

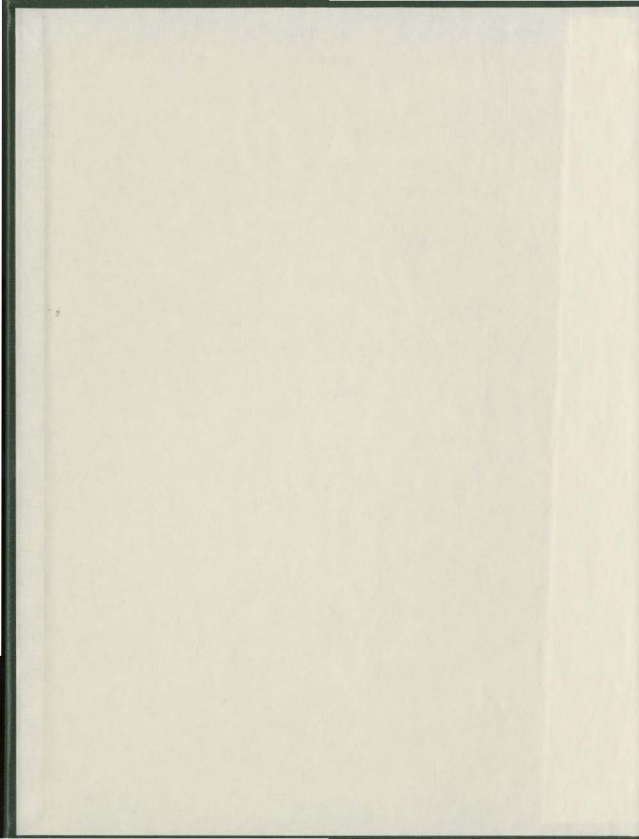
ORGANIZATIONAL MEMORY IN HIGH SCHOOLS:
A CASE STUDY

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

**TOTAL OF 10 PAGES ONLY
MAY BE XEROXED**

(Without Author's Permission)

PETER G. SUTHERLAND



Organizational Memory in High Schools
A Case Study

By
Peter G. Sutherland, B.Sc., B. Ed.

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Education

Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland
2001

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

Abstract

The site for this qualitative case study was a high school in western Newfoundland and Labrador. The high school was created in 1998 when the school board reorganized the schools in our town to permit more efficient utilization of school facilities. The teaching staff for our high school was drawn from three local high schools as well as from other parts of the school board and province. When our high school opened its doors in September 1998 it was considered to be a new school.

The purpose of my case study was to discover the essence of our school's culture and organizational memory, the shared basic assumptions of the teaching staff. The data gathered from open-ended interviews, observations, participant journals, and school artifacts led me to identify eight shared basic assumptions and identify the major components of our school's organizational memory. My research led me to conclude that our school's organizational memory is deeply rooted in the experiences of those teachers who taught in the same school building prior to 1998 when it was a large denominational high school in our town.

In chapter five I make recommendations intended to address the major issues identified by the participants in the case study. The issues identified are weaknesses which need to be addressed if our school is to progress and establish a unique identity based on a stronger sense of community and purpose.

Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement of my district director of education and my school principal. The case study would not have proceeded without their permission and assistance.

I owe a large debt of gratitude to the nine participants who volunteered to participate in the case study and who freely shared their experiences and thoughts with me. My interactions with the participants were illuminating and humbling. I was truly flattered by their trust in me.

Dr. Rosonna Tite, my thesis supervisor, gave her support and advice at each stage of the process from the research proposal to the end product. I appreciated Dr. Tite's specific commentary and the very efficient manner in which she dealt with my material. Dr. Tite's professionalism contributed significantly to the completion of my research.

My family was always supportive of my work. I wish to thank them for the opportunities over the past three years to spend many hours immersed in my work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE	11
3 METHODOLOGY	46
4 FINDINGS	67
5 CONCLUSION	118
REFERENCES	133
APPENDICES	139

Chapter One

Introduction

Cycle of Inquiry

Marshall and Rossman (1999) state the following

In qualitative inquiry, initial curiosities for research often come from real-world observations, emerging from the interplay of the researcher's direct experience, tacit theories, political commitments, interests in practice, and growing scholarly interests. At other times, the topic of interest derives from theoretical traditions and their attendant empirical research. (p. 25)

The dialectic relationship between the components referenced by Marshall and Rossman (1999) is described by the authors as a cycle of inquiry (p. 25). My cycle of inquiry began in the early 1990s when my political involvement with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association provided me the opportunity to visit schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. These visitations to primary, elementary, middle, and high schools allowed me to observe the similarities and differences which existed between schools. These experiences led me to the sense that schools shared easily identifiable gross characteristics, but differed significantly from one another in terms of climate and culture. Conversations with school administrators and classroom teachers provided anecdotal evidence indicating substantial variation among schools with respect to attitudes towards change initiatives and school growth plans. The next stage of my cycle of inquiry arose from my continued political involvement with the Newfoundland

and Labrador Teachers' Association

For two years, 1993-1995, I was on approved leave from my teaching position in a high school in western Newfoundland and Labrador. When my leave began, the high school was staffed by a highly motivated group of teachers led by a cohort of senior educators who had been teaching together for several years. The school was described by the community as dynamic, student-centred, and well run with a focus on high student achievement in all areas of school life.

During the two years of my leave several of the most senior teachers retired. These retirements represented approximately one-third of the teaching staff. The subsequent vacancies were filled by teachers new to the school. The school also experienced a change in school administration during this period. The teachers, with whom I kept in contact during my leave, invariably reported that the significant change in staff was causing difficulties, particularly with respect to classroom management issues and general student behaviour. When I first heard of this, I did not give the comments a large degree of credence since changes in staffing often generate critical comment.

By the time I returned to my teaching position in September of 1995 another change in school administration had taken place. Additionally, the decision to close a small denominational school in the town had resulted in the transfer of a small number of teachers and students into the school during the same period.

Upon my return to school I was astonished at the extent of change that had

occurred. The building was unaltered, but the school's climate was obviously different. The school was far noisier than before and at times chaotic. Students pushed and shoved in the corridors, students shouted loudly at one another while changing classes, students regularly arrived late for class and wandered into class without knocking on the door to be admitted. In-class behaviour had also changed. Students expected to sit where they wanted and how they wanted which included sitting on the floor during class. I noted a general deterioration in the respect accorded teachers by students. Classes seemed to be competition between teachers and students, not places of cooperation.

The collegiality that had existed on the staff prior to my two-year leave seemed to have dissipated. There were frequent disagreements over a number of germane issues such as classroom management, student evaluation, and expectations for student conduct. Staff meetings regularly ended without consensus on significant matters affecting the school community. The new principal often had to make decisions which a significant portion of the staff did not strongly support. This produced inconsistent application of school rules as well as inconsistencies in other areas such as student evaluation.

Community support for the school was slipping. Several parents voiced concerns to me regarding their perception of the school's demise, they were seeking advice as to how they could effectively air their deep concerns. A few parents referred to the school as having "fallen apart."

It was obvious to me that no one in a position of leadership at the school nor

school board level had given any thought to the impact on our school's culture of the major staffing changes. I concluded that it had been assumed our school would continue unchanged, that the more senior teachers would somehow steer the ship through the unsettled weather without too much trouble or effort. This was a major error in judgment. We spent the next three years building a new school community.

These experiences prompted me to consider the nature of school culture and its centrality in the life of the school community and left me to wonder about the artifacts of culture as well as the transmission of culture in periods of rapid staff change. How does a school remember "how things are done?" How does a school ensure that its strengths and values are maintained for the benefit of its stakeholders?

The provincial referendum held in 1997 tolled the demise of the province's denominational education system. This generated the next stage of my cycle of inquiry. Following the referendum, the new school district administrators decided to reorganize the local school zone. The town would have one primary, one elementary, one middle, and one high school effective September 1998.

The district director established a number of committees which were mandated to examine numerous issues arising from the formation of the new school system for our town. These committees dealt with a wide range of issues such as the selection of new names for the schools and the appropriate preservation of school memorabilia. During the meetings held with the various stakeholders throughout the winter and spring of 1998 the

need to “bring people together” was given considerable attention. The need to create new school communities was often voiced. I interpreted this to mean that we were actually going to enter into a process whereby teachers, parents, and students would have opportunities to explore what I have come to call shared basic assumptions. Unfortunately, this did not occur. The committees concentrated on the logistics of the reorganization and the artifacts of school culture, but did not consider the foundations of school culture, the shared basic assumptions.

Most of the teachers on our staff were reassigned to other schools. Five of us were assigned to the new high school for the town which would occupy the building that had been the largest of the town’s denominational high schools. When the new high school opened in September we introduced ourselves to one another, engaged in a team-building exercise, walked through the policies for what had been the previous high school, and then launched into the school year. There was little mention of school culture, values, or shared basic assumptions. In fact, many of the teachers from the previous high school simply said, “Welcome aboard.” It was clear to me at that juncture that this was not a new school in the minds of many people.

Once again developments led me to think seriously about school culture. Here we were in a “new school” operating as though little had changed despite the reality that the staff of forty-five teachers originated from different schools in the district and around the province. The great majority of the staff came from three high schools which no longer

existed. As the year progressed differences emerged over significant aspects of the school's life. We did not all share the same assumptions about the craft of teaching, neither did we share the same perception of the school community nor the same concept of student-teacher relationships. Large numbers of teachers voiced concerns regarding the lack of cohesion.

The decision to initiate this study was taken near the end of my first year of graduate studies in education. My academic responsibilities led me to do scholarly work on school culture and organizational memory. The dovetailing of my direct experience and scholarly interests crystallized into this research study.

Purpose

This qualitative study is an exploration of the school's organizational memory. Organizational memory refers to stored information from an organization that can be brought to bear on present decisions.

