his or her insights, talents and desires" (Oberg and Underwood 1992:163). One can begin to appreciate that the emotional dimensions of hope may help teachers to "find purpose and enjoyment in the chaos of existence" (Csikszentmihalyi; 1996:20). This is important, as this sense of enjoyment must be felt in order to rekindle the passion for teaching (Fullan 1997).

### **2.5.9 Implications for the Research**

The development of the self of the teacher is vitally important to the teaching role. The self of the teacher is constituted by the values, knowledge and views held by a teacher about the nature of his/her work. Indeed, the literature reviewed in this section strongly indicates that teachers would

benefit greatly by investing in themselves through renewal, in both the cognitive and the affective domains. Emotional and affective factors such as a strong sense of teacher identity and a high level of professional satisfaction appear to be very influential to the teachers' willingness and disposition to engage in critical reflection. This implies that if teachers are to be self-empowered as active proponents for their own learning, they must experience a sense of purpose, satisfaction and enjoyment in their work. A strong sense of a professional self appears to enable the teacher to reflectively consider alternatives, to assume responsibility for the consequences of choices and decisions made, as well as to deal with the various pressures for change in a generative way. Thus, any critique of the role of reflection in leading teacher professional development from the multi-dimensional focus of the teacher's professional life, must begin with an understanding of how the individual self has developed throughout the career.

## **2.6 THE CAREER CYCLE**

### **2.6.1 Life Cycle Research**

In considering the previous section, it would be reasonable to assume that the development of the self of the teacher may be paced by personal values and aspirations, as well as by cultural and societal expectations (Oja 1989). Reflective practice may then be conceived as being grounded in the repertoire of values, knowledge, theories and practices that form an appreciation system (Freire 1975). This could influence the nature of dilemmas faced, the way that these might be framed or reframed and how solutions are determined. Therefore, the development of teacher reflectivity does need to be considered in terms of ongoing social, cognitive, emotional and technical skill development.

As learning is a life long endeavour of constructing new knowledge on the basis of past experiences and prior knowledge, adult development, career development, career decisions and opportunities for career change warrant some consideration, when exploring teacher professional growth. The modal life span and career trajectories will therefore be briefly and broadly

overviewed, as they become a useful heuristic, when discussing teacher development (Huberman 1992). It is emphasised, however, that these are not meant to represent definable continuums of teacher development. The trajectories are viewed as "a set of spirals that may turn back on themselves," rather than as invariant sets of temporal sequences (Huberman 1992:123). Adults move through different stages of learning in different ways at different times, through experiencing different contextual circumstances. Therefore, it may be more accurate to conceptualise the teachers' development as being multi-dimensional, appropriately described as "that dynamic interplay between different teachers' stages of experience, environmental factors, career and life long learning cycles" (Day 1994:117).

### **2.6.2 Career Subjective Stages: Teacher Career Cycle**

Adult development theories imply that the various ages and stages of adult development may influence age related life issues and career concerns of teachers, especially in relation to curriculum reform. Such age related periods may include sequences of growth, adaptation, transformation and change (Oja 1980).

Teachers' career stages are considered to be an important variable that may influence planning for teacher professional development (Parker 1990). The career cycle may be influenced by and influential to the teacher's personal life as well as the organisational and social environment of the school (Fessler 1985). Personal and organisational factors, rather than age or length of teaching service seem to be key determinants of career stage effectiveness. This invites consideration of Senge's 1992:306) view that the artificial creation of boundaries between work and family serves as an "anathema to systems thinking".

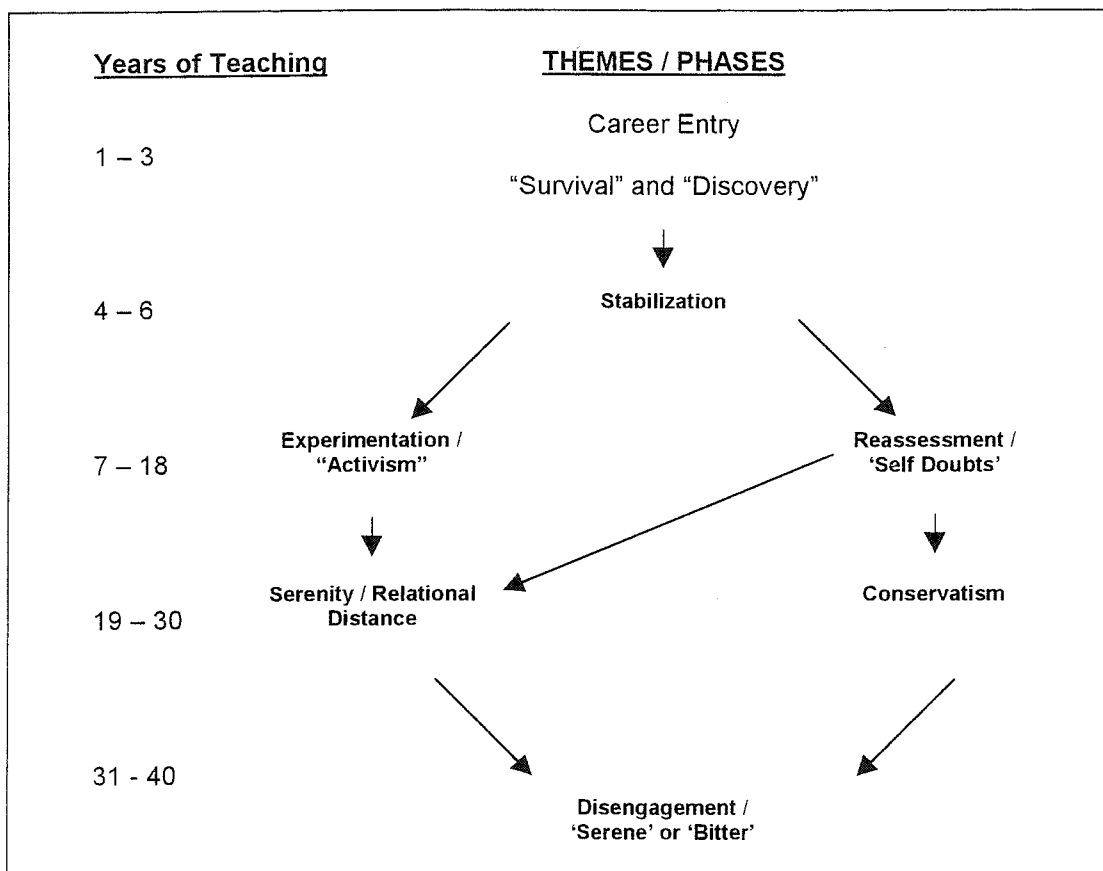
There is a natural connection between a person's worklife and all other aspects of life. We live only one life but for a long time our organisations have operated as if this simple fact could be ignored, as if we had two separate lives (Senge 1992:307).

However, from another perspective, 'how' teachers participate and rate may correlate with cognitive-developmental growth (Oja and Pine

1989). This suggests that any involvement in activities that support teacher development could be consistent with the cognitive development stage. This would be reflected in the teacher's thinking, emotions and behaviour. Therefore, in the provision of support for teachers as self empowered proponents for their own development, there would be a need to acknowledge adult development in ego maturity, principle/moral ethical reasoning and increased conceptual complexity" (Oja 1989:151).

A conception of developmentally conceived stages in terms of subjective states (Oja 1989) is augmented in the work of Maclean (1991). His analysis of teacher career research studies concluded that career development is often synonymous with personal constructions, which relate to a succession of stages. Thus, it is plausible to assume that "the subjective internal aspects of a person's career reflect the individual's picture of his or her work life and image of self" (Maclean 1991:16). This notion is exemplified in Huberman's (1992) mapping of possible phases within career paths that teachers may experience. A schematic model outlining successive themes of the teacher career cycle is provided in Figure 2.5.

**Figure 2.5 Successive Themes of the Teacher Career Cycle Schematic Model (Huberman 1992:127)**



Aspects of Huberman's (1992) research over five years relating to teacher career development have been previously explored (cf Section 2.5). The notion of the development of the career as a process rather than a successive series of punctuated events appears credible. For some teachers, this development could be a "linear" progression. For others, there may be "stages, regressions, dead-ends and unpredictable changes of direction sparked by new realisations" (Huberman 1992:4). The following conditions are considered to contribute to sustained career satisfaction (Huberman 1993, in Day 1994:119).

- an enduring commitment to the profession after being appointed with tenure;

- “manageable” classes, and where one can maintain good relations with pupils; good relationships with colleagues;
- a balance between school and home life/personal interests.

Other research (Evans 1997:840) into the teachers’ development of positive morale and sense of job satisfaction indicates that throughout the teacher’s career life, the major contributing determinants to this appear to be effective leadership, the opportunity to follow professional orientations, relative perspectives and realistic expectations.

Concern is sometimes expressed that the careers manufactured out of these internal states constitute personal constructions, not objective, profession defined and industrially negotiated career paths (eg Ingvarson and Chadbourne 1994). However, teacher career paths are not meant to be defined. They represent ‘routes that teachers take as they bring their actions to more effective states by means of adopting new ways of conceptualising and responding to phenomena’ (Butcher 1994:2). When exploring teacher development, the career paths taken by teachers may provide insight into the teachers’ professional interests and orientations.

### **2.6.3 Critical Incidents and Phases**

In these terms, it would most unlikely that all teachers would follow the same goal or the same route as they move toward higher levels of development. Each teacher’s career is punctuated by critical incidents and phases, which often impact on the direction of their career (Sikes, Measor and Woods 1985:20). Such critical incidents may affect the teachers’ perception and practice. It is claimed that whilst these incidents may provide a “beneficial boost” to the career, they can also “deal it a savage blow” (Sikes et. al. 1985:20). How a teacher responds to such incidents may be related to Senge’s (1992) notion of personal mastery and to the concept of emotional intelligence (Goleman: 1995) (cf Section 2.5).



One study, which explores how experienced "expert" teachers resolve professional uncertainty in relation to significant incidents (Burroughs-Lange et al. 1994:39-52) is of particular relevance to this thesis. Findings indicate that professional knowledge and practice improve through efforts to accept responsibility in meeting students' learning needs in the situational context. This study also emphasises the influence of family and personal values, as well as the role of the curriculum and traditions of practice on decision-making.

These findings concur with the view that critical incidents may serve to identify an area of concern, which motivates or forces teachers to seek new approaches or solutions (Downing 1994). Teacher development then, may be stimulated by the challenges and dilemmas, which are continually faced by teachers throughout their careers. These are described as catalysts for change.

These catalysts encourage and coerce teachers to find new ways of working, sometimes to challenge taken for granted views and procedures, both their own and those of other teachers or of the "system". This growth is stimulated by collaboration with colleagues, as sources of both support and reassurance, and of other views and strategies (Burroughs-Lange et. al. 1994:53).

Personal change, however, is not necessarily a smooth, unilinear development (Simes 1985, Huberman 1992; Day 1994). Changes in the career may represent more of a "dialectical relationship between self and circumstance" (Simes 1985:2). This suggests that it would be worthwhile to make provision for a wide range of particular forms of professional development that support teachers as life long learners and that may be appropriate to different stages of intellectual, career or role development (Dwyer 1996).

This notion prompts consideration of the three time zones in which teachers simultaneously work - yesterday, today and tomorrow, ie. connecting with the past, attending to present dilemmas and aiming toward the future (Holly and Walley 1989). Life experiences and teacher background are identified as "key ingredients of the people we are and of our sense of self" (Goodson 1992:116). Backgrounds may reveal instances of past teacher role models,

class, gender and ethnicity (Day 1992; Kelchtermans 1993). The teacher's lifestyle and career phase may also influence views on teaching practice and school development activities (Kelchtermans 1993).

Life history, biographies and narrative type research are purported to be useful in identifying aspects of teacher development as they hold potential to illuminate these aspects. However, there is growing concern expressed in the literature that the use of narrative and biographical research approaches have escalated an emphasis on the "self", without giving attention to "the genealogies of context" (Goodson 1997:42). This illuminates the need to recognise that some practices are embedded in history.

#### **2.6.4 Implications for the Research**

This section has highlighted the need to contextualise any insights concerning the Advanced Skills Teachers' reflective activity within the career life history and the broader socio-cultural context. This may provide deeper insight into choices, contingencies and options that have been open to the teachers in terms of their practice and ongoing professional development. The literature also implies that there is a need to also consider some of the many factors that could impact on the teachers' career long development. Teachers may be at different phases and stages in their personal and professional lives, in different contexts, with different personal and career expectations, with varied aspirations and professional career path orientations. These factors need to be considered in terms of supporting teacher development. It becomes clear that there is a definite need for movement beyond the provision of prescriptive means of support that casts teachers as being dependent on others to direct their professional learning.

### **2.7 SUPPORTING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **2.7.1 Changing Times**

When considering the choices that are open to the individual in relation to their professional development, it is important to consider the ecology of teacher development (Fullan 1992; Evans 1997). Institutional support for

teacher learning appears vital to organisations, as well as the individual teacher's professional health (Day 1994:124). Professional development may enhance both the affective and cognitive dimensions of the teacher's professional life. It has been previously noted that teachers within Catholic schools are encouraged to be self directed life long learners (Everett 1997:53). Life long learning involves "knowing, doing and being" (Blyth 1997:31). However, whilst there is assent for the support for teachers as life long learners, there is no single way of supporting it. The endorsement of one particular approach may mean nothing, without an understanding the context and the subsequent characteristics of effective, as compared to ineffective efforts. Thus, "if good teaching is to be recognised for the complex and difficult task that it is, then the professional learning of teachers should also be acknowledged as difficult and complex" (Groundwater-Smith 1998:31).

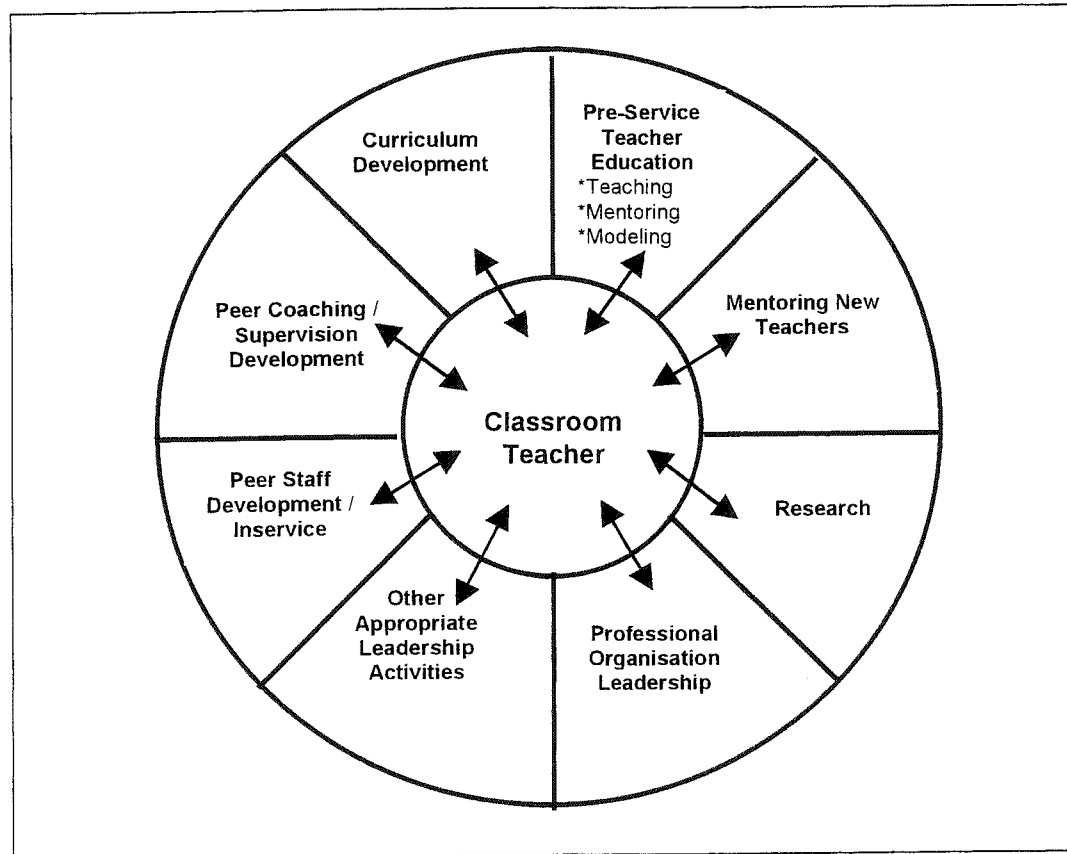
"Teaching is much harder than it was ten years ago." This comment made by a teacher at the BCE Teacher Convocation (1998), captures the impact of the increasing pressures facing teachers today. Thus, one can appreciate that some approaches, strategies and models used to support teacher development may be "obsolete" (Hargreaves and Fullan (1992), or "past their use by date" (McArdle and Spry 1996). Strategies that may have been appropriate for a particular purpose or historical time may not be of benefit in today's post-modern world. Therein then, lies a challenge for all members of a school community, "to leave nostalgia behind" (Hargreaves and Fullan 1992:124) and to consider alternative means of providing teacher support.

### **2.7.2 Sources for Professional Development**

An approach that provides for a synthesis between professional and school development appears to be necessary (Hargreaves and Fullan 1998). Recognition of the life long learning needs of teachers and provision for the continuity and balance of professional development opportunities is needed. "The message is that our connections must be more balanced, more authentic, more to the total person" (Day 1994:124). A wide variety of sources and means for professional development exist. A delivery "system" (Parker 1990:21) may encompass contribution from a number of sources.

Figure 2.6 identifies and demonstrates the interrelatedness of the contribution of sources for continuing teacher professional development.

**Figure 2.6 Professional Development Delivery Systems (Parker 1990:21)**



This diagrammatic representation supports the notion that some forms of professional development might be more appropriate than others, at different stages of the career (Day 1993:19). Providing support for professional development at critical learning stages throughout the teacher's career is necessary. In reconsidering the personal, occupational and societal change pressures (Candy 1997) (See Section 2.3), there comes the realisation that the appropriateness of any one means of professional support would also be context dependent. Thus, a need exists for flexibility and a range of options that might suit individual teachers' preferred learning styles and contextual needs (Day 1993; Lidstone and Smith 1996; McKenny 1997).

One study (Crowther and Postle 1991:91) that investigates teacher professional development within *Brisbane Catholic Education* confirms this assumption. It also reveals that most teachers preferred and valued approaches that provided opportunities for:

- a time for reflection by individuals and groups
- sharing of ideas and values by participants
- teachers setting priorities for action
- presenters who are knowledgeable in interpersonal processes and group dynamics
- needs based problem solving methodologies
- use of adult learning theory

It is important to consider the utilisation of the teachers' preferred formats and modes of delivery from the extensive variety of forms and strategies for professional development that exist (Dwyer 1996). Some examples are comprehensive large scale programs, group collaborative involvements, in-service sessions, workshops, networks, peer tutoring, collaborative group inquiry models, mentoring, and university course work (Lidstone and Smith 1996; Dwyer 1996). Involvement may be through individual, group, school, regional or system efforts. The "interest" could range from particular key learning areas, pedagogical interests, educational reforms, or personal teacher growth (Eraut 1993; Dwyer 1996; Candy 1997). Therefore, if teacher professional development is to "count" (Hargreaves and Fullan 1998), and be relevant, it needs to consider the appropriateness of the format and identify just who is in control of the process (Dwyer 1996:3).

### **2.7.3 The Craft Model**

There is scholarly concern that the general level of pedagogical, institutional and professional investment by teachers can tend to decline over the course of the career (Huberman 1992; Day 1994). The craft model of professional development is suggested by Huberman (1992:135-138), to be one that may prove to be appropriate for those teachers (usually mid-career), who prefer to "tinker" in their own classrooms, rather than become involved in large scale

reform, involving multiple classroom innovations. Such a model may encourage and support these teachers with their own self development in a way that is not too “codified” or “scripted” (Huberman 1992:136). Moreover, Huberman advocates structuring teacher networks that have focus on classroom level experimentation. Through such a forum, teachers may learn from each other, and at times access the broader perspective of outside agencies and consultants, in areas that are meaningful, challenging, yet practically relevant. The key to the effectiveness of these networks, would be collaborative group interaction and active experimentation or inquiry relating to a problematic issue, along with some evaluative data collection. Furthermore, Huberman (1992) suggests that this model may help to counteract the isolation that often characterises the artisan approach to teaching (Lortie 1975). The craft model seems to be a feasible option, which may help to alleviate the concerns teachers hold about having too much time out of the classroom for professional development (Buchmann 1992; *BCE* 1998 b; Hargreaves 1997).

With the advancement of technology and the increasing opportunities that are becoming available for teachers to access the internet, the craft model could well be adapted through the use of technology. This could become a futuristic, viable means through which teachers may have the opportunity to collaboratively interact with colleagues (Smith 1998).

#### **2.7.4 The Key Teacher Model**

The Key Teacher model is currently the most predominant model used in Catholic schools in the Brisbane Archdiocese. It was originally introduced in 1991, to facilitate implementation of the English syllabus, which was then a system priority. The model has since been used (albeit with adaptations and title changes between Key and Lead), as a means of disseminating information and providing support to schools in relation to *Choosing Our Future* initiatives. These include Mathematics Renewal, Information Technology, Health and Physical Education, Outcome Based Reporting and the Early Years Diagnostic Net.

Essentially, the model is one whereby the system "trains" and provides ongoing support to a Key Teacher from a school in relation to a particular Key Learning Area or project. The Key Teacher then has responsibility to disseminate information and to provide collegial support at the school level, through a variety of means that are appropriate for the given local context (Ralston and McDarra 1994:1). Within *Brisbane Catholic Education*, the role of the English Key Teacher first involved organising and leading module based workshops, which extended over an approximate two year span. The workshops were structured to facilitate reflective dialogue regarding the why related to the "context-text" model of the English syllabus, as much as the "how" regarding implementation (*Queensland Department of Education* 1991). This culminated in the development of a School English Program that would be endorsed by the school community and validated by a panel of peers (*Brisbane Catholic Education* 1995).

In 1993/1994, an evaluation of the English syllabus implementation investigated the effectiveness of the Key Teacher model in Brisbane Catholic schools (Cumming and Freebody 1995). Findings indicate that the model has proved to be "a most effective mechanism" for curriculum implementation and ongoing professional development (Cumming and Freebody 1995:46). However, this study also reveals that the Key Teacher role could place a burden on individual teachers, if there is not administrative or school ownership of the 'ELA project'. The need for Key Teachers to have ongoing professional development support in relation to collegial mentoring is highlighted in the evaluation. This appears to be essential to the building of positive relationships that are based on professional respect and trust. This conclusion concurs with other teacher change literature relating to the building of collaborative and collegial relationships within schools (eg Little 1990; Cole 1991; Hargreaves and Fullan 1998).

A more recent review of models utilised within *Brisbane Catholic Education* to support school curriculum development, indicates that the Key Teacher model is still considered as effective (*Brisbane Catholic Education* 1998). It is seen to have the advantage of providing schools with the capacity and

flexibility to engage in curriculum renewal in a manner that best suits the particular circumstance. It also appears to serve as a means of career enhancement for teachers wanting to assume a curriculum leadership role. Concerns with the model, essentially correlate with those identified in their earlier report by Cumming and Freebody (1993/1994). System facilitated Key Teacher network meetings continue to be a strong and popular source for professional development (*Brisbane Catholic Education* 1998). An emerging issue identified by some Key Teachers is the lack of time and appropriate forums to share the experience of the day with colleagues back at school. The multiplicity of both curricular and other school demands is becoming increasingly problematic (Brennan 1999).

There are, however, some elements surrounding the Key Teacher model, which warrant consideration, by both the school administration and the Key Teacher (Cumming and Freebody 1995). Care must be taken to ensure that the principal and staff have commitment to the particular project and that total responsibility does not rest with the person assuming the lead role. The "intensification" (Hargreaves 1994:149) of work also needs to be counter-balanced with support structures, such as appropriate release time, resources and opportunities to interact with other colleagues (Hargreaves and Evans 1997; Proudford 1998). It has been asserted that teachers should not have to offer "more for less" in the name of extended professionalism" (Hargreaves 1995:152). This may lead to burnout and disillusionment and present a real possibility for disengagement in later years (Huberman 1992).

### **2.7.5 Technical Models**

Other models of teacher development may have a technical focus. These are often regarded as "training" and may be related to policy or reform implementation (Clark 1992). Often these "top down reforms" have been developed with little or no input from practising teachers (Macpherson 1994). Moreover, as Tabulawa (1998:251) appropriately points out "to ensure implementation, inputs (in the form of resources and inservice programs) are mobilized, the expectation being that these will lead to a change in teachers' practices. Unless there is reflective activity that moves the teacher beyond



technical interest or control, there may be little ownership and a sense of being 'done to' (Theissen 1992; O'Donohue 1995). Teaching is seen in terms of instrumental ends that are achievable through recipes of tried and true practices. The big picture relating to either, or all, of the "moral, aesthetic, educational and political issues" surrounding the "why", are lost to the many pieces at the "how" (Sultana 1995:131) or the "what works" level (Burroughs-Lange et al. 1994:54).

Equally indictable are those models of development that disregard what teachers know and think about their own practice and which fail to understand the contextual realities of different schools and classrooms (Clark 1992; Tabulawa 1998). These tend to focus on rigid outcomes and risk reducing teachers' roles to that of technicians (Day 1994:250). In terms of the implementation of curriculum reforms, the "competent" teacher may be one who is projected as being able to implement policies competently and compliantly (Smyth 1995:6).

This raises concern, if awards such as the SFT (*Education. Queensland*) or AST 1 and AST 2 (*BCE*), are based on loyalty and compliance. Such a practice is characteristic of bureaucracies (Beneveniste 1987). A real possibility exists that teachers may be disadvantaged or victimised for challenging or opposing a policy. This, in itself, may manifest problems as teachers learn to "play the game, put on a front and pretend to comply" (Chadbourne and Ingvarson 1994:284).

It is only when teachers are actively involved in the change process and also have a critical understanding of the vision or "big picture" surrounding the change that there will be any real commitment to change (Sultana 1995; Proudford 1998). Alternative models of teacher development which promote collaboration (Proudford 1995) and reflective deliberation (Bonser and Grundy 1988; Beattie 1997) with peers and others have been advocated as being worthwhile in assisting teachers to be active proponents for their own learning (Dwyer 1997). These models may embrace teacher leadership,

through roles such as mentors, peer coaches, Key Teachers and teacher consultants.

### **2.7.6 Collegiality and Collaboration**

Since the release of the Queensland curriculum review report, *Shaping the Future* (Wiltshire et al. 1994), there emphasis has been placed on the need for increased collegiality and collaborative interactions (Proudford 1995). This has largely been effected through the promotion of a reflective approach to teacher professional development (*Education Queensland* 1997).

The Panel recommends the development of better models of collegiality and professional interaction within the school, with more emphasis on the teaching and learning process in professional development as well as on a reflective approach, which strives for integration of values and practice (Wiltshire et al. 1994:199).

It appears that in Queensland, since the release of this review, the isolated nature of teaching is showing signs of changing to a more collaborative one. *The Executive Committee of the Queensland Consortium for Professional Development in Education* (1995) released survey findings, which indicate that in general, teachers tend to value the opportunity for collegial interaction with peers. This research suggests that teachers prefer professional development that is practical and relevant to their immediate classrooms. A large majority of the teachers surveyed, rate networking, school based collaborative teaching and learning activities, interaction with colleagues and practical workshops and seminars as being important and worthwhile formats for professional development (Lidstone and Smith 1996:65).

However, concerns are raised when models of professional development foist responsibility onto the teacher to improve teaching, without giving attention to organisational or social factors, which may influence their practice and the curriculum. "Obsession with the seductive discourse of practicality and relevance," may not promote teacher professional growth and may ultimately limit teacher creativity (Day 1994:123). It is the role of practical problems such as challenges, dilemmas and contextual needs in the

process of professional development that appears to deserve greater emphasis (Burroughs-Lange et al. 1994:56). Thus, the challenge exists to define practicality in terms of professional development, in "ways which broaden, rather than narrow teachers' "visions of teaching" (Day 1994:126).

The high valuing of professional development activities that are of a collegial nature also applies to teachers employed by *Brisbane Catholic Education*. A collaborative study by McKenny (1997), into the role of the *BCE* consultant concludes that teachers prefer the opportunity to collaborate, network and dialogue on different issues. This study reveals that teachers appreciate opportunities to work collaboratively on challenging issues that relate to curriculum reform. However, time or rather, the lack of it, is problematic (McKenny 1997). Reports summarising teacher evaluations relating to School Curriculum Program Validation Panels, Moderation and Network days and data from the Teacher Convocation (1998) also endorse these conclusions (*Brisbane Catholic Education* 1998 b).

In terms of the implementation of outcome based assessment frameworks, teachers within *Brisbane Catholic Education* participate in the process of inter-school and intra-school moderation. The purpose is for teachers to share professional understandings of the learning outcomes in a collegial, supportive and collaborative manner, in order to move toward consistency of judgement (Ralston and Newman 1999). It has been emphasised that the moderation process may assist teachers to gain a clearer view of how tasks and assessments might indicate a level of student achievement (*Australian Council of Educational Research* 1997:302). The moderation process is advanced as a significant form of professional development, which may lead to successful implementation of an outcome based reporting approach (*Brisbane Catholic Education* 1999).

It appears that collegiality, collaboration and networking are important elements to consider, in the provision of teacher professional development (Gibson 1996). As experience by itself is limited, teachers need opportunities to learn through reflective dialogue and confrontation with others (Day

1994:110). However, the current thrust toward the development of staff collegiality, may run the risk of being “conceptually amorphous and ideologically sanguine” (Little 1990:509). It is claimed that induced collaboration and externally imposed relationships, both in design and development, do little to facilitate teacher development (eg. Little 1990; Hargreaves and Evans 1997). At issue, is “the congruence or fit between naturally occurring relations among teachers and those collaboratives that emerge in the course of institutionally sponsored initiatives” (Little 1990:530).

This suggests that collegiality and collaboration may be better fostered through a “natural, integrated” approach of building relationships, rather than through contrived arrangements that have been institutionally imposed (Cole 1991:425). The focus on relationships comes from a need for mutual understanding and consideration in the process of professional growth (Little 1990; Sachs 1997).

### **2.7.7 Promoting Reflection**

Efforts that are directed toward the promotion of teacher reflection do need to be framed from a perspective, which gives attention to growth and development (Wildman and Niles 1987; Carson 1995; Johnson 1997). Whilst it is generally accepted that a reflective approach is important for teacher professional development, it is a chimerical notion to assume that a person can be “trained” in reflection (Adler 1991). This has been the subliminal message inherent in government legislated documents (eg. STF, *Education Queensland* 1997). Indeed this is almost, as “Orwellian” as “being able to develop a person” (Holmes 1989, cited in Hargreaves and Fullan 1992:12). A reflective approach may, however, be promoted through the use of a variety of strategies with supportive structures in place (Smyth 1989; Bullough 1993; Houston and Clift 1990; Hargreaves and Evans 1997). These would emphasise the social construction of knowledge through the teachers’ experiences of responding to challenges (Sachs 1997; Groundwater-Smith 1998). Through such a process, skills used in reflection may be sharpened and opportunities provided to consider alternatives.

### 2.7.8 Language

Dialogue may facilitate the development of common meaning between teachers (Ross 1990:106). Meaning through language is constructed from personal experience by autobiographical narrative, with its accompanying discourse and reflections (Halliday 1986). The development of a sense of a personal biography and professional history may help teachers to assume a greater sense of confidence and responsibility in educational reform (Day 1993; Kelchtermans 1993).

Our experiences as teachers have meaning for us in terms of our own historically located consciousness; what we need to do is work at articulating that consciousness in order to interpret meaning (Smyth 1989:27).

Language needs to be tied "to the doing of reflection as both a function and a necessary condition of social development" (Cinnamond and Zimpher 1990:61). Reflection appears to be promoted through engagement in critical discourse "in fellowship with others" (Freire 1973:153). Thus, it may well be described as "inevitably and inherently, a social affair" (Bullough 1993:393). The need for critical discourse is also emphasised by Habermas (1984 in Kincheloe 1991:41) who sets forth "a theory of discourse and a consensus theory of truth." Discourse is considered to be a "form of communication in which participants subject themselves to the force of a better argument" (Crotty 1998:151).

As Bruner once said, "the last one to discover the water will be the fish: we are often so close to our ideas, beliefs and actions that we are unable to distance ourselves from them to be able to hold them up for scrutiny and consideration. We need another to help us to do this: another who we trust and respect and with whom we feel that we can risk (Smith and Hatton 1992:6).

There tends to be little quality time made available for professional discourse in teaching. However time in and of itself is not adequate, as specific structures need to be in place, if teachers are to consider their practice in a skilful manner. It requires patience, it is labour intensive and it requires considerable time (Houston and Clift 1990).

Systematic reflection takes time. Developing descriptions, examining beliefs and contemplating changes in one's practice are not automatic routines (Wildman and Niles 1987:29).

Dialoguing on professional issues, confronting long held assumptions and questioning others may be difficult, uncomfortable and foreign for some teachers (Sachs 1997:268). An atmosphere of trust must prevail if teachers are to expose their ideas, triumphs, problems, values and beliefs. Isolation in the classroom has been the persistent reality for many teachers (Lortie 1975). They can also tend to hide their successes, as well as their failures (Lieberman 1988). Thus, teachers need to feel collegial support, for the act of self-disclosure would involve risk and vulnerability (Spry 1989).

### **2.7.9 Peer Coaching**

Peer coaching and mentoring amongst peers may provide such collegial support. (Smart 1998). These strategies are reputed to be powerful in facilitating staff development (Hargreaves 1992; Smart 1998), through developing "organisational spirit", or the "culture of collegiality" (Playko 1995:89). However, to be effective, both strategies need to be implemented in supportive, environments where trust and positive interpersonal relationships are nurtured (Wright 1987). Peer coaching may serve the following three functions.

- To encourage collegiality through the continued engagement in study of their teaching;
- To develop shared language and common understandings of knowledge and skills;
- To provide a structure to facilitate implementation

(Joyce and Showers 1982:84).

This view is consonant with the research findings of Pugach and Johnson's (1990) study concerning peer collaboration in teacher professional development programs. Teachers in the sample were encouraged to rehearse specific reflective, strategic thinking patterns in structured dialogue with partners. These findings suggest that peer collaboration can facilitate teacher reflection. Teacher confidence is increased, as principled knowledge is built to

address ways and means of resolving conflicts between what is known by the teacher (including attitudes, values and beliefs) and what is known by the learner.

The disposition to engage in reflective practice, then, is acquired through peer collaboration when internal dialogue or conversation is made explicit, and thus available to the teacher. Listening to one's own processes of thinking and having those processed modelled provides a structured means for encouraging reflective practice among teachers (Pugach and Johnson, 1990:205).

This suggests that open dialogue and engagement in the process of reflective deliberation facilitates consideration of alternatives. However, any collaborative efforts would need to be characterised by a climate of trust and collegiality.

#### **2.7.10 Collaborative School Cultures**

Peer collaboration may help to promote a collaborative school culture (Playko 1995; Hargreaves and Fullan 1998). Current literature relating to school management, stresses that shared ownership is essential, for the success of school professional development "projects" (Sergiovanni 1992; Hargreaves and Evans 1997; Hargreaves and Fullan 1998). However, it takes time, energy and commitment to engage all members of the community in participative, decision-making processes (McArdle and Spry 1996).

There is also no denying the pressure that is on those in school administration to implement state goal governed approaches (Popkewitz 1996, in Sachs 1997:268). Thus, tension is created through pressure forces (Candy 1997), that come from the need to keep up to date with current trends in education, implementing a multiplicity of reforms and responding to the needs of those in the school community (Hargreaves and Fullan 1998). Without a collaborative school culture, the reforms may effect a sense of "the come and go syndrome" (Garman 1995:32). This could then manifest in a 'laissez-faire' attitude amongst teachers, which reflects little or no commitment (Hargreaves and Fullan 1998). At the other end of the scale, it may lead to burnout and feelings of betrayal, for those who have committed energy to abandoned projects (Huberman 1992; Garman 1995). Indeed, this

sense of the “come and go syndrome” (Garman 1995:32) is clearly evident in Proudford’s (1998) local study concerning teachers’ perceptions in relation to outcome based assessment and reporting, known as SPS, during a time characterised by changing Queensland government and legislature.

In order to facilitate the building of collaborative school communities, there is need to create “space” (McArdle and Spry 1996:5-1). Thus, it seems that a certain amount of ‘gate-keeping’ may be necessary (Hargreaves 1995). This however, would need to be based on collaborative decision-making (Proudford 1998). Emphasis would be on the quality of projects undertaken in terms of teacher involvement and generative efforts to change. This may help to ensure that all teachers, not just those in key roles have access to quality professional development and have the opportunity to critically evaluate the implications of any changes for their own practice (Groundwater-Smith 1998; Proudford 1998).

### **2.7.11 The School as a Learning Community**

An enabling approach toward teacher development may hold real possibilities for school renewal (McArdle and Spry 1996). The school, as such, would be viewed as a “learning community” (Yeatman and Sachs 1995). This type of approach to school renewal is endorsed as being necessary for education in today’s world (Senge 1992; Hinton 1997; Day 1997; Evans 1997; Hargreaves 1998; Fullan 1998). Within such a context, principals and teachers assume responsibility for their own learning, through a culture of collaborative school based management of teaching and learning (Sachs 1997:272).

In Australia, several networks of interested school communities are working toward this end. The *National Schools Network* promotes collaborative inquiry on issues related to teaching and learning through local, state and national networks. The *Innovative Links Project* involves collaborative working relationships between school committees and universities. These approaches can provide “a strong political platform for teachers to reclaim moral and intellectual leadership at the national level (Sachs 1997:267).



Moreover, they provide opportunities for teachers to continue to learn through their own self directed efforts.

A key part of expert performance is the ability to talk about it, to tell stories about it, not as a second order representation of what to do, but as an integral part of wide of what it is to be an expert performer. Learning is thus a way of being in a particular social world not merely knowing about it or describing it (Sachs 1997:272).