The purpose of this study is to uncover the staff's shared basic assumptions, the essence of the school's culture and the school's organizational memory. This is significant because the shared basic assumptions of any organization largely determine what an organization can and cannot accomplish effectively. A school's culture permits certain changes to be internalized, but generates considerable resistance to other types of changes. Schein (1992) states:

The culture of a group can be defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that

the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaption and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (p. 12)

Since we are in a constant process of change, it is necessary to have a deep understanding of our school's culture so that change processes can be managed effectively and professionally.

Our school was created in 1998. The entire teaching staff was drawn from different schools each of which had an organizational memory that had developed over many years. This has implications for the operation of our school. The teachers of our new school brought with them components of their previous schools' organizational memories. Are these organizational memories congruous? Are the organizational memories sources of problems because they do not contain the same or similar shared basic assumptions?

Research questions

Research questions "define how the purpose or goals will be carried out. They delineate the specific hypothesis or problems addressed in a study." (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 37). The research questions for this study were designed to focus on the individual lived experiences of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 4) and represent the beginning of an exploration allowing for open-ended interaction and an

emergent research design. The following research questions guided my work:

1. In the views of the participants, what are the shared basic assumptions of our school?
2. In the views of the participants, does incongruity exist between the values espoused by our school and the shared basic assumptions of our school?
3. In the views of the participants, what constitutes the organizational memory of our school?
4. In the views of the participants, how should the school's organizational memory be transmitted to new teachers?

Significance of the study

Research of this type was not conducted previously in any of the schools from which the staff members originated. The review of literature did not disclose any other instances of this type of research in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador nor elsewhere. Thus, a study of this nature is both timely and relevant.

The Department of Education publication entitled Education Statistics 2000-2001-Elementary-Secondary indicates that since the 1996-1997 school year the number of schools in the province had been reduced from 432 to 337 (p. 11). This reduction in the number of schools has resulted in the formation of new schools through the processes of school closure and consolidation. The anticipated decline in student population over the next several years will probably result in the continuation of these processes. Also,

teacher demographics point to the retirement of a substantial portion of the current teaching force during this decade, this will result in substantive staffing changes over a relatively short time frame

The identification and description of shared basic assumptions will be of significant use to the school as the school's stakeholders plan for school change initiatives. As suggested earlier, the failure to recognize the power of an organization's shared basic assumptions can result in the demise of well-intentioned change initiatives due to the incompatibility of the initiative and the shared basic assumption(s).

The research findings should also help to build a stronger school community since considerable discussion may be generated by the findings. This high school, like other large high schools, is fragmented into departments with minimal horizontal communication. Since shared basic assumptions are broadly based, their identification should result in discussions across departments as well as along the lines of authority within the school.

The description of the school's organizational memory should be valuable since the noncritical utilization of organizational memory is susceptible to misuse and abuse (Walsh & Ungson, 1991). Such misuse and abuse of organizational memory can have negative consequences for the school. Documentation of the school's organizational memory is valuable because during the next five years approximately one third of the staff will become eligible for retirement. If the time frame is extended to seven years,

approximately one half of the teachers will be eligible to retire. These probable retirements include the principal and most department heads. A record of the school's organizational memory will be beneficial as these senior teachers exit the school to be replaced by new educators. It will provide a link with the school's history thereby ensuring a degree of continuity during a period of rapid transition.

Failure to attend adequately to the importance of organizational memory and school culture may well result in periods of substantial instability. This instability has the potential to negatively affect student performance, school - community relations, as well as a school's ability to identify areas for improvement requiring broadly supported strategies designed to ameliorate perceived areas of weakness.

Limitations of the study

The writing of this thesis was an exercise in grounded theory since the identification of the shared basic assumptions and the description of organizational memory arose directly from the data obtained during the case study. The findings of the research are therefore specific to the school and are not generalizable to other schools because the findings are rooted in the lived experiences of the participants.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Introduction

In this review of literature I present a summary of the broad themes encountered in my research of organizational culture, school culture, and organizational memory. These themes are found in the publications of educators at the post-secondary level as well as educators at the school level. Themes were also drawn from the published work of business consultants and government departments.

This chapter contains the following sections: (a) a description of the relationship between organizational culture and organizational memory; (b) the link between school culture components and school performance; (c) the high degree of relevance this research has for school leaders; and (d) a summary.

Organizational culture and organizational memory

Shafritz and Ott (1996) trace the origin of the widespread interest in organizational culture reform, evident in the past twenty years, to the work of the American management theorist Dr. W. Edwards Deming. In 1950, Dr. Deming was invited to Japan to present his statistical quality control concepts of business management. Deming's ideas, and those of other management theorists who followed him to Japan, are credited with a huge transformation in the approach to business management in Japan that resulted in massive increases in product quality and worker

productivity in Japanese industry. By the mid-1970's, Japan was recognized as the world leader in quality and productivity (p. 486).

The work of Dr. W. Edwards Deming remained relatively unknown in North America until 1980 when the American television network NBC aired a documentary entitled "If Japan Can... Why Can't We?" in which the adoption of Deming's ideas in Japan were depicted. Concern over the decline of industrial productivity in the United States had been growing for a decade. The NBC documentary made the concern public and resulted in a nation-wide focus on organizational culture reform within the American business and industrial communities (Shafritz & Ott, 1996, p. 486).

The concern with declining productivity and quality was not limited to the corporate world. In the United States, the public education system came under close scrutiny because a link was forged between declining productivity and declining school effectiveness. Owens (1998) describes school effectiveness as a major item in the American public agenda in the 1980's. Owens states:

Although there had been a steadily growing body of research literature on effective schools and what they were like, a virtually unrelated "reform movement" suddenly erupted in 1982 that - in the popular press and electronic media, at least - seized the centre stage and strongly influenced numerous efforts to improve the functioning of schools. (p. 31)

In 1982, the American public agenda on education was energized by the release of

A Nation at Risk by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. The A Nation at Risk report, in addition to the approximately thirty other reports it inspired, catalogued a litany of deficiencies in the American public education system. Owens (1998) describes the reforms emanating from these reports as traditional, top-down management approaches to reform which focussed on such matters as the length of the school year and the school day as well as the implementation of tighter controls of curriculum content and testing at the state and local levels of the public education system (pp. 32-33).

By 1985, many commentators on education were questioning the top-down approach to education reform claiming that education reformers held a set of assumptions about the nature of schools that was antiquated. It was claimed that the set of assumptions was rooted in a management style associated with a factory-based dichotomy of management and workers. Doyle and Hartle (as cited in Owens, 1998) state

It simply doesn't work that way. The impulse to reform the schools from the top down is understandable: it is consistent with the history of management science. The explicit model for such reform was the factory. Frederick Taylor's scientific management revolution did for the schools the same thing that it did for business and industry - created an environment whose principal characteristics were pyramidal organization. The teacher was the worker on the assembly line of education, the student, the product, the superintendent, the chief executive officer, the school trustees, the board of directors, the taxpayer, the shareholder. (p. 34)

As the education reform movement was emerging in the United States during the early 1980's, researchers were finding that organizational culture was playing an influential role in the performance of corporations. Ouchi (as cited in Shafritz & Ott, 1996) from his study of large American corporations, including IBM, General Motors, and Xerox, found that the most successful enterprises were those he characterized as Type Z organizations. Ouchi states

In the Type Z organizations the decision-making process is typically a consensual, participative one. Social scientists have described this as a democratic (as opposed to autocratic or apathetic) process in which people are drawn into the shaping of important decisions. This participative process is one of the mechanisms that provides for the broad dissemination of information and of values within the organization, and it also serves the symbolic role of signalling in an unmistakable way the cooperative intent of the firm. (p. 498)

Ouchi emphasizes that the collective decision making is twinned with individual responsibility for the decision even if the individual does not believe the decision taken is the correct one. Ouchi (as cited in Shafritz and Ott, 1996) states

This combination of collective decision making with individual responsibility demands an atmosphere of trust. Only under a strong assumption that all hold basically compatible goals and that no one is engaged in self-serving behaviour will individuals accept personal responsibility for a group decision and make

enthusiastic attempts to get the job done (p. 498)

In a Type Z organization interpersonal relationships have a wholistic orientation. Relationships between superiors and subordinates are not authoritarian in nature. Ouchi (as cited in Shafritz & Ott, 1996) describes the relationships in this way:

Type Z companies generally show broad concern for the welfare of subordinates and of co-workers as a natural part of a working relationship. Relationships between people tend to be informal and to emphasize that whole people deal with one another at work, rather than just managers with workers and clerks with machinists. This wholistic orientation, a central feature of the organization, inevitably maintains a strong egalitarian atmosphere that is a feature of all Type Z organizations. (p. 499)

This egalitarianism implies that the individuals in a Type Z organization have a deep trust in one another. Individuals perceive each other as capable of exercising discretion without the need for close supervision and individuals believe no one will intentionally do harm to another person. This trust differentiates Type Z organizations from traditional hierarchies which are typically lacking in trust. The Type Z organization's high level of trust exists because it is founded upon "an underlying set of values that are deeply held and closely followed" (as cited in Shafritz & Ott, 1996, p. 504).

Peters and Waterman, Jr. (1982) analysed the organizational cultures of American corporations such as 3M, Johnson & Johnson, Hewlett Packard, and McDonald's. Peters

and Waterman, Jr. report that corporate success is closely associated with what they call simultaneous loose-tight properties. They state

Simultaneous loose-tight properties is in essence the co-existence of firm central direction and maximum individual autonomy - what we have called "having one's cake and eating it too." Organizations that live by the loose-tight principle are on the one hand rigidly controlled, yet at the same time allow (indeed, insist on) autonomy, entrepreneurship, and innovation from the rank and file. They do this literally through "faith" - through value systems (p. 318)

Peters and Waterman, Jr. emphasize that the discipline of the loose-tight principle does not emanate from an authoritarian hierarchy, but rather from adherence to a small number of shared values which focus on quality, innovativeness, informality, customer service, and people. Peters and Waterman, Jr. state

Quite simply, these companies are simultaneously externally focussed and internally focussed - externally in that they are truly driven by their desire to provide service, quality, and innovative problem solving in support of their customers, internally in that quality control, for example, is put on the back of the individual line worker, not primarily in the lap of the quality control department. The organization thrives on intense internal competition. And it thrives on intense communication, on the family feeling, on open door policies, on informality, on fluidity and flexibility, on nonpolitical shifts of resources. This

constitutes the crucial internal focus: the focus on people" (p. 323).

Greenfield (1986) criticizes the positivistic science of educational administration for its narrow focus on decision-making as the core of modern administration (p. 59). Greenfield proffers that to limit the study of educational administration to "the factual basis of choice and to ignore value and sentiment as springs of human action" (p. 59) is a major weakness in the philosophical foundation of positivistic research in the administration of schools. Greenfield states:

Because positivistic science cannot derive a value from a fact or even recognize values as real, we have a science of administration which can deal only with facts and which does so by eliminating from its consideration all human passion, weakness, strength, conviction, hope, will, pity, frailty, altruism, courage, vice, and virtue. These shortcomings are created by the blinkered view of choice and administrative action afforded by a narrowly empiricist science which lets us see but a pale and reduced reflection of the human will to achieve a purpose, to mobilize resources, to influence others - to do all that people in fact do as they make choices and strive to transform their values into realities. (p. 61)

Greenfield (1986) identifies the positivistic conceptualization of organizations as the root of the weakness in this type of organizational research. Greenfield claims that the positivistic view of organizations is based on an unrealistic separation of an organization from the individuals who constitute the organization. Greenfield states, "This position

highlights the ultimate concern of administrative science - the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization which is, of course, conceived as an entity independent of human will, purpose, and values " (p. 62) Greenfield claims that "To establish this science, it was necessary to commit the biological fallacy of endowing the organization with an ontological reality. The organization is conceived not only as real, but as more important than the people within it" (p. 66)

Greenfield (1986) juxtaposes the positivistic view of organizations with his contention that organizations are created and changed by human actions. Greenfield states

Organizations are not things. They have no ontological reality, and there is no use studying them as though they did. They are invented social reality of human creation. It is people who are responsible for organizations and people who change them. Organizations have reality only through human action, and it is that action (and the human will driving it) that we must come to understand. The alternative I am proposing rejects theory that explains human behavior as though a depersonalized organization and its devalued, nonhuman environment caused it. The alternative theory grants a measure of free will to individuals, and so places a measure of responsibility upon them for their action. People do not exist in organizations. Organizations exist in and through individuals. (pp. 71-72)

Greenfield (1986) maintains that in order to understand an organization, it is

necessary to focus on the values which form the foundation of the organization. The interaction of opposing values is the essence of conflict and the choices made during conflict point to the moral fiber of the organization. Greenfield points to a different science of organizations. Greenfield states, "If nothing else, we must understand that the new science of administration will be a science with values and of values." (p. 75). Consequently, the researcher cannot be an objective empiricist, but must be an interpreter of an organization's values. Greenfield describes the new science by saying

The alternative path would seek to understand administrative realities within a broader conception of science - a conception recognizing that values bespeak the human condition and serve as springs to action both in everyday life and in administration. But values are subjective realities, and people bind them inextricably to the facts in their worlds. Thus, an adequate new science may no longer be content to split facts from values, and deal only with the facts. (p. 57)

Schein has studied the organizational culture of major corporations in North America and Europe. Schein (1992) states

I believe that cultures begin with leaders who impose their own values and assumptions on a group. If that group is successful and the assumptions come to be taken for granted, we have then a culture that will define for later generations of members what kinds of leadership are acceptable. As the group encounters adaptive difficulties, as its environment changes to the point where some of its

assumptions are no longer valid, leadership comes into play once more

Leadership is now the ability to step outside the culture that created the leader and to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive (p. 2)

Schein (1992) illuminates the primacy of organizational culture. Schein describes an organization's culture as "those elements of a group or organization that are most stable and least malleable" (p. 5). The elements referred to by Schein are the shared basic assumptions. In his view, the shared basic assumptions are so well embedded in the organization that the members of the organization are not aware of them; however, the assumptions are powerful determinants of thought and behaviour because they operate subconsciously. Schein states that an organization's culture is "the accumulated shared learning of a given group, covering behavioural, emotional, and cognitive elements of the group's members' total psychological functioning" (p. 19). The shared assumptions derive their efficacy from the fact that they function outside of the individual's awareness.

A study of a school's culture is an examination of how the school has learned to solve problems originating from both its external and internal environments. The problem-solving strategies represent what has worked well for the school and is considered valid. The study also involves discovering how a newcomer learns about the school through the school's socialization process (Schein, 1992).

However, it is important to note that schools are unique organizations. The work of Ouchi (1981), Peters and Waterman, Jr (1982), and Schein (1992) arises from the study

of corporate cultures not school cultures. As Owens (1998) states

Though schools are organizations and, therefore, share much with other kinds of organizations, it must be remembered that we know relatively little about their specific organizational characteristics. Although research on the organizational characteristics of schools is increasing, until very recently our assumptions about them have been derived largely from studies in other kinds of organizations. But schools do possess special properties (pp. 329-330).

Owens (1998) summarizes the findings of other researchers by describing seven unique organizational characteristics of schools:

1. Almost all students attend school on a non-voluntary basis.
2. The goals of education are diffuse and are often stated in general, abstract terms making measurement of a school's effectiveness difficult.
3. Schools have a low technical capability arising from a weak scientific base underlying educational practice.
4. School activities are not always clearly connected to goals and control is difficult to establish.
5. Schools are open to influence from a variety of stakeholders.
6. Schools do not compete directly with one another. Schools exist in a relatively protected environment.
7. Schools are part of a controlled, but decentralized education system. (p. 330)

Schein (1992) describes three levels of culture: artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions. A researcher learns of an organization's culture through interaction with all three, but Schein cautions that artifacts can be interpreted in different ways by different people and that espoused values may not be consistent with what individuals actually do in the organizational setting. The artifacts and espoused values must not be confused with the shared basic assumptions. Schein claims that it is difficult for a group to examine its shared basic assumptions because the examination "temporarily destabilizes our cognitive and interpersonal world, releasing large quantities of basic anxiety." (p. 22). This basic anxiety arises from the group's desire for stability and congruity.

Walsh and Ungson (1991) theorize that within organizations "information can be considered as decisional stimuli and responses that are preserved in particular storage bins and that have behavioural consequences when retrieved." (p. 61). This decisional information when recalled and shared within an organization is the essence of organizational memory. The organizational memory is described in terms of individuals and a collectivity. Walsh and Ungson state: "our point is that the retention of organizational memory is not just an individual-level phenomenon, but can apply to a supra-individual collectivity as well through a process of sharing." (p. 68). Walsh and Ungson claim that organizational memory is distributed across several bins. The retaining bins are individuals, culture, transformations, structures, ecology and external archives.

(p. 63-67)

Organizational memory develops over a substantial period of time. The development of organizational memory occurs simultaneously with the evolution of an organization's culture. An organization's history of successes and failures generates within individuals the recognition of specific strategies as valuable and, therefore, worthy of retention. As individuals in the organization share these recognitions they gradually become the shared basic assumptions which according to Schein (1982) constitute the cultural foundation for the organization.

Senge (1990) identifies mental models as one of the core disciplines of the learning organization. He defines a learning organization as "an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future" (p. 14). Mental models are a key component of organizational culture and organizational memory, because the mental models affect thought and behaviour. Senge states:

More specifically, new insights fail to get put into practice because they conflict with deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting. That is why the discipline of managing mental models - surfacing, testing, and improving our internal pictures of how the world works - promises to be a major breakthrough for building learning organizations. (p. 174)

Related to this is a study by Sahin and Simsek (1996) who conducted a study of

three high schools in Ankara, Turkey, focussing on ways the schools acquired, disseminated, interpreted, and preserved new knowledge. Data for the study was obtained from observations and interviews with twenty-four teachers and six administrators. Sahin and Simsek contend that if schools are to be effective, they must acquire and create new knowledge about their primary function. The authors claim that schools must utilize organizational learning to attain the knowledge. Sahin and Simsek identify four constructs which the process of organizational learning comprises: (a) knowledge, (b) information distribution, (c) information interpretation, and (d) organizational memory. In their view, the effectiveness of two of the three schools was impeded by their organizational structures which tended to obstruct the acquisition, distribution, and interpretation of pertinent knowledge regarding the schools' performance. The authors noted that none of the three schools had developed formal arrangements for storing information for future use.

The Type Z organization, the loose-tight organization, and the learning organization are described as successful organizations that have evolved through interaction with their environments. The members of these organizations have developed cultures which permit and encourage individual autonomy within a framework defined by strongly held values and assumptions about the nature of the organization as well as by the role of the individuals in the collectivity. Continued success for these organizations depends upon the transmission of the values and assumptions to newcomers. Past success

is not a guarantee of future success, however, the failure to pass on the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and assumptions which produced success in the past may well lay the ground work for an organization's demise. Therefore, organizational memory is critically important

Linkage to school performance

Purkey and Smith (1985), reporting on their analysis of effective schools research literature, draw a direct link between school effectiveness and school culture. Purkey and Smith state

The most persuasive research suggests that student academic performance is strongly affected by school culture. This culture is composed of values, norms, and roles existing within institutionally distinct structures of governance, communication, educational practices and policies and so on. Successful schools are found to have cultures that produce a climate or "ethos" conducive to teaching and learning. Efforts to change schools have been most productive and most enduring when directed toward influencing the entire school culture via a strategy involving collaborative planning, shared decision making, and collegial work in an atmosphere friendly to experimentation and evaluation. (p. 357)

Steinhoff and Owens (1989) claim that successful high schools have a strong sense of values linking participants and the school. Steinhoff and Owens state, "It is necessary for educators to stop and make public and explicit the hidden basic

assumptions concerning the behaviour, speech, artifacts, and technology in the organization in which they work " (p. 5). To do so, it is recommended that various facets of the school's culture be examined in detail including the school's history, symbolic myths and stories, espoused values and beliefs, expectations for behaviour, rites and rituals, as well as heroes and heroines. These components form what the authors call the school's root metaphor (p. 5).