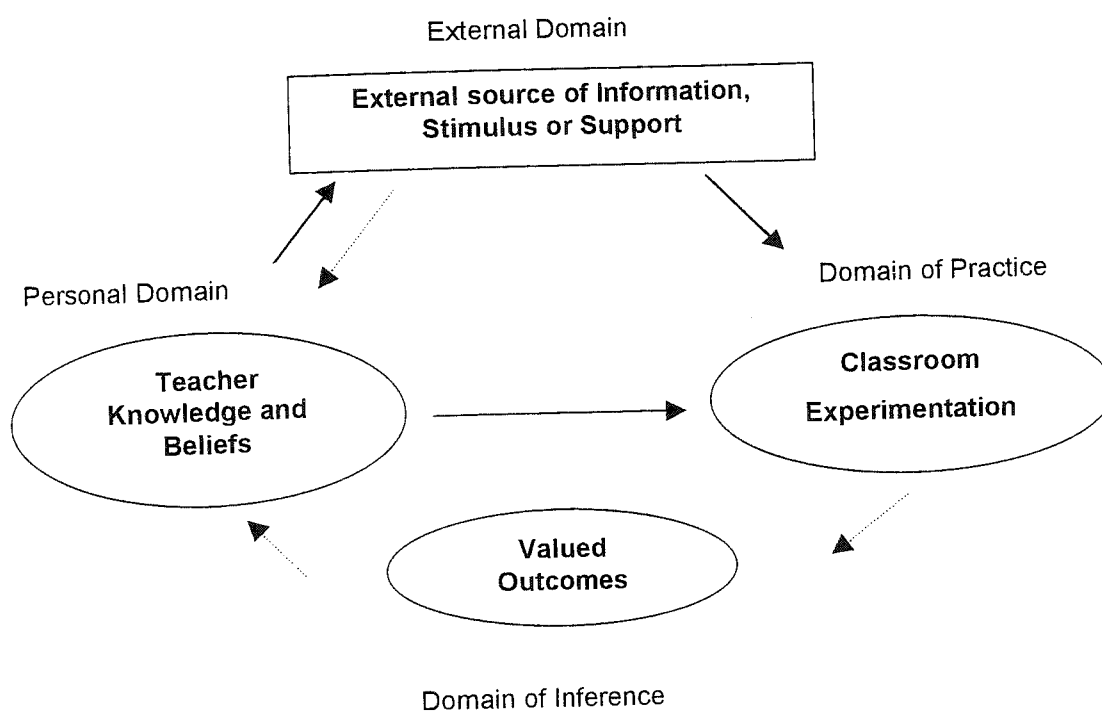
Teachers also need "inbuilt support" in the change process (Franke et al. 1998:67). The focus of professional development may then change from one that responds mainly to outside forces for change to one that makes it possible to "learn and grow" (Sherin 1998:68). Thus, a new paradigm of teacher professional development appears to be needed (Hargreaves and Fullan 1998). The "we can work it out" approach to school renewal is one example (McArdle and Spry 1996). The school is imaged as a "journey place," which strives towards being accountable, credible, communicable, non-coercive and participatory (McArdle and Spry 1996:2-1). Together, and through interactions with many others, those in school communities may become the "new rich" in terms of knowledge and learning (McArdle and Spry 1996:2-1).

The inevitability of change and the complexities and uncertainties of the post-modern era, present a challenge for all in education, to be learners as well as facilitators of learning. For clearly, isolated inservice and training alone do not appear to meet the individual needs of teachers and the demand for ongoing professional learning through the diverse stages of individual growth (Butler 1996). Thus teacher professional development could benefit from an approach that recognises a multiplicity of possible change pathways (Clarke, Carlin and Peter 1992). Such an approach would need to be creative, collaborative, open to challenges, flexible, workable and credible, if it were to have relevance in today's world (Dwyer 1996; Hargreaves and Fullan 1998).

*The Model of Professional Growth*, developed by Clarke and Peter (1993:4) aims to assist the school community to build a reflective and collaborative

school culture. This model acknowledges the role of reflection in teacher professional development, as it involves a continual and complex cycle of action and reflection. *The Model of Professional Growth* (Clarke and Peter 1993:4) is presented in Figure 2.7.

**Figure 2.7 Model of Professional Growth (Clarke and Peter 1993:4)**



(solid line = enactive mediating process; broken line = reflective mediating process)

In promoting engagement in a reflective approach to teaching and learning, it holds the promise of possibility for teachers and school communities to deliberate on issues and to then articulate what is valued. This may enable them to approach the task of education in a confident, positive and passionate manner.

### 2.7.12 Conditions

Attention needs to also be given to the appropriateness of conditions for effective teaching and learning. "The conditions of teachers work are the conditions under which students learn" (Sachs 1997:265). This would suggest that the physical environment, class sizes and groupings,

administrative school management structures, resources, opportunities for teaching, support networks, parent involvement and affiliation with outside agencies are just some of the many factors which may impact positively or negatively on the learning for students and teachers (Day 1997). However, this would be very context dependent. "Even schools within a few hundred yards from each other can legitimately hold radically different views on many issues, views which will be reflected in the structures and processes, which they will use to fulfil their perceived needs" (Reid 1998:80). Therefore an issue causing a problematic interest at one school may not present itself as being so at another.

### **2.7.13 Implications for the Research**

Choices must be open to teachers both individually and collectively to find appropriate support for ongoing professional development. A synthesis between professional and school development and the provision for the continuity and balance of professional development opportunities is required. When considering the notion of teachers as life long learners and the school as a learning community, there appears to be a definite need to find alternative models and means of supporting teacher professional development. Teachers face different pressures for change and engage in different kinds of learning for different purposes. This suggests strongly that they do need to be able to direct their own involvements. Clearly, there is no one model of support that might service or be appropriate to all teachers' needs. The literature also reveals that whilst it is important to promote teacher reflection, it is a chimerical notion to assume that teachers might be trained to reflect. Collaborative efforts that involve collegial relationships, opportunities for critical dialogue and interaction appear to support the development of a reflective approach. However, this requires appropriate conditions such as a climate of trust, the prioritising of time and support structures. It needs to be recognised that teacher professional development is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon that to be effective, must be supported in terms of what teachers identify to be most appropriate to their needs.

## 2.8 CONCLUSION TO THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature concerning reflection and teacher professional development closes by using extracts from the children's classic, *Through the Looking Glass* (Carroll (1946) to illustrate key conclusions.

When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone,  
 "it means just what I chose it to mean - neither more or less.  
 "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean  
 so many different things."

In educational discourse, there can be a tendency to make terminology mean either one thing, or another. Indeed, the review of literature indicates that the broad multi-faceted terms of 'teacher professional development', 'reflection', 'educational reform' and 'outcomes based education' have many different definitions, terminologies and embedded meanings. The review concludes that the conceptualisation of teacher development, when framed from both a critical and interpretative perspective, appears to provide a broader, more holistic view of the teacher as a person. Furthermore, teacher professional development represents a most complex, idiosyncratic and multi-faceted, career-long process that incorporates elements from both descriptive and prescriptive dimensions. It involves interplay between many different factors, as it connects practice, the personal and professional self of the teacher, the career, and the immediate and wider social and historical context in which practice is situated.

Reflection is also a very complex concept, the meaning of which is often embedded in a particular epistemological base. Critical reflection involves reflective deliberation and considered action. The review also concludes that reflection has a range of interests and forms, which may be appropriate for given situations. The conclusion is drawn that the promotion of reflection needs to be couched in a conception of ongoing personal and professional teacher development, which is characterised by change.

Moreover, the review concludes that processes for teacher development may either impede or enhance learning. Supportive, yet challenging structures must be in place to support reflective practice and to facilitate collaborative inquiry, group dialogue and social reflection. This may then assist individuals and groups to find the power within their own selves and community, to assume greater control over curriculum decision making and other issues relating to imposed reform. It appears that reflection, in its many forms, may enhance the personal and professional development of the teacher *in situ*, as well as in school and inter-school based contexts. Another section of text from Carroll (1946) is used to exemplify how reflection may provide both direction and meaning.

“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?” asked Alice.

“That depends a great deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.

“I don’t much care where,” said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat.

The review of literature reveals that teachers could well experience the Alice phenomenon, when they are not shareholders in school based or system decisions relating to educational phenomena, particularly curriculum reform. Like the Cheshire Cat, the question that teachers and leaders need to collaboratively consider may well be ‘where it is that they want to be going and what are the purposes for doing so’. This would be need to be considered in terms of the pressures for change at the personal, school and societal level that may be converging. In so doing, direction may be found through consideration of value based questions. Reflective deliberation on issues with consideration to the aspects of ethics, namely care, consistency and consequence (Haynes 1998) may provide direction for principled decision making and action. Reflective dialogue and active collaborative efforts, may well lead individuals, schools and the profession at large toward renewal and generative change.

The literature review also reveals that appropriate conditions and structures need to be in place, to support teachers in their professional learning.

Supportive management, flexible structures, time, a climate that both encourages risk-taking and supports self-directed and school community learning efforts are necessary. Attending to the ecology of teacher development at the personal, classroom, school, system and professional level is important. It is also necessary to attend to the emotional, as well as the cognitive side of change. There also appears to be value in collaborative research efforts, which attempt to better understand teacher development from the teacher's perspective. However, attention must also be given to the immediate and broader social context in which the teacher's experiences are situated.

This review concludes by turning once more to another "Alice" statement (Carroll 1946). "What is the use of a book, without pictures or conversation?" The review of literature paints a multi-dimensional picture that comes from many scholarly conversations concerning the role of reflection in leading teacher professional development (Refer to Figure 2.1). The review now serves as a reference source in the analysis of the data, as the promise of the rhetoric, surrounding reflection and teacher professional development is tested against the real life experiences of five Advanced Skills Teachers.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DESIGN OF RESEARCH

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This research attempts to critique, so as to understand the role that reflection plays in leading teacher professional development, from the inside perspective of the professional lives of five Advanced Skills Teachers. It has emancipatory intent in extending social consciousness of a more holistic view of professional development. This is important, if teachers are to be honoured and supported as having the knowledge and capabilities to be self empowered, responsible and active proponents for their own professional development. Therefore, the purpose for this research is to critically explore and to interrogate the processes that five Advanced Skills Teachers (AST1) use to reflect on practice and to critique how reflective activity has contributed to their ongoing growth and development in the many dimensions of their professional lives. The research inquires into how reflection has led these teachers to make sense of the phenomena of significant events experienced throughout their careers and how it impacts on action taken, when dealing with problematic issues concerning the *Choosing Our Future (BCE)* curriculum reforms. In so doing, it aims to extrapolate and question the embedded values that underscore decisions and actions.

It is acknowledged that reality is temporal and that teachers work simultaneously in three time zones, namely past, present and future (Holly and Walley 1989). Therefore, the design of the research allows any critical exploration of the Advanced Skills Teachers' reflective activity to be contextualised within each of these time zones. Hence, insights gained from this research are described from a conception of ongoing, career long teacher development (Zimpher 1988; Day 1994). Moreover, a participatory, collaborative methodology best serves the research purpose.

## 3.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.2.1 Research Orientation

A qualitative approach to research is appropriate, in the interest of giving attention to the experiences of the Advanced Skills Teachers. Qualitative research reflects a "quest for holism" (Kincheloe 1991:145). This is necessary, in order to understand teacher development from the holistic perspective of the career life history and to respect the contextual specificity of constructed meanings. Within the context of this research, social reality is regarded as "a creation of individual consciousness, with meaning and the evaluation of events being a personal and subjective construction" (Burns 1997:3). Moreover, the conceptualisation of teaching, learning and reflection is guided by the assumption of a social reconstructivist perspective (Freire 1973). This orientation is derived from the philosophy of critical social science. Research that comes from within a critical paradigm involves the production of new knowledge that is generated from past understandings (Kincheloe 1991).

The theoretical framework underpinning this research is primarily critical social theory. This is appropriate, since there is a need to critically explore the embedded values and thinking that underscores the actions taken by the Advanced Skills Teachers in their attempts to change. However, the research is also guided by an interpretative philosophy, as there is another need to give attention to the personal dimension of these experiences. This selection is based on "its goodness of fit" (Candy 1989:10) and its appropriateness to the purpose and the context of this study. It acknowledges that any research orientation could have some "blind spots", which could well be addressed by another approach (Candy 1989:10). The reasoning behind this decision is further explained this way:

While epistemological choice and investment provide clear paths to follow, any orientation, if mutually exclusive from another, carries the disadvantage of narrowing ranges of conceptual convenience and lessening permeability in personal, social and theoretical constructions of knowledge (Kompf 1993:167-168).



Clearly then, an understanding of the research problem directs the selection of an appropriate methodology.

### **3.2.2 Interpretative Approach**

The research design therefore, whilst underpinned by a critical theory also needs to reflect elements of an interpretative approach. As previously indicated, this provides for a more personal dimension to the research that gives attention to the person of the teacher. It is anticipated that an interpretative approach would enable the Advanced Skills Teachers' subjective and social realities to be better understood, in relation to their career life experiences. Whilst this research focuses on critical exploration of the thinking and embedded beliefs and values underscoring the teachers' actions, it also gives attention to experience as it is lived and felt. This holds greater potential to provide a broader, more holistic view of professional development and the notion of the teacher as a reflective practitioner.

Critical theory may be criticised as a negative formulation with narrow focus on the political (Buchmann 1993; Bradbeer 1994), if personal elements are not also considered. The personal dimension is necessary, as this research has emancipatory intent in extending social consciousness of a more holistic view of professional development, as a multi-faceted phenomenon that cannot be separated from what teachers value. This acknowledges that teacher development involves a process of self-understanding that is grounded in the life of each teacher (Kelchtermans 1993). It also strongly suggests the need to give attention to the emotional dimension of experience (Goleman 1995).

### **3.2.3 Critical Social Theory**

However, whilst the research has elements from the interpretative paradigm, its main orientation is in critical social theory. It is therefore important to describe this further and to explore its implications for the research. Critical social theory is concerned with understanding how ideology shapes social relations (Popkewitz 1984). Educational research that finds its orientation in critical theory aims to promote critical consciousness, in order to break down social

inequalities and oppressive ideologies (Habermas 1971). Current culture is located within its social and historical context, as well as through the immediate processes of action and reflection. If research is to be understood, then it "must pursue the emancipatory nature of critical theory, which dissolves the dominant forces which separate humans from understandings of their own histories and contexts" (Habermas 1971, in Held 1980:254). Critical theory advances the extrapolation of the genesis of those assumptions that shape lives and institutions, in order to determine how these might be changed. It suggests that any change in self-understanding of the individual, as both learner and teacher would offer scope for further change. Hence, within the context of this study, the depth and defining characteristics of the Advanced Skills Teachers' reflections and conceptions of their professional selves would indicate change, through lived experience in the changing social and cultural world. Critical theory also focuses on extending consciousness of the self as a social being, through promoting insights into the process by which perspectives and values were formed. It promotes that it is both plausible and possible for teachers to determine what is designated educational knowledge (Kincheloe 1991:3).

Critical social science thus promotes self-reflection, which results in attitudinal changes. The basis of these changes rests on insights into casualties of the past. {Individuals} thus come to know themselves by bringing to consciousness the process by which their perspectives were formed (Kincheloe 1991:2-3) {Author Parenthesis}.

Critical theory, however, has never been a "fully articulated philosophy shared unproblematically" (Giroux 1983:7). Therefore, the following guiding assumptions (Candy 1989:7) present important considerations for this research.

1. Much human action is outside the conscious control of personal agency and is embedded in social conditions beyond the consciousness of the actors involved.
2. Any interpretive explanation makes sense against a background of social rules, practices and beliefs, and there is thus a "logic of the situation", which differs from the "logic of causes".

3. Unless research is restricted to merely recording actors' interpretations and understandings, it inevitably involves the reformulating or "re-symbolising" of events or expressions which is an act of construction rather than of discovery.
4. Intentional agency may be frustrated by social rules, by constitutive meanings of the social order and by "the habitual sediment of the past", and the core project of uncovering such constraints through research is one of human liberation and emancipation.

The emancipatory intent and striving for participant empowerment is "the *raison d'être* of critical research" (Smith 1993:77). Critical theory in education gives emphasis to the emancipatory potential of "engaging with the world as it is, in order to imagine and bring about a world as it could and should be" (Sultana 1995:131). Three inter-related spheres of empowerment are empowerment as political consciousness raising, empowerment as self-growth, and empowerment as collective wisdom (Smith 1993). Whilst critical theory does give priority to empowerment as political consciousness, some critical theorists (Kincheloe 1991; Sultana 1995) suggest that the other emancipatory interests are too important to be negated:

It is true that teachers are embedded-for structural and cultural reasons in a culture of individualism and that this focus often makes them blind to the social and systemic properties of their activities in schools. The same focus however also generates a commitment to their clients, manifesting itself in what are often unconscious child-centred educational experiments and approaches which keep alive an intuitive idea of critique of the idea of transcendence (Sultana 1995:136).

This research focuses on empowerment through self-growth. The research aims to explicate the values and belief system that underscores each teacher's decision making, so as to heighten awareness of the professional self. The function of critical theory is to better understand "the relation among values interest and action" and to act on and "to change the world", rather than to just describe it (Popkewitz 1984:45). Thus, the relationships between the Advanced

Skills Teachers' interpretations, actions and external factors has to be considered as social reality that is shaped by and in turn shapes those perceptions. The very process, whereby one interprets and defines a situation, is itself a product of the circumstances, in which one is placed (Cohen and Manion 1980:38).

This research also focuses on empowerment as collective/action struggle. It is designed to facilitate collaborative engagement in critical dialogue with the Advanced Skills Teachers on aspects of an inquiry into problematic issues concerning the *Choosing Our Future* curriculum initiatives (BCE). In its commitment to social change, critical theory raises "questions of ethics, morality and politics," in order to "orient individuals to what is right and just in a given situation" (Popkewitz 1984:46). There is abandonment of "any pretence at neutrality" (Candy 1989:7). Within the context of this research, it is recognised that the Advanced Skills Teachers have the capacity to direct their own professional lives. Therefore, the value systems held by each of these teachers govern the research. Any critique of the role of reflection in leading teacher professional development is made so as to gain a greater understanding of it. These insights may inform future efforts to provide more effective support for teachers as self-directed learners. Hence, attempts are made to unite the language of critique with the language of possibility (Giroux 1981). In recognising that critical social theory focuses on the practical (Kincheloe 1991), this research is also aims to actively promote change, through a process of inquiry. However, any action taken by the Advanced Skills Teachers must be characterised by free commitment and their own decision-making:

Critical theory provides a framework of principles around which action can be discussed rather than a set of procedures. Teachers who engage in critical research are never certain of the exact path of action they will take as a result of their inquiry (Popkewitz 1981:15).

Critical theory also reflects a body of discourse that has focus on the possibility of social transformation, both individually and collectively through authentic action. This orientation represents a social reconstructivist perspective on

teaching and learning. This directs that education must emphasise social and critically reflective processes. Critical thinking or critical consciousness leads to praxis – “a form of reflection that stems from and remains integral to active human intervention” (Crotty 1998:149). The following quotation explains this further:

Teachers can transform themselves intellectually, overcome technical rationality, grow in awareness of both the overt and the hidden curriculum and encourage reflective practice, self-efficacy and self-confirmation through collective action and social transformation (Garman 1995:31).

From this perspective, knowledge is conceptualised as being dialectical. This represents the interplay between subjective views of the world and the historical and cultural frameworks in which they are located (Fay 1987). Central value is placed on the emancipatory interests of knowledge for social action. In so doing, “the spirit of social critique” may express itself in many ways (Crotty 1998:153). However, it always represents a dialogical search for knowledge, which is emancipatory in the context of action. Within the context of this research, attempts are made therefore to explore the dialectical interaction of reflection and the Advanced Skills Teachers’ subsequent actions for change. It is also necessary to consider the moral and professional implications of any decisions that are reached and any action that is taken when exploring solutions to dilemmas. Therefore, within the context of this study, any inquiry into the Advanced Skills Teachers’ approaches to curriculum reform must focus on the moral integrity of the teaching role. Insights also need to be considered against value based questions relating to the ‘why’ and the ‘what’ surrounding their decision-making.

However, from a critical perspective, it is recognised that any insights into the role that reflection plays in leading teacher professional development must be considered in terms of the socio-cultural context, in which the phenomena are situated (Goodson 1992). Therefore, in order to serve the research purpose, there is a need to go beyond description to active participation through an

inquiry approach. This affords scope to question the “ideological forces and power relations” (Fowler 1984:7) by which the Advanced Skills Teachers’ understandings are constructed.

### 3.3 CASE STUDY

This research aims to gain a better understanding of reflection in relation to the professional development of five Advanced Skills Teachers. Hence, a case study approach within a qualitative paradigm is adopted to orchestrate the research focus. Case study takes the conveyance of understanding as its explicit goal (Merriam 1998).

The case study approach offers flexibility and scope to access information that pertains to the changing nature of the teachers’ knowledge in all of its forms. Case study is selected to facilitate the holistic integration of the personal and contextual factors, events and thinking that led to the teachers’ professional growth (Nisbet and Ross 1980). Moreover, the utilisation of case study provides scope to give attention to contextual realities. This is important, as contextual variables need to be identified as factors that may have impacted on the development of the professional self of each Advanced Skills Teacher.

Case study is “an umbrella term for a number of perspectives, having in common the decision to focus on enquiry around an instance” (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis 1976:141). Case study may be defined as “an intense, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon or social unit” (Merriam 1998:21). As such, it becomes “a unique, holistic entity” (Patton 1990:387). Case study is utilised in order to explore the interplay of factors and elements within a bounded situation that give meaning.

One defining characteristic of case study is its delimitation of objects of the study (Merriam 1998). The case may be described as “a bounded system”, (Smith

1978, in Merriam 1998), or an "integrated system" (Stake 1995:2), that bounds the phenomenon being studied within the real-life context. Essentially then, it is viewed as a "phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (Miles and Huberman 1994:25). Within the context of this study, the phenomenon is represented in terms of the relationship between the reflective activity and professional growth of five Advanced Skills Teachers. This is bounded within the context or social unit of the career life history.

This conceptualisation of case study suggests the utilisation of a multiple case study approach to the research. To respect the integrity of each case, findings are presented as five individual case narratives. This requires both within-case analysis and cross-case analysis (Merriam 1998:194-195). Analysis begins with the individual case. This provides scope to direct attention to "the complex configuration of processes within each case" (Miles and Huberman 1994:206). Relevant information is then available for analysis across the five cases. This approach is based on the following assumption.

The purpose for such observation is to probe deeply, to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which that unit belongs (Cohen and Manion, 1980:120).

Moreover, there is a definite need to respect the context specificity of constructed meanings, before identifying patterns that appear to transcend particular cases. This is important, for case study's greatest advantage is that it endeavours "to understand the whole individual in relation to his/her (sic) environment" (Verma and Beard 1981:62).

The qualitative case study has specific, defining features. One particular characteristic is that the end product is a "rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study" (Merriam 1998:29). The "holistic" and "comprehensive" descriptions of the case "include a myriad of dimensions, factors, variables and categories woven together into an idiographic framework"

(Patton 1990:387). Other features of case study are described by Wilson (1979:44) as being:

- Particularistic - the research portrays events, situations or phenomenon
- Holistic - try to capture many variables
- Longitudinal - tell a story over time
- Qualitative - elicit images and analyse situations

A case study approach offers a worthwhile way of grounding inquiry into reflection and teacher professional development within the career life experiences of the Advanced Skills Teachers. Direct personal experience is an efficient, comprehensive and satisfying way of improving understanding. It is claimed that "case studies can take us to places where most of us would not have the opportunity to go" (Donmoyer 1990:193). Case study therefore, is a useful means to employ, in order to develop a critical understanding of reflection and teacher development.

### 3.4 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

This research is situated within the context of *Brisbane Catholic Education*. There are five (5) research participants. These are experienced teachers, practising in systemic Brisbane Catholic primary schools, who have been awarded Advanced Skills Teacher (AST1) status (cf Section 1.2.2). The essential criteria and application procedure for the AST award within *Brisbane Catholic Education* is included in Appendix B. As this study focuses on gaining a critical understanding of reflection in terms of teacher development, limiting the sample to Advanced Skills Teachers helps to define boundaries of the case. This decision is based on the premise that these teachers do reflect on practice and do accept responsibility for their own development, as the AST1 (BCE) criteria indicates (cf to Appendix B). Critical exploration of the reflective



processes that these teachers use may provide greater insights into the role that reflection plays in leading teacher development.

The research participants were selected through a process of purposeful sampling (Patton 1990). Five cases from an original eight were used for indepth study. The criteria set for the purposeful sample selection of participants were as follows:

- Advanced Skills Teacher I (AST 1) status
- Current employment as a full time teacher in a Brisbane Catholic Primary School
- Five years service to *Brisbane Catholic Education*
- Some past professional association with the author

The case study is bounded to include only those who are employed in a full time capacity and who have at least five years' experience of teaching within *Brisbane Catholic Education*. This delimitation respects the contextual specificity of the research. This is applicable in terms of the values of the organisation, past and current opportunities for professional development support, prior experiences concerning the *Choosing Our Future* curriculum initiatives and organisational infrastructures.

In order to include both personal and practical elements to the research, the criterion that the selected participants must have some past professional association with the author is included. The recommended rapport between the author and the participants and the development of trusting, collegial relationships were well established prior to the commencement of this study. This held potential to enhance the collaborative nature of the research efforts. The author's work as a curriculum consultant with *Brisbane Catholic Education* (1996-current) involves the provision of support and leadership in curriculum renewal. Hence, the component of the research involving the participant's inquiry into current curriculum initiatives was conducted within the context of her work. Limiting the sample to those who had previously worked with the author is

considered to be advantageous, as little time was required to establish entry into the field. Further details concerning the researchers' background are provided in Section 1.2.3 and Section 3.7.4.

When selecting participants, maximum variation sampling is also employed (Patton 1990). The process guides the selection of participants to ensure that there is a representation of gender, age, place in the career life cycle and contextual experiences in different primary school settings. This allows for the possibility of accessing a variety of perspectives in terms of the purpose for the research. It also provides for greater scope in the search for contrasts.

The motivation to participate in the research process also became an important selection criterion. Originally, ten teachers were approached in person to participate in the study. General details of the proposed research were verbally described. These included the purpose, methods and indications of the time and commitment that involvement would entail. Those approached were invited to make contact with the author, if they wished to participate. No further communication was initiated in relation to the proposed research to ensure that those approached would not feel pressured or obligated to participate. Eight teachers responded to the invitation to be involved in the study. The participants were provided with a letter providing information about the research. It was emphasised that participation would be voluntary throughout the period of the research and that confidentiality would be assured.

Of the original eight participants, five remained committed to their involvement in the research. The small sample size allows for indepth study of reflection and its impact on teacher development, within the bounded context of the career life history. This makes the research more manageable in terms of available time and resources. The participants in this study are sometimes referred to as co-researchers (Stenhouse 1985). As the research is embedded in real life situations, each of the five Advanced Skills Teachers, as well as the schools and people they identify are provided with pseudonyms to anonymize true identity.

An overview of relevant details concerning the five co-researchers is provided in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 The Research Participants**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Years teaching</b> | <b>Current Teaching Role<br/>Curriculum Lead/Key Role</b>         |
|-------------|---------------|------------|-----------------------|---|
| Daisy       | Female        | Early 40's | 21yrs                 | Yr 7 Teacher<br>English Key Teacher                               |
| Chris       | Male          | Mid 30's   | 15 yrs                | Yr 6 Teacher & APRE<br>Maths Lead Teacher                         |
| Gemma       | Female        | Late 40's  | 23 yrs                | Yr 1 Teacher  |
| Sam         | Male          | Late 40's  | 25 yrs                | Yr 5/6 Teacher<br>New Syllabus Lead Teacher<br>Maths Lead Teacher |
| Siobhan     | Female        | Mid 40's   | 25 yrs                | Yr 5/6 & Learning Support<br>Teacher<br>English Key Teacher       |

### **3.5 RESEARCH METHODS – NARRATIVE INQUIRY**

The research methods selected come under the umbrella term of narrative inquiry. A research design that facilitates interaction and collaboration with each of the Advanced Skills Teachers is necessary, in order to gain critical insights into reflection and teacher professional development, from the inside perspective of their professional life world. However, all that is called narrative “does not appear to be the same” (Kelchtermans 1997:122). Therefore, the reasons for selecting this approach and the implications that they hold for the research problem invite discussion. Narrative research is described as “an overarching category” for a variety of contemporary

research practices (Casey 1995:211). These include biographies, life histories and collaborative inquiry. The procedures for data collection and subsequent analysis for this research are devised through the adaptation of elements of a model appropriate to a life history approach, using a professional biographical perspective (Kelchtermans 1993) along with a *Methodology of Interpretative theory and Qualitative Inquiry* (Bartlett 1989). It also utilises a process of reflective deliberation (McArdle and Spry 1996). The design summary is provided in the concluding section of this chapter in Table 3.2.

Narrative inquiry is appropriate to use within the context of this study, as it is by nature, qualitative and located within the field of research on reflective practice. The narrative approach has the aim of understanding both the specific and the complex nature of teaching and learning (Fenstermacher 1997). This especially pertains to situations where moral and ethical questions are prominent (Beattie 1997). It is appropriate for this research as it has the potential to develop understandings of how teachers develop into the teaching role both personally and professionally. Moreover, narrative inquiry allows both the author and the Advanced Skills Teachers to engage in the processes of reflective deliberation (See Section 3.6.5). This involves a collaborative approach that provides conducive conditions for gaining critical insight into the relationship between the development of professional knowledge, sense of self and the reflective process. Such an approach also facilitates critical exploration of the ways that the Advanced Skills Teachers think through problematic and challenging issues, deliberate to make meaning and reflect on decisions they enact.

From a social reconstructivist perspective, inquiry into teacher professional development needs to be situated in the context of the Advanced Skills Teachers' career life history. "In narrative inquiry, professional practice is understood as narrative in action, and of the expression of the practitioner's personal history and biography in a particular situation" (Beattie 1997:1). Utilisation of life history methods, through a narrative approach allows for critical exploration of reflective activity through the teachers' subjective experiences.

The need to study changes in professional thinking and to honour the subjective stance of the teachers implies a narrative research method.

When utilising narrative from a life history approach, it becomes important to distinguish the life history from the life story. Life story is the individual story (Goodson 1992). Life history is a collaborative venture, which is "the life history located within its historical context" (Goodson 1992:6). The topical life history is more appropriate to the research purpose, than the more comprehensive life history, which is concerned with the individual's life from birth (Denzin 1989). Exploration of the topical life history focuses on phases and aspects of professional development within the career cycle.

Narrative inquiry is based in narrative ways of knowing, within the discourse of practice (Beattie 1997). The purpose of the research directs attention to critical incidents identified by the teachers as having helped them to develop a greater sense of the professional self. As stories are a part of our identity and culture, the use of narratives of the self holds potential to reflect experiences that are important to the person of each Advanced Skills Teacher (Gudumdsdottir 1991:207). People, situations and events are able to be studied holistically, within the terms of the participants. Narrative research acknowledges past experiences, the present lived reality, as well as the need to define future intentions (Kompf 1993). It also recognises the interconnectedness of "the intellectual, emotional, social, moral and aesthetic aspects of the human being" (Beattie 1997:2). This is important to the research, as there is an emancipatory aim to promote teacher professional development as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, which cannot be separated from what teachers value in terms of their own growth.

The theory of narratives postulates that as humans are natural storytellers, the study of teachers' professional life stories holds potential to give insights into teacher cognition, through revelation of how professional lives are experienced and created (Brittin and Pellegini 1990). For this research, story is that, which most adequately constitutes and presents each Advanced Skills Teacher's

knowledge in both the spatial and temporal contexts. Moreover, it is important to recognise that any insights reached in terms of the teachers' professional growth are influenced by the assumption that self constructed knowledge is constantly evolving.

Teacher biography and stages of career and life cycle development are important influences on the way teachers develop personally and professionally. Biographical experiences are signified as being highly influential to the formation of teachers' implicit theories (Connelly and Clandinin 1990). A life history approach may provide insights into teachers' thinking and practice as "one stays closer to the way teachers spontaneously think and talk about their practice" (Kelchtermans 1993:214). It is therefore, a most appropriate way to begin investigation to better understand teacher development.

Life history from a biographical perspective refers to the formative experiences within the career life history, which have influenced the way teachers think about their professional development. Life history methods are able to facilitate the researcher in the unravelling of threads, such as motive structures and value systems (Smith, Kleine, Dwyer and Prunty 1985). The methods also lend themselves to the teachers' identification and reflection on critical incidents or career phases. It is suggested (Denzin 1989:129) that there is value in identifying "existentially problematic moments in the lives of individuals". These may have both immediate and long-term effects on the teacher's life. Deliberation on past professional and personal experiences serves as a source of understanding about present actions within a relevant context. In so doing, the life history approach may reveal "knots in thinking" (Wagner 1984). These represent conflicts that have been experienced or are related to current practice. From this perspective, the use of a narrative life history approach opens possibilities for others to "resonate" with the case stories (Merriam 1998:158).

Narrative inquiry also provides a useful framework to reflectively deliberate with the teachers on insights gained and issues that present, as they confront and inquire into current problematic phenomena, relating to the *Choosing Our Future*

curriculum initiatives (*BCE*). In a narrative approach, all curriculum matters become people matters:

Curriculum design, curriculum planning, and curriculum change are fundamentally about teachers' thinking and teacher action, and the focus of narrative research is therefore on understanding these in terms of personalised accounts of knowing (Beattie 1997:7).

Clearly then, the narrative approach supports both critical and interpretative activist philosophies that reject the notion of an objective, controlled reality (Carr 1986; Bartlett 1989). Narrative in education goes beyond analysis and criticism to consideration of "questions of choice, decision and action" (Gough, Alexander, Beavis, Maunder and Prior 1991:2). Thus, within the inquiry process, the Advanced Skills Teachers are free to give attention to the naming of challenging problem areas concerning the *Choosing Our Future* curriculum initiatives (*BCE*). Moreover, any insights that are gained through the inquiry process need to be situated within the context of the career life story.

### 3.6 RESEARCH METHODS - DATA COLLECTION

#### 3.6.1 Data Collection Strategies

The procedures for data collection and subsequent analysis are guided by the research design. This adapts and integrates narrative inquiry methods appropriate to a life history approach (Kelchtermans 1993) with a *Methodology of Interpretative theory and Qualitative Inquiry* (Bartlett 1989). The design summary is provided in the concluding section of this chapter in Table 3.2. The research design demands multiple sources of data, which are collected through a variety of strategies. The time period for data collection was between April 1997 and November 1998. In order to manage the research, data were not collected from all of the five teachers concurrently. The time period of data collection from each of the five participants varied and became very context dependent. It ranged between four months to twelve months. Variables included the time intervals between data collection and the nature of the inquiry.

### 3.6.2 Chronological Career History List

The chronological career life of the teacher was explored as a starting point in the collection of data. Each of the five co-researchers, by request either brought or assisted the author to compile a resume by which their career history was "chronologically and objectively listed" (Denzin, 1970:235-7). Identifying features of the chronological career list were replaced with pseudonyms to safeguard confidentiality. This maintained a professional ethic.

The chronological career history list provides biographical, professional life details. The objective information constitutes a framework to structure each teacher's individual case. This generates information that guides the exploration of the career story. Within the context of this research, the career is not conceptualised chronologically. The focus is on the development of the professional life, rather than the formal career. However, the chronological career history list provides information that allows significant career life episodes to be placed within the appropriate external socio-cultural, historical context and within the context of the career cycle. This decision is based on the following premise:

The present has a living connection with the past. Current meanings and interpretations are shown to have grown and developed over time. In tracing teacher's own histories we acquire a fuller, deeper and richer understanding of them (Woods 1993:450).

Attention to the chronological career history in the early stages of data collection helps to avoid any focus on possible points of vulnerability for the co-researchers. It is recognised that starting with practice may be "an unpromising point of entry from which to promote a collaborative enterprise" (Goodson 1992:113). Therefore, the initial predominant focus is directed to aspects of the career itself, rather than on current problematic aspects of practice relating to the *Choosing Our Future* curriculum initiatives (BCE).



### 3.6.3 Open-Ended and Semi-Structured Interviews

The open-ended or unstructured interview and the semi-structured interview are selected as the primary data source, as both complement the collaborative nature of the study. The open-ended interviews take the form of a conversation that relies on the social interaction between the author and the Advanced Skills Teachers. Another advantage of using such interview types is that each limits biases and preconceptions when directing the line of the interview. Open-ended interviewing can be rationalised from the premise that only the persons themselves understand the social reality in which experiences are located.

The semi-structured interviews involved repeated face to face interactions between the author and each of the Advanced Skills Teachers. The interview series could be described as a "prolonged interview" (Denzin 1970:85). At times, the semi-structured interview guided parts of the unstructured interview. This particularly pertained to instances after partial data analysis. The number of open-ended interviews and the time that they required could only be estimated prior to the commencement of data collection. This became dependent on what eventuated within the research context.

The interviews were audio-taped to assist the teachers and the author to assume a more relaxed mode. Audio-taping the interviews allows for multiple replays of the tape. The data are able to be re-lived, so as to clarify any uncertainties. Multiple replays also promotes awareness of verbal mannerisms, as well as emotive changes in tone and dialogue.

Interview data were edited in the transcription, in order to either explicate the main phenomena for inclusion in each teacher's narrative or to identify aspects that required further discussion. This involves working back and forth between interview notes and sections of the tape, in order to preserve important quotations (Patton 1990). In considering the constraints on this study, this becomes necessary, in order to manage transcription of the taped data. For as Beattie (1997:12), cautions, "the complexities of dialogue and discussion,

continuous negotiation, sharing of understandings, and the construction of meaning cannot be underestimated”.

To be true to the research design, partially analysed data were presented back to the participants for feed back. This required action within a short, approximate calendar time frame that varied between a few days to a month. The research purpose demands the inclusion of not only a descriptive component, but also an explanatory, evaluatory or argumentative comment (Candy 1989; Bartlett 1989). Thus, in the partial data analysis, the principle explicated by the teacher was interrogated and immediately confirmed by examples that showed the legitimacy, effectiveness and valuing of that principle. When providing feedback, the teachers as co-researchers engaged in critical discussion and reflective deliberation with the author (See Section 3. 6.5). The validity and accuracy of the data also become sources that could be negotiated and amended by the co-researchers. This attended to the ethical need to authenticate research and to make it more reciprocal.

When conducting the interviews, questions were not pre-set. Rather, an interview guide approach was utilised. The interview guide provided a framework to “explore, probe and ask questions that elucidated and illuminated that particular subject” (Patton 1990:283). The aim was to keep the sessions conversational. The guide ensured that in broad terms, similar information was sought from all five co-researchers. Questions were developed and sequenced and further discussions were guided to focus on the following areas that pertain to the research purpose.

- Biographical and Professional details
- The Career life history
- Significant episodes within the career
- Personal theories concerning teaching and learning
- Support for professional development
- Problematic issues surrounding the *Choosing Our Future* Curriculum Initiatives (BCE).

### 3.6.4 Documentary Evidence

The teachers' AST1 application folios, along with supporting documentation serves as documentary data. This is used to validate, as well as to support relevant information derived through the interview process. This data source provides a worthwhile means of confirming the legitimacy and valuing of principles that are explicated. Permission was sought from the participants for relevant extracts from the AST application to be photocopied and added to the co-researcher's locked file for further reference in the data analysis. All names and identifying features were deleted and replaced with a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality.

At times, the co-researchers were asked to make available relevant and related documentation or artefacts that could support and triangulate other data sources. At the individual level, these include planning documentation, teacher evaluations of practice, planning units, reflective journals, articles produced by the teachers, newsletters, workshop journals and recording booklets; parental feedback; school publications, student assessment materials, student work samples; student reflections and video recordings. These forms provide the author with broader insights into aspects of the teachers' life history and practice within the career history. These become useful as "substitutes for records of activity" (Stake 1995:68). Such data also facilitates deeper discussion and explication of the teachers' meanings. Data sources at the contextual level provide relevant background information. These include school based curriculum programs, school policy statements, mission statements, professional development support materials and other such documentation. This approach helps to contextualise some of the interview data.

### 3.6.5 Reflective Deliberation: Inquiry Project

Narrative inquiry provides the opportunity to connect findings from analysis of data derived from the sources described, to analysis of data sourced through reflective deliberation within an inquiry project. This relates to a problematic issue that each teacher identifies as a priority, in terms of the *Choosing Our Future* curriculum initiatives (BCE). This allows for any further critical exploration

of the teachers' reflective activity to be contextualised within a concrete situation.