Brown (1994), who conducted a case study of a small, rural high school in Newfoundland and Labrador, draws a close connection between the school's effectiveness and the school's common culture. Brown states:

The teachers (who include the two administrators who are teachers more than they are administrators) share a common philosophy based on five Fs -- Fun, Fairness, Fitness, Friendliness, and Firmness. This philosophy is reflected in: a student focus which encourages students to see the school as their school (friendliness), an emphasis on co-curricular as well as academic programs (fun), a firm, fair, and friendly discipline program (referred to in the school as the three F approach to discipline), a warm, caring school climate (friendliness), an emphasis on sports and physical activities (fitness). The core group of teachers who opened this school sixteen years ago established a unique culture based on this philosophy, and new teachers are enculturated into it. The norms they developed are so entrenched that they are seldom discussed: they are simply the way things are.

done at Grandy's River Collegiate (pp. 4-5)

Brown (1964) describes how this common philosophy manifested itself through the actions and behaviors of the school's teachers. The offering of advanced mathematics was possible only through the splitting of classes with one teacher taking responsibility for two mathematics classes scheduled concurrently (p. 58). A teacher voluntarily gave up preparation periods to teach a chemistry course which was scheduled to be dropped from the program due to the loss of a teaching unit (p. 58). Teachers devised a way to offer three industrial arts and technology courses to very small groups of students because it was felt that the students would benefit from the courses and perhaps remain in school as a result (p. 59). The Physical Education 3100 course provided a student leadership unit valued at 25% of the course evaluation which gave students opportunities to develop leadership skills while planning and implementing activities for their fellow students (pp. 60-62). The resource teacher took responsibility for organizing and monitoring programs for approximately 40 students who were identified as having special needs which had to be addressed in order to increase the probability of successful graduation from high school (pp. 65-66). The goal of the school's extensive co-curricular program was to have 100% of the student population involved in these activities so that all students would feel part of the school community (p. 67).

Brown (1964) describes the climate of the school in terms of trust and openness. The school's teachers showed the trust they had in their students by permitting the

students to have full access to all of the school's facilities at any time provided there was a teacher in the school (p. 83). The principal provided the teachers with a great deal of autonomy trusting that all teachers would act according to the philosophy they shared (p. 84). The teachers believed they were strongly supported by the school's administration and by the parents (p. 84). Students reported that they believed their teachers were willing to provide extra help for academic problems as well as provide advice and counseling for personal problems (p. 115).

Brown (1994) identifies the leadership style of the principal as a key factor in the development and maintenance of the school's culture. The principal who described his leadership style as informal, gave priority to working with students and teachers over the administrative work associated with his leadership position (p. 98). The principal showed concern for the teachers who had to travel considerable distance to school by deliberately limiting the number of lengthy staff meetings held throughout the school year. The principal felt it was more beneficial for teachers to spend their time with students outside of regular class time than to have teachers attend frequent staff meetings (p. 99). The principal's relationship with his staff engendered great respect for him as well as a strong sense of loyalty to him and to the school (p. 100).

Doyle (1998) found that successful schools were staffed by teachers possessing a strong commitment to a strong, clear school vision. She also found the vision and commitment had high congruity with the needs and the expectations of the local

community. Glickman (as cited in Doyle, 1998) determined that a school fails when the school's vision is limited to the program it teaches. Glickman found that "it is the 'holding' to moral and democratic principles that makes schools 'good' " (p. 14).

Holmes, Leithwood, and Musella (1989) state, "schools have relatively distinct cultures and will operate within boundaries defined by their cultures " (p. 120). Similarly, Cooper (as cited in Lieberman, 1988) specifies that "schools are alike only in gross characteristics, differing in ethos, population, staff, character, climate, structure, circumstance, and history " (p. 48). Cooper also states, "Cultures are not made, they are born and grow. A culture exists in history " (p. 46). Cooper's insight draws an obvious link between school culture and organizational memory.

Rutter et al. (as cited in Owens, 1998) studied the relationship between school outcomes and school culture in secondary schools in the United States. School outcomes were measured using pupil behaviour, pupil attendance, and pupil public examination marks as variables (p. 180). Differences between schools as measured by the three variables were not attributable to socioeconomic or ethnic differences, but "the differences between schools in outcome were systematically related to their characteristics as social institutions " (p. 180). The researchers identified four characteristics of schools which had significant influence on school outcomes: (a) teacher behaviour at work, (b) the degree of emphasis placed on academic performance, (c) the existence of rewards for student success, and (d) the degree to which students were able

to take responsibility (p. 181).

Similarly Deal and Peterson (1999) state bluntly that "The culture of an enterprise plays the dominant role in exemplary performance." (p. 1). Deal and Peterson emphasize that all highly successful schools have distinctive, strong cultures based on widely held values and assumptions.

Lortie's (1975) classic study of elementary and secondary teachers in the Boston, Massachusetts, area makes the same point. Lortie interviewed ninety-four teachers in the Boston area and obtained additional data from approximately six thousand questionnaires administered to teachers in Dade County, Florida. Lortie found individualism to be a ubiquitous quality of the schools in the sample. The data indicated that teachers rarely discussed each other's work. Communication between teachers was generally limited to sharing information about students and parents. Teachers reported few opportunities to analyse and reflect on instructional practices. Teacher individualism did not facilitate the introduction of new teaching methods nor the critical examination of successful teaching practices utilized by other teachers.

More recently, Ashton and Webb (1986) conducted a comparative study of a traditionally organized junior high school and a middle school which was described as "a more progressive school." Both schools were populated by students of similar social backgrounds. The middle school students consistently scored higher on tests of basic skills. Ashton and Webb concluded that the statistically significant difference in the test

scores was due to the differences in the teachers' perceptions of their ability to affect student performance. Ashton and Webb (1986) described the middle school teachers by stating, "They were convinced that they could make a significant contribution to the lives of children and were publicly and personally committed to doing so" (p. 106). The junior high school teachers differed in that they believed they could do little to affect student performance claiming that poor student performance was due to student motivation problems and issues related to students' backgrounds.

Ashton and Webb (1986) found significant differences with regard to the level of teacher collaboration in the two schools studied. In the more effective middle school, team-teaching was common and shared decision-making was built into the organization of the school. Teachers planned together regularly at sessions which were scheduled at the beginning and end of the school day. The less effective junior high school did not have these characteristics of collaborative schools.

Rosenholtz (1989) conducted a study of school culture utilizing a sample of seventy-eight elementary schools in Tennessee. Rosenholtz described two distinct types of school culture. One type of school culture was not supportive of change and improvement; teachers in these schools were uncertain about their effectiveness in the classroom and tended to be isolated from other teachers. The second type of school culture was supportive of change and improvement; teachers in these schools frequently worked together and believed teachers never stopped learning how to teach. Teachers in

these schools received regular feedback respecting the effectiveness of their instructional practices and did not experience a high degree of uncertainty. Rosenholtz (1989) states, "It is assumed that improvement in teaching is a collective rather than individual enterprise, and that analysis, evaluation, and experimentation in concert with colleagues are conditions under which teachers improve" (p. 73). Rosenholtz found that measures of teacher uncertainty correlated negatively with student learning gains in mathematics and reading over a two-year period (p. 128).

Rosenholtz (1989) found that teacher isolation was more common in the schools than was teacher collaboration. Rosenholtz states:

Most teachers and principals become so professionally estranged in their workplace isolation that they neglect each other. They do not often compliment, support, and acknowledge each other's positive efforts. Indeed, strong norms of self-reliance may even evoke adverse reaction to a teacher's successful performance. (p. 107)

Inger (1993) found that schools characterized by frequent teacher collaboration experience significant improvements in student achievement, behaviour, and attitude. Additionally, teachers and administrators collaborate and learn together and become more supportive of one another's strengths while learning how to address weaknesses. Inger found that when teachers collaborate on teaching practices they realize they are interdependent and begin to reinforce one another's teaching techniques.

Linkage to leadership

Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) offer as their first guideline for school leaders contemplating change that they "Understand the school and its culture before changing it" (p. 86). Corbett et al. (1987) found that school culture is a powerful force which determines how a staff reacts to change. Shared assumptions are divided into two categories, the sacred and the profane (p. 37). Sacred assumptions are not malleable whereas profane assumptions are flexible. Corbett et al. claim that "If changes are to be successful, then initiators must understand how the culture will accept the proposed innovation and where the culture itself needs modification" (p. 57). Corbett et al. hypothesize that changes in schools do more than challenge how things are done, changes "threaten 'who we are around here'" (p. 56). When a proposed change encounters a sacred assumption, it will experience extreme resistance from the group. They state, "Managing change, like politics, is the art of the possible. But it requires knowing what changes are inherently compatible with the local culture, which ones are not, and which ones can be packaged to fit existing norms" (p. 57).

Louis and King (1992) proffer that "many advocates of new schools seem to overlook the fact that starting a new organization entails high levels of strain for adults who work in them and, in the absence of attention to the development of human resources, these demands may obstruct the goals of reform" (p. 3). Louis and King emphasize the need to plan for the socialization of teachers. Their research found

unfortunately that little attention is paid to this need. The results are a lack of trust among the staff members, simple misunderstandings, and value incongruence (p. 13). Michael Fullan (1991) concluded similarly that much attention is usually paid to the needs of the students of a new school, but little thought and energy is devoted to the critical matter of school culture from the teachers' perspectives.