Reflective deliberation is an appropriate strategy for this inquiry. It allows for the inclusion of the processes of reciprocity and self-reflexivity into the research design. This involves repeated feedback of partially analysed data that links the inquiry to past career life experiences. This process serves as a check on descriptive/analytic validity. It also allows for the construction of meaning through negotiation with the research participants. A simple two-paged recording template (McArdle and Spry 1996) is utilised to record information (Refer to Appendix C). This recording tool is appropriate, as it does not require detailed paper work on the participants' part. The recording sheet is used flexibly. It is utilised to add a more careful and systematic approach to the conduct of the inquiry. The sequential elements of describing, informing, reconstructing, and confronting are followed. These are outlined in Smyth's (1989) *Model of a Critical Pedagogy of Practice* (cf Section 2.4.9). The inquiry process within this research involves developing a plan of action; putting the plan into action; observing the effects of the action and reflection on the effects of the action. Relevant planning documentation and material produced throughout the inquiry also provide sources of supportive documentary data.

### **3.6.6 Research Diary**

A research diary allows tentative interpretations and observations to be kept. The dated entries include notes taken during the interviews and the author's reflections and elaborations on the interviews. Notes concerning the interview itself and reflections on the data collected were entered into the diary as soon as possible after the interview. Scheduling sufficient time for this activity follows Patton's (1990:353) advice that the period after the interview is a "critical time of quality control to guarantee that the data obtained is useful, reliable and valid".

Notes taken during the interview account for emotive language, emphases and non-verbal language. This was particularly necessary when the participants were telling stories of significant past events and critical incidents. Moreover,

autobiographical self-thematisation is “an intrinsically social event” (Kelchtermans 1993:199). Therefore, in the autobiographical reconstruction, the influence of feelings, emotions and unconscious motives demanded acknowledgment. It is recognised that any verbal reports of lived experiences would be inherently subjective. However, it is not the specific facts, but the teachers' interpretation and coherence with other experiences that are crucial to the research. There is also deliberate movement beyond narrative description. The embedded values that underscore the teachers' thinking in terms of their interpretations of significant events, beliefs, decisions and actions needed to be extrapolated and questioned.

Any understanding of the action described in the case records is connected to “distinctively social levels of explanation” (Bartlett 1989). This represents the author's interpretations of the teacher's reconstruction of past events and explanation of actions, which led to change. These link to the inquiry concerning current problematic curriculum reform issues. Thus, any interpretations made by either the Advanced Skills Teacher or the author are interrogated through sustained interactions, critical feedback and the exchange of ideas and values, through the processes of reflective deliberation.

### **3.6.7 Data Storage**

A data storage system took the form of a locked case kept in the author's home office. Records relevant to each co-researcher's case are dated, marked with the identifying pseudonym and filed under colour coded sections. These code keys manage the organisation of the data. To maintain confidentiality and to ensure anonymity, all details that could identify the co-researchers are erased. The within-case partially analysed data are coded and then filed in the storage system. Data relevant to the cross-case analysis are also coded and stored in a separate file under categories that emerge.

### **3.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

#### **3.7.1 Presenting Issues**

It is acknowledged that issues that relate to the reliability and validity of case studies may be contentious ones (Anderson 1993). However, it is also recognised that any research method would have its peculiar assets and liabilities. Qualitative inquiry relies on "issues of credibility" (Patton 1990:447). Therefore, data needs to be collected and interpreted carefully and findings viewed tentatively. Findings presented are specific to the cases and as such do not claim to represent a whole population.

The movement away from the paradigmatic/logico/scientific mode in educational research is connected to a movement in the academic world as a whole, to a mode of knowing that acknowledges and recognises narrative as an equally viable way of knowing and understanding the world (Beattie 1997:6).

Moreover, the issue of reliability, when defined in scientific research terms as "the replication of findings" (Merriam 1998:206) does not sit with the purpose or philosophical orientation of this study. Rather, attention is given to achieving reliability through dependability or consistency of the findings. As such, response is sought through the readership.

#### **3.7.2 Reliability**

Reliability is sought by taking the following appropriate measures to ensure that the findings are dependable and consistent with data that are gathered. The first measure taken is one that clearly states that the underlying paradigm of the research reflects a critical and at times an interpretative orientation. Another is the creation of an audit trail through the provision of details concerning the conduct of the research. This is included to enable others "to judge the quality of the resulting product" (Patton 1990:462). The trail includes justification that the selection of case study using the narrative inquiry and life history methods is appropriate to the purpose for the research. Details concerning the actual data collection and analysis are also provided within the trail.

Credibility is also sought by openly divulging information concerning the author's professional interests, perspective and past career life history (cf Section 1.2.3 and Section 3.7.4). The credibility of the author as researcher is important. Therefore, past details concerning the author's professional interests and experiences that have some relevance to the research are openly identified. Also, conscious efforts are made to present the findings in sufficient detail, so that interpretations and conclusions make sense. Thus, reliability is sought through the conveyance of authenticity, rather than the finding of ordered patterns.

### **3.7.3 Validity**

Validity relates to how the findings of the research match with reality (Merriam 1998). The constant cross-checking of interpretations with the co-researchers and cross-checking against other data sources becomes essential to the research. The issue of internal validity is addressed through triangulation. This process contributes to the establishment of data-trustworthiness.

Data are triangulated in a manner that complements the research purpose. The multi-method research design provides methodological triangulation. The varied data sources and the combination of different roles assumed by the author and co-researchers are also used for the purpose of triangulation (Allender 1986). This is appropriate as triangulation is needed to bring "varieties of evidence into relationship with each other", so that they may be compared and/or contrasted (Elliott 1991:82). Whilst the unstructured interview provides the primary data source, the convergence of data from other multiple sources such as the AST application and other relevant documentation, the inquiry summary sheet and the research diary assists the author to make links and to establish "a chain of evidence" (Burns 1997:283). Data derived from multiple sources are compared to determine if tentative findings remain consistent in different contextual circumstances. This provides for data source triangulation.

The narrative cases are used to gain critical insight into the role that reflection plays in leading teacher professional development. As the research attempts to

understand this phenomenon from the inside perspective of the Advanced Skills Teachers professional lives, it is essential that these teachers provide the main critique and validation of findings presented in the case narratives. This becomes far more than the checking or perusal of drafts of tentative findings (Stake 1995:115). The co-researchers critically review and validate transcribed data throughout the duration of the research. Authentication of analysed data presented in the final narrative forms is sought using Pope's (1993), notion of grounding findings collaboratively with the co-researchers. This becomes necessary, for any constructions of plausible explanations need to rely on a holistic understanding of the situation (Mathison 1988).

#### **3.7.4 The Author as Researcher**

In qualitative research, the researcher is principally responsible for the collection and analysis of data. Therefore, there is a need to make explicit any background experience that might influence the research. The author has experienced some past professional association with each of the five co-researchers. This has been as a teaching peer/colleague, either on staff at the same school and/or through her work as a curriculum consultant with *Brisbane Catholic Education* (1996-current). In designing the research, it became obvious that the relationship between the author and the Advanced Skill Teachers had to be characterised by trust and collegiality. Thus, the recommended rapport between the researcher and the co-researchers for the successful use of a life history and narrative approach was well established prior to the commencement of this research (O'Donoghue and Dimmock 1995:15). This is advantageous with regards to time management, as little time was needed to establish entry into the world of the co-researchers. Prior to undertaking engagement in this research, the author had also previously collaborated with these teachers on professional issues in varying degrees and in varying contexts. It was reflection on the benefits that such peer collaboration held for the author that provided the motivation to critically explore the topic of reflection through the selected methodology. The author was aware that she needed to be critically conscious of the relationship between herself and what it was that she was researching.



The use of the open-ended interviews limits bias and preconceptions through non-directive questioning techniques (Burns 1997). However, the author still needed to be constantly alert to her own preconceptions, in terms of her own professional career life experiences. During the period of time from 1991-1993, the author was a classroom teacher and the school's Key Teacher, English. In 1992, Advanced Skills status was attained. Hence, there was first hand familiarity with the ELA Inservice Program, as well as the process of documenting aspects of practice against the set AST1 criteria. The author had also sat on AST panels on a number of occasions, though these did not include panels that were relevant to the co-researchers. In 1995, as a practising teacher, she also experienced first hand, the impact of the *Choosing Our Future* Curriculum initiatives (BCE), relating to English School Program Development and Outcome based Assessment and Reporting in English (then known as Student Performance Standards SPS). A major focus of her work as a curriculum consultant had been on supporting teachers with the implementation of the *Choosing Our Future* curriculum initiatives. This interaction involved working with each of the co-researchers in their classrooms or school context. However, it must be noted that any prior observations were only used to support or to seek clarification on specific aspects of the data. Prior observations are not used as sources of data.

### **3.8 RESEARCH METHODS - DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **3.8.1 Data Analysis**

The purpose of the research directs the creation of opportunities that facilitate close interaction with the co-researchers throughout the duration of data collection. There is also a need for flexibility. Therefore, a participatory, collaborative methodology is utilised. The general research design could be described as the "creating of mixed methodological strategies" (Patton 1990:188). The varying analytical approaches that are employed also contribute to triangulation. As stated throughout this thesis, the design integrates an adaptation of a life history approach using a professional biographical

perspective (Kelchtermans 1993:204) with a *Methodology of Interpretative Theory and Qualitative Inquiry* (Bartlett 1989). It also utilises the processes of reflective deliberation in the inquiry process. This guides the inquiry into problematic aspects of current curriculum initiatives (BCE). The research design is summarised in the concluding section of this chapter in Table 3.2.

Through analysis, changes in personal knowledge as a result of career experiences are linked to the teachers' professional development. Bartlett's (1989) design, which is based on the works of Ricoeur (1981) and the critical social theorists Habermas (1971) and Thompson (1981) is consistent with the social reconstructivist theoretical orientation that underpins this research. It is based on the following methodological assumptions (Bartlett, 1989:16).

- The meaning of actions would be specified by their descriptions.
- Systematic inter-relationships between the understanding of the co-researchers' actions and explanation of their social genesis would be to depth interpretation for meaning, through reconstruction of structural conditions.
- Understanding of action would be linked to social levels of explanation.

Whilst Bartlett's (1989) methodology has elements of critical social theory and a theory of action, it also has elements that fall within a hermeneutic tradition. It offers the use of the narrative and life history approaches as a valid means of providing a structure for life's experiences. As this is a multiple case study, there is a need for both within-case analysis and cross-case analysis (Merriam 1998). Tentative within-case analysis begins with the first set of data collected from each co-researcher. Analysis must be parallel to data collection, as the interim analysis is used to inform and direct subsequent interviews. Attention is given to the way that the co-researchers create meaning from the identified and named experiences. Changes in the Advanced Skills Teachers' knowledge and practice

that are revealed in the data are considered in relation to the social realities of educational contexts of the past (Goodson 1992; Bartlett 1989). Moreover, data revealing the thinking and meaning making behind the action in the inquiry projects are also explored from the perspective of the contemporary social realities, in which the action is situated.

The design provides scope for the author to engage in critical dialogue with the co-researchers, so as to question and to confirm principles that are explicated. Partially analysed data are progressively checked with the co-researchers for modification, confirmation, clarification and critical discussion. This ongoing and cyclical process of data collection and tentative analysis is integrated into all phases of the research. This is planned to incorporate an evaluative review of the analysis and a reflective self-review.

The inquiry project into some problematic aspect of the *Choosing Our Future* curriculum initiatives (BCE) allows for the inclusion of processes of reciprocity and self-reflexivity into the research design. This also involves repeated feedback of partially analysed data to each co-researcher as a check on descriptive/analytic validity. Within this phase of the analysis, the practices of reflexive critique and dialectical analysis (Winter 1989:14) are used to facilitate the process of reflective deliberation. Reflexive critique involves the collection of information through the inquiry process. The subsequent dialectical analysis involves critical discussion on the accessed information. These processes are utilised to critique and to create meaning through deliberation and negotiation with the Advanced Skills Teachers.

Qualitative data analysis is an inductive process of identifying themes that are generated from the data. Coding involved presenting and organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories (Burns 1997). It is important to ensure that topics for discussion and analysis emerge from the data and that they are not imposed. In the cross-case analysis, emerging topics and recurring meanings facilitate the identification of tentative sets of categories.

A procedure for analysis of data using adapted life history methods (Kelchtermans 1993) is used in the within-case analysis (Merriam 1998). In the construction of the five individual case narratives and in the coding of partial cross-cases, Mandelbaum's (1973) suggestions for the analysis of life histories became useful. Consideration is given to:

- dimensions of the co-researcher's life (including biological, cultural, social and psychosocial dimensions)
- principal turnings (critical life incidents)
- the co-researcher's characteristic means of adaptation (changes which have a major effect on a person's life and on relationships with others (Mandelbaum 1973:179-181).

In the final stages of cross-case data analysis, the tool of "axial coding" (Strauss and Corbin 1994:96-115) is used flexibly, to rebuild the partially analysed data. Patterns are sought between the categories and sub-categories that emerge.

### **3.8.2 Narrative Construction**

The narrative case record is partially constructed through within-case analysis throughout the duration of the study. However, this is redrafted after all data is collected, because of the discovery-orientation of the research. The narrative descriptions inherent in the progressively analysed data are organised as a montage alongside direct quotations. Findings are linked in relation to the dimensions of personal and professional development, inquiry in action and reflective practice. In the construction of the narratives, data are considered holistically, in order to facilitate interpretation of the smaller data units. Hence, care is taken to consider the teacher's career life as a story, with a past, present and future. Attempts are also made to construct the case narratives as "a flow of experience" (Csikszentmihalyi 1996). The presentations of the five narrative cases are followed by a discussion of

findings that present both within-case and cross-case analysis. It is recognised that any study or critical commentary on a narrative construction is in itself, a narrative construction (Gough et al. 1991).

### 3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Consideration of an ethical kind must be given to any research that has focus on personal lives. The co-researchers (AST1 teachers) were informed of the research purpose and methods, as well as the approximate, possible time frame for data collection. Prior to data collection, it was stressed verbally and on a written consent form that they would be free to withdraw from the study at any time and that confidentiality would be assured. Each co-researcher is provided with a pseudonym for anonymity. Schools and people named in the narratives are also given pseudonyms to protect identity. However, from this perspective it was also acknowledged that there would be instances when ethical dilemmas needed to be solved in the immediacy of the situation (Punch 1994:84). Hence, the author was very aware of her need to morally and ethically care for and respect each co-researcher's privacy and well being (Merriam 1998).

The research is set within the context of *Brisbane Catholic Education* (cf Section 1.2.1). The interview location and times were selected in terms of their convenience for each of the Advanced Skills Teachers. The ethics of the situation deserved careful consideration when requesting access to school locations. On most occasions, the interviews were conducted either before or after school at the school site. This proved useful as any supporting data could be readily accessed either during or immediately after the interview session.

As stated previously, the research is designed to provide opportunity for each Advanced Skills Teacher to critically review his/her narrative to ensure accurate representation. The review and validation of the data along with each co-

researcher's right to edit the case narrative, serves as a means to ensure confidentiality and to protect privacy (Schumacher and McMillan 1993).

As this study is set within the context of *Brisbane Catholic Education*, ethical clearance was sought and granted from this governing body. Clearance was also obtained from the ethics committee at the *Australian Catholic University*.

### 3.10 DESIGN SUMMARY

Table 3.2 provides a design summary of the research. Data were collected from each of the five Advanced Skills Teachers at different time intervals, between the period of April 1997 and November 1998. As previously stated and discussed, the procedure for the collection and subsequent analysis of the data was devised through the adaptation of elements of a model appropriate to the life history approach (Kelchtermans 1993) with a *Methodology of Interpretative Theory and Qualitative Inquiry* (Bartlett 1989). The design also utilises processes of reflective deliberation in the inquiry. The design is emergent. Though presented in a linear manner in Table 3.2, it is in practice, quite idiosyncratic and integrative. The process for data collection and partial, interim data analysis is simultaneous and interactive within the phases rather than sequential. This summary serves as a guide to the research, rather than a blue print.

Table 3.2 Summary of the Research Design

| DATA COLLECTION (1997-1998)   | DATA ANALYSIS (1997-1998)   | INTERPRETATIVE /CRITICAL PROCESS  |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Phase 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Understanding field/establish entry</li> <li>* Research diary</li> <li>* Chronological exploration of the career</li> <li>* AST 1 Documentation</li> <li>* Documentation, artefacts</li> <li>* Semi structured interview</li> </ul>   | <b>Analysis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Objective data to provide context</li> </ul>   | Hermeneutic objective understanding,<br>Understanding as contextually informed guessing |
| <b>Phase 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Open-ended &amp; Semi Structured Interviews               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- respondent specific part</li> <li>- respondent unspecific part</li> <li>- Inquiry Planning Sheet</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Semi Structured &amp; Open Ended Interviews               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- discussion synthesis text</li> <li>- respondent specific part</li> <li>- respondent unspecific part</li> <li>- Inquiry Sheet</li> <li>- Research diary</li> <li>- Supporting documentation/artefacts</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <b>Analysis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Multiple listenings to audio tapes</li> <li>* Part transcription and coding</li> <li>* Tentative interpretations</li> <li>* Synthesis of text for participants</li> <li>* Respondent specific questions</li> </ul>   | Imaging / Suspending information, interpretation<br>subjective                          |
| <b>Phase 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Open-ended and semi structured interview               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reflective deliberation/inquiry</li> <li>- Inquiry Summary Sheet</li> <li>- Research diary</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Synthesis of text (narratives) for participants</li> <li>* Research diary</li> </ul>  | <b>Analysis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Synthesis of text for participants</li> <li>* Editing existing records</li> <li>* Multiple listenings to audio tapes</li> <li>* Part transcription and coding</li> <li>* Coding other documentation (Inquiry project, research diary)</li> <li>* Further tentative interpretations</li> <li>* Respondent specific questions</li> <li>* Synthesis of text for participants</li> </ul>                     | Validation, guessing through analysis of text<br>records                                |
|   | <b>Analysis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Modified transcription and coding</li> <li>* Synthesis of projects</li> <li>* Synthesis of text for participants</li> <li>* Respondent specific questions</li> <li>* Editing existing records</li> <li>* Axial coding (making links across categories)</li> <li>* Montage creation against direct quotes (within - case)</li> <li>* Narrative for participants</li> <li>* cross-case analysis</li> </ul> | Explanation, reconstruction of events   |
|   | <b>Analysis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Meta-reflection within - case-&gt; cross-case synthesis</li> </ul>   | Reflective Deliberation   |
|   |   | Depth interpretation<br>Reflective Deliberation   |
|   |   | Meta-reflection Cross- case summary   |

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

##### 4.1.1 Purpose of the Research

This research seeks to critique, so as to better understand the role that reflection plays in leading teacher professional development, from the inside perspective of the professional life world of Advanced Skills Teachers. If teachers are to be supported as reflective life-long learners in a meaningful and relevant way, then it is necessary for those outside of the classroom context to be cognisant of the values that underscore their ongoing quests for renewal. It is also important to acknowledge the capabilities and knowledge that teachers have that enables them to be active proponents for their own professional development.

Therefore, the purpose for this research is to critically explore and to interrogate the processes that five Advanced Skills Teachers (AST1) use to reflect on practice and to critique how this reflective activity has contributed to their ongoing growth and development, in the many dimensions of their professional lives. The research inquires into how reflection has led these teachers to make sense of the phenomena of significant events experienced throughout their careers and how it impacts on action taken, when dealing with problematic issues concerning the *Choosing Our Future* (BCE) curriculum reforms. In so doing, the embedded values that underscore decisions and actions are extrapolated and questioned.

The study is set within the context of *Brisbane Catholic Education*, during a time of system initiated curriculum reform initiatives. These come under the project title of *Choosing Our Future* (1995). The five research participants,



referred to as co-researchers are experienced, practising teachers in Catholic schools within the Brisbane Archdiocese, who have been awarded Advanced Skills Status (AST1).

#### **4.1.2 Research Orientation**

The theoretical framework of this research is underpinned by critical theory. The function of critical theory is to better understand the relationship that exists between values, interest and action (Sultana 1995). Questions of ethics, morality and politics are raised with the emancipatory intent of empowerment through self-growth and individual effort (Smith 1993) and through collective action (Popkewitz 1984). Moreover, critical theory has focus on extending consciousness of the self as a social person, through promoting insights into the processes, by which beliefs and values were formed. This research also aims to critically explore the thinking processes that underscore the teachers' actions for change throughout the career life. In so doing, insights need to be considered in terms of the socio-cultural context in which the phenomena were situated (Goodson 1992).

Critical theory reflects a body of discourse that focuses on the possibility of individual and collective social transformation through authentic action (Freire 1973; Crotty 1998). Research from a critical orientation involves the production of new knowledge that is generated from past understandings (Kincheloe 1991). Hence, a social reconstructivist perspective, which is derived from the philosophy of critical social theory, conceptually guides the interpretation of learning, teaching and reflection. This provides sequence to extrapolate and to question the ideological forces and power relations, by which the Advanced Skills Teachers' understandings are created.

The research also gives attention to the person of the teacher. This is necessary, in order to both respect and to better understand the teachers' subjective and social realities in relation to their career life experiences. Therefore, the theoretical orientation reflects both a critical and an interpretative philosophy. This is appropriate, as the research, to meet its

purpose, must consider teacher professional development, broadly and holistically, through giving attention to its many dimensions.

#### **4.1.3 Design of the Research**

A case study approach best serves the research purpose. The case phenomenon is the relationship between the reflective activity and professional growth of five Advanced Skills Teachers. This is bounded within the context of each teacher's career life history. Case study supports the use of a participatory, collaborative methodology that facilitates the explication of the interactive thinking processes that underscore the teachers' actions. Moreover, case study offers sequence and flexibility to more ably explore the relationship between reflection and teacher professional development in a manner that respects the contextual specificity of constructed meanings.

The emergent design for the research allows for systematic, yet flexible and ongoing data collection, partial analysis and participant feedback (Refer to Table 3.2). Most data are derived from a number of semi-structured, indepth and open-ended interviews. Other supporting data include AST1 folio documentation, artefacts, an inquiry project summary sheet and the researcher's diary. The procedure for data collection and subsequent interpretation and analysis, integrates a model appropriate to the life history approach (Kelchtermans 1993), with a *Methodology of Interpretative Theory and Qualitative Inquiry* (Bartlett 1989) (cf Table 3.2). The design also provides for the utilisation of elements of narrative inquiry, through adapted action research methods that incorporate reflective deliberation (McArdle and Spry 1996). This guides the inquiry into problematic issues concerning current system curriculum initiatives.

#### **4.1.4 Organisation of the Presentation of Findings**

Cross-case analysis of the data results in the construction of five case narratives. These present critical accounts of experiences that have shaped the Advanced Skills Teachers' professional lives and the inquiry into particular problematic issues concerning the *Choosing Our Future*

curriculum reforms (*BCE*). The accounts are identified as critical, as the research went beyond description of events, to extrapolate and question the embedded beliefs and values that underscored decisions that were made and actions that were taken. Moreover, conscious efforts were made to confirm the legitimacy, effectiveness and valuing of the principles that were explicated. This was achieved through further questioning or reference to other sources of data evidence. In the reconstruction of events that are illustrative of each teacher's lived reality, care was also taken to respect the Advanced Skills Teachers' intentions, as well as the specificity of situational contexts.

It is recognised that meaning is created through autobiographical narrative with its accompanying discourse and reflection. Language becomes constructive of experience, as meaning is framed and reframed through the construction and reconstruction of language (Halliday 1986). Therefore, the language, in both spoken and written modes used by each of the Advanced Skills Teachers is cited throughout the presentation of each case narrative. This is important, for it recognises that individuals may attribute their own labels and terms of reference for certain phenomena. The stories of the teachers are however, not merely a representation or a critical praxis. They are more of a critical exploration of a "hermeneutic returning to the lived ground of human experience" (Aoki 1990 in Carson 1995:154).

The cross-case analysis from the five case narratives is presented as a discussion of findings. The sequence of the presentation of the case narratives and discussion of findings from five case narratives is outlined in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Sequence of the Presentation and Analysis of Findings**

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 4.1 | Introduction                                  |
| 4.2 | Presentation of Individual Case Studies       |
| 4.3 | Discussion of Findings from Five Case Studies |

## 4.2 SEQUENCE OF THE FIVE INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDIES

The presentation sequence and contextual information relating to each of the five case narratives are detailed in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Overview and Presentation Sequence of Case Narratives**

| Case Narrative Identification  | Gender | Age        | Teaching Experience | Inquiry Focus<br><i>Time Frame of Data Collection</i>  |
|--|--------|------------|---------------------|--|
| <b>4.2.1 Case One – Daisy</b><br>Year 7 Teacher                                  | Female | Early 40's | 21 years            | Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting – Speaking and Listening<br><i>February 1998- October 1998</i>                            |
| <b>4.2.2 Case Two – Chris</b><br>Year 6 Teacher                                  | Male   | Mid 30's   | 15 years            | Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting – School Renewal<br><i>April 1997-November 1997</i>                                       |
| <b>4.2.3 Case Three – Gemma</b><br>Year 1 Teacher                                | Female | Late 40's  | 23 years            | Genre Based Teaching Approach – Speaking and Listening<br><i>May 1997- October 1997</i>  |
| <b>4.2.4 Case Four – Sam</b><br>Year 5/6 Teacher                                 | Male   | Late 40's  | 25 years            | Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting – Collection, Management and Analysis of Assessment Data<br><i>April 1997- April 1998</i> |
| <b>4.2.5 Case Five – Siobhan</b><br>Year 5/6 Teacher<br>Learning Support Teacher | Female | Mid 40's   | 25 years            | Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting – Documentation Student Self<br><i>September 1997- August 1998</i>                        |

#### 4.2.1 Case Narrative One: Daisy

Daisy has been teaching for over twenty years as a full-time and a part-time teacher. She is in her early forties and is married with children aged between ten and eighteen. She portrays an outgoing and confident personal disposition. Daisy “trained”, for three years to be a teacher on school leaving in the early 1970’s. Much of her pre-service “training” related to open area education.

Throughout her career, Daisy has worked in a number of State and Catholic schools and has taught across all year levels of the primary school. She also has experience in teaching multi-age classes and working as a supply teacher. Six years ago, Daisy was employed as a full-time teacher within *Brisbane Catholic Education*. This is considered to be a significant achievement in her career life history. Daisy feels that she now “belongs to *Cath Ed*”. This is important, as she “sincerely values what it stands for as a church organisation”. Moreover, she explained “I worked so hard to finally get permanency. I really, REALLY value it!” Daisy discussed the impact that this had on her sense of a professional self.

It was disappointing, especially when positions came up in the school I worked in. But I won't ever take my position for granted or become complacent. It means too much.

Daisy expounded that she “always wanted to be a teacher and never seriously considered doing anything else”. She has been able to maintain a real enthusiasm and passion for teaching. She was emphatic in making the following claim.

I love it. I just love it. I'll keep doing it forever. I think it's just a part of who I am. But really, seriously, I think you HAVE to love it and live it. I really do. It's not easy. You get those days of sheer chaos and madness at times, but that's part of it all. Just relating with the kids and getting in there with them. It's just that feeling you get that you are helping them learn. At the end of the day, that's what makes it all worthwhile.

Daisy is currently teaching a Year Seven class at a school that is located in a high socio-economic area on the outskirts of Brisbane. She transferred to this school four years ago as a supernumerary teacher. This represents the longest

time ever spent in one school in a full time role. Daisy spoke of her “emotional need”, at this point in her career, “to stay put and to have some stability in her work context”.

Daisy also assumes the curriculum leadership roles as the English Key Teacher and was also the SPS Lead Teacher. She has no designated release time from the classroom and tends to “juggle” the responsibilities associated with the Key Teacher role in her own time. She believes that worthwhile opportunities come from such lead roles, in terms of her own “progress”. Presenting inservice information back to the staff, in a limited amount of time, forces her to synthesise the input. She is very aware of her need to process new ideas through “practical applications”.

Moreover, Daisy’s involvement in writing the School English Program and taking it to validation, gave her “a broader perspective of the whole school curriculum”. She believes that it is important for all teaching staff to have some involvement in the development of school programs and that everyone needs to have the opportunity to attend inservices.

Daisy noted that she is being “increasingly careful”, to ensure that she doesn’t have too much time out of class. She feels that “it breaks the continuity of the program” and unsettles her students, if she has “big chunks out”. Daisy has “mulled” over this situation for some time and has taken a stance to ensure that she is “the class teacher first and the Key Teacher second”.

Daisy was awarded AST status seven years ago as a part-time teacher. She has since successfully reapplied for a continuance of the status. She takes the AST application process and the award itself, “very seriously”. However, she perceives that there is a lack of acknowledgment at the school and system level, as to what the award represents.

There seems to be an idea that AST is hush, hush. When you get AST, they give you a letter and the money and then say no more. It would be nice to have some recognition for what it stands for. I can live without

that, because really, at the end of the day, I'm the one that has to feel that I'm doing a good job. But just the same, I do wonder what it says about the quality of what we are on about.

Daisy readily articulates her thoughts in relation to the AST application in terms of its benefits to her own growth. She refers to her AST folio in jest, as the "I love Daisy book".

It is good for you to focus on what you have achieved. In teaching you tend to keep looking at what can be done in a better way and probably don't stop to recognise 'all you do know' and 'can do' and 'have learnt'. I wouldn't say it was easy putting the application together. But I got a lot from it. I think of the criteria as goals - 'what I'm working toward'. The AST gives someone like me, who wants to stay in the classroom, somewhere to head. In the overall scheme of things I felt affirmed, really affirmed. It confirmed my own feeling that I was effective and professionally accountable and that others thought so too. I think it's important to know you are on track.

Daisy has a personal image of herself as a "progressive" and "effective" teacher. She considers herself "a learner". She believes that this must be modelled to students, especially those in the upper year levels.

I think that you have to keep building on from what you know and what you do! I think change is part of teaching. I have to change or I get too bored. That's what is so exciting about teaching. It's always changing.

Daisy considers that she has "progressed" and "moved on", throughout her career. She feels that she has developed through experience itself, as well as from, "continually being exposed to new developments in education". She has a sense of inner confidence about her own professional capabilities. However, she is also quick to add that she is "still growing and that she still has much to learn". She strongly believes that she has "a responsibility to the students to be progressive and to keep up to date".

It all comes back to how you see teaching and learning. It's a big continuum. Things just keep changing and I'm changing and so are the kids. What I did a few years ago that was progressive might be out of date now, but at least I had a go and it moved me along.

Daisy strongly emphasises that her teaching needs to be “relevant to the students’ needs and enjoyable”. Moreover, she feels that students need “to have some basics” and “continuity in their learning”. Daisy tries to create “the right conditions in class so that they are able to develop a sense about who they are as learners”. Moreover, since working in a full time capacity, she has been better able to take decisive action toward this end.

You can really follow things through with a particular class and set the parameters and class goals together. That kind of thing becomes important to how I teach. I try to involve the students in those kinds of decisions and in the management of the classroom. That was harder to do, when I was part-time or on contract.

Daisy acknowledged that her value belief system has evolved and been influenced to some extent, through her experiences as a parent of four “very different children”.

I think seeing my own children cope in their different ways has helped me to realise just how important it is to build each child up. I’ve seen how important the development of self-esteem has been. They have to feel accepted. They also need the basics and then continuity to build on from that and extend.

This “puts quite a responsibility” on her shoulders, in terms of the “facilitation of student learning”.

I think that’s about the hardest thing about teaching. To make sure you are reaching every one of the kids in whatever way is possible. I think that’s what I think about the most really. You need to know when to push and when to hold back. I have a hunch if I’m drastically wrong. I’m not looking for instant outcomes with their learning. I’m looking for process outcomes. Learning takes time.

Daisy believes that if she is to match her personal theory with her theory in use, then she needs to be “progressive”, in her approach. To do so, she takes an active stance to relate to her students and “to be in touch with their world”. This has motivated recent attempts to better understand the “culture of youth”. Since attending Visual Literacy workshops, she has started to critically view television shows and movies that are of interest to her own children.



What I'm really scared about is not being in touch with the kids. It's okay, now because my children are at the age of children I'm teaching. But as they get older, I really don't want to lose touch with their culture. I think that's so important. It affects the way you plan, and in ways you relate.... It's all about relating really. When you are in touch with the kids, you can meet them on a level they are at - otherwise it becomes top heavy. You have to be able to use their language and be in touch with their world.

Daisy also considers that she must approach the implementation of planned units flexibly, if she is to tap into students' prior knowledge and "build from there". She was able to exemplify this with many instances drawn from her practice. One such incident occurred the previous year, during the implementation of a unit on "World Cultures". This experience reminded Daisy, "to never take for granted the obvious", in terms of the students' prior knowledge. Daisy replayed how she spontaneously changed her pedagogical approach in action several times, in order to "build on the students' basic world geographical knowledge". She was "amazed" to discover that many of her students were not able to locate Italy on a world map, despite having studied the language as a LOTE subject, for the past five years. She recalls how she "panicked", because of the "pressure of limited time".

They needed the basic map reading knowledge and skills for the unit, so I turned to 'jug to mug' style. I hated it and the kids hated it. I just knew I had to do something else. I tried a few different strategies over a couple of sessions, but I could see and hear how bored they were. So without thinking, I went back to 'my way' and gave them a task that involved finding out five geographical things about a place that they didn't know before, to share 'round robin style'. The kids became really engaged and we ended up having a class geography question box all that year. Now, if I had kept to my original plan, they would have probably had trouble achieving the outcomes because they had nothing to build from. Responding this way gave them more outcomes. That's where I think teaching has changed. It has to be evolving and responsive. Planning is important, but it's just a guide.

Daisy believes that she needs to approach planning for her own professional development flexibly also. She feels that she must take responsibility for this and "that it is up to her" to find the most appropriate form of inservice or activity that suits a particular need. Daisy values opportunities to have "input from those at

the cutting edge". She explained, "I want those new ideas. Then I can process it". Moreover, she indicates that she feels confident to question and to challenge issues that are presented at workshops.

If I'm not sure about something or I'm searching for something different I ask. I'm not afraid to ask any more. I really don't have to be worried about proving myself to anyone any more. I'm not being difficult when I do that. I'll ask and question. I need to talk my thinking, when I'm trying to understand something. It's how I process. Then I need practical applications to sift it all through. That's how I learn.

Such an approach became evident throughout the inquiry process. Daisy explored "practical applications" for the "theoretical ideas", in relation to authentic assessment of student learning outcomes in Speaking and Listening. This 'theory' had been presented at English Network Days. She contended that it is up to her "to process new ways of thinking". However, she noted that she can become frustrated by sessions that "regurgitate more of the same". At other times, she can experience concern that she is "not doing the right thing by the kids", when hearing non-contextualised accounts of best practice. Daisy "copes" with such situations by reminding herself that she also is "there to learn".

Indeed, Daisy's ability to direct efforts to find "new ideas" is clearly evident in her AST folio. It provides much documentary evidence that indicates that she is indeed very resourceful. Daisy believes that outside stimulation beyond *Brisbane Catholic Education* is good for her professionally. It is her view that there are "many, many ways to tap into the community." She also feels that it is up to her "to hunt them down" and to make contact with outside agencies whenever and wherever possible. She explains the thinking that motivated her to have such involvements.

I think teaching is more than the four walls of the classroom. I think that it's important for the kids to get that outside feel. Why not use the resources available?

Daisy has expressed concern that there are “too many things on the boil”, in terms of school renewal. She is finding that it is becoming increasingly difficult to attend inservice sessions that she feels would be of benefit to her own learning. This is largely due to an “increasingly excessive” number of staff meetings and school committee meetings held after school, most days of each week. She believes that this is “unfortunate”. It places her in a “bind”, because her past efforts in directing much of her own professional development had worthwhile consequences for her learning. Daisy provides two such examples.

One experience occurred about eight years ago, when Daisy planned units of work for a Government Department educational program. Her motivation to be involved in this venture came from a search for “different” resource materials. She considers that the experience of meeting regularly to collaboratively plan with other teachers from other sectors gave her greater confidence in her own effectiveness. Prior to this experience, Daisy viewed collaborative planning to be a somewhat “superficial exercise” that had focus on the selection of topics or activities. She considers that her conception changed and that she has come to value “bouncing around ideas with others” and gaining “a broader perspective”.

Daisy also emphatically identifies her involvement with an *Education Queensland* initiative: *State Environmental Centre C* as being “**ABSOLUTELY INFLUENTIAL**” to her current pedagogical approach. Moreover, she knows that it has impacted on her whole approach to the “creation” of a “worthwhile curriculum”. She is very aware that she was able to explore more exciting ways of integrating the curriculum, so that the students were actively involved in their learning. Daisy first became involved when she took her class on an excursion to the centre over four years ago. She has since written and critiqued units and workshops and makes a deliberate choice to involve her students in the Centre’s activities. She also tries to “make the time and organise things at home” so that she is able to attend some of the weekend seminars and workshops, when they are offered.

I really appreciate having the support to process the practical applications. I'm able to be more creative and the strategies allow for the kids to become more emotionally involved also. I always go away feeling all fired up. I think the processes you go through, help you to touch base with what learning is all about and that goes for me as much as the kids. It is incredibly satisfying to work with the curriculum to make it more relevant to the kids.

Daisy also considers that her involvement in higher degree study has helped her to become "a more analytical and critical thinker", as well as to "persevere". She upgraded her formal qualifications to the Bachelor level when she was raising a very young family. She decided to study to keep in touch with educational trends and to gain further qualifications. Daisy has also completed a *Graduate Diploma in Religious Education*, through external studies to enhance her prospects of being employed by *Brisbane Catholic Education*. However, she was also aware in herself that "this was an area, in which she really needed to develop her knowledge base".

Daisy has decided that "this is not the right time" to undertake further tertiary study. She notes, "I think study needs commitment and right now, because of my family, I'm not ready for that kind of commitment". She does have hopes to study toward a Masters' degree, with a focus on Environmental Education, "further down the track".

Daisy considers that there is "no one best way to teach". She feels that she has been very "fortunate" to have had the opportunity to experience many and varied classroom and school settings and situations, through her work as a supply teacher. She believes that these experiences were "invaluable to her professionally, as she learnt to be "flexible, adaptable and open to new challenges and ideas". The overall experience of doing relief work helped her to appreciate the impact that the teacher has on the students' socialisation within the school and on their approach to learning.

That really makes me think about what I do myself these days. Supply work is a great learning experience because you see the full spectrum of school life and you get a real bird's eye view.

Daisy also believes that this experience made her realise how important it is for her to "entertain new ideas" and to have "the professional freedom to play".

This want can be linked back to difficult experiences as a novice. Daisy emphasises emphatically and emotively, that "it was not easy and not exactly the best start". She recalls that she "felt confused and stifled" by the rigid, autocratic administrative structures, which conflicted with her personal views of teaching.

In my first year this deputy would humiliate me in front of the class and show me how to teach. Chalk and talk stuff and lining up in rows. I can still remember that sense of feeling inadequate in his eyes. I've never forgotten it.

Then at the Catholic School in New South Wales I taught Prep. It was like I would corrupt the children, because I was State trained. All I remember is having to keep the windowsills dusted. It doesn't say a lot for what I did as far as teaching those kids.