Ruddick (1991) says, "education is among the last vocations where it is still legitimate to work by yourself in a space that is secure against invaders" (p. 31). Ruddick describes teacher isolation as a double-edged sword which permits teachers to employ their discretion respecting the interests of the children they teach, but yet blocks the easy flow of meaningful feedback regarding the effectiveness of their classroom instructional practices. Similarly, Hickey et al. (1988) found that isolated teachers receive little meaningful feedback related to their instructional effectiveness. Formal teacher evaluations provide some feedback, but since these evaluations are periodic events rather than ongoing processes they are generally ineffective mechanisms for the promotion of continuous improvement.

Akin (1991) found that few school administrators have an adequate knowledge of the research on staff cultures. Akin's research led her to conclude that many high schools have elements which actually prohibit the formation of positive school culture. These elements include large staffs segregated into academic areas. Akin calls this an isolating factor which stifles communication across a staff. Teachers perceive themselves as

teaching a discrete curriculum, tending to see their classrooms as their domains separate from other teachers' classrooms. This fragmented conceptualization of the school resists school culture formation. Akin concludes that "administrators who wish to lead high school site-based management projects must first understand their school organization and know how to bridge from negative to positive cultures" (p. 7). Congruously, Hargreaves (1990) identified "Balkanized" cultures as impediments to the formation of positive school cultures. Hargreaves' research found these cultures to be common in large high schools with formal department structures.

Hargreaves (1992) examined the teaching culture patterns in two Ontario secondary schools. The two schools were selected from a study of ten secondary schools undergoing a provincially imposed directive to destream grade 9 by 1993. The findings indicated that teacher isolation was the result of balkanization in the school which had the traditional department structure associated with conventional secondary schools. The second school in the study was described as nontraditional and innovative; however, Hargreaves found that balkanization persisted as a dominant feature. Hargreaves concluded that the persistence of balkanization was due to the failure of the restructuring process to adequately deal with issues of status, politics and leadership.

Siskin and Little (1995) describe traditional subject departments as the primary organizational unit of the high school. These subject departments have substantial influence on the culture of a school because the departments shape the views and practice

of individual teachers. Subject departments can set boundaries within schools contributing to teacher isolation and the formation of subcultures.

Van Wessum (1990) studied forms of collaboration within departments in secondary schools in Holland. Data was collected from three secondary schools using interviews, observations, documents, and questionnaires. Van Wessum found that different forms of collaboration occurred, informal collaboration was the preferred form. Van Wessum also found significant differences in the content of collaboration. The most frequent content of collaboration concerned subject matter and the least frequent concerned instructional methods. Collaboration between departments was not frequent. Van Wessum's findings resonate well with those of Hargreaves (1992) and Siskin and Little (1995).

Nias, Southworth, and Yeomans (1989) conducted case studies of five primary schools in England recognized for their positive staff relationships. They found that three of the five schools exhibited characteristics associated with cultures of collaboration. Personal interactions throughout the schools were helpful, supportive, trusting, and characterized by openness to sharing at the personal and professional levels. Nias, Southworth, and Yeomans (1989) state:

Allowances were made at work for domestic circumstances such as a husband's or son's redundancy. Staff were tolerant of each other's taciturnity, irritability or unaccustomed inefficiency; they were quick to anticipate the help which might be

needed because of, for example, a fit of depression, a painful back, a broken car or a sleepless night. When someone was having a bad day, the appropriate response was to be sympathetic rather than offended. In the collaborative schools there was a pervasive atmosphere of consideration for others. (p. 55)

Nias, Southworth, and Yeomans (1989) found that in the fully-functioning collaborative schools teacher collaboration resulted in the recognition of failure and uncertainty as phenomenon to be shared and discussed with colleagues rather than experiences to be hidden and protected. Teachers shared successes as well as failures in teams. Nias, Southworth, and Yeomans state:

Working in a team doesn't mean that everybody's the same and everybody's so busy saying yes, yes, yes to one another that nothing happens. That deadens it. You've got to have different personalities and different ideas to spark other people off, but it can be done without aggression. (p. 57)

In the highly collaborative schools teachers had a marked sense of interdependence and collective responsibility for the schools' success. Nias, Southworth, and Yeomans (1989) state:

Together the members of each staff made a group which they valued because it gave them a feeling of belonging. At the same time, they accepted a collective responsibility for the work of the school, so creating a strong team in which people helped, encouraged and substituted for one another. (p. 58)

Deal and Peterson (1999) have concluded that school cultures are malleable. Even toxic cultures can be changed given sufficient knowledge of school cultures as well as strategies for changing school cultures (p. 127). These findings are consistent with those of Hargreaves (1994). Hargreaves maintains that school cultures are not as deeply embedded and unalterable as is the concept of culture in the anthropological sense. Since teachers enter schools as adults, the school culture is learned; therefore, the culture should be perceived as a corrigible phenomenon rather than incorrigible.

Gideon and Erlandson (2001) describe how the staff at Crockett High School in Austin, Texas, implemented changes to improve student learning and transform the school into a teacher-led and teacher-driven school. When Barbara Gideon, one of the authors of the article, became the fifth principal of Crockett High School, the school had experienced several years of deteriorating test scores, attendance, and post-secondary enrollment. Gideon led the staff in facing the challenges and finding solutions which resulted in significant improvement in various measures of student achievement over a period of three years (p. 15).

Gideon and Erlandson (2001) explain that to achieve the improvements the staff analysed achievement data and teacher practices. Teams were created by department, grade level, and by area of interest. The teams were given the authority, autonomy, and responsibility to make decisions and monitor implementation of their decisions. Gideon and Erlandson state

As teams grew in their understanding of school wide concerns, they were better able to understand other teachers' experiences. The members of various teams developed an appreciation of the impact of teachers' actions in a learning school. They learned to reflect on their practice, using Argyris' and Schon's framework (1974, 1996) as a guide (p. 16).

Gideon and Erlandson (2001) itemize a set of guiding principles which arose from Crockett High School's experiences:

1. The principal is the formal head of the school, but leadership is everyone's responsibility.
2. All school professionals must have valid information readily available to them.
3. Every school professional must make free and informed choices regarding participation in the renewal efforts.
4. Every school professional is included in monitoring the renewal process. (p. 16)

Gideon and Erlandson (2001) emphasize that for change to be successful teachers must perceive the effort to be addressing real needs which teachers have helped to identify. Gideon and Erlandson state:

Teachers can see change as something outside their day-to-day work or they can allow change to energize their teaching. Successful change must start with data. Analyzing the data can spawn a reality check. Teachers addressed questions such as: Are our instructional strategies as effective as we would like with all students?

What evidence will we accept that our work has had the intended effect? What in our environment can we control in order to produce better student achievement?

Teachers led the process of analyzing the data and determining the answers. The principal acted as a catalyst introducing the conversation. (p. 17)

Gideon and Erlandson (2001) also highlight the critical importance of the relationship between the principal and teachers. The authors focus on the need for this relationship to be built on trust. Gideon and Erlandson state, "Change produces an atmosphere of risk. As something new is introduced, teachers often fear closer monitoring and less individual decision-making power. When a collegial atmosphere is put into practice, the opposite is true." (p. 17)

Gideon and Erlandson (2001) conclude their description of the Crockett High School experience with reference to the need for collective responsibility in the change process. Empowerment and collective responsibility are closely linked. The role of the principal is defined in terms of power:

The power of the principal is in her ability to recognize power in others and to collectively share that power to move the school ahead as a community of learners. The principalship is a collective leadership and responsibility that is larger than the individual who holds the formal title of principal. (p. 17)

Gideon and Erlandson (2001) do not present a panacea in their article. It is emphasized that reform is a set of processes and not an instantaneous remedy which will

magically cure all the ills of a school. A substantial benefit of the experience at Crockett High is that “the staff has come to understand that growth occurs as teachers reflect, refine, and work in the context of their regular classroom instruction.” (p. 17)

The U. S. government document Techniques Companies Used (1992) states, and, Faucette (1994) found that organizational culture is far too important for the success of an organization to be left to informal processes based on the assumption that significant values and beliefs will be assimilated quickly and easily by newcomers to organizations. Formal strategies for the formation and maintenance of positive organizational cultures are required. These approaches include the allocation of significant amounts of work time to activities designed to achieve cultural goals.

O’Neil (1995) reports on an interview conducted with Peter Senge in which Senge states:

Our fundamental challenges in education are no different than in business. They involve fundamental cultural changes, and that will require collective learning. They involve people at multiple levels thinking together about significant and enduring solutions we might create, and then helping those solutions come about. (p. 21)

Senge identifies the complex, stratified, and fragmented culture of school communities as impediments to innovation. School leaders who have had the greatest impact have been those who have perceived themselves to be creating an environment where teachers can

continually learn (p. 21)

Smith's (1994) conceptualization of an organizational leader describes the leader as having a nurturing role in the developmental process of building shared vision. Smith defines this developmental process as "co-creating" (p. 322). In order for this process to occur the organization must be characterized by openness, honesty, respect and reverence for individuals as well as equal treatment of opinions irrespective of an individual's position in the organization. Intimate knowledge of an organization's culture is essential if a leader expects to be successful in this regard.

Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) identify school culture as the primary focus for transformational leadership defined as leadership focussed on the creation of highly collaborative school culture. Leithwood and Jantzi state:

Attention to culture, as part of school reform, is driven by evidence that traditional school cultures, based on norms of autonomy and isolation, create a work context in which realizing the central aspirations of school reform is highly unlikely. (p. 250)

Leithwood and Jantzi describe the goal of transformational leadership to be "the enhancement of individual and collective problem-solving capacities of organizational members," (p. 252).