Daisy strongly considers that her level of professional satisfaction and enthusiasm now serves "as a major guiding force", in relation to professional decisions she makes. Daisy is very aware that this has been steadily developing over the past ten years and that she is becoming increasingly reliant on this inner sense. When she starts "to feel in a rut or becoming too tense with something", she intuitively knows that "it is time to stop and think things through". This helps her to "change direction", when she feels that she is losing "that inner buzz of excitement". She emphatically contends, "if I don't feel it how can the kids?" Daisy notes that she always manages "to rope herself back in", when she feels that "the sense of that real anticipation starts to wane". She exemplifies this with an instance, when she "just knew when it was time to move on", from one school, due to "outdated", organisational structures.

There was a change in principal and after a time I really knew that the working situation wasn't right. I don't mind being challenged, but I can't come at being told what to do how to do it, because it is a routine from the dark ages or for someone's power ride. I've moved well past that.

Daisy followed her "inner sense" that she needed to "take the risk" and try to move to another school. It was then that she was appointed as a permanent

teacher with *Brisbane Catholic Education*. She notes that at her new school she could “play again and have professional freedom”. Daisy attributes this to the positive ethos of the school, which was influenced by the effectiveness of the principal. This person showed interest in her as a person, visited her classroom regularly, discussed her program and provided “critical support”.

Daisy refers this phase of her teaching back to a significant career life experience. This was set in a context, in a “newly opened” Catholic school in New South Wales in her third year of teaching. She notes, “I think that before this, I was treading water trying to prove myself”. She makes special reference to “the encouragement and support” that she received from the lay principal of this school. Within this supportive context, Daisy was able to “finally spread her wings”.

During this critical phase of her teaching career, Daisy also affectionately acknowledges the significance of the mentoring from her more experienced team teaching partner. She viewed this person as a role model. This teacher befriended her and helped her “to loosen up”. Daisy recalls that she felt “free” for the first time in her career “to really experience the excitement of teaching”. She gradually gained confidence to apply some of the open area strategies that she had studied in her pre-service studies. This was a phase in her teaching life, when she started to “process teach” using “themes”. Daisy considers that she has since built on and adapted her teaching from such an approach.

In her current planning, Daisy records core teaching sessions and activities that may assist her students to achieve key learning outcomes. She is able to articulate the personal theory that underscores her thinking behind her teaching approach.

My planning and approach has to be broad and flexible. I know that every activity we do will finally lead up to the end. I have to have that built into my units as I go, but I have to be flexible. It is important, because you do have to know what you're hoping for. I mean you need structure. Structure is important. If you've got structure you can play. And if I need to, I'll change what I'm doing. I always change what I've

planned. But the basic structure is there, as it's supporting all that you do and all that the kids do.

Daisy uses the analogy of "playing", to illuminate what she means by a process approach to teaching.

I don't think you can afford to be complacent and just teach. I think you have to create with the class. That's what I call playing. They are learning. At the beginning of the year some of them will say, "When are we doing real work and I say to them what is real work? What do you know now that you didn't know before or what have you improved on that you didn't do before?" It takes them a while to get into that thinking.

Daisy refers her thinking to her stance taken in relation to the *Choosing Our Future* recommendations for curriculum change.

I think we all have to look at *Choosing Our Future* and say, 'this is a direction and we are heading in this direction... let's see what we can do with this'. You may not agree with it, but you have to at least have a bit of an idea of what it's about. It stops you getting in a rut and it really does make you think.

Daisy believes that she has a professional obligation to plan from the perspective of knowing her students' learning needs, the curriculum content and the resources that are available. In her AST re-application folio she notes:

Planning is a starting point and from there I believe it is important to work with my students and to involve them in developing and extending the learning experience.

Daisy has endeavoured to use the system recommended five part-planning framework, when thinking through her planning. However, she refutes the idea of writing unit plans according to prescribed formats. Daisy considers that she has moved beyond the need to document her "Assumptions about Learning and Learners" each time that she plans at the unit level. She prefers to use her Class Year Overview for that purpose. She also notes that, "on the down side", she found she became too concerned with getting the planning "looking right" on the surface. This presented the challenge to "adapt" and "transfer" her preferred

webbed way of planning to meet the five-part framework. The following rationale frames her thinking.

This makes much more sense to me. It helps me to get that overall big picture of the curriculum and I can see connections between what we are doing in all of the KLAs. If students are not working to a certain standard, I look at ability level. You try to find activities that will pull out that strength. I like to keep the planning open and be guided by how it flows.

Moreover, as far as Daisy is concerned, “there is a big difference between evaluating a unit of work and really reflecting”. Whilst she considers it important to scribble down notes and evaluations as she goes, she views this as “relevant working document surface stuff”, that helps in the immediacy of the implementation of the unit. Daisy believes that reflection requires deeper thinking about an issue within the context of her whole practice and “how everything is relating to the students”.

Excerpts from Daisy’s AST Application and Re-application three years later exemplify how she has gradually involved her students in the change process. In her first application folio she notes:

Involvement in ELA through school inservice challenged me to reflect on and to change some of my classroom processes and teaching strategies. I am experimenting with planning ideas to put into practice approaches where I provide for more modelling of genre with the class and to help the students to understand the purpose for their writing (AST application).

In her updated folio five years later, Daisy’s written reflection reflects a change in the thinking that guides her planning. This has been reframed to accommodate greater focus on more student/teacher negotiation.

I believe that it is important to share my thinking with the class and to be open to the students’ suggestions. When planning, I endeavour to consider the needs of the students and to negotiate possibilities with them. I reflect on the impact of various approaches and respond through having a flexible approach to how I plan (AST 1 re-application).



Daisy is also able to articulate how she worked through issues associated with the use of Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting in English. She also “knew” that her own assessment practice needed to be improved. Daisy had found it difficult to find a “valuable way to collect and to record assessment information that “she was happy with”. She identifies that she “never liked the idea of doing end of semester tests and basing reporting on these results”. Daisy found that “the test mindset was head to break, especially with the parents”. She also refers to the Yr 6 state-wide testing and the subsequent Benchmarking in Year 5. Daisy “moved in her thinking”, through working with something she had little control over and “turning it around to advantage, so as to make the most of the situation and to use the test as an opportunity to talk about what success really means.

Daisy was also very astute to the political push toward the use of outcomes. She felt that she “might not be doing the right thing by the kids,” if she “didn’t at least get some grip on it”. Moreover, she makes reference to the issue of state testing and pragmatically notes that “it’s like anything really in teaching. You can either dig a hole and bury yourself, or you can have a go and do it”.

From the perspective of her own understanding of outcomes, Daisy believes that her thinking was transformed from having focus on what she thought that her students “should be able to do” to “what they actually achieved”. This took time to “process”. Moreover, she is aware of her need to have some “procedure” to follow, in the initial stages of trying to make sense of SPS.

I tried to assess everything that moved in those early days of SPS. I tied myself in a knot. I followed all the steps that were outlined at inservices. But it’s part of the process...trying out new things. I was a bit over the top, with all that I assessed. I really wasn’t comfortable with it. The biggest challenge was to try to decode the jargon of the documents into plain English. That made me ask questions and really try to understand **how** to use the framework. I don’t think you can ask the questions, until you’ve tried to work with something. And to work with something, you need a structure.

Moreover, Daisy recalls that she also began to realise that she was not enjoying teaching, because she was “so paranoid about being accountable”. She concluded that she “wasn’t interacting with her students”, as freely as she normally might. “Mulling over this feeling of loss in her own mind”, helped “to change her mind set”. She notes, “for a bit there I was so locked into assessment that the creative, internal energy was lost”.

Daisy considers that this “knowing” provided the incentive to work collaboratively with two other teachers at her school. She notes: “once I saw the documents as a tool to help me, it was easier. It sort of all came together after that, because we helped to clarify points for each other and linked SPS to the School English Program”. Daisy recalls that “once she understood the practical application of SPS, she began to realise that she was “enjoying teaching again”. This experience effected awareness of her tendency to “get caught up with the details of change and to loose creativity and flexibility”. She expresses this insight with a positive attitude. “Well I had a go. But I had to say to myself, ‘**NO!** This is over the top’ and try another approach”.

Moreover, when participating in the system organised inter-school moderation process, Daisy became very aware that other teachers were experiencing similar difficulties. Whilst she valued having the opportunity to share ideas, she considers that moderation has been a “difficult and somewhat frustrating experience”. She attributes this to some teachers’ use of documents, other than the SPS “official” ones, to level the students. Daisy held concern, as it was difficult to have any notion of consistency. Hence, she has come to the belief that the intra-school moderation process of is of greater benefit to her, as she can dialogue on “a level playing field”. This is where she “focuses her energy”.

The other documents might be easier to decipher, but it really does make the whole moderation process difficult. I don’t think *Cath Ed* lay down too many expectations. But if the employer wants you to try to get consistency across schools and they give you the sequence and freedom to do that, well I don’t think it’s too much to ask teachers, to at least have a try. Using easier documentation just makes it harder in the

long run, especially if we are trying to help each other out in understanding it all. I thought THAT was what moderation was supposed to be all about.

When working through the inquiry process, Daisy was keen to find an alternative approach to develop the student's ability to tell and listen to stories. She recalls that for some time, this idea "has been swirling around" in her head. Daisy planned for the learning experiences "to flow into" the school's Book Week celebratory activities. Through independent story telling in the group situation, she endeavoured to provide her students with the opportunity to further develop co-operative learning skills and self directed learning. Assessment criteria were negotiated and jointly constructed with the class.

In the early stage of the inquiry, Daisy framed her enthusiastic reflective replays of events, from the perspective of her students' response. Throughout the inquiry, Daisy relied on these insights to adapt what she had planned. She deliberated on the notion of establishing the assessment criteria with the class, after there had been some modelling and exposure to the genre. This was done with the intent of developing the students' critical thinking skills and focussing their attention to the purpose for the assessment of specific textual features of the genre. Moreover, Daisy was adamant that she needed to explore the sequential structure of the genre using story maps. She was "set" on this course of action, as she believed that her students needed some "fundamental structure to build on". Daisy justified this action through making reference to the theoretical underpinning of the English syllabus.

Daisy was highly enthusiastic when discussing the outcomes of the students' story telling. She "could feel the students' involvement", as they created their own story telling corner with little direction from her. She makes the following evaluation:

The quality of their story telling was extraordinary, absolutely extraordinary. I'm sure it was because they were free to be creative and flexible and not locked into, 'a you must'.

However, Daisy found that using the assessment criteria sheets throughout the students' presentations "detracted from the whole climate and atmosphere of the story telling experience". Moreover she observed that the students found the sheets "distracting", when peer assessing. When reflectively deliberating on this problem, Daisy identified that she was getting "locked up with the assessment again". She decided to talk through the issue of assessment of the presentations with her class. It was through this class discussion, that the idea of video recording the story telling had its genesis.

Daisy used the video recording for both herself and her students to determine the outcomes of their learning from the class negotiated criteria. She reflectively reviewed the consequences of possible alternative decisions, after the event.

As far as the assessment went, well I used observations I'd made, but I could clearly see individual outcomes. I mean, if I'd sat down and assessed, it wouldn't have had the flow. That was a problem after the first few presentations. I had to change the whole approach. This video idea complements the whole focus on helping the kids to self assess. Better still, we could discuss outcomes in relation to the presentations.

Daisy also found that viewing the video helped the students to consider ways to improve on their own story telling performances for the Book Week celebrations. Moreover, they were able to organise a timetable to take the video home to share with parents. Throughout the inquiry, it was interesting to note that Daisy rarely referred to the SPS documents. She explains that she has learnt that it is "best to keep the focus off" these documents, as she gets too locked into "one way thinking". However, she keeps the outcome and level statements as a general guide. This helps to give her "a big picture focus", in relation to the planning. She notes that she is better able to see the differences in the levels of student achievement.

The more I work with the outcomes, the more I'm coming to think that the levels in themselves are no big deal. It's what the levels are telling me that's important, so that we can build from there. If they can't demonstrate an outcome in this particular unit, well then, I have to find ways to help them and that might need another type of situation.

When deliberating on the unit, Daisy provides her insights through the following evaluation.

I really didn't know how this would go. I can see how I was still too tied up in the assessment at the start. But this flowed, when I let go. We had freedom to play. Next time I would consider self-assessment from the video. It's only through experiencing it that you think, 'yes this works' and 'no, that doesn't'. Mind you, another class and the outcomes could be different, so you need to be flexible. The next challenge is viewing, but I've realised that we came along way with viewing, through the assessment task.

Daisy's reflective thoughts indicate her drive to continue to work with a holistic curriculum in a relevant manner, as other outcome based syllabus documents in the Key Learning Areas are introduced.

Look, I'm really thinking that I have to make sure that I don't 'box' all of the new things that come in. I 'lost it', when I did that. But if it can flow from one into another and I can make the time and freedom to play with it, then I can help to make things happen for my class. I really think we have to create something with the curriculum. It's not about putting units into boxes and making them all nice. It's not about putting a number on a child and saying you are level whatever. It's really GOT to be about creating something with the kids and really making a difference for them to develop in themselves, as much as for 'what they know' and 'what they can do' (SPS). That's what it's all about! Accountable, YES! Locked in, NO!

Daisy believes that she is reflective, but feels that "there is little point in getting too caught up in terms and words". She considers that understanding about her past helps her to appreciate her present. Her hopes for the immediate future are to work flexibly with the curriculum in a way that frees up time. She notes that she is "realising more and more, just how much value there is in negotiated class discussions and modelling critical thinking skills with the kids". She is determined to "keep on trying to free up the curriculum", so that there is quality time to work with her students in a relevant and worthwhile way.

Moreover, Daisy is working toward "achieving optimum goals", that she has set for herself, through use of the AST 2 criteria. Daisy's hope for the future is that she is always able to "teach" in a way that is "progressive", "effective" and

"relevant" to the students and that provides her with that "buzz". She strongly believes that it is up to her "to do something about making that happen".

#### 4.2.2 Case Narrative Two: Chris

Chris is in his mid thirties and is married with a young family. Since qualifying as a primary teacher, he has upgraded his qualifications in education to the Masters' level. Chris has taught middle and upper grades in three Catholic schools. He has been teaching at his current school, located in a middle class Brisbane suburb for a number of years. Chris also holds the position as Assistant to the Principal, Religious Education (APRE). This entitles him to two days' release from the classroom. He is currently teaching a Year 6 class, which he shares with a part-time teacher. Chris has taken on additional school curriculum leadership roles as Lead Teacher in Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting and Mathematics Lead Teacher. He shares these lead roles with two other staff members. He enjoys these roles and considers that they have been of benefit to his own learning, as he has needed to interact with others and consider new ideas when working through challenging issues. Chris is non-committal about the AST award and circumspect in his view that it is perhaps "more a system reward for long service than for exemplary practice".

Chris takes responsibility for his own professional development and seeks support when needed, from a number of sources from both within and outside of the system. He believes that it is essential for him to be in touch with current educational thinking and to be constantly open to change. Chris finds it useful to keep a personal journal, to reflectively record ideas, thoughts and deliberations.

I'm just one of those writing types of people. I write down my thoughts, what worked and what didn't and my own challenges for myself. It crystallises what is in my mind and it sort of formalises my reflections.

The involvement with Masters' studies promoted awareness that reflection is "vital" to his professional growth. Chris admits that he misses "those opportunities, for the interplay with ideas and engagement in critical discussion" that come with tertiary study. He appreciates dialoguing with academics as "the ideas are put up there to be challenged". Chris has plans to enrol in Doctoral studies when his own children are a little older.

Teaching brings its own rewards for Chris “in seeing great stuff happening for the students and feeling the adrenalin build up with that sense of this is all happening, pumping inside”. He has formed a strong belief that he has a responsibility to facilitate learning for all students by “making schooling experiences relevant and meaningful”. Three core ideas in Chris’ pedagogy are self-motivation, self-awareness and critical thinking. He reasons that the students’ ability and disposition to be confident enough “to think for themselves is crucial for survival in today’s world”.

Chris is very aware of how and why he has “evolved” in his thinking and its influence on his approach to pedagogy and curriculum design. He considers that he has developed basic instincts relating to teaching and that at this phase of his career, he needs to work with “principles of design”, if he is to “facilitate” relevant learning experiences for his students.

I really think a good curriculum is fluid. It has to be changing and evolving, if it is to be relevant. The needs of students change from one year to the next, one term to the next, one day to the next and even in the case of one of my attention deficit children, one minute to the next. It’s my job to respond to those needs.

To achieve this, Chris tries to be a “resource person”. When planning, he sees himself as a “designer, not a technician”.

Teachers are designers, a bit like artists. You know you are given a design brief and here are the guidelines, the givens. Problems are a matter of solving the design problem. I know the givens, these students in front of me. That’s where I start from and then something clicks and you go back. If it doesn’t work, well, it could be that I expected too much from them or they didn’t have the pre-knowledge or I just didn’t have the patience or time to work it through this way. And then I’ll try something else. That’s when I find it useful to talk things through with others. It doesn’t have to be someone who thinks the same as me, but I find it hard to find those people. It’s not snobbery or anything. It’s just that some people are good at taking other people’s ideas and putting them into practice and others are really good at generating ideas. I talk to lots of people, but I’m talking about going deeper. It’s difficult. Where do you get those ideas? That’s a problem.



Chris is emphatic that ideas are not prescriptive means to an end. He recalls times when he has responded to requests to publish or to share his ideas and planning with other teachers. On a video recording of one session, he stresses that all contexts are different and that what works in one situation may not in another.

I can never pick up on what anyone else is doing! I don't know if others should pick up on what I'm doing... just because it seems to be a good idea. Sure I'll play with ideas, but if you gave me a book of units, these days, I wouldn't even open it. But if you gave me a book of units with the teachers thinking and problem solving, like a case study, I would find that useful. That's why I'm wary about just going into the procedures about what I do, but that seems to be where the interest lies. I prefer to go into the thinking behind the idea. Publishing given answers to practice is a problem. Contexts are so different. I couldn't do what I did last year with any class, but I could build on or adapt the ideas. You have to move on.

Chris does not consider teaching to be problem solving, but "problem finding". Part of the excitement of teaching is searching for these problems and coming up with ideas to design ways for both himself and his students to look at and work through these in different ways.

Ideas just sit in my mind for a bit, like when I'm driving home or doing something else. My mind just does that and ideas play around inside. I might see someone else doing something in the classroom, or read or hear about it and think, "that's fantastic". But if it's not really an issue for me, or a problem for me, I don't pick it up. I know I'm just not the sort of person to sit and plan meticulously. I just jump in and try things and then after, I work at how I can fix or adapt that or work out why it worked or didn't work. That's when I find it useful to dialogue with others.

Chris has come to believe that "problem finding" and "problem solving" holds more meaning, when it occurs in relation to curriculum decision-making at the school level.

This is becoming increasingly difficult as School Based Curriculum development, with the Choosing Our Future reforms is so overloaded at the moment. It's all bits and pieces. Questions such as, "why do I have to do it?" aren't addressed. The danger of that is that you miss the reflective process. It's almost like, "well that's done. Now let's get to the next thing we HAVE to do. Good we've done this, now let's do what's next." It is so much at the superficial level

and so rushed that teachers are looking for prescriptive means. That time for really deep dialogue and debate is missing. I have an uneasy feeling about that. I really do think that real change only happens through working through challenges and making decisions based on your own particular circumstances and those of the school. You do have to justify those decisions to the system, but that makes you think about what you are doing and why. I really believe that it's important for all teachers to reflect on what they do and to address their own issues of change. Until we get that right, well I think it will all be just one more thing to do!

This has caused concern for Chris as an administrator and as a teacher.

I really have pondered over this. I do think that maybe what it is saying to us is that School Based Curriculum Development and using Outcomes within a tight time frame, isn't exactly the right way to promote teacher reform, especially with the time lines as they are. So it's up to school communities to work through the issues in consultation with the system. I do think that's possible. In fact, what the *Choosing Our Future* time line has done is put the issues up there and it's up to the schools to respond. But we have to move forward and think forward to connect it all. We can't sit back and moan and blame the system. I mean the system has a responsibility to make recommendations, but the system as an organisation doesn't know our school needs like we do.

Chris responded to this dilemma in relation to Outcomes, through initiating an inquiry process into the school's assessment and reporting policy. In consultative collaboration with his principal and other teachers, he set about involving administration, staff, teachers, parents and *BCE* curriculum support personnel into the process at the school level. Chris also inquired into his own beliefs and practices concerning assessment and reporting. A motivating factor was the challenge "of critically working with, rather than to the reforms". Chris felt that it was important to "keep sight of the bigger picture of teaching and learning and the whole curriculum" and not to become "too bogged down with just assessment or reporting". In a school journal documenting *the Story of the Journey*, he provided the following rationale.

It is too big an issue for our school community to merely jump on the latest educational bandwagon. Education and proper consultation of the

school community needs to be the keynote of change, if it is to be effective.

Chris is able to confidently articulate his understandings and stance on the use of Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting. He was adamant that he first had to ask himself what motivates him to want to use Outcomes.

I'm not opposed to Outcomes. Don't get me wrong. I do try to get the philosophy behind it and pick that up and make that work. I understand children moving naturally through levels and that the levels are broad. I like the notion of the big picture and ok, a child has achieved this and this and is now working toward the next stage. I think it's fantastic, but I think it's the practical side that the whole idea of Outcomes is falling down on. For me, there is a big gap between the givens that's not filled. So here is the problem. Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting is a given. Okay. Now I'm a practical person. That's another given. I've been given the responsibility of teaching these students. There's another. So if I'm to use something then I need to understand it. I need to understand its theory and genesis and I need to feel comfortable that I can work with it. I need the parents to feel confident with what I do and the students to feel confident with it too. I have to act myself into thinking forward.

Chris connects his thinking to an encounter at an inservice on Outcome Based Assessment. This incident reinforced his need to demand respect for himself as a professional, who was able to direct his own learning.

I've come to the belief that new ideas are there to be challenged, alternatives considered, and procedures to be questioned. Then at this inservice, I am being directed to record all these bits and pieces, of a bits and pieces program into little box segments, using different types of assessment techniques. I questioned the Objectives Model and the prescriptive nature of the format, during and after the session. I got a bit of flak for that. I really do think you need healthy debate and I do think we need to encourage teachers to be innovative and to think for themselves. Provide a structure as a possible alternative, YES, but writing units for programs that meet a formula, NO! Who do you know of who writes the objectives first? And covers all that assessment? It's like, "oh I'd better go back and fill in this box". It's this guilt thing sitting out there. Here's a model, now use it. The thing is, I don't see it like that. Teaching isn't so black and white. The Scientific Revolution communised the objective model, but its only ONE MODEL. And Outcomes! It's all an outcome for this and that. Unless we are careful it will become so technical. It will just be the Objectives Model in a different guise and we will be teaching to tests or specific bits. It takes time away from really thinking about what you are doing and why.

Chris is able to clearly articulate how he developed this personal theory. He clearly recognises the need to be aware of the thinking behind beliefs and approaches to curriculum.

I taught to objectives until I was challenged in my thinking at uni. You can set out to teach that objective and you can teach it, really, really well. And test at the end and fantastic . . . they got it! For me, that isn't good enough because you have only taught that objective and not the students. I'm not saying that's a negative thing to do, but for me it doesn't work any more. It's not satisfying for me as a teacher and I think it would short change the students if I did it.

The confidence and enthusiasm to inquire into the use of Outcomes through collaboratively working with all stakeholders in the school community can be connected to Chris' professional biography. Chris regards his Masters' curriculum lecturer as being a highly influential mentor.

This lecturer really emphasised, "Act your self into thinking". I really agree with that. You have to act yourself into thinking. Agreeing with it is one thing, but doing it is another. It isn't always easy. No one can tell you how to think. So if you act on what someone else says to do, then it is vitally important to think about not only what is being done, but the reasons behind it.

Chris believes that his lecturer's advice is pertinent not only to decision-making concerning imposed reforms, but to working with new ideas in all realms of life.

I'm always fascinated how some things stick in your mind and you think, "Yeah that's right", in a "wow yeah, that does it for me", and others not. And then something else hits that didn't before. You sort of know something and then someone else expresses it for you. You think, "I know it already." I guess you get the words for it. Then you think I know it now. The same goes for solving problems. What that lecturer did for me was to put into words, what I believed and maybe didn't always do. He really pushed me to think about what I do and why I do it, but most importantly to act on ideas.

Chris also identifies a principal that he had "the good fortune to work" with, as being highly significant to his development.

Mrs Y was a real influence and a real role model. She knew she wasn't a visionary curriculum wise, but what she did know was how to get people together who were visionaries and push them on.

He refers to the notion of “heads of steam”.

You go to where the excitement is building and build it up and encourage it. That's how Mrs Y worked. Look for the energy and encourage it. She was there in a non-judgemental way to talk through concerns and issues. She supported a risk-taking environment and if it didn't work, then at least we gave it a go. Then you see what's possible. That is to me is a true visionary.

Mrs Y encouraged Chris to be a risk taker, when he took on the challenge of teaching a Year 5/6/7 multi-age class. At this time he was also studying for his Masters and “searching for ways of facilitating learning, rather than teaching content”. Chris is emphatic that through this experience, he was able to rethink his teaching approach and that it was a pivotal turning point in his career. However he is very quick to point out that he had a small group of sixteen students. Chris also believes that his studies helped him enormously, as he could make connections between much of his course work to practical dilemmas he faced in the classroom.

I was able to dialogue with others. I could be challenged in my thinking and so that study/work gap closed. I was always questioned, “Why are you doing this? Why? Why? Why?”

Chris also had the support of the parents. Working reflectively through the processes of involving the parents in their children's learning assisted Chris to rethink the parent teacher relationship. He explains it this way.

The parents had a choice. They knew before hand that this was a bit of an experiment, what was involved and they were approached about having their child in this class. I really think parents will support you if they know where you are coming from and that you have their child's best interest at heart.

Chris continues to involve parents in school activities as it helps to “keep channels of communication open”. He was keen to involve parents in the decision-making processes, relating to the school's assessment and reporting policy.

I think it is so important to have parents involved. I mean what is the use of reporting if it doesn't mean anything to them? It's good for both teachers and parents to discuss educational issues.

Chris openly admitted that the first few months of teaching the multi-age class was a "difficult time" for him and that he "nearly ran himself into the ground, in trying to make it work". He explained how it "all came together"

I tried something different all the time, each week, almost. I would become very disgruntled with myself. But what I slowly began to realise after talking to Mrs Y. and my uni group was that I was taking other people's ideas and trying to get them to work for me. I was being a curriculum technician and not a designer. It was only when I started to generate my own ideas and to work with the curriculum to suit the class context, that good things started to happen. That's when I got the confidence to say, "I like what I'm doing and I think it works. It works for these students."

Chris is able to relate the learning that came from his experiences when teaching the Year 5/6/7, to the development of his personal theory on authentic assessment.

I came to know the students so well, because there were only sixteen of them. I could use that internal knowing and I was clear about what I was looking for in their learning. But it became more than that, because sometimes they would demonstrate the unexpected. It was my job to draw on that and build from there. It was dynamic and fulfilling to be a part of that.

When explaining his thinking in relation to the broad and flexible use of Outcomes, Chris refers to an experience with one of the students in this class. This reinforced his belief in the need to work with new ideas or approaches critically and to trust his own judgement with assessment.

We were focussing on using 'Top Level Structure' which was **THE IN** thing at the time, as part of a unit on 'Major Historical Periods' of the world". A Yr 6 boy did the most amazing work. He just engaged with a complex text at such an advanced level. Now if I'd have taken him through each of the strategies and laboured through each separately, he would have been so bored. I doubt that he'd have done what he did. But the understanding was there. I knew it was there. He knew it was there and we built from that. It felt right. It was intrinsically satisfying for both of us. That made me really alert to work from where students are in their learning.

Chris continued to consciously try to make the curriculum more "authentically learner centered". He is aware of his own thinking in relation to his experience

with the multi-age class to his use of Outcomes today. For Chris, the challenge is to support individual students in a way that assists them to build on their learning and that involves both them and their parents in the assessment process.

I didn't need loads of checklists with that multi-age class. But then I only had sixteen students. Now I have thirty and that's a bit different. So that's why I've come full circle now and I'm trying to use folios and the criteria number line to see where students are and to support and to extend from there. I think both the students and parents feel more confident with it, because it's visual.

Chris has concern that students are "so institutionalised and have learnt to play the school game so well", that they do need time and structures to accept that classroom life can be different.

Most of them are so black and white, right or wrong in their thinking. I have to work at assisting them to understand their own progress and to take some control over their own learning.

This inner drive to involve students in their learning has evolved throughout Chris' career. He feels "strongly" that his first four years of teaching were very "formative ones, when he learnt a lot about the basics of teaching".

I had good models. I had a supportive Principal and others who challenged and led me on all the time in those early years. No one knocked me on the head every time I wanted to try something different, or something didn't go well.

When considering the early phase of his career, Chris emphasises that there is a big difference between encouraging and challenging teachers and trying to change experienced teachers' practice.

I will NEVER change because someone wants to me to change. For example, no matter what happens in the system, I WILL NOT teach from a textbook, I WILL NOT test for the sake of a test and put a mark on a piece of work. So if after fifteen years of teaching, if someone tried to get me to do these things, they wouldn't be able to because I have done them. Now my philosophy and beliefs about teaching don't sit with those practices. But back in those early years they probably would have convinced me, because I was forming my own ideas and I didn't have the same confidence or view of teaching that I have now. In fact I did a

lot of those things. But I have moved on. What was right for then isn't right for now. And what's right for now probably, won't be right for later. But I have moved on myself. **NO-ONE CHANGED ME!** I was supported, but any change really had to come from me. And I can't change others, because that has to come from them.

In the early phase of his career, Chris taught along side two teachers who helped him to develop his own sense of professional identity. The personal theories of each of these teachers influenced Chris' developing theory about teaching.

Teacher (A) was very strong on basics. She helped me to make sure that whatever else happened that at the end of the day the students would be able to read, write and **THINK** and feel okay about themselves as learners and as people. That's why I think assessment has to lead to something.

The other teacher challenged Chris' conceptions of teaching, which were based on his own schooling. Chris considers that this teacher assisted him to "balance" his approach to pedagogy.

When I went to school I was taught the basics, but I wasn't taught to think. I just had to remember facts. Also there really wasn't a global vision. We weren't children of the world. It was all Queensland, Queensland, Queensland. But today with the technology, well there has to be a global vision. Back then though, everyone, including me was lamenting the American influence through television on Australian kids. Teacher A really challenged me to work with it, rather than against it and to talk about it with the students. She had a global vision of the whole world. Just by being who she was and doing what she did, really helped me to realise how students respond when they are livened up to see what's out there. Really sparking off learning.

Other significant experiences throughout his career have helped Chris to work with the curriculum flexibly and in a way that relates to the students' world. He considers that "big world events" make a difference to how he approaches curriculum planning. He recalls an incident involving the explosion of the space craft, The Challenger which had a teacher on board. Chris read the students' interest and sense of bewilderment, and changed in action, the approach he was taking with a unit on "Hopes and Dreams".



Because it was impacting on the class, it started to impact on me too. I remember thinking this is significant, so let's deal with it. I mean I wouldn't think of doing Space Dangers as a part of a similar type of unit, because it wouldn't work. It worked because it was in response to the students' response to the Challenger disaster. From then on, I have tried to really touch base with their interests and to go with something unexpected that happens, that really breaks through and does something inside you. If the curriculum is too prescriptive and narrow well, then that doesn't become possible.

Chris expresses his concerns about the narrow use of outcomes by referring to another situation in a school context in a lower socio-economic area. Many of his students had literacy learning difficulties and behavioural problems. He recalls feeling "real tension and concern" when dealing with the social and emotional needs of some of these students.

How can you just go on with the lesson on this or that, when you sort of know that a child has had a weekend of hell. I learnt there that some kids have to put that behind them and school is a bit of escape from what happens in the home. I had to reach out to them and try to help them get those basic literacy and numeracy competencies in a way that meant something to them. It was here that I learnt the importance of relationships, not just with me, but for them with each other. I had to be sensitive to their immediate emotional needs and still have a vision of where they could head. Learning skills in conflict management and co-operative learning was as important as the 3Rs for some of them.

Chris monitored the learning of these students informally. He felt strongly that testing would have been "detrimental, because a lot of them already saw themselves as failing".

In his current school context, Chris differentiated between the underlying theory behind Outcome Based Assessment and the problematic structure of the documentation relating to the Key Learning Area of English. He focussed on streamlining his assessment practices through trying a number of different approaches to collecting relevant data. He was keen to involve the students in the process. He explains the thinking behind his actions.

I was taken with the Junior High criteria based model of assessment I'd heard about at uni, so I tried to apply that. I used all sorts of criteria and

number lines. I came to realise that using a continuum helped get the criteria clear.

However, Chris faced a dilemma, when he saw children taking out rulers and measuring along the number line and converting it to a raw score. This became more of an issue when some teachers started to do likewise.

Now that's a worry because it shows how socialised the students have become and a lack of understanding of what it's about because the criteria has to be looked at as contributing to the whole. The hardest part is standing back and seeing all that each child has achieved rather than sticking with the bits and pieces.

Chris came to realise that he became "bogged down", when his thinking narrowed to the Outcomes, rather than to "the bigger picture of the holistic development of the child". Chris responded to this concern by "playing around" with the notion of using a folio of student assessment data to give an indication of the students' achievements on completion of a unit of work. He tried negotiating criteria for unit tasks at the beginning of the unit. He found it became necessary to model for the students, processes for self and peer assessment. Chris encouraged his students to use the work samples to discuss their learning at home. The intent behind this action was to instil in the students "a sense of responsibility" for their own learning and to engage them in the process of parent education.

Chris was challenged to stand aside from his own beliefs about this innovation. He recognised the need to provide space for other interested teachers to work with the folio idea. He tried to be open to others who were also trying different ways of using Outcomes, in ways that were workable for their own classrooms. In discussions, when his ideas and use of the folio were challenged, Chris was able to accept criticism.

I'm past being sensitive to that. If someone is telling me I'm wrong well, I can't ignore that. I use it to think on. But what it has made me more certain of elements of what I'm doing is right. It also points out areas I need to look at myself. There are also issues we need to look at as a school.

What did become very apparent to Chris was that the formal documentation needed unpacking. In response, he deliberated with others and worked toward putting together some work samples from across the school that were indicative of the Outcome levels. The purpose was to “promote a shared understanding of levelness at the school and to keep sight of a holistic picture of learning”.

If we want a meaningful context, then we have to be sure the program content is relevant to the students. We have to keep moving away from the old way of assessing and reporting and to try lots of different avenues.

It was through this process that Chris along with other teachers identified a need to evaluate the genres he was covering in English and to critically review the scope and sequence section of the School English Program.

Chris also continued to be a driving force behind the reporting committee, which met monthly for a period of 12 months. In collaboration with others, he worked through concerns relating to the use of the impersonal, formal language in the documentation when reporting to parents. The intention behind these actions was for parents, teachers and students to “share a common language for open communication”. After much deliberation, a school decision was made to ascribe the numerical SPS level for teacher reference, but not to include it on the report. For Chris, this became important, as it offered time to “really critically review the use of SPS” in a worthwhile manner. Structures for the students to report to the outcomes of their learning to parents were also progressively implemented. Lengthy parent teacher interviews using folios replaced the mid year report. Chris’ reflections indicate that this process was successful and that parents too, need time to work through change. Chris was mindful not to make reporting with Outcomes “the same as what had been used previously”.

We really need to view it all differently, if we are looking at acknowledging what students have achieved and looking at ways to improve learning.

After the inquiry into the use of Outcomes, it became apparent to Chris that there was a “real need for non-pressured time for teachers and students and

staff to just spend time together". He was reflective about the parents' view, that the most important thing to them was that the teacher knew their child as a person as well as a learner. This prompted Chris to consider ways to be more in touch with his students - "just in who they are and where they are heading. I think if you can get that right then a lot of the rest just happens".

His hopes for his school are that all in the community can "take time to be there for each other", to work through curriculum issues in a holistic way and to "not be madly dashing from here to there. Time to just be still together is what we need."

Chris has started to read a few articles on school reform and spirituality. He wants to "give the ideas time to play around in his mind for a bit" before he takes any real action. In his own classroom, he is endeavouring to create "more time for quiet and for his students to learn to be more in touch with their own feelings." This is to provide "some balance to the whirl of pressured rush, which represents much of their world".

Chris hopes that in the future that he will always have that sense of intrinsic satisfaction that comes from teaching. For him, "the way forward" to keep sight of the big picture using a holistic approach to curriculum design. He contends that it is the school, not the system that needs to slow down the reform process, if renewal is to be authentic. Chris is emphatic that reflection is an "integral" part of any efforts toward renewal and to his development as a teacher. He contends that "No one can teach you how to teach. You have to learn that for yourself." He is passionate when sharing his own reflective thoughts on reflection.

Teacher development is teacher reflection. No, go back a step. Curriculum development involves teacher development and teacher development needs reflection.

### 4.2.3 Case Narrative Three: Gemma

Gemma, a primary teacher in her late forties, has been employed by *Brisbane Catholic Education* in part-time and full-time positions for over twenty years. Throughout this period, she also raised her own family of six children and cared for an invalid spouse. Gemma began teaching in a Brisbane State school after completing two years of training under a *Queensland Department of Education* State scholarship. She then resigned, married and taught in England for two years. On returning home to Brisbane, Gemma was employed on contract at a Catholic School in a high socio-economic area. In between pregnancies and caring for her very young family, she worked as a part-time teacher in the lower grades of a very large urban school. After gaining permanency, Gemma taught across middle and lower grades at this school before transferring as the school's "supernumerary" to her current school.

Gemma is currently teaching a Year One class at a small, urban school in Brisbane. She has been at this school in a full time capacity for the past eighteen years, teaching mainly in the lower grades. Though she has experienced many changes in staff and administration over this time, she feels "comfortable" and has a "sense" of "belonging" to the school community. She attends many parish functions and becomes very involved in school fundraising ventures. Gemma "has found her niche" in the lower grades and "loves teaching Year One". She "knows in herself" that this is where her talents lie, and where she feels a great sense of personal and professional satisfaction. At this stage of the career cycle, Gemma considers that "seeing what is possible with her class has generated as much interest and enjoyment as it ever did". Indeed, discussions with Gemma are charged with enthusiasm and reflect the real passion that she holds for teaching her Year One students.

I love to start the year ready for what comes and just seeing what these children will achieve. I get that that real inner drive from having Year

One. I have that with other classes, but more so with Year One. This is where I want to be. It's just full of anticipation.

Teaching for Gemma is far more than a job. "I might be doing other things, but then I'll think of something related to school." This usually takes the form of informal reflective thoughts. At times, Gemma finds herself smiling at the humour in replaying some incident or thinking of ways of dealing with a particular problem or issue. Sometimes it might be just thinking of an idea that she might use in the classroom. Gemma consistently arrives at school very early each morning and this is when she focuses her attention to think about her work. She spends that time "planning, formally evaluating units or programs preparing or just pottering around". Sometimes she records unit or program evaluations.

Gemma modestly presents a very understated picture of herself, when discussing her professional development. Indeed, when approached to participate in this study as a co-researcher, her first reaction was one of surprise that "anyone might be interested in her as she's just an ordinary person". Gemma appreciated the support from colleagues who "encouraged and talked her into" applying for AST. "It gave me more confidence to apply, as I just wasn't too sure if I'd have enough of the documentation". Gemma recalls that once she began the process, she was able to reflect on the implications of the criteria in terms of her own teaching. This helped her to feel far more confident that she had met the requirements for AST1. Moreover, she notes that she felt intrinsic satisfaction and a sense of affirmation of her efforts, when collating the validating evidence, especially those unsolicited notes of appreciation from parents. Gemma's AST documentation holds inclusions of testimonials that validate the criteria from her peers, administration, parents, university tutors of novice teachers and *BCE* personnel. All reflect a common theme, which represents a high regard and respect for her professionalism, dedication caring and commitment to her students.