Trice and Beyer (1993) offer advice for leaders who contemplate changing organizational cultures. "They should not assume that because the need for change seems

obvious to them it is obvious to others " (p. 397) and that "It is unrealistic to expect a complete disappearance of an existing culture without total destruction of the group or organization involved or dispersal of its members " (p. 399). Deep understanding of the ideologies which form the core of the culture is of critical importance and is a prerequisite for the commencement of successful change.

Peterson (2001) describes school principals as the major players in leading school reform over the past decade. Peterson believes principals are central to school success and to student learning (p. 18). Peterson advises the principal to become knowledgeable of the school's culture and history in order to initiate successful change strategies. Peterson states

Hone your skills as a historian by listening to stories of past events, exhuming old planning documents, and reviewing past efforts to understand where the school has come from. But also develop the skills of an anthropologist by digging into existing norms and values, examining artifacts and symbols, and asking about the deeper meanings of staff traditions and rituals. (p. 20)

Peterson (2001) emphasizes the need for a principal to have a deep understanding of a school's purpose and values. Peterson (2001) states

Every school has a deep set of values. In toxic cultures, those values are negative and hostile. In positive cultures, the values hold deep meaning for staff. Learn to identify and interpret what those values are as they relate to curriculum.

instruction, approaches to assessment, and learning. See if the current values match the community's and one's own. (p. 20)

Summary

The review of literature indicates that organizational memory is a major component of school culture. The exploration of a school's shared basic assumptions would result in simultaneous exploration of a school's organizational memory and deeply held beliefs and values. The overlap of shared basic assumptions, mental models, and organizational memory is significant.

The review of literature draws a strong link between organizational success and organizational culture. Successful organizations are social institutions which have learned how to adapt to changing external and internal environments while holding to a core of values and assumptions. These values and assumptions are learned by individuals who enter the organization. The transmission of the core values and assumptions preserves the essence of the organization's success.

We are witnessing in this province dramatic changes in our school system. Over the past three years most of the newly created school districts have consolidated schools and subsequently have formed new schools via the combining of teaching staffs and student populations. In view of the projected continuing decline in student population in the province it is logical to assume that we will experience more consolidations as more of our schools are deemed unviable. The growing wave of teacher retirements, which will

probably see the exit of thousands of teachers from the teaching force over the next decade, will bring further change to our schools

Educational leaders at the school and district levels will have to contend with rapid change in the cultural foundations of our schools. Failure to attend adequately to the importance of organizational memory and school culture may well result in periods of substantial instability. This instability has the potential to negatively affect student performance, school - community relations, as well as a school's ability to identify areas for improvement requiring broadly supported strategies designed to ameliorate perceived areas of weakness. The review of literature indicates these matters are of such importance that they cannot be left to chance. Our current educational leaders as well as those who will assume positions of leadership in the near future must take action to address the implications of changing schools and school staffs.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Research design

My research project was a qualitative case study conducted in the natural setting, the school itself, throughout the 2000-2001 school year. All participants in the study were members of the teaching staff of the school.

My cycle of inquiry led me to the conclusion that the research project would not be an intellectual exercise in theory or hypothesis testing, but would be focused on understanding the lived experiences of the participants, an example of interpretive research as described by Merriam (1998):

In interpretive research, education is considered to be a process and school is a lived experience. Understanding the meaning of the process or experience constitutes the knowledge to be gained from an inductive, hypothesis- or theory-generating (rather than a deductive or testing) mode of inquiry. Multiple realities are constructed socially by individuals. (p. 4)

The data obtained from the research project would not be measurable or quantitative in the traditional scientific sense, but would reflect the individual lived experiences of the participants. The analysis of the data and the writing of the findings would have me attend closely to the voices of the participants. Marshall and Rossman (1999) identify individual lived experience and attention to the voices of the participants as key characteristics of qualitative research.

The end product of the case study would be grounded theory consistent with the concept introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and described by Merriam (1998) who states, "The end result of this type of qualitative research is a theory that emerges from, or is 'grounded' in, the data - hence grounded theory." (p. 17) The theory would be substantive rather than formal in nature since it would emerge from the individual lived experiences and voices of the participants, therefore, the theory would be specific to the bounded system, the school itself. Consequently, the theory's utility would be limited to the school, the site of the case study.

Table 1 outlines the time frame and activities associated with the case study. Further details follow.

Table 1. Schedule of activities associated with research project.

Date	Task
April 2000	Preliminary discussions held with the district director and school principal regarding proposed research project
May 2000	Proposal for research project submitted to the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research, M.U.N.
June 2000	Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research grants approval for the conduct of the research
June 2000	Letters requesting permission to conduct the research are forwarded to the district director and school principal
June 2000	The district director gives support and approval for the research project. This letter was copied to the school principal

August 2000	The school principal grants approval for the research project
September 2000	Participation in the research project was sought from the teaching staff and school council of the high school. Fifteen members of the teaching staff volunteered, participation from school council members did not materialize
September 2000	A sample of ten from a population of forty-three teachers was selected using quota selection
October -November 2000	Interviews were arranged with the ten participants. Each participant interviewed agreed to do journal writing at a later date. Observations began in late September and continued throughout the autumn. Observations of meetings, professional development activities, and general school activities were made and written records made
October 2000 - January 2001	Taped interviews were transcribed. Observations of staff meetings, teacher-parent night, and the school musical production were made. The participants were asked to complete their journals by mid-February.

October 2000 - June 2001	Data analysis and writing. Observations were made of events in the school and at school sponsored events outside the school. These included robotics team preparations, sporting events, and the school's spirit week activities.
--------------------------	---

Permissions

This case study required the permission of the district director and the principal of the school. In April 2000, discussions were held with both individuals regarding the proposed case study. At that time the district director and principal gave tentative, verbal approval for the case study. I explained to them that the research proposal would be reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research at Memorial University and that a formal, written request would be forwarded to them when approval had been granted by the committee. The research proposal was submitted to the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research in May 2000; approval for the research project was given by letter dated June 9, 2000 (see Appendix A).

Letters dated June 20, 2000, were written to the district director and the school principal describing in detail the purpose, methodology, and time line for the proposed study (see Appendix B). In this letter I committed to share the findings of the study with the school staff and district personnel provided the participants agreed to share the final report. A meeting with the district director and the school principal was requested to deal directly with any concerns they might have had. Neither the district director nor the

school's principal had concerns necessitating such a meeting. Both individuals were satisfied with the description of the proposed study contained in the documentation they had received.

By letter dated June 27, 2000, the district director gave support and approval for the case study (see Appendix C) and on August 31, 2000, the school principal approved the case study by returning the signed consent form provided (see Appendix C).

Participants

Participation in the case study was open to all members of the professional teaching staff of the high school as well as parent and community representatives of the school council. I was cognizant of the difficulties associated with a large sample and the huge amount of data that can be generated by a large sample in a qualitative study. Miles and Huberman (1994) claim that a study with more than fifteen cases can become troublesome with respect to the quantity of data generated for analysis (p. 30). In consultation with my thesis supervisor, it was decided to limit the sample to eight participants. This was judged to be an acceptable and manageable number of participants given the components of the case study. As well, I decided that if more than eight individuals volunteered, I would select participants purposively to obtain the experiences of senior and junior teachers; this selection would reflect gender balance if the actual number of volunteers permitted gender balance to be attained. As it turned out, gender balance was achieved because three females volunteered to participate.

Letters dated September 12, 2000, containing a consent form and return envelope were delivered to each of the forty-six individuals in the population from which the case study's sample would be drawn (see Appendix D). The letter provided the rationale for the case study as well as an overview of the procedures to be followed. It was emphasized that participation in the case study was completely voluntary and that participants could withdraw at any time. I emphasized that all data provided by the participants would be held in strict confidence and that all verbatim transcripts would be returned to the participants for editing prior to analysis. Each potential participant was provided with an informed consent form which was to be signed and returned to me if they wished to volunteer for the case study (see Appendix D).

Sampling

By late September 2000, fifteen individuals had returned signed consent forms. All fifteen volunteers were members of the school's teaching staff. Several other members of the teaching staff verbally indicated their willingness to participate, but did not return signed consent forms. At this juncture I considered the possibility of expanding the sample from eight participants to ten participants and decided that a sample size of ten would allow a better approximation of the population's characteristics.

Quota selection was utilized to generate the sample for the case study. Lecompte and Preissle (1993) state, "Quota selection provides a subset that approximates a population. It does not supply the precise representation provided by random and

systematic sampling, but the selected units do correspond to relevant dimensions characterizing the population" (p. 73). Approximately sixty per cent of the teaching staff had taught in the same school building prior to the reorganization of the zone's schools in September 1998. Of the fifteen total volunteers, eleven represented this subset of the teaching staff. From this group of eleven I randomly selected six participants for the case study. The remaining four volunteers represented the second subset of the teaching staff consisting of teachers who came to the new school from other schools in 1998. Three of the four volunteers came in from local high schools that had been closed in 1998 and the fourth volunteer had moved into the new high school from another part of the province in 1998. The sampling also produced an approximation of the gender composition of the teaching staff. Three of the ten volunteers chosen for the sample were female which approximated the proportion of females on staff.

Procedures

The case study utilized the following components: (a) participant observation, (b) semi-structured, open-ended interviews, (c) participant journal writing, and (d) researcher observation of the school's artifacts, meetings, and special events.

Observations

Observation of the school's operations was an ongoing process which began in September 2000, and ended in June 2001. When the case study began I had initially planned to conclude the observations at the end of the first half of the school year,

however, I quickly realized that to do so would omit observation of significant activities in the life of the school. Thus I extended my observations to include special events such as the school's Spirit Week activities which occur in the second half of the school year.