However, Gemma does have some concerns regarding the way AST is awarded.

I think besides the written application, it would be useful to have someone come into the classroom and observe what goes on. I would appreciate that. I don't mean the old inspector type thing but someone showing an interest. I have appreciated it when Principals have come into the room and listened to the children read or looked at their work.

Though presenting a very unassuming disposition, Gemma does project a quiet sense of inner confidence and belief in her efficacy as a teacher. She tends to frame her views relating to her professional life from the perspective of the outcomes of her students' learning. She is very aware that her main motivation comes from "seeing her students' success". This also becomes her yardstick in evaluations of her own practice and the use of different strategies and curriculum innovations. Gemma is contemplative when considering that her own personal pedagogy has "evolved over time". Her personal theory emphasises the students' sense of belonging, promoting a positive image of self as a learner, fostering a love of reading and assisting students in the acquisition of fundamental literacy knowledge and skills.

Gemma aims to provide a classroom environment that provides students with "a sense of security. It is a place where they know they belong and are accepted as learners". Gemma strongly advances that this is "a necessary condition for learning". This aim is mediated by a motherly, caring image of herself as teacher.

"I take a motherly interest in all of the children and they know they can come to me for anything." As a mother herself, Gemma knows what her own children needed and what she as a mother appreciated in her children's teachers. She uses this knowledge based on her experiences as a parent to reach out to her students. Gemma provides a high level of pastoral care in practical ways. Before school starts each year, she writes a personal welcoming letter to all new Year One students and their families. She assumes the financial cost herself. Gemma sees this small gesture as being

very worthwhile. This idea was generated from her awareness of her own children's need to have that personal sense of belonging. She reasons that it takes the school organised induction visit for new Year Ones that "one step further and provides that personal touch". Gemma also attends to those extra needs for others in the school, such as spare underwear, cardigans, lunches and other items. She also promotes an informal open door policy, so that the students in the school know "there is a place that they can come to before school".

Despite her quiet disposition, Gemma "speaks out and fights hard", when confronting issues concerning classroom or playground conditions that may adversely affect her students. She notes an earlier experience some time back, at another school, when her Year One room was taken over for use by a parish group. Her classroom was relocated to a small room on an upper floor that did not have easy access for parents, or to the playground, taps, or an area for painting and art work.

I fought and fought and though we still had to move, I knew that I'd done all that I could to stop it. The children were very unsettled and their learning was disrupted during the move. I still feel upset when I think about it, because in a school it's their needs that should come first, not mine, or admin or parish, but the kids. I felt very disappointed with the decision.

Gemma relates this experience to the conditions she enjoys and "worked hard to get" in her present classroom. It is spacious, and set up to allow for easy movement between outside activities, desk work, group activities and a large carpeted area. "This room is ideal for Year One. It makes that transition from the pre-school setting to school so much easier, as the children have the space they are used to and need."

Gemma's pedagogical approach also reflects a strong belief that it is important for her to know her students. As the year progresses, she comes to know of their strengths, interests, fears and circumstances. Knowing when



extra care or sensitivity is needed becomes "intuitive". She cannot explain this, but emphasises, "somehow you sense it and just know".

Gemma also has an informal open door philosophy with parents that "has just happened over the years". Once that initial settling in time is past, Gemma welcomes any parents who may stay on to watch the children share their news. "This gives parents a chance to see what we do and for some of the mums, it's a chance to socialise a bit." Gemma believes that it is important to communicate with parents in an open and warm manner. She sends home a newsletter each week informing parents of what work will be covered as well as general news about what is happening in the classroom. Gemma doesn't have any difficulties in relating with parents as "they are welcome to be a part of classroom life from the beginning." She sees this as being of benefit for her practice. "If there is a problem at home or at school, I need to know about it, see where it's coming from and try to work it through with the parents and the child."

Gemma also involves parents and wider members of the community in her classroom. One senior parish citizen has been visiting each week over the past eight years. Again, this "just happened" and has proved to be of benefit to all. He comes because he enjoys being there. Gemma appreciates his time and interest. "At times he represents that grandfather image that some of these children don't have. He also provides that extra pair of hands in art work and activities and someone the children can read with and share their stories."

However, Gemma gains the most professional satisfaction from helping children to learn to read. She herself has a great love of books, and reads prolifically, especially non-narrative texts that deal with history and geography. In her AST application she is able to articulate and reflect on her own thinking and beliefs about learning.

It is important to foster a love of learning about the world and the people beyond the confines of the school. I believe children have an innate curiosity about the world. Through good learning experiences, the wonders of the world of learning can open up for children. I have gone to great lengths to find material of personal interest to children so that their joy for learning is fostered. I try to pass on a love of reading. I literally surround the children with hundreds of books - books I have collected over the years. I continue to collect books that I know are children's favourites and books that cater for all interests. Each night they take home a book that they are able to read to and share with their families. I think it's important to challenge the children in their reading by encouraging them to go that one step further, instead of only reading books that they can read easily.

Gemma's room is flooded with print through the use of children's work, wall charts, word banks, labels and captions. She notes that she does not just have these "for the sake of having something on display", but uses them as resources to support the children's learning.

Supporting student learning is important to Gemma. She is aware that she places emphasis on the students' learning rather than her own career path or outside political or system influences that may impact on her work. She readily acknowledges that she needs "to take the change process slowly". Moreover, she accepts this is how she copes with change and manages its impact for her practice.

Gemma describes her own professional development as "a gradual process" of building on what she knows and adapting and refining strategies that she could see were working. She has made changes "gradually" as she has "tried out" different ways of working with her students, working with new materials and implementing school based policies. Gemma prefers to take responsibility for her own professional development and notes that she doesn't gain a lot from attending large scale inservices. She comments that she tends to feel "insecure" and a sense of "pressure to change" when involved in these sessions.

At times, I have felt overwhelmed and think, "Oh I'm not doing this and I should be doing this". When I hear some other teachers talking, I think, "gosh everyone is doing this or that." It's a real feeling of pressure.

However she is quick to add that this is her "own perception" rather than a criticism of the larger formal inservices. Gemma has her own coping mechanisms to get past any anxiety. She tries to "get past the jargon and fathom what is being said" from the perspective of her own beliefs and teaching approaches.

What I'm starting to realise is that maybe I am doing these things, but I'm just not using the right terms.

Gemma places far more importance on personal sources of development than more formal professional development activities. Insights into teaching are gleaned from her experience. As Gemma reflects on her own professional development and growth, she identifies forms of support that she finds useful. She prefers smaller Year Level network groups and planning sessions at school where issues can be contextualised as these are more appropriate to her own learning style and personal disposition. She also values talking through ideas with trusted colleagues. Gemma makes the comparison between her current situation of working in a small school and being the only Year One teacher and her experience of teaching in a very large school with a number of drafts of each year level.

Even though each teacher worked separately, there was that informal time to share and to discuss a problem or something that happened. You don't have that here as much because we are all teaching different classes.

When dealing with the "Choosing Our Future" initiatives, such as School Program Development and the use of the "Early Years Continuum", Gemma tries to be open to change. However she considers any such recommendations cautiously, to ensure that the system or political direction doesn't change before taking any decisive action. She has grown in her own self confidence to be more judicious about considering her own needs and any possible implications that these may have for her students. She also shares

her views from this perspective, when involved in school based decision-making such as reporting procedures, program development and school based policies.

Gemma is able to relate this stance to an episode relating to her postgraduate studies. Some years ago, thinking that the system required two year trained teachers to upgrade their qualifications, Gemma undertook studies toward a Bachelor Of Education degree. She describes this experience as "hard work". It "required a fair amount of juggling" between caring for her own young family, working full time and meeting the demands of formal tertiary study, which initially demanded attendance at lectures two nights a week. She recalls that she "really did not have much spare time to think" about her studies or to consider any implications for her own practice. Her main goal was to meet the requirements of the course.

Gemma feels some intrinsic satisfaction concerning her tertiary success. However this is overshadowed by a greater sense of "annoyance" that the goal posts seem to have been moved with regard to the system's expectation. She comments that the parameters changed a few years down the track to accommodate this upgrading, through the attendance at inservices that required little or no formal assessment. Gemma felt that this was a justice issue for those who had made real effort and personal and financial sacrifices to gain the upgraded qualification. "I wouldn't say that I didn't get anything out of doing the Bachelor studies, but the timing was not right for me, personally or financially." Had she known that the expectation would change, Gemma believes that she would have been better able to weigh up the benefits and possible consequences before undertaking the studies. "I normally don't complain or raise issues with the Central Office, but I felt so strongly about this injustice that I did. Sometimes you hear things and think, 'that can't be right'."

At this point in time, Gemma has come to accept the system's recommendations as regards to using the School Program and implementing the English Syllabus. "I can understand that planning needs to be consistent

with guidelines for accountability and I don't see anything wrong with that." She did however, see a need to ensure that it "provides opportunity to improve children's learning". She carefully considers the implications that any change might hold for her own practice and the needs of her students. She notes in her AST application:

I explore and introduce new methods, while myself growing, learning and changing. I believe that it is important to be informed of current thinking to promote meaningful experiences of promote children's learning and to evaluate and reflect on current educational experiences from this perspective.

Gemma explains her reasoning.

A lot of change happens for the sake of change and I'm not really prepared to do that. I'm interested in helping these children with their learning. I'm a slow person to change, I'm aware of that. I don't jump in and say I have to change this. I look at it carefully. I always take these new things on gradually. It will take me a while to see if it's any better or even if it's a good thing to do. I'm prepared to have a try, so I can make those decisions. But I need time to do it and I need to do it in my own way.

Gemma inquired into the value of planning for the explicit teaching of a genre in the Speaking and Viewing strands of the English Syllabus. Previously she had covered these genres implicitly and informally. Gemma was also keen to make relevant links from these activities to a Mathematics unit she was about to plan, for the first time using the five part framework. This action was in response to a school decision that all teachers would "have a go" at planning a Maths unit during that particular term to consider further its relevance for her own situation. In so doing, Gemma was emphatic that she would also be using opportunities created throughout the context of these units to further develop the children's reading and writing skills.

This action was embedded in Gemma's personal pedagogy that strongly emphasises a developmental approach to literacy learning. She was deliberative in ensuring that any planning was flexibly implemented. Gemma likes to free up the curriculum. She does not impose restrictions on the

teaching and learning by way of keeping to timetables or working with Key Learning Areas as separate entities.

This belief is influential to Gemma's planning approach when using Syllabus documents and School Programs. These act as "a guide" for her planning. Throughout the inquiry, Gemma was able to critically relate her espoused theory and her theory in use to the theory inherent in the new syllabus. Through planning collaboratively with Sarah, the school's "new" Teacher Librarian and English Key Teacher, Gemma worked to accommodate small changes to her unit planning. As she inquired into the use of a more genre based approach in relation to the development of spoken language, Gemma deliberated on her planning concerning English and Mathematics units that were built around a theme of "The Sea." An excursion to the beach was planned as a real life experience that would provide a meaningful context to develop the children's use of the spoken personal recount, as well as the notion of Mathematical concepts relating to time intervals. Gemma scaffolded the learning thorough use of a photo story that sequenced events concerning the excursion. Both genres were taken from the recently validated School English Program.

Gemma found the collaborative planning experience "worthwhile". "Planning with Sarah is just wonderful because you can talk through ideas and we can work together with the children in the classroom and the library." Gemma notes that she "felt comfortable from the start because she was such an easy person to work with." These sessions with Sarah were initiated by the Principal after consultation with the staff. He offered each teacher release time to support the process.

Gemma relates the positive experience of working with Sarah to a period when she was involved in the English Language Arts (ELA) school based inservice. This extended over a two year time span. Gemma didn't enjoy these sessions or "get a lot from them". She considered that perhaps the workshops were more appropriate for the teachers of upper grades.

I didn't enjoy ELA. To me, it was "airy fairy" and not very practical. We didn't have a choice about going, whereas now we have a choice in looking at how we might plan. This is a lot more practical. I've come to understand the English Syllabus a lot more from working with Sarah. I appreciate how she listens and she is really affirming and interested in what I do.

Gemma felt that throughout the ELA sessions there was "pressure" on her to change.

I'm a slow person to change. I did feel that it all came across as if what I was doing was "old hat" and I felt pressured that I should be doing this, this and this. At the time I didn't know half of what was being talked about and the jargon! I would think "what does this mean?" I didn't really engage with it or speak up much. Whatever some of us had to say wasn't really respected. I didn't get the certificate at the end. Maybe the Key Teacher didn't think some of us deserved it.

Throughout this experience, Gemma felt that it was important to keep hold of her own belief in herself as a teacher. She recalls how she focussed her energy to her own approaches rather than bothering too much with the workshop materials. Through working with Sarah, Gemma has come to realise that much of what she was already doing was consistent with the philosophical underpinning of the English Syllabus. It's "a lot less daunting than I imagined. It's just been a matter of working through different genres. I needed to let it all evolve gradually".

Gemma does not conceive that "anything dramatic" occurred in her teaching to bring her to where she is today. She recalls that in the early days of her career she "just went into the classroom and was expected to teach". However, she also acknowledges that the emphasis on the teaching of reading and writing skills continues to influence her teaching today. Gemma considers that "experience in itself has been a great teacher" concerning her own development. When reflecting on the past, she is contemplative when expressing the view that past events and issues and approaches in education may have been appropriate for "that time" or that these may have been influenced by "specific circumstances".

I don't think anyone can say this or that was wrong. There is a lot of that when new things are introduced. I think it's more a case of doing what you can to be up to date. Circumstances change too. When you have over forty children in a class makes a difference. But I don't think you can just dismiss some approaches as "old hat" just because they were used in the past. Things I do are probably seen to be "old hat". The trendy academics may say this isn't the right way to go, but there is real value using them. It's not the ideas, it's how they're used that's important.

Gemma is passionate, when relating this notion to the teaching of reading.

I think with the Speaking side of it all you are modelling all of the time. But with reading it's not so easy. The problem is, I don't think a lot of the younger teachers know how to teach reading. I have young student teachers and they often say they would be stuck in getting the kids started on reading. I really do agree with Dr Kemp, that students need those basic fundamental literacy skills and knowledge on which to build. He has a point. You have to teach the basics. Really teach and give children the chance to have those skills. Some of the brighter ones will read in spite of you, but the vast majority need those skills. For some Whole Language just doesn't work. It's all about finding that balance and knowing what each child needs. That doesn't come in a book or a manual or an inservice session.

Gemma emphasises that it comes from knowing the students and knowing how to get them reading. She uses the teaching of phonics as an example. She strongly believes that it is important to teach young children phonemic awareness as a part of the whole program. This is an issue that is close to her heart and deeply embedded in the Year One curriculum. Whilst she has accommodated a variety of schemes and strategies over the years, she never loses sight of the value of using phonics to help students with their reading.

When new ideas come in or I see some different way of teaching reading, I really do think about it and I'll discuss it with student teachers and other teachers. A lot of things come and go with the teaching of reading. Phonics are an important part of learning to read and write. It gives a foundation. Some students don't achieve using just sight words or whole language. They need those skills. I see that sense of success even for those having difficulties and I see their enjoyment. I can see that it works. They are excited by being able to read and reading becomes exciting for them. Why throw something out that you know works?



In the past Gemma relied on basal readers, but now uses a variety of materials that suit the interests of the class. "I tend to build on their interests and go with their thinking and excitement". She builds her curriculum from her students' literacy learning needs and interests. Gemma's confidence to free up the timetable and to be flexible in her programming has been "a gradual involvement".

To develop phonological awareness, Gemma plans for the basic word families and then works with the conventions that come up incidentally.

I don't plan for them. I can't write that down, as one thing leads to another, once you've got something to build from. I just have the big idea of this is what we want to achieve and go from there. It's really only responding to what the class as a whole need and then where individuals are in relation to it. So when I plan units they are only a guide.

Gemma is passionate when she explains the thinking behind her approach.

It's just not a case of doing one thing or another, as separate parts of the program. It's more of a case of integrating all reading strategies in a way that suits the learner. Then that leads over to the writing and spelling.

Gemma believes that the student's success is what drives her to continue to build on this approach. Gemma also emphasises that she is more "low key in organisation of the day. I really think it's important to focus on what the children can do. Each year I'm more and more amazed at what they can achieve." Gemma reflects on the action that occurred during an incidental learning incident that day.

For example, today when we were writing stories one child asked 'why isn't there a 'k' on the end of comic?' Then we just went into leaving off the 'k' when there are two syllables and tried to find other words. I make up little stories when words are not conventional and the children respond. It's old fashioned stuff. Though, I think a big change over the years is that it's become a lot more flexible than doing set sheets or coloring pictures each day. This morning I hadn't planned to do this, but if I left it I'd have missed an opportunity that just came up.

Gemma is able to identify one significant episode that came unexpectedly. One day she wrote down the children's news during the usual show and tell sharing time.

I really don't know how it came about. One day, it just dawned on me to write it down. I hadn't planned for it but it turned out to be worthwhile. The morning news was a bit of a time waster and I would find myself rushing to try to fit everything in. Writing down the news has proved to be far more effective.

For Gemma, it has become "a lovely way to start the day and the most important part of the teaching program". The first hour is spent discussing items of interest to the children, be it unit topics, or real life events. She models the writing process, as she scribes the children's news on butcher paper attached to an easel. She explains how she contextualises the textual features. During the modelling process, Gemma covers sight words, punctuation, spelling and phonics. She makes deliberate mistakes to emphasise specific textual features. Gemma believes that this assists the children to be risk takers and it emphasises the value in reading back and editing. The news sheets are then placed in a box or collated into big books for the children to read again.

Gemma continues to use the context of sharing the news, reading literature and writing with the class as a vehicle to teach skills strategically. She models and provides the students with a repertoire of decoding and encoding strategies to respond to real text meanings. Indeed Gemma used this news sharing time to sequence the photo story and to model the spoken recount genre. Whilst Gemma does have strong fidelity to promoting phonemic awareness, her intent is firmly grounded in a strong sense of responsibility to assist her students to learn to read.

No matter what happens in education, at the back of my mind I know I'm never going to stop doing phonics or lessen it in any way. If anything over the years, I've given it more emphasis and I'll continue to do so. I'll continue to incorporate it in the work that we do and the topics we are covering right across the other curriculum areas. It is exciting. In fact, I think a lot of what I do ties in with the modern theory. I just don't use the

same jargon. I'll only ever change what I do, when I see that the children are not learning and are not progressing in their reading.

Gemma is proud of her students' achievement in learning to read.

I would love others to come and hear these children read. I would like them to come and see how excited they are and how involved they become.

Indeed, the author was able to see this first hand when some children arrived very early one morning before school and proceeded to their desks and started to write. Gemma explained that at the school assembly earlier in the week, the Year Two children presented some "Who am I?" riddles they had worked on as part of the Year Two Diagnostic Net validation task. Gemma responded to the children's interest, abandoned other activities she had planned for the day and modelled the writing of some of their own. They interrupted the session and asked for clarification with words, referred to wall charts, assisted each other and very enthusiastically read their riddles. Moreover, as the author was leaving, one child bounced into the room waving excitedly several pages of riddles that he had written at home with his mum.

Gemma believes that the introduction of the Year Two Net was significant as it affirmed her approach concerning the teaching reading and writing. She also found she was able to record each student's progress and in so doing highlight the areas needing extra support. "I did that informally, but now I'm more organised with having the information more accessible. Many of the interventions suggested are already a part of my teaching, so in that respect I felt affirmed." Gemma also found that helping a colleague, who had not attended the inservice sessions concerning the use of the continua, helped her to "clarify her own thinking" in relation to the mapping of the students' progress. Gemma concedes that accountability is important. However she believes that what is more important is what the teacher does with the mapping information to assist children in their reading and writing.

Gemma makes reference to the process of Moderation in relation to the mapping of students' development on the Early Years Continuum. "I found it useful in that first year, as it was so new. It was helpful to meet with others and discuss the indicators, though I don't say a lot in situations like that." However at a more recent Moderation session Gemma was confronted with a concerning incident that "just didn't sit right" with her own personal theory. Some of the younger teachers in the group challenged her and questioned how some of her students could have been able to achieve some of the indicators relating to phonetic blends, as these wouldn't have been taught in Year One. Gemma recalls:

I was taken aback somewhat. At first, for a fleeting moment I thought, "I'm not doing the right thing". After a few moments I thought, "well this is what the kids are doing. I can back it up and I know it's working". I tried to emphasise that I don't teach phonics in a linear way and that much of the teaching comes from children's interest and needs day to day.

Gemma thought about this incident "a fair bit" and took the initiative of "talking her concerns through" with other teachers she had moderated with at her own school. She notes, "what I realised later was that these teachers were coming from initial sounds and consonants, whereas I was coming from phonetic patterns and blends."

Gemma's flexible and learner centred approach to the curriculum became clearly evident in her reflection on the incident.

You can't put predetermined limits on what children should do or can't do. You don't say 'well we won't read that word or look at those blends, because we don't do that in Year One. I think that's what disturbed me the most. The important thing is that the students see themselves as readers and you give them the tools and the sequence and opportunity to be readers.

This incident reinforced Gemma's commitment to working with student teachers. She always volunteers to take students for field experience and endeavours to share strategies and approaches that facilitate the children's literacy learning. "I think it's important for them to see these first hand and to

see the children's response. It's important to see alternatives to lock step programs. They have to be free enough to allow the children to progress."

Gemma found that planning collaboratively with Sarah and discussing aspects of her teaching through the inquiry process assisted her to consider all angles of her planning and practice and "to get some different ideas". Moreover, she was affirmed in what she was doing by being able to get a notion of the meaning of terms such as "scaffolding".

I realise with the modelling and deconstruction that I do really do that. Now I try to put it into the context of the genre. I'm a lot more aware about the speaking although I wouldn't say that I did a lot that was different because in Year One you are modelling it all the time and talking all the time. The same with the Maths unit. I would have done the same activity probably but not thought of it as Maths. What I have come to understand is the five-sided figure with the assumptions. It all connects and it makes sense. Knowing what I believe about children's leaning and then actually putting that into my words makes it all fit into place. Three or four years ago, I wouldn't have done that. I realise it's an accountability thing but that's okay. It's accountability coming to the fore. In the past it was there but not so much up front. Planning this way helps me to know I'm keeping up to date. At first I have to admit that I was sceptical and thought it was more paper shuffling. I really can see value now that I'm into it.

Gemma's hopes for the future centre on continuing to work with Year One. She plans to keep exploring ways of furthering the student's development of literacy learning. "Once you get that going the other areas of the curriculum just flow on. She intends to continue to use the Genre scope and sequence in all of the English strands as a guide in her planning."

One day, Gemma would "love to" compile her ideas and approaches that may start children reading into "some sort of book". Gemma believes this would be a worthwhile resource for those teaching Year One for the first time. The idea came as a result of suggestions from some of her colleagues and student teachers.

As far as her continuing professional development is concerned, Gemma would appreciate having opportunities for inter-school visits to other classrooms. "It would be good to see what they are doing and to pick up on strategies and ideas. All classes are different and you'd have to adapt any ideas, but I think that sort of sharing would be worthwhile. Gemma refers to her "bias" toward her own class.

I think mine are wonderful, but then I don't know. Maybe that's just my perception. I think it would be great to see what others do. I am reluctant to have time out of class for inservice, as I think continuity for the children is important. But I would take time away from the class, if I was able to visit others, as that it would be helpful.

Gemma also refers to the inquiry process. "I wouldn't mind having consultants that I know in the classroom too. The faceless and nameless people actually become real and make those links to the system. I find that worthwhile."

Gemma's final words express her passion for teaching.

It really is a joy! I get so much satisfaction from it. Even with technology nothing will take the teachers place because it's the caring and interaction that's needed. I hope I never lose sight of the importance of nurturing the children and giving them the chance to have those basic skills and knowledge about how to read and write. That is so important. That's what I'll always keep as my goal and that's what I'll keep working toward. If we are talking professional development then surely it **MUST** be based on helping these young ones with their learning.

#### **4.2.4 Case Narrative Four: Sam**

Sam is a married family man, in his late forties, who has been teaching for twenty-five years. Sam was “born and bred” in England and then immigrated to Australia twenty years ago. A few years after leaving school, he “trained” to be a teacher. The move to Australia came to pass, when Sam was looking for a “new experience”. He “quite spontaneously” responded to a newspaper advertisement calling for teachers to work in Australian Catholic schools. This era marked the historical time in Catholic Education, when declining numbers of the Religious led to teaching staff shortages and a steady increase in the laity in Catholic schools. Sam “came”, settled into a Brisbane suburban Catholic primary school and “stayed.”

Since coming to Australia, Sam has taught in the lower, middle and upper grades in two Catholic primary schools. He is currently teaching a Year 5/6 class, in a small school that attracts students from disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances. Sam also assumes the additional curriculum leadership role as the Mathematics Lead Teacher, which he shares with the Principal. This year, he took on the additional responsibility of coordinating and supporting school efforts to trial the draft of an Outcome Based Syllabus in a particular Key Learning Area.

Several years ago, Sam was awarded AST status and has since renewed his eligibility for this award. He believes that the AST award provides “self-affirmation” of his efforts. Moreover, he considers that completing the application was a “useful exercise”, as it helped him “to think about” and “to compare”, what he values against the criteria.

Sam enjoys the challenge of teaching. At this time in this phase of his career, he has no inclination to move into administration. He recalls that some years ago, he needed to “weigh up”, how he felt about teaching, so as to determine the course of action that he might take in terms of his career path. He explains the thinking behind this decision.

I like teaching and I'm very comfortable with the decision I made to concentrate on being a teacher. Ten years ago, maybe not. I had to decide on what direction I was heading. Since then, I've had a clear path and I haven't seriously entertained the idea about admin positions.

Moreover, Sam "enjoys" and derives "personal satisfaction" from teaching. He makes reference to his strong sense of a professional self.

At the moment, I am confident. My morale is high, because I do enjoy teaching. It goes back to the children. I like being with them. Take the highs and the lows as you go, everyday, day by day. If I didn't, I don't think I'd be feeling like I do, or enjoying the job as I do.

Sam also feels a sense of satisfaction in "working with" *Brisbane Catholic Education*. He recalls that when he first came to Australia, he was "surprised by the personal touch", shown by this employing authority. This contrasted markedly to the more bureaucratic governances that he had experienced in England. Moreover, Sam came to appreciate the system's flexible structures for staff transfer, when he made the decision to transfer to his current school three years ago. Though Sam was "happy enough" at his last school, he was beginning to feel somewhat "jaded" and intuitively felt that fifteen years in one school was "a long enough stay". Sam believes that it is up to him to direct his own career life, so as to maximise his sense of job satisfaction. He "weighs up the pros and cons in his own mind and goes with what feels right". From a similar perspective, Sam also sees that it is his responsibility to "move along", in terms of his own professional development.

However, Sam does have a "growing concern" that whilst the system attends to the personal needs of teachers, it does not appear to publicly acknowledge their work. This is where he feels that "the AST process falls down. Sam connects this thinking with the issue of teachers taking on curriculum leadership roles within the school. He has a concern that the AST 2 award, when introduced, may be based more on what teachers do beyond the classroom.

That really isn't what AST is based on and it's really not the name of the game. Again, it's taking that recognition away from the teacher in the classroom. I'd rather see it go on scales of positions of added responsibility, if that's how it is to be structured and keep the AST for



the classroom. I do think though, sometimes it can be taken for granted that someone will take on the lead role in a school and someone will do it. I really don't think it's fair on the teacher or the children in the class to have to run a workshop after school plan it in your own time and teach all day as well.

Sam acknowledges the work of his current Principal, whom he believes fully supports his teachers and recognises the pressures they face. At this school, structures are in place to support those teachers in key roles. Sam sees this as a positive move, as he has witnessed colleagues suffering from "burnout", through taking on too much, with little administrative support. He refers to the collaborative "team" approach that is taken at his school in relation to curriculum renewal. Two staff members share each leadership role in relation to renewal projects.

In a small school such as this, it could become difficult, because there aren't enough of us, for the number of Key roles. This way we can manage it and prioritise our involvements. The team approach works, because two of us take it on and there is a team effort among the staff.

Moreover, Sam has found that this helps to overcome the problem of too much time away from class for Network Days. He finds that this also has an added benefit, as "different view points can be brought to bear on issues, rather than any particular teacher's own interpretation". Sam believes that this approach also promotes "a co-operative learning culture", within the school. This is worthwhile, because those involved are working under similar conditions and facing similar challenges. Such collaborative efforts are sources of support, as they allow for "reassurance", as well as "challenges". Sam explains the team approach adopted by the school, in relation to the development of a School Mathematics Program and the trialing of new syllabus documents in a particular Key Learning Area. In doing so, he raises some pertinent issues.

We charted the Outcomes and shared it with other teachers. It seems to be working well in the early stage, as we can link the program to meet the needs of the students here. I think that team effort is important. With the Maths Program, it has been a team effort, though I've been the one to put it together. Having support from the system has helped with curriculum people helping out. We've come a long way quickly. If I didn't have time out of the classroom, though I wouldn't have been able to do

it. But I can't keep having time out, because I have an obligation to my class.

Since transferring to this school, Sam has taught Yr 6/7 and Yr 5/6 multi-age classes. The staffing schedule, based on the school's overall student population does not provide for one teacher for each year level. Sam is very happy and enjoys the challenge of working in this context, as he experiences a sense of school community spirit. He attributes this to "all staff learning to work together and being supportive of each other, because the school is so small and resources are limited". Sam also has a greater sense of the Catholic ethos in this school. He identifies that many of the children have high level social, emotional and cognitive learning needs.

The Catholic ethos is more tangible and I think that's because of the clientele. For some of the children here, 9am to 3pm is probably their happiest time, because of their home circumstances. So we have to get that balance with the curriculum and meet their needs in the best way we can. There is no point in hammering someone with all this fancy stuff, if the child is going home to an empty house or getting abused in some manner.

Sam has learnt to cope emotionally within this context, "by switching off", when he is not at school. He feels confident in himself that he is doing "the best he can do", for his students. For Sam, this is important. It becomes the yardstick of professional deliberations in relation to his practice. He has found that to be fair to himself, his family and ultimately his students, that at the end of the day, he must "remove himself emotionally from the situation".

I think you have to do that or you get too involved and then you're of no use to anyone. There is no point in taking problems home. It serves no purpose.

Sam enjoys teaching his Year 5/6 class. Sam's personal theory embodies a main aim to balance the curriculum, so as to give priority to the person of the student. His AST validating documentation pays testimonial to his ability to direct action toward building students' self esteem, through "recognising individual needs in a socially just classroom". Sam is astute to the need to make time "to cover basics" that his students need to function in society. Such basics

are identified as thinking skills, social skills, life-coping strategies, as well as skills in basic literacy and numeracy. Sam's experience has taught him the importance of "readjusting his assumptions about his learners" from "class to class" and "school to school". He strongly advances that the curriculum needs to be "flexible" and "adaptable", if he is to help his students in their learning. Sam recalls that within his present teaching context, he has needed to readjust his expectations, as to what his students might achieve.

Coming from my last school, my expectations of the students were quite high. But here you can't put pressure on children, who may be going home to different cultural and family circumstances to meet those same expectations. They aren't realistic. You just have to expect that you can help them to do their best.

This thinking underscores Sam's approach to the *Choosing Our Future* initiatives (*Brisbane Catholic Education*), involving school program development in the Key Learning Areas.

You tick along and keep up with change. You have to do your best to keep up. It's important to keep up with what's happening. But in doing that, you HAVE to keep focus on what it is that is being indicated about what the kids need and are expected to learn. You have to really interpret that against who the students are, the age group and the circumstances. You have to respond in a worthwhile means through adjusting what's required, or it becomes meaningless.

Sam took this stance, when inquiring into the use of the Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting Framework in English. His aim was to explore ways and means of recording assessment data, so that he could better understand what the Outcome levels represent in terms of the children's learning. The motivating factors came from his general attitude of "keeping up with change" and his concern that his lack of clarity could be "short-changing the children", in terms of reporting their progress.

Sam values his students as learners. Whilst he does "go with the flow", in relation to most changes and recommended directions, he strongly and passionately questions the validity of state-wide testing.

The Year 6 test became a real issue for me, because it went against everything that I believe is right for the kids at this school. It didn't have room for any personal looks at the child. It's done in the back corner of the program. It really doesn't give much of a fair indication of the kids, especially those with literacy learning difficulties. For some, it just reinforces that sense of failure.

Sam notes that he "really worked hard", to ensure that his students understood that it was important "to feel they had done their best", rather than rating themselves by a test score. He also found that explaining the test results to parents was "very difficult", due to the language barrier and the inability of many parents to attend information sessions. Moreover, Sam strongly articulates dissatisfaction concerning the introduction and discontinuation of "projects", without proper consultation.

The government comes up with this great idea that had us putting the kids through the test. We tried to explain what it meant to parents. Then it's dropped. It can't have meant too much for education, because they dumped it. One year, you have to do it and the next year, without consultation, it's gone and replaced by something else. I didn't see any informed letter about why it was gone and what the implications are for the classroom, or for those students who have been rated poorly.

Sam notes that he has thought deeply about the whole notion of Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting, from the perspective of the personal element in the process. He emphasises the need to attend to the use of outcomes, through a holistic approach to the implementation of the curriculum. Sam refers again to a personal theory that gives priority to the individual needs of his students.

It's all about knowing your learners. I don't know where you get it from, it's just experience. I haven't sat down and read a particular book or been to a particular inservice. I think it comes from being in contact and working with children a lot and you come to know. I know these children.

Sam strongly advances that experience in different contexts has been the greatest factor in terms of promoting his personal and professional growth. He is very aware of his career evolution. He believes that he has "moved along progressively". He is also very astute in recognising how his

philosophy of teaching and learning has changed over the span of his career.

His early days as a novice are described as being ones of “survival”. Sam was “thrown into the deep end”, when taking up his first appointment at a public school, which was located in a very poor industrial area in England. The students came from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, due to widespread community unemployment that was effected through the then recent closure of the steel works. He perceives this phase of his teaching life to one where he was “on a very great steep learning curve”. He notes that, “you survived and had to deal with tough situations and classes of forty plus, the best way you could. That basically meant allowing yourself to be socialised into how things worked in that particular school”. Moreover, Sam also acknowledges the historical context of this phase of his career life. He recalls that English public schooling was essentially structured “to effect control and conformity, more so than meeting the learning needs of students”. Sam recalls that the realities of teaching in this school context forced him to make personal changes, in terms of his own emotional behaviour.

It was rough and I learnt there that I HAD to be calm and stay calm, no matter what happened. Before that, I was a person with a quick temper. I had to change that because it got me nowhere. I soon learned that to survive, there was no point in my getting worked up about incidents. Those were the days of the school inspectors. I was told in my first year that if I kept control, an inspector would not come into my room. It was all about controlling the kids and in retrospect controlling the teachers. If you kept the kids quiet and busy, then you were considered to be a good teacher. What they learnt, or more to the point didn't learn, didn't come into it.

Sam compares this early experience to his beliefs about effective teaching and learning in the present context. He refers to and provides examples of instances that show a deep respect and care for his students. These include the use of a parish pastoral care program, behaviour management that attends to the child and support programs such as the *Learning Assistance Program (LAP)*.

Moreover, Sam endeavours to ensure that the learning experiences are of interest and relevance to particular groups of children in his class.

I think it comes down to respecting the children and wanting to work with them. Back then, control was over the students, but things were different then. That's how it was. Now I give attention to helping them to cope and grow beyond the misbehaviour or inappropriate way of handling situations. The curriculum has to be relevant.

Significant to Sam's development was the experience of "coping and adjusting" to a very different socio-cultural context, when he first taught in an Australian school. This broadened his perspective and helped him to appreciate the influence of changing contexts. Moreover, Sam found himself teaching in the lower grades, which forced him to really "adjust" his whole teaching approach. He recalls that he "could not believe how small the children looked" and tells amusing anecdotes of this time of "survival". Sam was "alone", "uncertain about teaching such young children" and for a time, felt "stunned". He makes reference to his present context and emphasises his belief in the need to consider the context of the teaching situation, in terms of the individual learners.

When I first came to Australia, I thought that Australian children were spoilt in comparison. But the circumstances were totally different. When I moved to this school, things were very different to my last school.

Sam deems that he "moved along" professionally, over the fifteen years spent at this school. He views this to be "just a gradual progression through experience." He makes mention of the time, when open area education was strongly promoted "as THE way to teach". He refers to this era as a time "when the walls came down". Moreover, he also humorously notes that, "it wasn't long before the walls went back up", after the intervention of the parish priest. Sam judges in hindsight that any changes were "superficial ones" and not "terribly effective". He attributes this to the lack of support for the change process and to no real understanding of the philosophy behind "a more process oriented approach". Sam considers that it "just created more noise and distraction, as two classes were in really just sharing the one room". He "paced himself" over this time, by making small changes to his practice, such as working with groups and using

contracts. He tended to evaluate the effectiveness of any such strategies through the response of his students.

Sam also believes that being on staff at this school assisted him to “learn to take change in its stride”. The socio-economic status of the school community changed at least three times during the fifteen-year period spent there. The school changed from one that was located in a working class suburb, to a school with a high migrant student population and then to one that was placed within a “trendy and upmarket area”, due to a rise in the market real estate value. Sam found that he needed to “adjust” and “adapt” his teaching approach, to meet the needs of the students. Moreover, he was able to identify his preference for working with students from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds. He “knows” in himself, that through this, he finds “greater job satisfaction”, as he feels that he is able to “offer more to these students”.

The experiences of living through these changing social contexts meant that Sam “didn’t have a lot of trouble making adjustments, when he moved to his present school”. However, he faced not only the challenges of working with a different clientele, but also those associated with teaching a multi-age class for the first time. He identifies “the support from other staff and experimentation with organisational structures”, to be factors that assisted him to work through problematic issues. For a time, he found it difficult to find time to work with individual students. Sam made and continues to make adjustments to make provision for this time. He feels that this is important, as there is a broad range of specific student learning needs in his class. Sam endeavours to work on a cycle, whereby he integrates curriculum content around a broad topic across the year levels. In so doing, he tries to attend to the personal and social developmental needs of his students. In his AST documentation, Sam makes reflective comment that “it is important to assist the students to deal with a world of rapidly changing knowledge”. He provides exemplars of ways that he integrates life skills within the curriculum program. Some include simple learning experiences, such as using the tuckshop as a resource regularly, community walks and class projects that contribute to the school community and

environment. He bases this on his assumption that “the curriculum is far more than content knowledge”. Sam believes that the curriculum must be “flexible enough” to assist his students “to process knowledge, allow for diversity and to build on from that.”

Sam is able to make meaningful connections between his knowledge of the curriculum, to more tacit knowledge relating to knowledge about his students’ interests, needs, background, learning style and disposition. He “reads the situation” and generally knows when his students “have done their best, or having an off day”. He notes that he “may leave a child alone, or push one along” and that “this may change day to day”. Sam believes that it is best for his students, that he “be calm and relaxed”, as this flows over to them. For some, this provides “modelling”. For a few others, it offers a sense of “stability”, that Sam believes may, in its small way, counterbalance the stress experienced in some of the students’ home lives.