Early in the school year I carried a notebook with me to record observations as events occurred, but stopped doing so when it became obvious to me that people were observing me observe the events and interactions. This necessitated writing my notes after something of significance had taken place. Since I was a member of the school's teaching staff, observing the day-to-day life of the school was not a difficult process. Attendance at staff meetings was part of my regular duties and my position as chair of the school's finance committee allowed me to attend school council meetings in an unobtrusive manner. Observation of the school's artifacts such as displays of student work and official policy statements were not difficult either because the artifacts were openly displayed or easy to access.

The site

Our school is located on the north side of our community at the entrance to a large, relatively new housing sub-division. The school is visible from a major roadway running across the north edge of town which connects the town to several smaller communities located to the west.

The school was built in the mid-1970's. When the school opened in 1975 it was the largest of the denominational high schools in our community. The building is a two-

story, red brick structure with a flat roof situated on several hectares of open land. The front of the building faces eastward opening onto the street which leads to the housing sub-division located immediately north of the school. A residential area borders the school property on the south and to the west and northwest there are open areas where a softball field and soccer field are found. The school has a large parking lot on its northeast corner and a one-way road running around the back of the school. Smaller parking lots are found at the front and south sides of the building. The north, south and east sides of the school have sheltered walkways. In the past few years, a number of deciduous trees have been planted in the narrow green spaces bordering these walkways.

The front entrance of the school opens into a large foyer. Through the glass doors leading to the main part of the school one can see the entrance to the main office on the right. The staff room is located immediately to the left as one passes from the foyer into the school. A short hallway leads to an open area where a curved stairway leads to the second floor. This stairway is for the use of staff only. To the right, this open area connects to a wide hallway leading to the gymnasium, cafeteria, learning centre, and guidance centre. To the left, the open area connects to another hallway leading to the school's child-care centre and to a computer technology laboratory. The entrance to the theatre is located off the open area, as well. The two-hundred seat theatre forms the centre component of the ground floor. Student lockers line most of the hallways.

The ground floor of the school also houses the industrial arts room and the science

laboratories. The industrial arts room is located off the hallway leading from the open area on the ground floor to the gymnasium and cafeteria. The three laboratories are situated in the southwest corner of the school.

The school's second floor contains the resource centre. The resource centre, like the theatre on the ground floor, is the central component of the second floor. A small computer room is connected to the resource centre. The second floor has two groups of classrooms centred around teacher preparation areas. These two areas are called "pods". Each pod has six classrooms four of which are interior spaces without windows. The hallways around the pods and the long hallway which runs the entire length of the north side of the second floor have classrooms on the exterior of the building. These classrooms have high, narrow windows.

The school has a student population of approximately seven hundred registered in grades nine through twelve. The great majority of the students reside in the immediate community. Bussing is provided for students who live in the school's catchment area which extends several kilometres outside of the immediate community.

The school has a teaching staff of forty-three. The principal is a full-time administrator and the two vice-principals are half-time administrators with teaching duties. The school has a full-time guidance counsellor. The teaching staff is composed of thirteen females and thirty males.

Interviews

The interviews were held between October 1, 2000, and November 14, 2000. The dates and times of the interviews were negotiated with the participants either over the phone or privately at school. I proposed to conduct the interviews outside of school hours and at a location away from the school so that participation in the case study would not be apparent to nonparticipating staff members. The ten participants were comfortable with this proposed arrangement. Dates and times of interviews were confirmed by letter to each participant (see Appendix E).

Unfortunately, one of the participants withdrew from the case study. The initial interview date proved problematic for the individual and subsequent efforts to find a suitable date were not successful. Following consultation with my thesis supervisor, I decided not to pursue the individual's participation. The individual did not initiate any further contact regarding possible participation.

The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended as described by Merriam (1998). I requested that the participants allow me to tape record the interviews in order to permit verbatim transcription of the sessions. Each participant gave permission for their interview to be tape recorded. I assured the participants that their anonymity would be safeguarded by use of pseudonyms and each participant chose a pseudonym before their interview began.

Before beginning the interviews I reviewed the contents of the consent forms

each participant had signed to ensure the participants understood their rights as volunteers and my obligations to them as the researcher. Participants were told they would be given ample opportunity to review and edit their transcript before analysis began.

The interviews followed the guidelines as suggested by Schein (1992). The participants were not asked direct questions regarding values or basic assumptions. Instead, I attempted to draw out of each of my colleagues their own stories describing their experiences in the school. In interviews with long-term staff members I asked them to recall what they considered to be a significant event or crisis in the history of the school and to describe how the school handled it. The following questions were posed during these interviews:

1. 'Would you tell me why you became a teacher and describe for me your personal history in the profession.'
2. 'You have been teaching in this school for several years. Why have you remained here for so many years.'
3. 'Would you describe for me some positive characteristics of this school? Some negative aspects of this school.'
4. 'Over the past several years you have witnessed many significant events in this school. Can you describe for me one such event? How did the school handle the event?'
5. 'What does your recollection of the school's response to the event tell you about what the school considered to be important?'

6. Was the school's response to the event appropriate? Why or why not?
7. Would you recommend to a young teacher that they apply for a job in this school? Why or why not?
8. If a new teacher asked you to explain what is important in this school, what would you tell the new teacher?
9. If you could change anything in this school, what would you change?
10. Is there anything you would like to add before we end the interview?

In interviews with relatively new staff members I asked them to describe their experiences as the newcomers to the school. The semi-structured nature of the interviews was based on the categories of questions as proposed by Batten (1980) focussing on experiences, opinions, feelings, and personal knowledge (as cited in Merriam, 1988). The following questions were asked during these interviews:

1. Would you tell me why you became a teacher and describe for me your personal history in the profession?
2. Why did you request a transfer to this school? or Why did you apply for a position here?
3. Had you learned anything about this school before you began to teach here?
4. What did you learn about this school in the first few months of teaching here?
5. Can you describe for me the aspects of this school that you like and those you do not like?

6. What is the most important thing you have learned about this school over the past two years?

7. Did you learn this as a result of the orientation you were given or did you learn this via some other process or from some person(s)?

8. How could a new teacher's orientation to this school be improved? What does a new teacher need to know about this school in order to be prepared for teaching in the school?

9. Is there anything you would like to add before we end the interview?

The interviews ran smoothly and were characterized by willingness to openly share experiences, opinions, and emotions regarding the school. The interviews ranged in length from thirty minutes to ninety minutes and produced more than three hundred pages of verbatim transcription. Field notes were kept during the interviews. At the end of each interview I asked each participant if they would agree to a follow-up interview, if required. Each participant agreed. I also asked the participants if they would be willing to do some journal writing at a later date. They all agreed to do so. I told the participants I would contact them about the journal writing in December or January.

In January and February 2001, the verbatim transcripts were delivered to the participants for review and editing and these were returned to me by late February.

Journals

In December 2000, a letter was delivered to each participant respecting the

journal writing they had agreed to do (see Appendix F). Initially I had intended to have the more senior participants describe an additional significant event(s) in the life of the school and have the more junior participants focus on their introduction to the school and how their introduction could have been improved. However, the interviews with the junior participants provided ample data regarding introduction to the school and how it could be improved. Consequently, I decided to have all participants write about additional significant events.

Each participant was provided with a 1.44 MB diskette for their journal writing as well as guide lines for using a word processing program. However, participants could handwrite their journal if they wished. I asked that the journals be completed by mid-February 2001. Two of the journals were not completed until the end of the school year. One of the journals was not returned.

The participants

Alphonsus is a senior social studies teacher with twenty-six years of teaching experience. Alphonsus' twenty-six years of experience have been spent in schools on the west coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. He has taught in small and large schools. In 1998, Alphonsus chose to be assigned to our school. Alphonsus saw the new school as an opportunity for a new teaching experience in the context of a large high school. From an early age, Alphonsus considered teaching to be a highly credible occupation, he said he always wanted to be a teacher.

Grandy is a senior teacher with twenty-eight years of experience. Grandy taught on the east coast of Newfoundland and Labrador for three years before coming to the west coast to teach English in a rural high school. Grandy was influenced by his high school teachers to pursue an education degree at university. Like many other teachers of his generation, Grandy began teaching before completing his university studies, but returned to university to complete his education program as well as a graduate degree. Grandy had been teaching at the high school for several years before the school zone was reorganized in 1998 and the new high school was created.

Jesse has been teaching for twenty-seven years. Jesse completed his university training at a mainland university and took a teaching position in our community after considering positions in central Newfoundland and Labrador as well as in Labrador City. Teaching was not his first choice of career, but he feels teaching has been a positive experience. Jesse decided to remain in our community because the town has much to offer families despite being a relatively small municipality. Jesse was on the staff of the high school when the new high school was formed in 1998.

John has been teaching for twenty-four years. John was influenced to become a teacher by several family members who were teachers. He began teaching on the west coast of the province in a replacement position in the mid-1970's and took a special education position at our school the next year. John worked in the special education department for six years before moving into the mathematics and science departments.

where he currently teaches

Mariah was strongly influenced by her mother to become a teacher. Mariah's mother spent her entire career in education. Over the seventeen years of her career, Mariah has taught at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels. Early in her career, she was not sure if she wished to continue teaching, so Mariah took a year of educational leave to complete a graduate program. Mariah was teaching in the local area when the reorganization occurred. She requested to be assigned to a different school, but was assigned to our high school in 1998.

Mary has been teaching for nine years. Mary completed her initial teacher training in another province, but began full-time teaching when she moved to our province in the early 1990's. Mary taught on the east coast for three and a half years before moving to the west coast where she took a permanent teaching position at our school. When the new high school opened in 1998, Mary had been on staff for three years.