Moreover, Sam believes that it is important that he approach teaching in a “flexible way” that allows him to be “open to the unexpected”. He indicates that there are so many situations in the school day that call for this need. In his present context, he often has to stop in action and attend to issues that relate to the development of social skills. Sam believes that it is important for these children to understand the consequences that their actions have for others, especially in the group, whole class or playground situations. Moreover, since coming to this school, he has negotiated classroom parameters and given attention to individual goal setting. The thinking behind this action comes from Sam’s strong belief in his need to assist these students to be “more self sufficient” and to believe in their own self worth. Sam considers that he has attended to this “far more consciously” than he “ever did at his previous school”.

Over the past three years, Sam has come to realise that he is able to “get by” on limited resources. As those at his school “are not the best”, he has been forced to “revisit the Syllabus documents and re-read and think from them to get ideas”. Through this, Sam has developed a broader understanding of the Syllabus. He



has been able to discern greater implications for his students, in terms of reducing the number of genres to cover in the program. He replays his reflection on the experience.

At first I couldn't believe that I couldn't get this or that book or kit. I recall I looking for particular resource that I'd relied on and it wasn't here. So from that point of view, it was probably good for me, because I had to go to those Syllabus documents, as there wasn't anything else. That was a big learning exercise last year. I revisited the English Syllabus and I have to say, it put a lot of that ELA into a better perspective. I could connect and I asked around to get ideas.

At this time, Sam also established a close working relationship, which he still shares, with another teacher. He consulted with her to determine ways of working with the students in a relevant manner. Sam found subsequent collaborative sessions to be "very worthwhile", as they provided opportunity, "to just share ideas and concerns". He continues to deliberate with this teacher.

Sam also believes that he owes it to his students "to do his best to keep up with change". He endeavours to transfer new ideas into his teaching as best he can, by "going with the flow" and finding what is needed in terms of his students, himself and the school community. Then, Sam "goes a bit further". The reflective process is utilised "to gauge the impact of new information and strategies" by "standing back and thinking things through from all angles".

I do really think that I must be aware of anything that is going on in education or curriculum. I must get to know about it or then it all becomes too difficult.

Sam considers that the system has supported his development through offering inservice. He notes that it was not that long ago, when teachers seldom had the opportunity to attend inservice sessions regularly, except for Religion. Sam is able to rationalise his thinking in terms of his own professional growth.

The system started to support the learning that you get through experience, with inservices. You are encouraged to go. It's seen to part of your job, which I think is a big change that's come from all of the curriculum changes and a good one. It's a different attitude. To keep up

with things you need to be inserviced. That helps you to be responsible about change, as you are in a better position to be pro-active about it. You think about it, try a few things and go with the flow. Then you try something else and take what you need to build on your own experience and understanding. If you keep going like that, it doesn't get out of hand.

Sam finds the experience of attending Mathematics Lead Teacher meetings to be worthwhile. However, at times, he does experience feelings of anxiety, when he hears some teachers describing "all of the wonderful things that they do". Sam notes that it becomes difficult, when he goes away questioning, "gosh am I do doing the right thing?" This is usually framed in terms of the students' best interests. He explains how he works through anxiety.

I've learnt not to let myself worry about it and I just think that I'll look at it another time. I usually do discuss issues that are troubling me with others at school or with curriculum people from the Office. If you don't get it sorted out early and into its right perspective, you just get all worked up and depressed and that helps no one.

Sam feels strongly that ideas shared with others need to be "framed within the scene in which they were carried out". He found that this is "lacking", at system organised inter-school moderation meetings. He is coming to realise that "wonderful ideas are fine in theory, but in the reality of some contexts, they may not gel". Moreover, in terms of the moderation process, he feels that one has to really know and appreciate the characteristics and needs of the learners, before any "judgement" concerning levels of achievement can be made.

Sam is very self-aware that he approaches new challenges in a "very calm", "open" and "pro-active" manner. This is verified in validating evidence in his AST application. "Over the years", he has learnt that "the best way forward" is to "take change in his stride", by making connections between the life world of his own situation and the system world. Reflection, described in terms of "standing back and thinking it through from all angles", assists him "to keep touch" with the reality of his own situation. Sam makes reference to the two year long English Language Arts Inservice.

ELA is a good example of keeping abreast of change". When they started ELA, I thought, 'goodness me, what a lot of waffle". But I stuck with it. I know of people who didn't and tried to avoid it. But you can't afford to do that. You have to say I'm going to try and keep up.

However, Sam found that the two-year time span of the ELA Inservice Program was not his most preferred form of professional development. He believes that attention must be given to "the comfort", as well as "the intellectual needs of teachers as learners".

At 3.30 in the afternoon it was the last thing you'd feel like doing. It was fine, if you'd had a relaxing day, but if you'd had a horror day, it was the last thing you wanted to do. It was incredibly hard to switch off from what had happened and switch in to something that wasn't making a lot of sense at the time. That doesn't benefit anyone. The staff did discuss issues, but time was always a problem.

Sam also compares the ELA inservice to the present collaborative staff efforts involving the new key syllabus learning area.

I think in retrospect that the ELA went on far too long and other things, in other areas were left behind, so that we could get through it all. It loses its perspective, as the school focus is on getting through the modules and not on understanding what it means for the classroom. It comes back to finding that balance. With the new syllabus, we are trying things, a little at a time. We work through other programs that we have in place and make adjustments as we go. This way it's more practical and makes better use of the time.

However, Sam indicated that he did get some good things from the ELA inservice. When reflecting on his learning, he is able to discern what he actually learnt and the implications that this held for his own practice.

There are benefits and you can see where you have moved forward from a professional point of view. I'm much more aware of genre and social context. The School Program brings continuity through the school.

Sam uses samples of his program, Individualised Education Programs (IEPs) and the students' folios, to explain how he has "adjusted his expectations and adapted his teaching approach", to suit his learners' needs.

The clientele here need skill development in basic literacy learning. You can't expect children here who are going home and not exposed to good English at home to be fluent here. That's why it all has to be modified to give them some basic structures. I am concerned that we are trying to cover just far too many genres with these students. Over at the other school, I could see the need for them to be more familiar with a wider range of genres. But here, well, it's just getting through the skills of learning to read and write and then being exposed to the others. It's really almost impossible to cover what's on the scope and sequence. We have to evaluate it as a school.

Moreover, Sam frames his concern in relation to the use of Outcomes from this perspective. His strong belief in making learning relevant to the students needs' is highlighted.

Putting a level across the use of different genres is difficult. I'm just not sure if we are creating a difficulty, when a difficulty didn't exist before. We are trying to get too much covered in a superficial way. It's harder on the kids and takes the focus away from helping them with what they need. "Is that Justice, I ask myself, is that right?" Even when you integrate, it's that concern with outcome levels that you haven't covered this or that. I think the priority is in finding that balance of what the kids are learning, that's appropriate for them.

Sam is very aware that the introduction of student learning outcomes has a political influence and sees such an influence as "fact of life in teaching." He remains circumspect in his view that he must "keep up". Moreover, he views this initiative more positively than state-wide testing, as decisions concerning the reporting of the outcomes are controlled at the school level.

Sam is emphatic that "you have got to try something out, before you can say it works or doesn't work". This was in the back of Sam's mind when he inquired into the use of an assessment-recording format that had been developed by the author. However, the main motivation behind the inquiry process was to come to a better understanding of the whole notion of Outcomes Based Assessment and Reporting and to be better able to ascertain levels of achievement.

Throughout the inquiry, Sam attempted to record aspects of his students' learning through use of a grid. He recorded his analysis of students'

attempts to use the written narrative genre. This was compared with past writing samples representative of other genres. His reasoning was “to keep a holistic perspective”, in terms of the children’s overall achievement in the English writing strand and “to support further learning”. Throughout the inquiry project, Sam found that he continually made adjustments to the way that he was collecting and recording data, as it “just didn’t gel”. Sam did not modify his teaching approach, which involved scaffolding the task and providing individual support, as the children wrote. The thinking that underscored this course of action came from his belief to support individual learning needs. However, Sam also endeavoured to set time aside to consult and work through a detailed procedure. This involved a focussed analysis of the completed narrative with each child, whilst recording assessment information, with assiduous reference to the *SPS (QLSP) Level Documents and Parent Descriptors (Brisbane Catholic Education)*.

Sam found that his emphasis on recording assessment data, limited the opportunities for more casual responsive feedback and interaction with his students. After working through this process with twelve students, he “just stopped”. He found that he first had to ask himself and then his students and other colleagues, “why am I doing this?” When Sam stopped recording specifics, he found that he was better able to manage the process. He has decided that the grid is not an appropriate “tool” to use in his situation. He provides the following reflective evaluation.

I approached it wrongly at the start, but I needed to see what is possible. I think what I’ll do is keep up to date samples of the main genres in the children’s folios and pencil in levels as I go. It should build up that formal picture as I go. Mind you, I know these kids, so it will be just a focussed analysis. That should support what I know from observing and being with them. I think that is fairer to the children too. If you spend so much time with this one or that one trying to work out levels, I found that you can miss other learning that’s going on.

Sam is able to “critically consider”, the implications that the use of the outcome framework has for his work. He has come to believe that he needs to see

outcomes in broader terms and to rely on his own professional knowing of what the levels represent.

I'm still not even sure if the use of Outcomes is the right way to go. I really think though, that you know just by working with children, what they are able to do. I don't need a level statement to do that. When I know the child, then I can REALLY say what they are doing or not doing. I may be too confident there, but I don't think so. I think working at recording all that assessment information helped me to see that I need to trust that more. That confidence builds at different times of the year depending on what you are doing, but you still have that overall picture.

Sam also hopes to further clarify what the outcome levels represent in terms of student learning at the intra-school moderation. He considers that "the less than satisfactory way of recording analytical details", that he explored through the inquiry process, "opened his eyes to a different way of looking at outcomes". He intends "to take time out" and to further "evaluate" the use of outcomes. Sam has concern that with more KLAs coming on line, that "time and space" for students to really learn may be lost.

Priority for children to be children seems to be the phase that is being taken out of education today. It HAS to be found again, otherwise we will be lost in a whole lot of KLA content that means little to the kids. We HAVE to find that balance. That's the challenge.

This thinking frames Sam's hope for the future that he will "keep with up with change" and "keep it all in its right perspective". He hopes that this will ultimately help him to "teach effectively". He makes the following claim.

In relation to teaching, well I enjoy it. I'll stop when that stops. My only concern is that too much change will become so much, that the pleasure in teaching will be gone. I'll safeguard against that. If that happens, then I will be gone. You have to have that sense of pleasure and belief that what you are doing is worthwhile. If I think, "Oh I can't do this, or go along with this, it's too much", or if it just isn't sitting well, or the direction isn't relevant for me, then I would hope that I'd know that it's time to get out.

Sam specifies a collaborative workplace that allows, "a bit of light hearted relief and social activity" as an important condition for ongoing professional

change and renewal. He emphasises the need to give attention to the person of the teacher.

We are all individuals and that's something that maybe as system, we can recognise a bit more and go with it. Instead of trying to get all teachers to be the same and to approach things the same way, maybe it's time we really acknowledge the differences among teachers, as well as students.

In terms of his ongoing professional development, Sam intends to continue "to go with the flow and to do his best". He believes that "it's all a matter of making time, standing back and thinking it all though". It is from this perspective, that Sam considers the reflective processes to be important. He makes the following concluding statement.

You need the opportunities to go to inservices, you need the time to work through issues in the classroom and the school, you need to keep a balance, by letting children be children and giving them the opportunity and time to learn. I really think it all comes down to doing your best, knowing you are doing your best and knowing that you can cope and that you **CAN** learn.

#### 4.2.5 Case Narrative Five : Siobhan

Siobhan is a teacher in her mid forties, who is married with children aged between ten and twenty years. She has a breadth of experience that has come from working over the past twenty-five years in a wide range of educational contexts. Siobhan has taught in Queensland State and Catholic schools in both city and rural areas. This has been largely due to her interest in working with disadvantaged students and relocations associated with her husband's work as a teacher with *Education Queensland*. Siobhan is currently co-teaching a Year 5/6 class (3 days each week) and working in the capacity of learning support teacher (2 days each week). She is on staff at a medium sized Catholic school, located in a rural area. She has been at this school for over two years. Siobhan also assumes an informal role as the school's curriculum co-ordinator. This "unofficial" position evolved through her responsibilities as the school's English Key Teacher and Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting Lead Teacher.

Siobhan is highly respected by her colleagues for her "gentle manner", her "commitment and drive to get things done" and for "the expertise that she brings to her work". Her "quiet disposition, sensitivity to others and gift for giving", are recognised by others in her AST documentation. Parents, teachers and students speak warmly and highly of her, as both an educator and a caring person. Her current Principal considers that "she has the gift of being able to promote a collegial approach to curriculum development and renewal", which appears to "energise and inspire others to approach change positively".

Siobhan worked with her co-teacher, Michaela when inquiring into the use of the English Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting (SPS) documents. She recognised that she needed to work with the level statements, "to try to make better sense of them". This came from her own professional need to create meaning, before she could begin to ascertain their implications for students.



I can see where SPS is coming from and I understand that it's all a big picture focus. But I need to look at the details, because it's still all so new. The documents are difficult to process and that makes it more problematic.

Teaching is an important part of Siobhan's life. Whilst she has many other personal interests, she feels comfortable in being able to integrate her personal and professional life in a way "that doesn't draw boundaries between home and school". Siobhan "values the fact" that she is able to discuss professional issues with her spouse. She has also found that she is able to "gain insights into school related issues", when dealing with problematic situations that concern her own children.

Two of my own have needed extra attention and one has needed to be extended in his learning. Their needs have highlighted how important it is to recognise individual differences when looking at growth and development. Every student must be able to celebrate who they are and the efforts they've given, even if the progress is slower. I really believe that all children grow, if they achieve success enjoyment and have their basic needs fulfilled.

Siobhan considers that she is "evolving" and strongly believes that she is responsible for her own professional development. Throughout her career, she has attended many different workshops, training sessions, personal self-development courses and conferences to advance her professional growth. Whilst she has found these to be worthwhile, she favours collegial interaction and collaboration with her colleagues, both at and beyond the school.

I have gained a lot from working in collaborative partnerships with others. I guess I try to give the best that I can give and the best way that I can give is by valuing other's ideas and opinions. I have to accept ownership and I have to travel the extra mile to work through change. It's much better if you can do that together.

Siobhan has also undertaken further tertiary study at different times throughout her career. She entered teachers' training college on school leaving, with the expressed hope of realising her dream, to follow in her father's footsteps and teach at an Aboriginal mission school. She graduated with a *Diploma in Teaching* and gained qualifications in Special Education,

by successfully completing additional units during in her pre-service studies. Siobhan has since upgraded her qualifications in this field. Currently, she is studying for a *Graduate Diploma in Religious Education*. The decision to study in this area came from a personal and professional sense that she had “a responsibility” to attain formal qualifications in Religious Education. There was also the reasoning that this qualification “may be useful to have behind her”, should she decide to apply for other positions, “further down the track”. Siobhan would like to continue to work with *Brisbane Catholic Education*, as she has “belief in its values” and “a sense of belonging to a Christian community”.

Siobhan has held the AST status for the past five years and recently successfully re-applied for the award. She considers that “as a system”, *Brisbane Catholic Education* recognises and supports the work of teachers. However, she does not believe that the AST award is valued by the system, nor promoted or recognised as offering teachers a viable career path that has equal status with administrative positions.

I don't put anything on the award. It's a monetary thing. I don't see anything special in it as regards the system. The status means nothing. It's a sense of achievement yourself. That personal process of collating all the evidence to support the criteria is worthwhile. It's not easy. You have to do it properly to get something out of it for yourself. When I did it, I found that I had to give it lots of thought. That was what made it a very effective professional development exercise.

Siobhan takes the AST application process seriously and spends considerable time thinking about how she has met the criteria and “evolved professionally”.

You realise how much you've changed in your approach and how things have changed, especially in curriculum. When I was reapplying, I realised how much planning was emphasised in my documentation and that's largely due to *Choosing Our Future*. I think that in itself is a good thing, as it lets you see how you've evolved. You can see the changes you've made in your approach and thinking. You see what the priorities were and that helps you decide on other priorities, so that you can move on. It's affirming to know that you've evolved and have the ability to move on. That gives you confidence in yourself.

Siobhan is able to clearly articulate her “philosophy of teaching and professional development”. Her pedagogical approach embodies two main aims of attending to the individual needs of students and directing and supporting them to be life long, independent learners. Siobhan explicitly refers to the reflective processes and makes frequent reference to the notion of herself as evolving professionally. She strongly emphasises that she needs to “always be a learner”. Working through various changes over the years, has given her “confidence in not having all of the answers” and provided her with “tools to find a better way of working to meet the needs of the students”. She feels in herself that she grown in her effectiveness as a teacher. Siobhan considers that her interest in integrated curriculum and her learner centred pedagogical approach has “evolved” throughout her career and that “it will continue to evolve”. Her current approach is mediated through her aim to help her students to become “more independent thinkers and self reliant learners”. The thinking behind the passion she feels in relation to this issue is clearly evident in the reflective comment made in her AST documentation.

The provision of learning experiences to our children is not just for utilitarian purposes, for example to get a job. Rather, I perceive the acquisition of knowledge as a fulfilment in itself and satisfaction for its own sake. From a philosophical point of view, there is a beauty in the act of knowing and wanting to know. I feel strongly that to be an effective teacher I have to have confidence in my ability to instil in students the will to learn, the need to learn, the desire to learn and the joy of learning.

To “be authentic”, Siobhan feels that it is important for her “to model what it means to be a learner”.

If that wasn't my philosophy, well I don't think I could teach. It comes from me. Teaching is a part of me. I think to be effective, you have to acknowledge that practices are evolving and that there is always a better way and to always seek a better way. I see that I'm evolving. You have to meet anything new “head on” as a challenge and then think, well let's look at the most effective way of doing this.

Siobhan is always “searching for a better way” to improve her teaching. She tries to “adapt and accommodate” new ideas and system driven curriculum

initiatives, in a manner that “is geared” to her students. She is passionate, when articulating her reasoning.

I think we have to go past what’s in it for me, to what’s in this for the students. That’s what mustn’t get overlooked. And something I heard at a seminar a few years back has stuck with me. “If we don’t do this or move with this, then what are the implications for these students?” That becomes a pretty good guide.

It was this thinking that motivated Siobhan to inquire into the “practical use of SPS (English) with her Year 5/6 Class and that has influenced her attitude to the *Choosing Our Future* reforms. Siobhan prefers to approach any change “optimistically”, despite feeling “a bit confused by it all”. She is aware of the political influence behind the reforms. However, she rationalises that the political push toward the use of Outcomes (SPS) has given efforts to improve practice in this area “added momentum”.

It comes down to how you look at change. Government driven reforms and system initiatives aren’t a bad thing. They get you thinking and it means we have to make some moves and make decisions. But you can’t make those decisions without having some understanding about it. I guess it all really comes down to how you view learning.

Siobhan tends to implicitly refer to “others” when discussing change. She believes that collegial interaction and collaboration have been a dominant influence in the development of a positive conception of herself as teacher. Since moving to her current school, Siobhan has felt accepted as a part of this community. She has developed a strong collegial relationship with Michaela and works collaboratively with other teachers in classrooms, when supporting students with special needs.

“Having a sense of community” is important to Siobhan. Throughout her personal life, she has “always enjoyed” parish involvement. In her current context, school and parish life combine as one. Siobhan works from the philosophy of involving parents and the parish community in the student’s learning. Moreover she strongly advocates the importance of the school as a part of the wider community. She makes the following reflective comment in her AST documentation.

Since I hold the belief that school and community are interwoven, all my teaching practices revolve around this belief, particularly my belief in the Christian community. Hence, I believe that my teaching practices are not solely located in the classroom, but are in fact part of our Faith Community. Unless the home, school and community operate in liaison, a teacher's ultimate potential for affecting growth either intellectually or emotionally is curtailed.

Siobhan is able to provide examples that express her espoused theory in practical terms. For the past four years, she has organised for parent and parish tutors through promoting a *Learning Assistance Program (LAP)* for those children identified as having special needs. Siobhan organises for school activity days, and for student participation in the local show and community events. She also opens the door to consultants, advisers and other professionals to support the learning process. Siobhan endeavours to work with others in the "spirit of the fellow traveller, rather than the expert or the person who holds total responsibility for the children in her care". She tries to build and maintain positive relationships with parents and feels that it is important to "be there", when parents wish to discuss aspects of their child's education.

Siobhan's many and varied career experiences have not only influenced her own "personal teaching philosophy", but also helped her to cope with change in a positive and confident manner.

In my history, I've had a lot of changes and taught primary, secondary and TAFE. There isn't any one experience that stands out, as they've all been quite significant and in some way influenced my thinking and approach. What I have realised is that, hey every situation is different and there must be a way of meeting the needs of the students here. You can only do your best to do that, by whatever means. But you've got to find it and make it better all the time. It might be by tapping into people in a particular field of study or going along to some inservice or course or looking at the innovations of others. That's important.

Siobhan's concern for meeting the needs of individuals in the learning process comes from her interest and study in Special Education. This interest was sparked in her teenage years, when her father worked on an aboriginal mission in a remote area of Queensland. Though she was at

boarding school for much of this time, Siobhan's respect and empathy for the aboriginal community came from living along side of them during her holidays. Siobhan was "ecstatic", when she was appointed to an aboriginal mission school in her first year of teaching. She had requested this "placement", even though her family had moved back to the city. She remembers this experience as one that gave her "enormous personal satisfaction", despite "feelings of isolation" from her family and friends. In this early phase of her career, Siobhan was in "survival mode" and "learnt to learn on her feet". She considers that the experience was significant to her development, as she became "alert to the need to be adaptable and flexible", very early in her career". She also came to realise that she had "to tap into the community", if she was "to have any hope of making schooling relevant for those students".

After teaching in another school characterised by very different social contextual factors, Siobhan's interest in Aboriginal Education led to an advisory position within the *Curriculum Branch of the Department of Education*. Much of her time and energy was given to the development of a program that could be used to support aboriginal students with literacy learning.

This was a good experience for me, because I became very interested in curriculum. It linked understandings about the influence of the curriculum to my understanding about the needs of students. I think that was significant for me, because marrying the two has stayed with me. It's important to bring them together. A program is only as good as it is able to help and support the student.

Siobhan is able to identify a number of system initiated and commercial programs that she has used throughout her career. She feels that today she is "far more discerning" in how she uses resources and packaged programs.

I think we've gone past just picking up a program and using it. You have to really think about what it is you are trying to do or create and then it's a matter of taking parts of a particular program, to service particular needs, for a particular purpose.

She makes reference to a school based inservice that focussed on a "Behaviour Management Program" that she attended a few years ago. This program was adopted for use throughout the school.

After that inservice, I had to re-think behaviour management from the perspective of facilitating learning. It made me realise that confidence in the ability to instil the will to learn is THE MOST important management strategy for effective student learning. I'd thought that was important before, but this really made me get those intentions focussed. After that inservice, I really had to ask myself why I was interested in using particular behaviour management strategies.

Siobhan recounts how she assumed the roles as "Creator of Expectation and Designer Manager" with the explicit intent of creating a needs satisfying teaching-learning environment. She has continued "to experiment" with these strategies. Currently, she has been trying to "involve students in participatory decision-making and problem solving through class and school student meetings", to help them to assume greater responsibility for their learning. Siobhan sees the need to "look for ways to integrate this in a more holistic and meaningful way".

The reasoning behind this action may be linked to a phase in Siobhan's earlier career life. After marrying and moving to a country town with a high Aboriginal population, Siobhan worked in a State secondary school with a high number of potential Junior Secondary "drop out" students. Siobhan refers to the "emotional support and the enormous assistance" that she received from an Aboriginal elder, Joe, who was employed as her teacher aide. The reality experienced in this context, along with Joe's stories promoted Siobhan's awareness "the consequences" for students and society that are effected", when processes are not in place to help each and every student feel that he/she is worthwhile, with the ability to be a learner, despite a poor academic achievement". Working in this context also brought forward the realisation that "learning experiences had to be relevant and integrate into the students' own lives", in order to broaden their schemes of meaning. She recalls that it was a "real challenge" to implement the literacy learning program that she had written in a flexible way.

It was hard to let some things go, because I'd put so much thought and effort into producing it. But I soon found out the hard way that I had to make the program work for them, in so many different ways, depending on the individuals and not make them work to the program. Just the topic and resources that you used made a difference - the students had to relate to it. Relationships based on trust had to grow and what was important was that these kids saw themselves as achieving.

This knowledge was reinforced when Siobhan worked in a different context as a part-time Adult Literacy Tutor with Technical and Further Education. In the present context, Siobhan used knowledge gleaned from these experiences, as a frame of reference in the initial stages of the inquiry into Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting. She gives attention to the individual needs of students when deliberating on the details of the Outcome Statements in each of the strands.

I think that's why it has to be seen as an overall big picture of what say a child at a particular Level might achieve and go from there to support them with whatever it is that they need to get there. The multi-age 5/6 situation should help, because the structures are more conducive to working in an open-ended manner.

Siobhan's part-time studies in the field of Special Education had a significant impact on her perception of self as a learning support teacher. She saw her need to move from a deficit view of the learner as "needing remediation", to one that saw her role as supporting further learning. Dissonance was generated, when she was challenged to critically consider the appropriateness of student withdrawal from the classroom for "remedial" help. This procedure had become "the norm in the service delivery of the Remedial Resource teacher". Whilst the formal theory presented in her studies appeared to be cognisant with her belief system, it conflicted sharply with the reality that she had previously experienced in school contexts. This tension really came to the fore in practical terms, when Siobhan began working as a learning support teacher at two Catholic schools. She soon discovered that she needed to approach this situation carefully, as there was little teacher or administrative support for a non-withdrawal approach. This created pedagogical problems that caused a sense of anxiety and frustration, as her "mode of operating" conflicted with her personal theory.



These “uneasy feelings” brought forth a determination to be more confident about her own knowing and to be more assertive when expressing her thoughts and ideas.

Siobhan found that her best solution was to work in the classrooms of a few “willing” teachers and to work collaboratively with others on Individual Education Plans. She recalls that she “really came to value” opportunities to network with other colleagues, who were facing similar problems and “to try to find better ways of operating”.

I would knock on doors to see how things were operating in other places and schools beyond the System. I was also very fortunate because I had good mentors to talk through any problems.

When discussing this phase of her career, Siobhan refers to a recent incident at her current school that “forced” her to critically reflect on her own beliefs concerning the withdrawal of special needs’ children from the classroom. This was prompted through a growing concern that some high level special needs’ students appeared to be “in need of a boost”, in terms of their self-esteem and relationships with other children in the school. When discussing this problem at a collaborative planning session, a suggestion was made to withdraw these students for short intervals from the classroom and to provide them with their own “special project”. This idea did not sit as well with Siobhan, as it did with her colleagues. However, they challenged her thinking sufficiently to force her to look at “withdrawal” from the angle that there may be possible benefits for these students. After considering different courses of action, Siobhan came up with the idea of giving the students the responsibility of organising and holding a monthly sausage sizzle. This idea was generated during a staff inservice concerning the childrens’ application of Mathematics in real-life contexts.

Siobhan found that because the students became so enthusiastically and seriously involved in the project, it gave them an opportunity to further develop some life skills and a more positive sense of self. This “special

project” provided a relevant context for her to support them in their learning across Key Learning Areas. Moreover, this project had the unanticipated positive outcome of providing an opportunity for others in the school to observe and acknowledge their hard work and success. She provides the following reflection on the experience.

What I found was that I need to let go of a particular approach and consider appropriate ways of supporting them, that seems best for the particular situation. The other teachers and the students helped me to realise that.

Siobhan identifies her transfer to one school, as the APRE release teacher and learning support teacher as being a “significant turning point” in her career. She recalls that “she jumped at the chance to work in ONE school”, as she was missing that “sense of community” when working as a learning support teacher in two large schools. At this school, she also assumed a leadership role as the school’s English Key Teacher. Siobhan saw this role as “a great opportunity for her own professional development”. In time and after consultation with the Principal and staff, she combined all of her roles and used collaborative planning sessions as “a process way” of working through the ELA project and planning Individual Education Plans.

It was evolving, but it was great Professional Development. This way I found that you could work with other people and get other people’s ideas and follow things through. It was difficult to do that before. Through collaborative planning, both parties are evolving and learning. That is a true collaborative situation.

Siobhan acknowledges the practical and emotional support provided by the Principal of this school.

He gave me and the other teachers release time to plan with the teacher librarian. Sometimes he’d take the class himself or work to get support from the Office. He also made funds available to purchase some of the ELA resources that we needed for the modelling of the different genre. If any of us found an inservice we wanted to go to, then he would make it happen. But if we went, we had to bring it back to the staff. That was a good thing, because everyone shared in it. The greatest thing was that we never became too uptight, because we combined professional development with some social activity. We

would always do things informally - have a barbecue or drinks or even go away together to sort things through or to work on a project.

Siobhan identifies the ELA and Key Teacher Training inservices, as significant to her development. She found the exercise of articulating her own assumptions about language in relation to the new syllabus to be worthwhile. Whilst it did not challenge her underlying philosophy concerning literacy learning, it did help her to find alternative ways to support the children's learning. The English Key Teacher Network days continue to be very a worthwhile form of professional development for Siobhan. She finds that she is "always able to gain insights from others" and "hear of the latest trends in the teaching of English".

Siobhan became familiar with the new syllabus, through presenting the ELA workshops and "actually getting in and working with it". She found that the collaborative planning sessions grounded the school based inservice modules. In her AST application she noted:

The collaborative planning sessions that I have been privileged to have with colleagues have involved a partnership of planning, acting, reflecting and adapting - a process that represents a mutual commitment to ongoing learning and hence professional development.

However, Siobhan found that the role of Key Teacher had its "down side". She became "very nervous" when presenting workshops to the staff, as she has never "liked" addressing groups. Though she understates the amount of time and energy that she gave to the preparation and presentation of workshops, validating comments in her AST indicate that this was often done in her own time. However, she "knows in herself that she feels better and much less stressed, if she is totally prepared". She explains her reasoning.

I prefer doing it that way and I'd much rather get things ready at home. I need that non-pressured time to process. I get more stressed by not doing that. I guess it's just "the nature of the beast" really. Being totally prepared helped me to feel less nervous about presenting. I still do most of the preparation at home for any presentations that I give.

As Key Teacher, Siobhan worked collaboratively with another teacher to produce the School English Program and to ensure that it met the system recommended criteria for its validation and endorsement.

It takes a couple of people to actually put a program all together. A whole staff can't do that. But what you are doing is representing all that the staff have discussed and worked through and prioritised as important. Someone has to write it down and then take it back to the staff. The other teachers had to sort it through from their own assumptions about the teaching and learning of English and their own students at the class Year level. We worked through the mismatches, when we had the planning sessions. But the bottom line was that we needed to make sure that we had covered the criteria in a way that was okay for us and still right by the system. The validation and endorsement process can only help schools ensure that they have quality programs. Real accountability comes from what you do with the program.

Siobhan is emphatic when expressing her view concerning community ownership of school curriculum projects. Hearing concerns of others at Network days and comparing these to her own positive situation has been influential to the formation of her strongly held views on this matter.

If a particular project or approach is valued, then it needs to be supported at an administration level. I came to realise that if people are to work collaboratively together and if this is something that the school wants, then processes and conditions that support it become necessary. It's one thing to say, "hey we believe in collaborative planning" and another for a school to show that they value it, for example through making funding available for it. It has to come from the top and then it has to be valued. You have to want to do it. It has to be valued by admin, the system and valued by teachers. This is worthwhile. This is great. We are WORKING TOGETHER and SUPPORTING EACH OTHER to plan for quality learning experiences for our students.

When Siobhan transferred to her present school two years ago, she found herself assuming similar roles in a different context. She feels that she was "very fortunate" to transfer to a school that operated from a collaborative paradigm. However, she laughingly notes that it was "unfortunate" that she faced the task of producing "yet another School English Program". Siobhan used "lessons learnt", from the previous experience and tried to give greater

focus to the underlying assumptions that guided each teacher's planning at the classroom level. She recognises the collaborative process of evaluating program units as being "very worthwhile" for her own development. Structures are in place within the school's organisation to support this process.

Evaluation helps to inform planning next time round. If it doesn't, then hey, it's not working. Evaluation isn't a pen and paper activity. It's an action process informing what you're doing next. It's reflection really. That reflective process is constantly happening, when you are working together, because you're not only engaged in the teaching, but engaging in it all as learners yourselves. In teaching you're always reflecting on what you're doing and how you might change something. It's better when you sit down together and evaluate because this gives you a chance to think it through. It's an opportunity to reflect on what you've done. The reflective process is happening all the time when you work collaboratively in teams. We encourage and challenge each other and help each other out. The evaluation sessions are just about making the process more explicit and making the time for it. There isn't much point in having an Evaluation section in the School English Program, if there isn't time prioritised for it.

Siobhan finds that working in collaborative team situations enhances this process and is critical to the reflective process. She values receiving feedback from others and having the opportunity to discuss her thinking. "When you are monitoring progress together, then it's helpful, because two heads are better than one and you can see areas that you've missed." She is aware of her own ways of dealing with "uncertainty" and pressure to change.

We don't have all the answers. How can anyone have all of the answers in teaching? You have to be prepared to try it out and that comes from seeing yourself as a learner. You might make a mistake, but then you turn it around. It's not really making a mistake though; it's finding a better way. Things we might have done before weren't necessarily wrong, it's just that now there is a better way to do it that meets the needs of our students now in a better way. There is always a better way and working with others helps you find it. Sometimes they challenge you to rethink something and sometimes give you that added push that gives you the confidence to have a go. But you have to prioritise. You can only take on so much at one time.

Siobhan refers to the first system organised inter-school moderation session, at which she "very nervously" assumed the role as facilitator.

The moderation process was useful as it identified areas that were very clouded and it gave you the chance to try and work with others beyond the school to get some understanding. I think Moderation as a process it a great opportunity to develop a shared understanding of Level statements, but I don't think it's about "I'm right and you're wrong". Some of the others felt that they had to get all of this levelling right. That just causes stress. I think though, that moderation forces you to be reflective because you have to consider what you are doing to help the students achieve the outcomes, what others are doing and then try to think of what you can do that's better. After that moderation, I realised that I needed to streamline the assessment.

When working collaboratively with Michaela, Siobhan framed the inquiry into the use of Outcome Based Assessment and Reporting, with the explicit intent of "making the assessment meaningful". It was hoped this would give relevant information about the students' progress across the strands. When planning using an integrated approach across Key Learning Areas, both teachers took care to look at the assessment tasks from the perspective of the intended learning outcomes of the unit, in all of the English strands. After deliberating on courses of action, they decided to make the tasks open-ended. This was done to allow for greater sequence, when ascertaining the levels that were indicative of the students' achievements.

However, when collaboratively planning the unit, both teachers tended to move away from their preoccupation with the level statements, to focus more on the students' self assessment. Siobhan and Michaela "bounced around" different ideas that might be used to assist the students to take greater control of the learning. They developed and trialed the use of a criteria checklist. This was designed so that their students could monitor and reflectively self assess their work. Excessive paper work was streamlined by using the same checklist, as a means of recording their observations. Both teachers discovered that they had to "let go" of some of their usual means of collecting assessment data, to make way for this new approach. Plans were put into place to model and scaffold the reflective process, in order to help the students become more independent learners. Siobhan explained:

If we want them to be life long learners, then we have to help them to be independent thinkers. We had to get past the idea of us giving all the directions and answers. That wasn't easy. We really wanted to find ways of supporting the students, but to get them more involved all the way through the unit and not just during the synthesising activities.

However as the unit progressed, Siobhan and Michaela both recognised the need to continue to build on previous learning experiences and to assist some of the students' with the use of top level structure strategies and graphic organisers. They changed in action, as they observed that some students needed further assistance to organise their thinking. The intent behind these actions was "to deliberately and recurrently transfer the strategy to any expository reading material". During the implementation of this unit, Siobhan realised that she needed to make provision for three of her students to demonstrate their understanding of the Social Studies concepts in a manner other than a writing task. This was important, because these particular students needed equal opportunity to demonstrate their conceptual understanding in the other Key Learning Areas.

Siobhan found that exploring issues related to the student's self-assessments helped "to crystallise her thinking".

Interestingly enough we gained more insights into their thinking when we adlibbed and discussed their work informally in the whole class situation. So we just kept on encouraging them to verbalise their thinking and to talk about the positive things that were happening, as well as the problems that they were encountering. This gave us heaps of information that we really hadn't counted on. Next time we'll build from there and negotiate with them a little more. We think we'll use the students' assessments more in class or group discussions throughout the enhancing phase. That means we'll have to free up some time to allow space for informal discussions. We also need to look at exploring some reflective learning strategies that cater for the language ability of all students.

When evaluating this unit, Siobhan considered that it would be useful to have some lead in questions that assisted the students to journal their reflective thinking. When endeavouring to ascertain "SPS" levels, Siobhan and Michaela struggled when they worked with the Level statements, as

entities that sat apart from their School Program. Siobhan notes that differentiating between the levels became much clearer, when they directed their thinking to their own program and interpreted the level statements from that perspective. That's when it was useful to dialogue, to have a look at the Parent Descriptors and to see the differences in work samples that were indicative of the different levels. Michaela and Siobhan independently wrote down their thinking in relation to levels of achievement for a cross section of the class. They did this to make their thoughts explicit and to compare notes. As a result of this inquiry, Siobhan was able to move beyond a technical interpretation of the Outcomes Based Assessment and Reporting framework, largely because it did not sit with her own philosophical approach.

I can now see that the Outcomes will take care of themselves when steps are taken to plan and structure the learning activities in a relevant way. If we are going to truly value both the learning process and the learner, then we have to adopt a positive approach at all times and stress success in learning outcomes no matter how small.

Siobhan's ethical sense of moral responsibility for her students frames her concern that care needs to be taken to ensure that there is not an over emphasis on levelling students' academic achievements. "I think we have to be careful that we show the students that we acknowledge and value them for WHO THEY ARE, as well as for what they know and can do."

Siobhan intends to continue to work in her current position and to apply for AST 2 status when it is introduced. In the future, she would like to work in some kind of curriculum support role in the school, and devote more time and energy to whole school curriculum renewal. Siobhan believes that the time is coming with so many different initiatives, when such school based positions become necessary.

If teachers are to continue to work with the curriculum and to work with the students in an open and flexible way that keeps abreast of modern changes, well some thing has to be in place to support it. If we say as a system that we believe in a collaborative approach to school renewal and if the changes and system recommendations keep coming at a fast pace, well then, common sense suggests that processes and structures



have to be in place to support curriculum change. That has to come from the top. It has to be shown it's valued.

Siobhan feels "very confident" that she has the capacity and will to continue to accept responsibility for her own professional development and growth. She is emphatic in her claim that "ultimately, the students' learning and well being must always be **THE** main motivating factor behind any professional development", be it system, school or personally initiated. Siobhan is strong in her belief that reflection is a critical part of teaching, as it assists her to "evolve". She emphasises, "I know in myself that the reflective process is absolutely essential to my own identity, as well as to my growth as a person, as well as a teacher"

### 4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS FROM FIVE CASE STUDIES

#### 4.3.1 Introduction to the Discussion

The focus of the discussion relates to the role of reflection in leading teacher professional development. It is important to consider that the co-researchers were experienced Advanced Skills Teachers. It is also worth noting that each of the co-researchers gave full commitment to this study and participated enthusiastically and willingly throughout the period of data collection. This study is framed from the assumption that these teachers do reflect on practice and that they are active proponents for their own learning. This assumption is confirmed, as the relevance of a reflective approach unfolds in each of the co-researcher's own terms.

In the cross-case analysis, a number of themes emerge which connect reflection to the moral purpose of teaching. The following broad themes, are presented from a holistic perspective.

- Moral Ethic of Care
- Moral Ethic of Responsibility
- Development into the Social Role of Teaching
- Development of Knowledge
- Teacher Reflection - The Big Picture.

The following inter-related themes also emerge through the analysis.

- Development of Teacher Identity
- Development of Personal Images of Teaching
- Development of the Self of the Teacher
- Development of Relationships with others
- Self- Directed Professional Development
- Reflection-Enabling Response to the Unexpected.
- Reflection – Enabling Response to Current Curriculum Reform

In introducing the discussion around these themes, it is useful to first consider the narrative cases in general terms. The cases reveal that each of these teachers has advanced well beyond the early career phase of "survival", as a novice (Houston and Clift 1990). They are aware of their own development and describe this in terms of having "evolved" (Gemma, Chris, Siobhan); "progressed" (Daisy); "moved along" (Sam), both personally and professionally throughout their respective careers. They have reached a point in time in their professional lives, where they have awareness of themselves as teachers and learners. Moreover, they are able to confidently articulate their personal philosophies of teaching and learning and to make explicit the values that underpin their practice (Sultana 1995).

The narrative cases reveal Daisy's transformation from a confused and somewhat disillusioned novice to a confident, outgoing, highly resourceful and enthusiastic teacher. One sees Chris' evolve through his "formative years". His creativity and inner drive to design the curriculum finds expression in his classroom as he "thinks himself into action". Moreover, his passion for the curriculum is directed through exuberant efforts toward involving the community in whole school renewal. Gemma's path is different as she "evolves", through her years of experience. Her narrative case portrays her love of teaching in the Early Years and her commitment to enhancing her students' literacy learning. Gemma appears to have developed professionally, through tinkering in her classroom, as what appears to be, in Huberman's (1993), terms, a "positive focuser". Sam's case also shows how he has developed and changed since his early days as a novice teacher working in a public school in a poor socio-economic area in England. His pedagogical approach has transformed from one of strict discipline and control, to one that has deep concern for the person of the student. Siobhan's early experiences of working with aboriginal children in a community school have clearly influenced her concern for students' self esteem and her efforts to work collaboratively with others. Each of these teachers has an understanding of "where they have been, where they are

and what they are about" (Sarason 1982:122). They also most certainly appear to be "enjoying what they are doing".

When working collaboratively with these teachers, it became very obvious that they are sincerely passionate about their work. There is fervour behind the emotive language that is used to describe their role. "It's not easy, but I love it. I just love it!" (Daisy). "It really is a joy! This is where I want to be" (Gemma). "Just feeling the adrenalin build up with that sense of this is all happening pumping inside" (Chris). "I enjoy it and I know I'll stop when that stops" (Sam). "It's wonderfully satisfying" (Siobhan). These extracts do not portray images of stressed and disillusioned teachers (Fullan 1997; Hargreaves and Evans 1997). Each has been able to maintain and build on "that inner buzz of excitement" (Daisy) and that sense of "anticipation" (Gemma), that comes from teaching. They are able to cope with and move beyond the difficulties and the frustration of those "horror days" (Sam), the "days of sheer chaos and madness" (Daisy), or experiences that are "emotionally gut wrenching" (Chris). Moreover, they are able to recognise and look at such situations with open candour, revealing the feelings of concern for some situations and the humour in others.

#### **4.3.2 Moral Ethic of Care**

These passions for teaching appear to be sourced by the satisfaction that is derived from caring for the students and the inherent want to promote student learning (Buchmann 1993). Indeed, the co-researchers' sense of intrinsic satisfaction that comes from this moral concern holds far more self-value than status or monetary rewards. This finding concurs with Mayes' (1998:785), tender best-benefit analysis of teaching as an occupation. A strong and consistent theme across the narrative cases is each teacher's commitment of care and concern for students (Noddings 1992). These teachers do see their students as "particular lives" (Cairns 1994:2). This theme of care correlates with the *Brisbane Catholic Education Convocation Report* and other studies (eg. Little 1990; Noddings 1992; Burroughs-Lange et al. 1994; Hargreaves 1997). Moreover, whilst each of the co-researchers refer to promoting student traits of life long learning in different terms, their overall philosophy of teaching

and learning reflect similar themes. Each has a personal theory that reflects personal developmental goals for their students. These include the inherent belief in their need to develop the students' sense of self as learners and assisting them to develop skills in co-operative and independent learning. For these teachers, the ethic of care is as important as the development of student cognitions (Noddings 1992; Cairns 1994).

The commitment to provide care through the promotion of learning consistently comes through each case in many of the stories within the larger story. This appears to be the driving force behind much of the reflective activity that surrounds many aspects of the teachers' professional lives. Thought and action appear to flow from and return to holistic concern for the students as learners. This frame of reference did indeed provide the starting point and not just the conclusion of an ongoing cycle of practical deliberations (Buchmann 1993; Lange and Burroughs-Lange 1994).

#### **4.3.3 Moral Ethic of Responsibility**

At a deeper level, embedded within this theme of care is each teacher's high regard for the rights and interests of their students. Care for themselves and others in the school community appears to be mediated through this interest. Moreover, it seems to provide the incentive to address the purposes for education from the perspective of Catholic schooling. Each of the Advanced Skills Teachers made some reference to the values of *BCE*. This could be expressed as "growing in understanding of what they were about" (Sarason 1983:122). This over-riding moral intent generally appears to undergird the co-researchers' processes of reasoning in decision-making. Problematic issues concerning educational phenomena tend to be framed around the rights of students and the moral and professional obligation to be accountable. These teachers did indeed, endeavour to "keep all eyes on the child" (Darling-Hammond 1995:166) through efforts to keep in touch with the students' world (Biggs 1991). This seems to be the driving force behind their willingness to try alternative approaches, to make small scale or large-scale changes in the classroom, to work collaboratively and to network with others.

These teachers frame their inherent need to be professionally competent and accountable in terms of being conversant with current educational thinking, from the perspective of “doing the right thing by the students” (Daisy). It is this that appeared to provide the motivation and challenge to assume responsibility for their own development.

In terms of the teachers’ commitments to the moral purpose of teaching, the interconnectedness of the three aspects of ethics, namely consistency, consequences and care proposed by (Haynes 1998:25), become less abstract and more realistically apparent. The strongly felt sense of care and responsibility for students seems to provide the impetus for reflective practice and ongoing professional development. The narrative cases reveal that the teachers’ regard for their students as individuals strongly influences deliberations, decisions and subsequent actions. This became very apparent when they confronted challenging issues through the inquiry process, concerning the *Choosing Our Future* Curriculum initiatives. Within the context of the study, each of these researchers raised ethical issues that addressed the consequences of their decision-making in terms of their students’ interests. Findings concerning the co-researchers’ inquiry into the curriculum reforms are further discussed in Section 4.3.12.

#### **4.3.4 Development into the Social Role of Teaching**

The narratives indicate that these teachers have developed into the social role of teaching in a manner that offers them incentive and the ability to assume what Senge (1992), describes as “personal mastery”. Their focus on the moral responsibilities surrounding the teaching role appears to play an instrumental role in this development (Sultana 1995; Colnerud 1997). These teachers appear to have grown and continue to grow into the social role of teaching, through what could be described as relational and dialogical processes (Haynes 1998), between their own selves and others. However, as Chris points out, “no one can teach you how to teach. You have to learn that for yourself.”

The process of development for each of the co-researchers could well be described as complex, idiosyncratic and multi-faceted (Day 1994; Candy 1997; Groundwater-Smith 1998). Their professional development in the descriptive and prescriptive sense (Kelchtermans 1993), throughout the career has been strongly influenced by the interplay between the many and varied personal and contextual factors and circumstances. When reflecting on their current practice, the co-researchers' narrations tend to naturally flow through three time zones – past, present and future (Holly and Walley 1985:285).

Significant experiences, ie. “where they have been” (Sarason 1982) are used to explain and to illustrate why they thought as they did, or why and how they had reframed their thinking and changed, adapted, or built on a particular pedagogical approach (Smyth 1989). Instances are identified when the teachers are critically conscious of the need for re-direction and learning. This process could be described as a retrospective reconstruction of experiences that had relevance and coherence with other experiences. This often linked to considerations for future action or hopes for the future. However, it becomes obvious that these teachers do not dismiss or glorify the past, nor did they idealise the future (McCullough 1997). The past is viewed as temporal and considered in terms of the contextual circumstances that surround specific experiences. Terms such as “moved on”, (Daisy; Chris) and “right for its time”, (Gemma), characterised the teachers' discussion. This finding supports Huberman's (1993) notion of career as a process, rather than a series of punctuated events. For some (Gemma and Sam), it has been more of a gradual evolvement than for Siobhan, Chris and Daisy. Moreover, each of the three female teachers had time intervals away from teaching, due to pregnancies and associated family commitments. Each of the teachers refer to past experiences in varying and very different school communities. These appear to have enabled them to adapt to change, as well as to broaden their perspective on teaching, learning and school cultures. As such, changes in the career and critical events do appear to represent a dialectical relationship between self and circumstance (Connelly

and Clandinin 1995; Kelchtermans 1997). It becomes apparent that the subjective internal states of career development do indeed reflect each of the co-researchers' developing confidence and consciousness of their professional and personal self (Maclean 1992).

#### **4.3.5 Development of Knowledge**

The narratives reveal that for each of these teachers there is an essential connectedness between thought, emotion, actions and people (Noddings 1992; Buchmann 1993; Haynes 1998). Reflection on that connectedness appears to be conducive to each of the co-researchers' personal and professional growth. The moral, sensory, cognitive and social dimensions of the teachers' work tends to inter-relate and at times fully integrate in many and varied ways in different situations and contexts (Johnson 1997). It is the inter-relatedness among each of the dimensions of knowledge that appears to enable the teachers to sustain ongoing commitment to the moral purpose of teaching (Groundwater-Smith 1998). These findings indicate that knowledge encompasses far more than cognitive knowing. It seems to involve astute awareness and emotion, as well as the creative, imaginary, intuitive (Bradbeer 1994; Beattie 1997), and spiritual dimensions (Treston 1995). Reflection on that knowing from a number of these dimensions does appear to play an integral "mediating " (Clarke and Peter 1993:12), role in "enabling" (McArdle and Spry 1996) these teachers to connect their ideals/vision with directed principled action.

#### **4.3.6 Teacher Reflection – "The Big Picture"**

Whilst reflective activity appears to enable the teacher to connect to the moral purpose of teaching, the reflective processes that teachers use are difficult to describe (Carson 1995; McMahon 1997). The researcher found that any analysis of the teachers' reflective activity, without attention to "the multi-dimensional big picture" that encompasses the affective, social and cognitive dimensions of knowledge, brings forth an artificial image of teaching that has no soul (Bradbeer 1994; Fullan 1997; Hargreaves 1998). The notion of explicating the intent or the motive behind actions, through the



reflective process is particularly important for ongoing professional development (Haynes 1998). The teachers' connection to the over-riding moral intent of providing quality learning for their students, appears to be the most salient factor that assists them to adapt, to change aspects of their practice, or to reframe their own personal theories (Colnerud 1997). Understanding the "why" behind the "why", concerning actions and decisions provides insight into the role of reflection in leading teacher development. This does not concur with the view that the relationship between reflection and action is not to be understood in terms of the teachers' intentions (Kelchtermans 1993:215).

The collaborative nature of the study highlights each co-researcher's tendency to keep a "big picture focus". Throughout the research, it was these teachers who strongly considered the moral purposes of their work. Explicit and consistent reference to values, framed many discussions concerning the various dimensions and factors that impact on professional life. Indeed, in the early phase of data collection, the researcher wrongly assumed that these teachers would identify significant career life events in chronological order and that she would need to probe for information concerning the thinking behind the teachers' actions. This was not to be the case. For the most part, the past experiences were recalled as a means of exemplifying or justifying current beliefs, views or espoused theory (Anderson 1997). The co-researchers tended to initiate such discussions with emotive frames of reference, such as "I felt". This could well be described as a "hermeneutic returning to the lived ground of human experience (Aoki 1990, in Carson 1995:154).

Therefore, it may be worthwhile when promoting reflective deliberation, to first give attention to the emotive dimension. For example, Smyth's (1989:5) process that engages four forms of action could begin with "what do I feel about . . . and why do I feel this way". The co-researchers show a natural tendency to give first attention to the affective modality. Emotion is both a response to the situation or interpretation of the event as well as a significant

force in generating subsequent cognitions, emotions and behaviours (Lazarus 1991 in Stough and Emner 1998). This appears to assist the co-researchers to contextualise any understandings that are reached in relation to the broader cultural and social milieu in which they are situated. Moreover, this facilitated the identification of explicit values embedded in their practice (Day 1994; Sultana 1995). Thus, the teachers' stories suggest that there is a definite need to consider the "heart", as well as the "head" (Bradbeer 1994; Beattie 1997), when exploring the reflective processes that teachers use to create meaning. This is relevant, for the cases reveal that dialectical reflection involving the emotive/affect and cognitive domains, appears to facilitate the development of moral frameworks for practice (Johnson 1997; Colnerud 1997; Haynes 1998).

Reflection, in terms of teacher development appears to be far more than a form of thinking that was stimulated by surprises or puzzles (Grimmett 1988:6), or "a process of restructuring a mental representation of experience" (De Jong and Korthagan 1993:135). It certainly appears to involve the ability to make and to assume responsibility for rational choices (Ross 1987:1), that do extend to the moral and ethical issues and to a very much lesser degree political issues embedded in practice (Zeichner and Gore 1995; Popkewitz 1998). However, Butler's (1993:223) view of reflection as "the open communicative channel between the social context and the inner self," appears to be the 'most like' representation of the co-researchers' reflective activity. The teachers' descriptions of their reflective activity could well be identified in terms of it being an "evaluative dialogue that enriches the self and enhances professional practice" (Butler 1993).

Reflection appears to be an enabling process that connects the teacher to the moral purpose of teaching. The narrative cases reveal that this requires an inward focus for connectedness to self and an outward focus on the social milieu of practice and to the broader cultural context for connectedness to students, colleagues and others in the wider community (Zeichner and Tabachnick 1991; Bullough 1993). From this perspective,

reflective activity seems to enable the teacher to feel, to think, to act and to be (Beare 1989; Day 1994; Butler 1996). Reflection also appears to have a significant role in teacher development by enabling connectedness to the moral purpose of teaching and the mission of *BCE* through: -

- Enabling connectedness to the self
- Enabling connectedness to the students
- Enabling connectedness to others in and beyond the school community
- Enabling self - directed professional development
- Enabling critical response to the pressures for change

From this perspective, the following inter-related themes emerge from the data analysis. These provide some insight into the role that reflection plays in leading teacher development. The reflective processes that the teachers appear to utilise are contextualised within the discussion of these findings.

#### **4.3.7 Development of Teacher Identity**

Each narrative suggests that teaching for these teachers has become far more than a "job". Their work is clearly an important part of their self-description (Handy 1997). The personal disposition of each of these teachers is clearly at the core of their sense of self as teacher (Sikes et al. 1985; Butler 1993). Factors such as background, family experiences and values, lifestyle, personalities and professional experiences and circumstances all differ and impact in unique ways on each teacher's sense of identity. Moreover, the relationships among people, places and objects that come from experience and that are expressed in practice (Anderson 1997) could well use the descriptive metaphor of the "professional landscape" (Clandinin and Connelly 1995:4). Indeed, the professional self of the teacher does very much reflect the person of the teacher. Identity seems to be constituted by the values, knowledge and views inherent in their own personal teaching. The reflective process appears to enable these teachers to develop a strong sense of professional identity (Nias 1989; Evans 1997).

Explicit self-awareness of this identity seems to enable them to connect to others beyond the self.

#### **4.3.8 Development of Personal Images of Teaching**

The co-researchers appear to have personally constructed images of teaching that reflect the values and experiences of the internal self (Nias 1989; Johnson 1997). These images seem to have been adapted and reconstructed through varied experiences involving interactions with others and changing situational contexts (Casey 1995). Daisy's image of herself as a "progressive" and "effective" teacher comes from difficult years as a novice. The reality of her early experiences in traditional, authoritarian type school settings, conflicted with the knowledge drawn from her studies in open area education. Chris' image of himself as "a designer and NOT a technician" has its genesis in his involvement with higher degree tertiary study. The motherly, caring image that Gemma holds is highly influenced by her own experiences of raising a large family and caring for an invalid spouse. This image also reflects her years of experience in teaching students in the Early Years. Moreover, Gemma's love of reading is also highly influential to her passion, for developing her students' literacy skills, and engendering a sense of success as readers. Siobhan has an image of herself as a learner. The importance she places on working collaboratively with others in the school community for the benefit of her students appear to have evolved from her own personal disposition and professional interests. Her early experiences of living and working with disadvantaged students within community settings are also highly influential to the development of this image. Sam's image of teaching, though not as easily definable is one of being a "calm" teacher who goes "with the flow" and does "one's best". This has also evolved through varied career life experiences of working with socially disadvantaged students.

These personal images have impacted, albeit in varying degrees on how each of these teachers enacts their professional external selves. However, each of these teachers also recognise the need to stand aside from their own beliefs and personally constructed images, in order to consider their

students' interests. Moreover, in the context of curriculum reform, with the emphasis on student cognition, these teachers have tried to find ways to also support student social and emotional growth. The teachers' efforts, in terms of working with students on interpersonal issues, concurs with the research conclusions of Adalbjarnardottir and Selman (1997). However, the narrative cases reveal that this is not always easy and provide instances of when this has created tension, anxiety and frustration in decision-making (Mandzuk 1997). This tension appears to be generated through what Senge (1992:11) describes as "the juxtaposition of vision" and the "big picture of current reality".

The narratives reveal the importance of making explicit the values or intentions that govern decisions (Haynes 1998). For example, within Siobhan's narration there is a retelling of an event that exemplifies how a teacher's personal image of teaching could have a narcissistic entitlement, if there is not opportunity to dialogue with others. Siobhan's strong belief in the non-classroom withdrawal of students with special needs could have limited opportunities to develop the students' self esteem through other organisational arrangements. Siobhan readily admits that she needed her colleagues to challenge her to try a different approach, in response to a particularly difficult situation. However, Gemma's "fight" for a working environment that is conducive to young students along with her passion for, and belief in, the development of phonemic awareness in the teaching of reading, provide another perspective. These are instances of when the personal images of teaching provide the motivation to pursue what is believed to be morally right. Moreover, at a superficial level, Gemma's approach to the teaching of reading could be interpreted as technical fidelity to one teaching method. This invites another interpretation, when it is analysed from the perspective of Gemma's critical intent and from the students' demonstrated ability to read successfully, with meaning and enjoyment. Gemma's story concerning moderation reveals how her over-riding intent to assist her Year One students to develop in their literacy

learning moves beyond imposed boundaries of year levels. Gemma clearly keeps her focus on her students (Darling-Hammond 1995).

For the most part, these personal images of teaching do not appear to “delineate power” (Hargreaves 1994:72), from the co-researchers. Rather, they generate confidence in the teachers’ own selves that they have the capacity to exert control over the lived reality of their own life (Gardener 1995; Haynes 1998). These images often provide the impetus to reflect on value-based questions, in terms of the students’ interests, when confronting problematic situations. This becomes particularly evident in the teachers’ thinking when inquiring into aspects of the *Choosing Our Future curriculum* initiatives. Thus, attention to the moral purpose of teaching tends to be mediated through personal images of teaching. This could be seen to assist them to “expand their ability to create the results they truly seek” (Senge 1992:1). This finding supports Butler’s (1992:225) opinion that it is important to seriously consider the teacher’s judgements and beliefs about their own selves in efforts to support teacher development.

#### **4.3.9 Development of the Self of the Teacher**

A consistent theme emanating across all of the cases is the high level of career satisfaction that is derived from interactions and relationships with students, parents and colleagues. Such positive interactions do appear to legitimate the teachers’ feelings of competence (Kelchtermans 1993). The social and emotional dimensions of knowledge appear to be vitally important in terms of teacher development (Groundwater-Smith 1998). Reflection on this knowing appears to assist these teachers to continually touch base with the moral nature of their work. This notion is consistent with Hargreaves’ (1997) view that emotional as well as intellectual capacities contribute to the building of professional teaching cultures. However, moral concern also seems to create tension and does at times cause anxiety. This tends to manifest itself in feelings of “inadequacy”. For Sam, Daisy and Gemma this is often precipitated at inservice sessions when they were “hear” of the successes of other teachers, in relation to system initiated curriculum projects, or when trying to make sense of

"jargon." These teachers recall how they experience anxious concerns that they are "not doing the right thing by the kids" (Daisy), or "short changing the children" (Sam). However, this anxiety also appears to have positive effects, as it seems to force examination of successes or areas that need to be improved from within the context of the teacher's own practice. These teachers are able to move beyond these concerns, by giving regard to implications of a moral, social, as well as educational order (Day 1994; Sultana 1995). In these instances, they tend to rely on the students' cognitive learning and personal development, when evaluating their own effectiveness. This tendency concurs with much of the research into teachers' personal practical theories (eg. Marland 1993; Khames 1993).

The development of emotional strength appears to be effected through each teachers' own self directed efforts and greatly supported through interactions with others (Conle 1997). The narratives reveal that it takes effort to consciously source the passion that is needed if one is to teach in a morally responsible way. This suggests that teaching clearly involves emotional labour (Hochschild 1993). Moreover, the teachers' awareness of their own emotions appears to assist them to consider the consequences of their emotive state for both themselves and others. This appears to enable them to act on situations and in so doing, to transform their reality (Freire 1973).

A common pattern to emerge across the narratives is that introspection or contemplation appears to be utilised in some form, when the connection to the underlying moral purpose of their teaching is lost or clouded. For example, Daisy recalls an episode when she became "so obsessed with assessment that she lost sight of the kids". However, once she realised that she was not enjoying teaching, she took action to give more attention to her students. Sam transferred to another school when he began to feel "jaded" and Siobhan "jumped at the chance" to work in one school community. Moreover, Chris tells of his strong sense for the need to be more in touch with his students and how this motivated him to explore ways to create time to "be still". From another perspective, Gemma speaks of having an intuitive knowing when extra sensitivity to her

students is required. Indeed, each of the co-researchers is very astute to the need to provide a balance to the curriculum, so that cognition is not elevated above care (Hargreaves 1997). These teachers in different ways have taken social action to transform the conditions of the classroom. There is greater focus on the students' personal development in attempts to counterbalance pressures from the outside world.

The reflective processes appear to connect these teachers' with their inner most feelings and thoughts about what is "right". This could be described as looking inwards to be in touch with themselves (Beyer 1991). This tends to occur far from the action, but becomes very important to the action. This involves taking time "to mull things through" (Daisy) or "thinking through that "gut" feeling (Chris), so as to re-define and to re-connect to the inner self. Trusting that inner voice has become important to these teachers, especially when trying to make sense of personal problems that require moral choices. For example, Daisy notes that she has learnt to trust that "inner voice". She emphasises that she "just knew", when it was "time to move on", from one school where her general teaching philosophy was not reconciled to the "top down" administrative decisions that had consequences for her work. Sam tells his story of needing to really determine whether he wanted to move to an administrative role, or if indeed his heart was in classroom teaching. Gemma has an inner knowing that she "belongs in Year one." Moreover, she also had a strong intuitive knowing that it was not the right time to engage in further formal study because of family commitments. She readily admits that she went against that inner knowing and as a consequence, the course became a technical exercise of gaining the accreditation. Gemma's need for "proper selfishness" (Handy 1997:88), at that point in time can also be understood in relation to Candy's (1997) explanation of the convergence of pressure sources for change.

#### **4.3.10 Development of Relationships with Others**

Another theme that emerges from the narrative cases is one of "belonging". Each of the co-researchers refers to the benefits for their own growth that comes from "belonging" to a school community (Binney and Williams 1995; McArdle



and Spry 1996). Indeed, the narrative cases reveal instances when some of these teachers made deliberate moves to transfer, when their own personal values and beliefs conflicted with the reality of a particular school context. These events are recalled with great emotion and intensity, especially when discussing the reasoning behind action taken. Each of the co-researchers expressed a need to feel supported and valued for who they are, as much as for what they do (Farson 1996). Moreover, there was common reference to "working with", "belonging with", or "belonging to", *Brisbane Catholic Education*.

The teachers' narrative cases clearly illustrate that self-directed learning and autonomy does not imply working in isolation from others (Everett 1997; Conle 1997). Within the career life story, each co-researcher identified significant people who were influential to their personal and professional growth (Sikes et al. 1985). These critical people are regarded appreciatively and with affection. Mentors play significant roles in three of the co-researchers' early career phase (Daisy, Siobhan and Chris), through providing emotional support, interest and affirmation. Some challenged their underlying assumptions about their teaching and encouraged them to be risk takers in a supportive and non-threatening way. Also highlighted was that engagement in reflective deliberation with others assisted these teachers to stand aside from personal subjectivity and to consider alternatives that might be more appropriate in a given context. Moreover, the teachers also identified relationships with others that were not positive. Insights concerning the impact on the personal self were framed emotively. These experiences tended to occur in situations, where autocratic organisational structures were perceived to be in place, when some of these teachers felt subjected to defect models for supporting teacher development.

Another pattern to emerge is the teachers' reference to the influence of particular principals in schools. In these instances, they sensed positive ethos and the building of collaborative cultures (Hargreaves 1998). Siobhan, Daisy, Chris and Sam identify principals who they perceive as having been influential to their development. This supports the notion that leadership, which is

encouraging, yet challenging and supportive, is highly conducive to teacher development and authentic whole school renewal (eg. Sachs 1997; Fullan 1997; Hargreaves 1998).

The narratives also reveal that the development of healthy inter-relationships between each of the teachers and others in their school community assists them to be actively involved in school renewal efforts (Spry and Sultmann 1993). The recognition of their own personal strengths and personally identified areas of need in relation to the whole school renewal efforts appears to be important (Binney and Williams 1995). Moreover, the notion that school or system efforts need to be "more to the total person" (Day 1994:124), is emphasised in the narratives. For example, with the implementation of the English Language Arts syllabus, Siobhan and Daisy assumed leadership roles as the Key Teacher. In so doing, these two teachers were able to work through associated challenges. Each considers that the pressure of presenting the inservice modules to their colleagues assisted them to reach a better understanding, as they needed to take time to consider the information, as well as the implications for the classroom. However, Gemma and Sam recall how they struggled with the ELA inservice. In their case, the two year long inservice program was foisted on them with little or no consultation. These teachers felt alienated, as the conditions were not conducive for them to be able to articulate the implications of the changes in terms of their own personal theories (Sachs 1997:268). Gemma particularly felt devalued and tended to turn to her own success with the students' literacy learning to counterbalance her sense of being deficient in her approach. Thus, it was the inservice delivery that caused much of the tension and anxiety, more so than the new syllabus itself. However, both Gemma and Sam's activity could be described as "tinkering", throughout the inservice time frame. Both appeared to reframe aspects of the session input into more personally congenial forms (Huberman:1992). Engagement in collaborative planning and active inquiry with trusted colleagues enabled him to reframe his thinking to accommodate the underlying philosophy of the syllabus.

Collaboration with others and the development of collegial relationships appears to be conducive to teacher development. A natural and integrated approach to building relationships seems to promote this connectedness and to build a sense of belonging within a school community. Each teacher identifies how working collegially with colleagues and having a sense of purpose assists them in the renewal process. Moreover, having adequate time for involvement appears to be conducive to this process. The current system thrust toward the development of school programs seems to have facilitated the development of collaborative school cultures. The collaborative planning of units of work and class year overviews at the school level also appears to have provided the impetus for these teachers to discuss their underlying assumptions about learning generally and in relation to particular Key Learning Areas. These planning sessions appear to provide structures for the teachers to engage in deliberative inquiry and to be risk takers in a supportive environment. This suggests that the enabling approach to school renewal holds real potential for teacher growth (McArdle and Spry 1996).

The co-researchers consider opportunities for inter-school networking within the system to be useful to a degree. However, collaborative interaction at the school level seems to hold the greatest benefit for their own understanding and sense of purpose in relation to whole school renewal efforts concerning curriculum change.

#### **4.3.11 Self-directed Professional Development**

All of the co-researchers perceive themselves to be learners and consider that they have the ability to assume responsibility for their own development (Clark 1992; Sachs 1997; Groundwater-Smith 1998). Each appears to be aware of their preferred learning approach. For example, Daisy needs to “play,” with new ideas. She is highly resourceful and “hunts down” inservices and workshops that have a practical focus and that appear to be appropriate to her professional needs. Gemma considers that she is “a slow person to change” and prefers to make small-scale changes, as she tinkers in her classroom. She prefers to work in small networks with her colleagues at the

school or with other Year One teachers. Chris tends to "act himself into thinking". He enjoys academic study and prefers to work through whole school change or classroom change with other stakeholders. Siobhan considers that she must always be a learner and prefers to work collaboratively with others. Sam believes that it is essential to keep up and to keep abreast of change. He tends to prefer networking and school collaborative efforts. These teachers are able to identify their preferred format and mode of delivery for professional development activities. However, they indicate that the most appropriate format is more dependent on the purpose for their participation.

The need to have time to work through challenging issues in relation to curriculum change is emphasised in the case narratives (Borko et al. 1997). Too many pressures for change seemed to force these teachers to make discerning choices concerning how much they could cope with at any one time (Woodilla et al. 1997). Each of the co-researchers showed cautious concern in terms of taking on too much, too quickly for their personal and professional selves. They also considered the possible impact on and consequences for their students, their families and their relationships with colleagues (Goleman 1995). These teachers recognised the need to make choices between competing educational goals. They were also prepared to justify these in terms of their commitment of responsibility to the students (Buchmann 1993). This also applied to time management concerning too much time away from class for inservices, networks, activities related to key roles or in trying to juggle too many role responsibilities without sufficient support (Hargreaves 1997).

Four of the five co-researchers indicate that documenting details of their practice and reflectively responding to the AST criteria is an effective form of professional development. This activity, though time consuming is considered to be worthwhile, as it assists them to consider their own philosophies of teaching against their practice and the validating responses from others (Eraut 1993). Moreover, it generates a sense of intrinsic

satisfaction concerning their success. In the past, the AST application process assisted Siobhan and Daisy to identify aspects of their practice that they considered to be in need of improvement. Each of these four teachers also raised political issues, in terms of their concern with what is perceived to be non-recognition of the AST status at the system level. These concerns challenge the dominance of the recognition of administrative positions in terms of system social status. However, this issue was not raised by Chris, who was the only co-researcher with a part-time administrative position.

#### **4.3.12 Reflection - Enabling Response to the Unexpected**

Unexpected incidents in the classroom or school have also impacted on the co-researchers' development. The co-researchers generally tend to consider that "never knowing just what might happen", makes teaching exciting. Each of these teachers strongly consider that flexibility and being "open to the unexpected" (Sam), is essential to their professional effectiveness. The reflective activity in relation to these incidents could be described as tacit and took the form of "spontaneity" (Louden 1993), or to use Schon's (1983), term, reflection-in-action. The teachers' description of this could be interpreted in terms of reading students' cues and flexing and adapting in order to respond to the students' needs in a particular situation (Cole 1987, in Louden 1992:204). The knowing appears to be in the action and the "spontaneity tends to involve further reflection on-the-action (Schon 1983; 1985). This appears to take the forms of replay and rehearsal. Moreover, analysis of these incidents indicates that critical spontaneous incidents seem to be discussed in relation to other catalysts for learning.

#### **4.3.13 Reflection - Enabling Response to Current Curriculum Reform**

The co-researchers appear to be able to deal with contradictory mandates surrounding the *Choosing Our Future* curriculum initiatives confidently. Throughout the inquiry process, the supremacy of the teachers' voice over formal theoretical knowledge orienting the reforms became clearly evident (Day 1997; Goodson 1997).

Gemma had few problems working with the Early Years Continua. She considers that she only needed to make small organisational changes that related to the recording of assessment data. She felt affirmed by this initiative as it confirmed that she was supporting the student's literacy learning in a theoretically sound way. In terms of the inquiry project, Gemma recognised her need to better understand the implications of planning from a five-part framework, so that it had relevance for her practice. She endeavoured to continue to experiment with the genre-based approach to the teaching of English. This involved the accommodation of small changes to her practice, so as to include the speaking and listening strand.

Daisy, Siobhan, Sam and Chris used the inquiry process to work through their own problematic issues concerning Outcomes Based Assessment and Reporting. The framework documentation seemed to provide each of the teachers with a challenge as they found it to be a very dense document full of "jargon" (O'Donoghue 1995; Proudford 1998). There was awareness of the political push to implement the use of the Outcomes framework. However, all of the co-researchers felt that they had a responsibility to try to work with these and to improve their understanding of using an Outcomes approach. Each teacher considered the consequences of not having an understanding of the reforms, from the ethic of being morally responsible to the students. There was little explicit reference to political power, though there was some reference made to the system.

It was clearly evident that the teachers struggled with and then rejected the notion of showing technical fidelity to aspects of the reforms. However they did deliberately use a technical approach in order to acquire some working knowledge of the innovation. The co-researchers indicate how they need some guidance and structure to scaffold early attempts of working with the innovation. The prescriptive use of "how to" materials was not problematic (Apple and Jungck 1992). However, these materials did assist some of the teachers to come to a better understanding about the initiative through active engagement

at the 'hands on' level. The focus on the "how to" tended to be emphasised in the early phases of the teachers' use of the Outcomes framework.

Analysis of the thinking behind these teachers' actions throughout the inquiry process, indicates that there appears to be fluid and complementary movement between the technical, interpretative and at times critical levels (Habermas 1971; Van Manen 1977). Thus, it becomes very evident that the reflective choices are not mutually exclusive of each other (Louden 1992; Butler 1992; Johnson 1997). Indeed, reflective processing in and through the various levels of reflection (Van Manen 1977) appears to lead to complex thinking and enhances the teachers' ability to create meaning. The thinking and determination that underscored the actions of each of these teachers indicated an awareness and acceptance of the self as a learner.

Moreover, the over-riding intent behind their actions (Haynes 1998) was to better understand these reforms and in so doing to critically evaluate not only their practice, but the initiative or reform itself. This appeared to assist them to best determine how they might best consider the students' interests. Deliberations were practically oriented and went well beyond deciding on curriculum content or ways to plan or to assess effectively against the standardized outcomes based assessment framework or the five part planning framework. It involved choices concerning the degree and pace of change that they could effectively deal with at that particular time. Each teacher emphasised that they needed time and support, especially at the school level to make informed and worthwhile evaluations of the reforms in terms of their own practice (Borko et al. 1997; Houston and Clift 1990). This also involved critically reviewing aspects of their own practice in the light of new perspectives and understandings gained through working with the reforms. These decisions were justified, renegotiated and justified again from the perspective of the possible impact on and implications for the students.

These teachers placed little emphasis on the Outcome Levels, once they had some understanding of their meaning in terms of student achievement. Attention

moved to finding creative and innovative ways of working with the initiative for the ultimate benefit of the students. Each of these teachers took a reactionary stance, which had more concern for the holistic education of the students, than the assessment of outcomes relative to national standards. Attention was given to the utilisation of more learner centred pedagogical approaches and student personal development (Delores 1998). However, the process by which these teachers' came to this decision differed. This in itself is significant, for it emphasises that there is no one way teachers deal with imposed change and certainly no specific time frame in which they are able to do so (Clark 1992; Hargreaves and Evans 1997).

The modelling of the reflective processes and negotiating aspects of the curriculum with students, appears to assist the co-researchers to consider alternatives for practice that might be more appropriate for particular groups of students in particular learning situations. Dialoguing with the students also seems to enhance the teacher/student relationship and provides insights into how they might best serve the interests and needs of their students (Bullough and Gitlin 1995).

#### **4.3.14 Summary of Discussion**

This study finds that reflection plays an important role in leading teacher professional development. Reflection in its many forms appears to be a mediating process (Clarke and Peter 1993) that enables teachers to stay connected to the moral purpose teaching. However, the co-researchers do not conform to any single model of what it means to be a reflective practitioner (McMahon 1997). Teacher development is clearly idiosyncratic and complex and influenced by many personal and contextual factors (Day 1994). A synthesis and review of the findings are presented in Chapter Five.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.1 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This research reported in this thesis attempts to critique, so as to understand the role that reflection plays in leading teacher professional development, from the inside perspective of the professional lives of five Advanced Skills Teachers. In so doing, it endeavours to emphasise the complexity of the many dimensions of teacher development, as well as to promote critical awareness of the value systems, which underscore reflective practitioners' ongoing quests for renewal. This is important, if continuing teacher professional development is to be supported in a meaningful and relevant way.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to critically explore and to interrogate the processes that five Advanced Skills Teachers (AST1) use to reflect on practice and to critique how this reflective activity has contributed to their ongoing growth and development, in the many dimensions of their professional lives. The research inquires into how reflection has led these teachers to make sense of the phenomena of important events experienced throughout their careers and how it impacts on action taken, when dealing with problematic issues concerning the *Choosing Our Future* (BCE) curriculum reforms. In so doing, the embedded values that underscore decisions and actions are extrapolated and questioned.

## 5.2 THE CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

The study is set within the context of *Brisbane Catholic Education* during a time of system initiated curriculum reform initiatives that come under the project title of *Choosing Our Future*. The five research participants, referred to as co-researchers, are experienced, practising teachers in Catholic primary schools, within the *Brisbane Archdiocese*, who have been awarded Advanced Skills Status (AST1).

The conceptual framework of this study is underpinned by critical theory. This is appropriate, since there is explicit intent to inquire into the thinking processes that underscore the co-researchers' actions in their attempts to change (Crotty 1998). Critical theory focuses on extending consciousness of the self as a social being, through promoting insights into the processes through which perspectives and values were formed. Moreover, from a critical perspective, any insights gained are considered in terms of the socio-cultural context in which the phenomena are situated (Goodson 1992). The function of critical theory is to better understand the relationship that exists between values, interest and action (Sultana 1993).

Educational research that finds its orientation in critical theory aims to promote critical consciousness in order to break down social inequalities and oppressive ideologies (Habermas 1971; Popkewitz 1994). This research aims to promote the notion that teachers, as reflective practitioners, are able to make value based decisions and consider consequences both individually and collectively concerning their professional needs. This research is also guided by an interpretative philosophy, in order to give consideration to the personal dimension of experience. This facilitates a holistic view of each Advanced Skills teacher's career long, personal and professional development.

Critical theory reflects a body of discourse that focuses on the possibility of individual and collective social transformation through authentic action

(Freire 1973; Crotty 1998). Hence, a social reconstructivist perspective, which is derived from the philosophy of critical social theory, conceptually guides the interpretation of learning, teaching and reflection. Learning is an active and life long process involving the construction of new interpretations of knowledge that are generated from past understandings (Freire 1973; Crotty 1998). Thus, to serve the research purpose, there is a need to go beyond description, to question and extrapolate the beliefs and values that underscore decisions. In so doing, there is scope to question and to explore the ideological forces and power relations, by which the Advanced Skills Teachers' understandings are created.

A case study approach offers flexibility and scope to explore the phenomenon of the relationship between reflection and teacher professional development. Moreover, it respects the contextual specificity of constructed meanings. The research design allows for systematic, yet flexible and ongoing data collection, partial analysis and participant feedback (Refer to Table 3.2). Life history and narrative inquiry methods facilitate exploration and analysis of the Advanced Skills Teachers' reflective activity and professional development through the subjective experiences of their career. The research design also allows for inquiry into problematic issues concerning current *Choosing Our Future* curriculum initiatives (BCE) that utilises processes of reflective deliberation. The primary data sources are open ended and semi-structured interviews that could be described as a prolonged interview. Other data sources include the co-researchers' AST1 application folio, documentation, inquiry summary sheets, artefacts and the research diary.

Data were analysed through the creation of a montage within five individual case studies and presented in narrative form. Findings from the cross-case analysis were then presented under themes that emerged.

### **5.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS ADDRESSED**

#### **5.3.1 Identification of the Research Questions**

Three research questions emerge as being important to the study. These questions emanate from the purpose for the research. They took an evolving form and were re-shaped throughout the duration of the study. Consequently the research questions represent the co-researchers priorities, as well as those of the researcher. The research questions are:

##### **Research Question One**

What experiences do the Advanced Skills Teachers identify as being catalytic to their professional development?

##### **Research Question Two**

How do these teachers describe the reflective processes that they use in their practice?

##### **Research Question Three**

What forms of support for professional development do these teachers identify as being important to their professional learning?

These questions provide a useful framework for a summary of the findings. For the purpose of reviewing and addressing the important aspects of the research, each question is presented as a separate entity. However, each question is closely linked and is inter-related with all others. The responses to these questions are not intended to be definitive. They find their meaning and relevance in the texts of the Advanced Skills Teachers' professional lives. This is important, since "the usefulness and appropriateness of any prescriptions for practice must be judged in relation to the specific circumstances of practice in their own setting" (Merriam 1998:222). Therefore, it is emphasised that the responses to the questions are not framed from the prescriptive perspective of 'how to'. Rather, they are included to provide some critical insights into the 'what', 'why', 'how' and

'when' surrounding the development of these Advanced Skills Teachers as reflective practitioners.

### 5.3.2 Research Question One

The research question is:

**What experiences do the Advanced Skills Teachers identify as being catalytic to their professional development?**

The narrative cases reveal that professional development clearly involves more than experience itself (Day 1994). However, the five co-researchers all consider that they have "evolved", both personally and professionally throughout their respective careers. Whilst each of the teacher's experiences relate to their own context and life histories, some common themes become evident across the case narratives.

The most significant catalyst, common to all cases comes from the every day relational experiences of caring for students and the intrinsic satisfaction that is derived from promoting student learning. Efforts to "do the right thing", in terms of the students' best interests appears to be the most powerful catalyst to furthering their development.

The relevance and importance of experiences and incidents appear to be influenced by the Advanced Skills Teachers' own personal theories. Significant is the finding that these experiences seem to have been influenced by or been influential to the development of personal images of teaching. The experiences or critical incidents identified can be related to pressures for change that pertain to personal, classroom, school, system or societal sources. These experiences were consistently framed through feelings that were evoked in relation to their own beliefs and values. The cognitive, emotional and social dimensions of knowledge seem to be used interchangeably in attempts to create understanding and meaning. It is this interplay that appears to enable the Advanced Skills Teachers to sustain a focus on the moral nature of their role.

Perceptions of events and people from the past were consistently reframed to the present context. These are either identified as a source of the evolution of current aspects of practice or as a definite movement away from particular patterns of behaviour and routines. The co-researchers also tend to place these experiences within critical phases of their career development. Moreover, reference was often made to the historical and social context in which these events occurred. This becomes particularly evident when discussing curriculum and pedagogical issues and incidents that had occurred during different phases of their career.

The early phase of the career is notable for each of these teachers as it marks the beginning of the establishment of their identity as a teacher. All describe this as a time of "survival". Others, who showed an interest in their work, attended to some of their emotional needs and assumed roles—as mentors are still regarded appreciatively and with affection. These critical people are considered as role models. Moreover, those identified had either challenged the co-researchers' thinking and/ or supported their efforts to take risks, to try alternatives and to change aspects of their practice. These people (eg colleagues, principal) are noted as having been highly influential to their cognitive and social development and sense of professional identity. The teachers' experiences in various school contexts are also regarded as being beneficial to their own growth. As well, the need to modify and change aspects of practice, in order to meet the students' needs in different socio-cultural contexts that were experienced throughout the career, also provided opportunities for the Advanced Skills Teachers to broaden their outlook. The co-researchers' own efforts to take principled deliberative action when their values conflicted with that of the school appears to have been of benefit for their own self-growth.

Unexpected incidents in the classroom are also identified as critical turning points. These appear to have involved reflection-in-action and further reflection-on-the action (Schon 1983). Many of these spontaneous incidents were followed up with further inquiry. Moreover, external interventions,

especially in relation to the curriculum are also identified to be catalysts that have had some influence on each of the teachers' own development throughout the career. The career life histories illuminated how feeling a moral sense of responsibility to the students provided the incentive to find creative means of working through external curriculum demands for change. However, the lack of, or need for more appropriate teacher resource material also provided incentive to search for alternative means to support the students' learning.

In the present context, the four teachers involved with the use of outcome based assessment and reporting consider that this initiative has been catalytic to improvement in their approaches to student assessment. Working with standardised frameworks has motivated them to explore the use alternative student-centred pedagogical approaches. The primary motive is to create a more holistic curriculum that gives attention to the person of the student.

The AST award is recognised as being intrinsically significant to the co-researcher's own sense of professional achievements. The process of documenting aspects of their development and critically reviewing their teaching performance is regarded to have been intensive, but worthwhile. However the status itself, is not seen to hold value, beyond the self.

### **5.3.3 Research Question Two**

The second research question is:

**How do these teachers describe the reflective processes that they use in their practice?**

This question is derived from the premise that the co-researchers DO reflect on practice and that they DO assume responsibility for their own continued improvement. The research findings not only confirm this assumption, but also revealed a depth and complexity of thinking that underscored the reflective activity of each of these teachers. Each of the co-researchers

could confidently articulate their personal theories and the explicit values that underscore their practice. The co-researchers refer to the term “reflection”, as “thinking about practice”; “considering different direction”; “reflective collaboration”; “evaluating”; “rethinking”; “contemplating”; “mulling through”; “reassessing”; “ideas playing around in one’s head”; “weighing up the possibilities”; “gut feelings”; “sensing”. The research finds that in terms of the literature, Butler’s (1992:223) notion of reflection as “the open communicative channel between the social context and the inner self”, appears to best describe the reflective activity of the Advanced Skills Teachers.

The research reveals that there is no one way that reflection contributes to the action taken in practice. However, the reflective process appears to involve both thinking and feeling. It is apparent that different forms of reflection served different context specific interests. There appears to be complementary movement between the use of different forms of reflection, which served these interests. The reflective activity of the teachers appears to be an “enabling” process. This tends to involve deliberative thinking about alternative courses of action, that may be taken or that have been taken, either spontaneously (reflection-in-action), or intentionally (reflection-on-action). Emotions and intuitive “gut feelings” also play a powerful role in the framing and solving of problems through the reflective process. This appears to especially be the case, when an outside force or pressure for change conflicts with the co-researchers’ own views and subjective stance. The value of dialectic reflection for teacher development becomes apparent through the co-researcher’s demonstration of their ability to stand aside from their own selves and to reflect on the subjective and objective aspects of their understanding of the problem.

An important finding of this research is that it is not the reflective interest that appears to be so crucial to decision-making, but the critical intent behind the thinking and subsequent action. When working through issues concerning curriculum reforms, each co-researcher expressed a need to have an idea of the purpose, rationale or theory behind the initiative. This provides a frame



of reference against their own values and personal practical knowledge. For some, there is a need to reflect at a technical level in order to make sense of the new idea. However, technical fidelity to prescribed means is short-lived. The commitment and over-riding sense of responsibility to the students seems to provide the impetus to engage in further inquiry in order to create meaning. For some of the Advanced Skills Teachers, it was at this stage, that they challenged aspects of the reforms and looked for collaborative and collegial support from others. An unexpected finding of the research is that the standardized frameworks and the political push to narrow the curriculum has provided a catalyst for these teachers to create and to find alternative pedagogical approaches, to ensure that the classroom is one of student centred learning. Some of these teachers now give greater attention to creating opportunities for engagement in reflective dialogue with their students, albeit in different degrees and ways.

Introspection is a form of reflection that serves both personal and critical interests for these teachers. This inner dialogue with the self appears to assist the co-researchers to consider their priorities and to re-connect to the self. This serves as an intuitive safety valve that effects consideration for their own personal well being and that of their students. This quiet reflective activity has prompted the teachers to find ways to create space and time for "calm", for their students and themselves. Introspective activity appears to have helped these teachers to re-connect to the moral purpose of their role. It has influenced action taken to create a more holistic approach to curriculum that balances the emphasis on student cognition with creative, aesthetic and spiritual dimensions. In effect, this enables the classroom context to be transformed in a manner that counterbalances the pressures of the outside social world.

Clearly then, reflection does contribute to principled action in practice. Moreover, reflection appears to play an integral role in teacher professional development.

### 5.3.4 Research Question Three

The third research question is:

**What forms of support for professional development do these teachers identify as being important to their professional learning?**

The co-researchers could clearly identify the format for professional development that most suited their own personalities and learning styles. However, each strongly emphasises that they prefer to have scope and flexibility to be in a position to more readily access different types and forms of activities that might suit their particular needs, at a particular time, for a particular purpose. Sessions that incorporate collaborative and practical components are most preferred. These teachers, in their own way, search for alternative sources of support to meet self-identified needs.

Involvement in school based curriculum development is considered to have been a worthwhile learning experience, as it has helped to transform thinking about student learning in the particular key learning area. It appears to provide a school context for collaborative planning and deliberation on curriculum and pedagogical issues. All of the co-researchers frame their evaluations of effective collaborative school efforts in terms of the level of collegial relationships that exists. Each stressed the personal need to feel valued for what they are already doing, when working through whole school efforts. Some indicate that this can at times influence their contribution to involvement in whole school change efforts. However, from a less positive perspective, there is concern that the individual KLA focus can tend to be disjointed and fragment the curriculum.

A supportive and encouraging leader is considered as being important to each of the co-researcher's self-development. When considering their career life histories, four identified principals who took an active interest in their students and their teaching and challenged and encouraged them to be risk takers. The co-researchers raise the issue of justice and the need for greater, equal opportunity for all members of staff and not just a "select few",

to be involved in school decision-making. All appreciate opportunities for discussion on issues relevant to the school community, the provision of support structures for collaborative planning and the chance to interact socially with colleagues.

The assumption of key/lead roles in school curriculum development appears to enhance the personal and professional self of the teacher. However, there is expressed concern that the additional pressures that these roles place on individuals as well as the time and energy that is consequently taken from classroom or personal life. This only seems to become apparent when there are inadequate school support structures or too many pressures for change. The existing key/lead teacher networks appear to be valued as a worthwhile source of professional development for those in the key role/s. The pressure of too little time and over crowded staff meeting agendas, often means that those in key or lead roles are not able to process information with other teachers on their staff in a meaningful way.

In contrast, those teachers who assumed key roles in the *ELA Inservice Project* claimed the process to be worthwhile to their learning. However, those who were not Key Teachers found the two-year span of the ELA Inservice workshops, time consuming and experienced difficulty with the technical terms, or in their word, "jargon". It was only when these teachers collaboratively planned with others and had some understanding of its practical application that they were able to make sense of the new syllabus and to critically consider its implications for their own practice.

Each of the co-researchers considers that they had a responsibility to be informed about current trends in curriculum and educational thinking. This is seen as being vital to their effectiveness as a teacher. The opportunity to share ideas, to collaborate and to engage in professional conversation has helped some of the co-researchers to develop greater self-confidence in terms of their professional selves. These teachers in their own way, search

for other colleagues and create their own networks, albeit, in an "ad hoc" manner, to support this inquiry process.

The co-researchers emphasise that they need and appreciate having time to ponder, to dialogue and to collaborate with others, to "play" and to involve the students in the "playing", in the inquiry process. Thus, the multiplicity of changes to be implemented within a short time frame is identified as problematic. The pressure of "getting it right", was particularly experienced in relation to outcome based assessment and reporting procedures. Time, or the lack of it, appears to create the greatest concern relating to the ecology of teacher development. The co-researchers identify the need to monitor their involvements outside of the classroom, especially those that relate to school based curriculum development. Moreover, these teachers are seeking support that focuses on alternative pedagogical approaches that promote student centred learning and student personal development. There is hope for a greater balance to exist between system driven school-based initiatives and those that are more self or school directed.

Four of the teachers express some disappointment that their achievement of being awarded AST (1) status was not acknowledged or celebrated within their own school communities. This sense of a devaluing of the status is aggravated, when comparisons are made to system and school recognition of administrative appointments. However, each co-researcher refers to a sense of belonging and working within an entity that holds personal meaning. As teachers, they do feel valued by the system and supported in their development and teaching. Moreover, each co-researcher refers to the relevance of the mission and/or vision of Catholic schooling, either for their practice, or in terms of some decision that they or others made. They also indicate that they feel that they "belong to", or "belong with"; rather than "work for" *Brisbane Catholic Education*.

## **5.4 CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

### **5.4.1 Conclusions and Implications for the Profession**

The following conclusions represent attempts to better understand the role that reflection plays in leading teacher professional development, from an inside perspective of five Advanced Skills Teachers' professional lives. It is emphasised that any tentative conclusions drawn from this research are made with due respect for each co-researcher as a "self in transition" (Carson 1992: 161).

This study concludes that reflection holds potential to play a powerful role in teacher professional development. However, how teachers reflect tends to be complex, idiosyncratic and at times a very intimate process. Moreover, the constructs of teacher professional development, as well as teacher perception of effective practice are also idiosyncratic, complex and clearly influenced by the interplay of a wide range of personal and contextual factors. This research has emphasised that teaching, reflection and professional development are socially constructed phenomena. Teachers do evolve and develop personally and professionally over time, through many and varied experiences and interactions with others in different contexts. The ability and disposition to engage in the reflective process appears to evolve and to develop through the teachers' growing awareness of their personal and professional selves. This is a career long process, which involves developmental learning, conscious effort and the support and challenge from significant others, particularly from those within the school context.

The research findings indicate that there is no single model of a reflective practitioner. Teachers bring distinctive personal attributes and characteristics as well as diversity of perspective to the teaching role. Any notion that all teachers might conform to some norm in terms of their reflective activity or professional learning is a chimerical one. Therefore, in any efforts to support teacher development, care must be taken to avoid the

promotion of stereo-typical images of “the reflective practitioner” or the “Advanced Skills Teacher”. This also pertains to the arbitrary imposition of expectations for what constitutes effective practice or quality learning. The process as well as the findings of this research strongly suggest that these can only hold relevance and meaning, when contextualised within the multi-dimensional “big picture”, of all that they represent.

These results concur with other research (eg Louden 1992; Beattie 1997; Clarke 1997) in concluding that efforts to gain insight into reflective practice or professional development cannot be separated from what each teacher values and considers to be paramount and worthwhile for quality education. Such values and ideals may be made explicit through reflection on the cognitive, affective and social dimensions of knowledge. It would seem that reflection on knowing from each these dimensions does appear to play an integral “mediating” (Clarke and Peter 1993:12) role in enabling the teacher to connect to the self, to others beyond the self and to the social milieu in which practice is situated. This highly interactive process appears to enable the teacher to connect to the moral purpose of teaching (Day 1994; Haynes 1998). It is this, which seems to empower them to be willing and able to be morally responsible and to accept the consequences of their decision-making and actions.

The teachers’ sense of care for and commitment to their students is at the heart of teaching (Noddings 1992; Buchmann 1993). The relational and emotional dimensions of teaching generate a sense of intrinsic satisfaction and self-value. Their commitment to “making a difference” in students’ lives sources the passion for teaching. This seems to drive efforts to explore various avenues that might assist them to do their work well. The teachers’ care for students clearly deserves to be recognised as being much more than sentiment. The very strong influence that it has on personal and professional development warrants acknowledgment. The sense of care for students is the most salient impetus behind professional deliberations and generative efforts to improve practice. This then implies that it could provide

a worthwhile starting point for many efforts that support teachers in their professional learning.

This study also tentatively concludes that the reflective process enables teachers to express this sense of care through commitment to the ethic of professional and moral responsibility. For the co-researchers, the provision of care equates with being morally responsible and accountable for choices and decisions made in terms of the interests and rights of the students. This became the most powerful and salient force in promoting ongoing professional development. Doing "the right thing by students", appears to generate intrinsic motivation to continually modify, change and improve teaching, so as to enhance the quality of student learning. Important too, are efforts that help in terms of relating with students through being in touch with their world. Moreover, the ethic of moral responsibility appears to provide the motivation to find various ways of means of coping with the multitude of demands that come from the many and varied pressure sources for change.

This study has found that acting "rightly" (Buchmann 1993; Colnerud 1997), in terms of the moral purpose of teaching takes the notion of "effective teaching", to a different realm of meaning. The reflective process could be identified in terms of playing a mediating role in bringing together subjective and objective aspects of understanding. This appears to enable teachers to connect their ideals/vision with directed principled action. It also illuminates consistencies and inconsistencies with the vision/mission of the school. This appears to assist in the taking of principled action. Thus, the inter-relating ethical components of care, consequences and consistency, represented through use of the Borromean Knot of Ethics by Haynes (1998:26) could well be considered in efforts that have focus on personal and school renewal, especially in relation to outside forces for curriculum reform.

Being morally responsible is not an easy path to follow. It demands the making of difficult decisions in response to varied dilemmas. As such, it requires intense emotional labour (Hochschild 1998). It can involve risk

taking, acceptance of a state of flux, uncertainty, times of frustration, persistence and great flexibility. Yet, it also appears to give teaching its integrity and its soul. Excitement and synergy are generated through the creation of opportunities for innovation and deeper teacher/student relationships. This often provides the catalyst for new learning. In this sense, teachers become active proponents for their own learning, as well as for student learning. Moreover, teachers are self-empowered to work for social change through the curriculum process.

The *Choosing Our Future* (BCE) curriculum initiatives appear to have provided catalysts for these teachers to create a more holistic curriculum with increased consideration for the social, aesthetic, spiritual and affective dimensions of the students' world. The moral ethic of care appears to be influential to deliberative action taken to find creative means of working with the reforms in a manner that attends to the person of student. Such efforts seem to help to counterbalance the political, economic rationalistic emphasis on the development of student cognition and the narrow use of standardised assessment and reporting frameworks. The emphasis on promoting students as life long learners appears to provide incentive for teachers to work with a variety of learner-centred pedagogical approaches. Many of these strategies involve teacher modelling of the reflective processes for students. Thus, through the curriculum process, teachers themselves are able to create further opportunities to collaboratively reflect on aspects of practice with their students.

Reflection appears to be an active process that enables the teacher to connect with and to make explicit the values embedded in their teaching. The findings suggest that attention to the moral purposes of education, from the perspective of Catholic schooling may be mediated through personal images of teaching. Indeed, these socially constructed personal images appear to very much reflect the self of the teacher. These images seem to serve as a useful medium thorough which teachers are able to make explicit the values inherent in their personal theories. The embedded values within



the teachers' personal images of teaching underscore much of their decision-making.

Moreover, teachers naturally tend to give first attention to the affective modality, when dealing with problematic pedagogical or curriculum issues. The processes and findings of this study strongly indicate that attention to teachers' emotions and feelings through the reflective process may facilitate in the development of moral frameworks for practice. Thus, it would be worthwhile to give attention to the affective as well as the cognitive domains when supporting teacher development and school renewal (Fullan 1997).

School contexts characterised by collegial relationships among staff appear to bring forth a sense of belonging and community. This appears to also assist teachers to connect to the vision of the school. The need for teachers to feel valued for whom they are, as much as for what they do, within the school community and the system was strongly emphasised in this study. Also, three of the teachers identified times when they felt that in moving forward, the culture of the past at the school or in terms of their practice still needed to be valued for its relevance at that time. This indicates a need to respect the events of the past in terms of their contextual relevance, as well giving consideration to the phenomenology of change in whole school renewal efforts.

The principal of the school seems to play an important role in supporting, assisting and challenging teachers to develop professionally. The principal's interest in the teacher's work; provision of support to try new ideas; creation of opportunities for collaborative networking, both at and beyond the school; the promotion of collaborative, whole school discussion; negotiation concerning school curriculum projects; as well as the making of time for staff social interaction were highlighted as important factors that contribute to the holistic development of the teacher as a person. This also appears to contribute to the development of collaborative school cultures.

This study also raises the issue as to whether there needs to be greater recognition of the AST award within *Brisbane Catholic Education*. The findings suggest that any such acknowledgment could perhaps be addressed more in terms of the moral purpose of Catholic Schooling, than for assuming additional roles outside of the classroom. Moreover, in terms of the AST application process, the reflective folio compilation and written self-review, whilst time consuming was deemed to be a very worthwhile and intrinsically satisfying undertaking. Thus, perhaps consideration could be given to the provision of structures for teachers to engage in a similar process, whereby they might reflect on their successes, as well as areas in need of development. This may hold potential to enable teachers to be active proponents for their own development.

A conclusion drawn from this study is that there does not appear to be any one "better" way for teachers to reflect on their practice. The interplay between the social, cognitive and emotional dimensions of knowledge through the reflective process appears to allow for fluid and complementary movement between the different reflective interests. The teacher might utilise a variety of reflective forms and processes through various modes to serve context specific interests. These involve reflection on practical problems, collaborative efforts with others, the spontaneity of the classroom and at times quiet solitude. Deliberative reflection, inquiry and collaborative efforts with others both at and beyond the school appear to be highly conducive to teacher development. However, so too is that time for inner dialoguing and being in touch with the intuitive inner self. Introspective contemplation enables teachers to reconnect to the moral nature of their role. Therefore, care must be taken not to advance the promotion of one form of reflective activity, without due recognition that other forms may also be of benefit to personal and professional growth. The review of the literature indicates that there is strong promotion for inquiry and collaborative networking (eg. Beattie 1997; Sachs 1997; Proudford 1998). However, there appears to be much less emphasis given to the enhancement of practice through other forms of reflection. The findings of

this research strongly suggest that the forms are complimentary and that reflective engagement in all enhances ongoing development. At times one form is a more appropriate one. At times, insights gleaned from collaborative, deliberative reflective activity may become more meaningful through quiet introspective contemplation. Similarly, introspective thoughts may be clarified through engagement in critical dialogue with others.

It is the critical intent behind deliberative decision-making that needs to be explicated, when determining the level of teacher reflective activity. The teachers' ability to articulate the intent or the motive behind actions, through the reflective process appears to be vitally important for self directed professional development. Those supporting teachers with curriculum and those researching teacher reflective activity, to be mindful of the complexity and many dimensions of professional life that teachers must attend to, in terms of their own growth and development. Reflective activity that appears to be at the "what works" level (Burroughs-Lange et. al. 1994), when dealing with problematic issues may indeed have deeper intent. Some teachers choose to work in a technical way, in order to gain a working knowledge of a particular pedagogical or curriculum issue. This then assists them to make informed decisions, when ascertaining benefits for the learning of the students. Reflection at the technical level was indeed, but one necessary part of an ongoing reflective cycle of creating meaning. This suggests that there is a need to explore the thinking surrounding the "why", beneath the "why", of action taken. Moreover, this study challenges the world of scholarship to consider that teachers have the integrity and the intelligence not to become political "pawns" or "puppets". This study attests to their ability to broaden their vision through awareness of political and social issues that have definite implications for education. However, they appear to be best able to respond in a critically reflective manner through their work in the school. It is here, that they can most make the difference, because they have their students' best interests at heart. This implies that there is a definite need to continue to support teacher commitment to the moral purpose of teaching, as well as with the development of curriculum and

pedagogical skills and knowledge. The findings indicate that the promotion of a reflective approach to curriculum change, either individually or collectively could begin through critical consideration of each of the inter-related aspects of ethics proposed by Haynes (1998). This could involve critical deliberation on the following:

- care for the students from the relational and holistic perspective of student centred learning
- consequences where decisions are objectively considered against aspects of ethics
- consistency where subjective practices are considered against values to ensure deliberate action

A synthesis between individual and whole school renewal enables teachers to reflectively respond to various pressure sources for change. Efforts toward whole school renewal appear to involve greater teacher commitment, when attention is given to the holistic “big picture” in terms of the school’s mission/ vision. The use of processes that provide teachers with flexible structures and sufficient time to reflect, both individually and collaboratively on the implications of any change initiative from the perspective of their own values/ideals also appears to be worthwhile. The principal plays an integral role in promoting the school as a learning community. Moreover, the negotiation of opportunities for teachers to inter-changeably assume and share curriculum leadership roles also holds potential to enhance the personal and professional development of the role holders.

The research also concludes that teachers appreciate having the scope to be self-directed in their own professional learning and to seek support that is appropriate to their needs. This then, presents a challenge to those whose role it is to support teacher development, to engage in critical dialogue and

to collaboratively deliberate with teachers, so that they may find creative and alternative approaches to provide that support.

#### **5.4.2 Areas for Further Research**

The value of this study lay not only in its findings, but also in the research process itself. Hence the involvement in collaborative study or inquiry that is undertaken within one's own working context is highly recommended. This study raises several issues that appear to warrant further research and investigation. The following lines of inquiry are suggested:

- Inquiry into the affect modality in relation to teacher change, especially in terms of its inter-relatedness with the cognitive and social dimensions of knowledge appears to be worthy of further study. This may provide insights into finding alternative ways to best support ongoing teacher development.
- The phenomena associated with moral intent and the reflective form of introspection is deserving of its own inquiry, in terms of its impact on teacher development. This may be facilitated through exploration of personal images of teaching.
- Collaborative inquiry into the impact of learner centred pedagogical approaches and strategies, such as peer and self assessment, negotiated curriculum and student reflection on:
  - teacher development
  - student development
  - school and classroom organisational structures
- Evaluative/comparative type studies in relation to the revised AST application process and the previous process used within the context of *Brisbane Catholic Education*. Providing written responses to AST criteria and the compilation of detailed documentation assists teachers to engage in self-review and to critically reflect on practice and their

own professional development. A comparative analysis could provide worthwhile information, should there be any further moves to revise the AST process.

#### **5.4.3 Closing Comment**

The image of the reflective practitioner is one that could be promoted in terms of commitment to the moral purpose of teaching. In terms of the Advanced Skills Teachers this represented “caring for” and “doing the right thing”, by the students. It is this, which appears to self empower teachers to be active proponents for their own professional growth and development. Moral purpose clearly has an inherent holistic theme of teacher and student development that is achieved through ongoing renewal. This encompasses cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions. This thesis closes with the positive conclusion that the role of reflection in teacher professional development is an active and effortful one that enables the teacher to connect with the self, with the students and with those in and beyond the school community. In so doing, it enables the teacher to connect to the ideals of Catholic schooling and to stay connected to the heart of what it means to be a teacher.

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## APPENDIX A

### *Choosing Our Future Curriculum Recommendations Brisbane Catholic Education (1995)*



# *CHOOSING OUR FUTURE*

## **CURRICULUM REFORM 1995 – 1998 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendation 1**

#### **In regard to the QCC and its associated structures.**

From the consultation process it is recommended that Brisbane CATHOLIC EDUCATION supports and co-operates with the Queensland Curriculum Council and its structure in so far as the activities of the Curriculum Council do not conflict with overarching systemic documentation and strategic plans.

### **Recommendation 2**

#### **In regard to the pre-school curriculum.**

From the consultation process it is recommended that Brisbane CATHOLIC EDUCATION maintains policy in that curriculum in pre-schools should be developmentally based and centred on the individual needs of the child.

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **In regard to the general curriculum framework.**

From the consultation process it is recommended that Brisbane CATHOLIC EDUCATION schools adopt a core curriculum based on the 8 KLAs of the National Framework with Religious Education as an additional Key Learning Area.

### **Recommendation 4**

#### **In regard to providing a sound and general education for Years 1 – 8.**

From the consultation process it is recommended the following core will provide a framework for the curriculum.

The Arts, Cultural Literacy and Language, English, Health & Physical Education, Mathematics, Religious Education, Science, Studies of Society and the Environment, and Technology.

### **Recommendation 5**

#### **In regard to providing a balance between access to sound and general education and maximising student options for years 9 and 10.**

From the consultation process it is recommended that Brisbane CATHOLIC EDUCATION students across Years 9 – 10 will study 8 subjects, 5 of which shall be compulsory with 3 electives.

## **Recommendation 6**

**In regard to allowing students to maximise as far as possible the opportunity to specialise in Years 11 – 12 study as compulsory an English subject\* and Religious Education.**

\*from the consultation it was suggested that while English be compulsory more than one level of English be available for schools.

## **Recommendation 7**

**In regard to the area of Cultural Literacy and Languages.**

The area of Cultural Literacy and Languages caused the greatest reaction from the consultation process and it is not possible from the data to make a specific recommendations regarding implementation of Cultural Literacy at this stage.

- 7.1 Therefore it is recommended that the issue be investigated more fully to determine recommendations for systemic schools.
- 7.2 Therefore it is recommended that Cultural Literacy and Languages be compulsory for Years 1 – 7. The language component is to be compulsory in years 5, 6, and 7. Students with disabilities and difficulties that will prevent them from participating meaningfully in the language learning component may be considered for exemption. In Years 8 – 12, language learning will be offered as elective.

## **Recommendation 8**

**In regard to Health and Physical Education**

From the consultation process it is recommended that Brisbane CATHOLIC EDUCATION alters current Policy and Guidelines for Action in regard to Physical Education and Sport to reflect that HPE is mandatory from Years 1 – 8. However in Years 9 – 10 students will elect HPE as an elective subject from the HPE Key Learning Area or participate in a strand of Sport and Recreational Studies. This area may be an elective for students in Years 11 and 12.

## **Recommendation 9**

**In regard to Lifeskills**

From the consultation process it is recommended that students be entitled to a coordinated program of Lifeskills education from Years 1 – 12. The understanding of Lifeskills in Catholic Schools will be determined from research.

## **Recommendation 10**

**In regard to Quality Assurance in Curriculum**

From the consultation process it is recommended that a phased implementation of Quality assurance process mechanisms for curriculum reform and monitoring be adopted.

## **Recommendation 11**

### **In regard to school curriculum**

From the consultation process it is recommended that schools be required to have a curriculum program for each KLA and associated subject offered in their school. Such programs are consistent with the Years 1 – 10 Syllabuses (QCC).<sup>\*</sup> Similarly IEPs are required for those students whose needs require an alternative curriculum.

<sup>\*</sup>Presently these would be in 1 – 10 Maths and English. While the program would be Yr 1 – 10 each school would only be responsible for appropriate year levels.

## **Recommendation 12**

### **In regard to outcomes based reporting**

From the consultation process it is recommended that each school move towards outcomes based reporting in accordance with the suggested timeline.

## **Recommendation 13**

### **In regard to current reporting practices and reporting of outcomes**

From the consultation process it is recommended that a review process occur which examines alignment between current reporting practices in years 8 – 10 and outcomes based reporting.

## **Recommendation 14**

### **In regard to nominal time allocations for curriculum areas**

From the consultation process it is recommended that in addition to waiting for the findings from the Queensland Curriculum Council come research regarding the collection of benchmark data concerning nominal time allocations in relation to 9 KLAs be undertaken.

## **Recommendation 15**

### **In regard to the Year 2 Net**

From the consultation process it is recommended that each school will work toward using a net to identify and support children with literacy and numeracy skills in the early years of schooling.

## **Recommendation 16**

### **In regard to running records**

From the consultation process it is recommended that running records be understood as part of the normal monitoring and tracking of student progress in literacy and numeracy in the early years of school as defined in the Year 2 net.

## **Recommendation 17**

### **In regard to the Year 6 Test**

From the consultation process it is recommended that schools participate in the Year 6 Test on a trial basis and monitor its impact including the usefulness of the results.

## **Recommendation 18**

### **In regard to normative monitoring**

Because data is required at system level, it is recommended that normative monitoring across Years 5, 6, 7 and 9 in literacy, numeracy and religious education occur.

## **Recommendation 19**

### **In regard to moderation of student outcomes**

From the consultation process it is recommended that the moderation of student outcomes becomes a necessary component of effectively implementing outcomes based reporting.

## **Recommendation 20**

### **In regard to State School support centres**

From the consultation process it is recommended that where appropriate inter-systemic cooperation in curriculum with State School Support Centre be supported.

## **Recommendation 21**

### **In regard to curriculum leadership**

From the consultation process it is recommended that current system documentation in regard to policy and roles be reviewed to ensure that curriculum leadership is explicitly articulated and linked with the achievement of quality education.

## **Recommendation 22**

### **In regard to Year 10 Exit Statement**

From the consultation process it is recommended that a consultative process begin with schools to determine the possible format of a Year 10 exit statement and processes necessary to ensure comparability.

## **Recommendation 23**

### **In regard to Post-compulsory Education**

In regard to the convergence of general and vocational education, the coordination, accreditation, registration and quality assurance procedures of the BOSSSS of specific ASF level 1 and level 2 courses are supported.

**Recommendation 24**

In the post compulsory years the suggested coordination through BOSSSS including competency based outcomes within vocational education modules should be supported.

**Recommendation 25**

In regard to the provision of technology assistance to manage the data from outcomes based planning, assessing and reporting in curriculum.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Advanced Skills Teacher (AST1) Criteria** ***Brisbane Catholic Education***

# AST 1 STATUS APPLICATION

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## CRITERION 1

**Exemplary understanding of, commitment to and demonstrated support for the values and ethos of the school/system.**

To satisfy this criterion the applicant shall demonstrate:

- (a) an ability and willingness to articulate the implications of the Mission Statement in relation to the school curriculum;
- (b) an ability and willingness to review and reflect positively upon the teacher's own teaching practices and the general school educational practices in light of the school's current Mission Statement;
- (c) an ability to incorporate the values of the Mission Statement into the school curriculum in line with the demands of good teaching practice;
- (d) active support of school worship and liturgy.

I submit the following as my evidence of having satisfied the above criterion and its performance indicators ☐

I shall submit other appropriate evidence at my interview, if such is requested, of having satisfied the above criterion and its performance indicators ☐

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# AST 1 STATUS APPLICATION

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## CRITERION 2

**Exemplary skills in effective classroom practices, in evaluating and reporting students' progress and in demonstrated positive relationships with students.**

To satisfy this criterion the applicant shall demonstrate:

- (a) substantial involvement in reflective, adaptive and non-discriminatory classroom procedures and teaching strategies;
- (b) thorough preparation and purposeful planning, contributing to highly effective classroom management which provides a classroom climate conducive to learning;
- (c) use of a variety of appropriate procedures for assessment of students, evaluation of programs, and appropriate reporting procedures, in keeping with the ethos of the school;
- (d) consistent provision of effective assistance to students with specific educational needs;
- (e) skills in providing a high level of pastoral care within the classroom.

I submit the following as my evidence of having satisfied the above criterion and its performance indicators ☐

I shall submit other appropriate evidence at my interview, if such is requested, of having satisfied the above criterion and its performance indicators ☐

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# AST 1 STATUS APPLICATION

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## CRITERION 3

**Exemplary skills in and achievement of personal and professional relationships with parents and the wider community.**

To satisfy this criterion, the applicant shall demonstrate:

- (a) the ability to develop climates conducive to healthy inter-personal and social relationships;
- (b) effective communication practices;
- (c) the capacity to work in partnerships with parents and community organizations;
- (d) the development of healthy interactions between school and community.

I submit the following as my evidence of having satisfied the above criterion and its performance indicators ☐

I shall submit other appropriate evidence at my interview, if such is requested, of having satisfied the above criterion and its performance indicators ☐

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## AST 1 STATUS APPLICATION

### CRITERION 4

Proven effective skills of a personal and professional ability to work collaboratively with administration, teachers and other staff members.

To satisfy this criterion the applicant shall demonstrate:

- (a) active support for school policy;
- (b) frequent effective collaboration with colleagues in areas such as planning and evaluation;
- (c) positive support for and collaboration with other teachers in their professional development;
- (d) a significant participation in the organisation, planning and development of the school's curriculum.

I submit the following as my evidence of having satisfied the above criterion and its performance indicators ☐

I shall submit other appropriate evidence at my interview, if such is requested, of having satisfied the above criterion and its performance indicators ☐

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# AST 1 STATUS APPLICATION

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## CRITERION 5

**Proven ability to develop and implement ideas gained from professional activities to enhance students' learning, and to promote organisational development.**

To satisfy this criterion the applicant will demonstrate that he/she has:

- (a) manifested the integration of personal and professional life, expertise, and a positive outlook in a superior performance within the school;
- (b) shown insight into individual student needs, and responded to changed circumstances with innovative and well researched practices;
- (c) implemented innovative classroom strategies based on the above;
- (d) shared these teaching/learning experiences with other teachers.

I submit the following as my evidence of having satisfied the above criterion and its performance indicators ☐

I shall submit other appropriate evidence at my interview, if such is requested, of having satisfied the above criterion and its performance indicators ☐

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## **APPENDIX C**

### **Inquiry Project Planning and Recording Template McArdle and Spry (1996)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Project

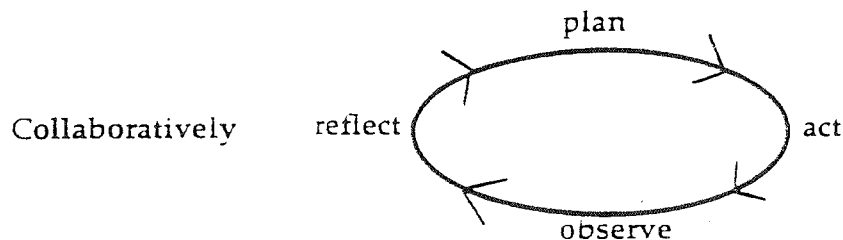
Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

## Research Project

- develop a plan of action -  
to improve what is already happening or to change an existing situation
- put our plan into action
- observe the effects of our action
- reflect on the effects of our action as regards to further planning and action.

This particular model includes collaborative activities with the project consultant or colleagues, at each of the four stages. This approach is flexible as the four stages are cyclic and adjustments are made as needed.



## Project Form

**Plan stage:** Here we name the focus of our particular activity and define its purpose. The **Purpose of the Project** and the **Relevant Background Information** is recorded. **Broad Projected Outcomes** are noted.

**Action Stage:** The plan is put into action following a sequence of steps (**Action Plan**). Overall **Results** are recorded.

**Observation Stage:** Observations are made on the projects and results produced (**Observations**). The effects of our action are observed.

**Reflection Stage:** This is an evaluative stage and judgements are made regarding effects and issues. (**Reflection**). Recommendations and future action (**Future Action**) are part of this reflective stage.

## RESEARCH PROJECT

NAME OF PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is: \_\_\_\_\_

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The context \_\_\_\_\_

### PROJECTED OUTCOMES

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### ACTION

1. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_

### Steps of implementation

2. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

### OVERALL RESULTS

### Success/Failures related to Purpose

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### OBSERVATIONS

### Insights I have

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### REFLECTIONS

My points of satisfaction...  
What I might do differently next time?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### FUTURE ACTION

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_