Sam was new to the school and the community when the new high school opened in 1998. Sam has been a teacher for sixteen years. When Sam began university he had not planned on becoming an educator, but is satisfied with his career choice. Sam and his family moved to our community because they saw the move as providing better opportunities for their children. Sam feels the school has great potential to grow and improve.

Tara has been teaching on the west coast for seventeen years. Tara's teaching

experience includes kindergarten, elementary, junior, and senior high as well as special education service. She was teaching in a nearby community when the local school zone was reorganized. Tara applied for a vacant position at our school and was successful in attaining the position effective September 1998 when the new high school began its operations.

Tom has taught for thirteen years. Tom's mother was a teacher and he feels his mother was a strong role model who influenced his career selection. He began teaching in a remote part of the province where he taught grades from the elementary to the high school level. Tom was teaching in a local high school when the zone was restructured in 1998. He had asked to be placed in a middle school, but was assigned to the new high school. Initially, Tom was not pleased with his assignment, but feels the new high school is an exciting and challenging place to be teaching.

Analysis of data

Schein (1992) and Merriam (1988) state that the analysis of qualitative data "from all sources must focus on the identification of recurring regularities evidenced by "repetition of response, some behaviours, values, and assumptions that clearly are shared and continue to be used in new situations" (Schein, 1992, p. 177). The analysis of the data followed the general steps proposed by LeCompte and Preissle (1993): (a) tidying up, (b) scanning the data, and (c) searching for patterns (pp. 235-238). The identification of themes and patterns in the data was accomplished by utilizing the conceptual

techniques of theorizing, analytic induction, and constant comparison (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, pp. 239-256). These techniques are consistent with the generative nature of the research proposal.

The details of the constant comparative method provided by Merriam (1998) were particularly useful for data analysis. Merriam (1998) states:

The researcher begins with a particular incident from an interview, field notes, or document and compares it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set. These categories lead to tentative categories that are then compared to each other and to other instances. Comparisons are constantly made within and between levels of conceptualization until a theory can be formulated. (p. 159)

Category construction was aided by usage of the index card strategy (Merriam, 1998, p. 185-186).

The triangulation provided by participant observation, observation of school artifacts, participant interviews, and participants' journals permitted the discovery of, and corroboration for, shared basic assumptions and the major constructs of the school's organizational memory.

Role of the Researcher

My role in the research is best described by LeCompte and Preissle (1993) as participant-as-observer (p. 94). All members of the school staff knew I was conducting research while I was fulfilling my contractual responsibilities to my employer. This

would have allowed me to deal directly with any ethical issues that could have emerged as the research progressed. No such ethical issues arose. Also, my experience with the staff permitted access to all areas of school life for data collection. My professional relationship with my colleagues was not compromised since I did not have a supervisory role at the school during any phase of the case study.

Researcher subjectivity is an issue requiring constant attention. I have worked with some of my colleagues for several years and with others for the past three years. I had my own thoughts regarding the school's culture and organizational memory, but I remained focussed on the individual lived experiences of the participants. I attended to their voices and reached conclusions consistent with the data collected and analysed. Prior to finalizing data analysis, member checks in the form of telephone discussions were conducted to ensure that the tentative findings were consistent with the data provided by the participants.

Confidentiality issues

Measures taken to maintain the anonymity of participants and to ensure confidentiality of data sources are outlined in the informed consent form found in Appendix D.

In addition to the measures found in the consent form, my contact with the participants regarding any aspect of their involvement in the case study was made discretely by telephone, letter, or private meeting. I told the participants at the beginning

of the data collection process that I would not approach them in a public fashion during regular school hours to discuss their participation. neither would I disclose their participation to anyone

Chapter Four

Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the case study in the form of categories and subcategories as described by Merriam (1998). Merriam defines categories as "abstractions derived from the data" (p. 181) and as "answers to your research question(s)" (p. 183). The categories emerged from the constant comparative analysis of the data. The names for the categories were selected by me, the researcher; the names "reflect the purpose of the research" (Merriam, 1998, p. 183) and are derived from the four research questions. The names of the subcategories emerged from, and reflect, the data.

Shared Basic Assumptions Among Staff

Shared basic assumptions are the essence of an organization's culture. The shared basic assumptions represent what a group has learned as the group has dealt with external and internal realities. The shared basic assumptions affect the perception, cognition, and emotions of the organization's members (Schein, 1992, p. 12).

Colleagues

During their interviews when the participants were asked to describe the positive and negative aspects of the school all nine participants made immediate and easy reference to their positive perceptions of their colleagues. Alphonsus stated, "we are far from perfect, but I believe that we make great and honest efforts in what we are about." John said "the atmosphere is more of a family."

Each of the participants made reference to the good-natured humor, laughter, and

bantering which is readily observable when the staff congregates. When one enters the staff room or a teachers' preparation area where staff members tend to gather it is common to hear loud laughter and humorous commentary. The staff room's whiteboard is regularly used to draw attention to birthdays, teacher accomplishments, as well as mildly embarrassing events involving colleagues. The bulletin board in the staff room is used to display nominations for the Good Deed Award. This tradition was initiated in September 1998 when the staff first came together as a new school. Each time a teacher does a good deed for a colleague the beneficiary of the good deed is expected to write a brief description of the deed and identify the doer of the deed. These creatively written notes are placed in a paper gift bag which is hung from the staff room bulletin board. Once a month at a staff meeting one of the notes is drawn and read aloud to the staff and the doer of the deed receives a school shirt. Following the draw all of the descriptive notes are stapled to the staff room bulletin board for all to read. These good deeds range from something as simple as photocopying a test for a colleague to giving up part or all of a preparation period so that a colleague can attend to a private matter outside of school.

The participants used the following words to describe their perceptions of their colleagues: strong, committed, exceptional, good, inviting, helpful, highly motivated, professional, concerned. In his interview Tom stated that there is "A fair amount of camaraderie in the staff room and on the staff." When the participants were asked during their interviews if they would recommend to a young teacher that the teacher apply for a

teaching position at the school all participants quickly responded in the affirmative. Each participant supported their positive recommendation to apply for a position by stating that the staff was a good group that would willingly offer support to a young teacher.

Almost all teaching staff and support staff members attend socials which are organized at special times of the year such as Christmas, Easter, and year-end. These socials are usually held at the school after students have been dismissed and the final bus runs have been completed. The staff members mix easily and are comfortable in the school setting. At Christmas time two traditions have been established. The Kris Kringle tradition involves drawing a colleague's name from a hat and secretly providing the colleague with a treat on each of the three Fridays leading up to the closure of school for the Christmas vacation. The second tradition is providing an inexpensive gift for the person whose name you drew from the hat. These gifts are distributed at the social held in the school on the last day of school prior to Christmas. Although the gifts are inexpensive, they are selected with some thought and care since many of them reflect knowledge of the recipients' likes and dislikes.

Teachers willingly participate in the annual Spirit Week activities organized by the student council. In his journal Grandy said, "This event indicates clearly the level of support teachers are willing to give to events that are designed for the pure pleasure and entertainment of students." The Spirit Week activities begin with each student and teacher being assigned to one of four teams. Each team is assigned a color and has to

participate in a wide range of activities for which points are earned to determine the winning team at the end of the week. The activities include a color contest, poster contest, mascot contest, and several games designed for fun rather than competitive sport. Teachers regularly sign up for the events and often take leading roles for their teams.

However, as Alphonsus said, "we are far from perfect." Six of the nine participants made reference to a significant degree of negativity displayed by a number of staff members. Tom stated, "One thing that I most dislike about the building, and I still find difficulty dealing with it, is the issue about negativity among some staff members." In the same vein, Tara stated, "I don't like people who are cynical." Tom and Tara attempted to quantify their observations by estimating that approximately thirty per cent of the staff displayed a generally negative attitude, but especially when they encountered a new way of doing something. Sam spoke to this negativity when he stated, "There's people there, that for whatever reason, who can make what you're doing or what you're trying to do a difficult thing."

This negativity surfaces at staff meetings when a modification to a set way of doing something is proposed or a new idea is introduced. Many staff members say they can predict who will speak negatively and can almost predict what the individuals will say regardless of the issue under consideration. When these individuals do speak, it is common to observe teachers tune out and ignore what is being said. Alphonsus opined about the "unfairness in the types of criticism" that certain colleagues make. When asked

to identify one thing she would like to change about the school Mariah said she would like the school "to be more risk taking"

Students

All participants made numerous positive comments regarding the school's students although the participants did qualify their remarks reflecting the fact that a large high school always has its share of difficult students. John stated, "For the most part the students are excellent." Alphonsus said, "for the most part the kids are, are decent human beings" and, "it was appreciated when I could see that in larger percentage of what we could call loosely good kids, right. Academically - character wise good, motivationally good."

Other participants described the students as a "nice group", "a good mixture of students", and as "a wonderful student body." Jesse and Mariah observed that the students had adapted to the new school very quickly and smoothly even though the students had originated from three different school systems. Jesse and Mariah believed this spoke well of the students. Likewise, Grandy addressed the students' adaptability and openness to change by stating, "Another strength in the school I think is with the kids themselves. For a school as big as what it is there's a, there's a great tolerance for different types of people within the school."

In his journal, Sam identified the student involvement in the Cops for Cancer campaign as an indicator of student character. This campaign involved the raising of

money within the school in order to shave the heads of students and teachers who had challenged the students to raise a set amount for their heads to be shaved. The campaign raised more than \$2100.00. Sam said, "The students really answered the bell having one student in remission and a second in treatment and doing this activity gave the school a tangible way to show their support for one of their own." Grandy's journal referenced the students' participation in the annual Christmas hamper program. The student council organizes this work of charity by placing cardboard boxes in each home room. Each student is asked to bring in a nonperishable food item for the hamper in their home room. Grandy said, "Students did not do it because they wanted to be recognized, but rather that they saw it as being worthwhile and going to someone in need."

The participants' positive comments respecting the student population are further substantiated by student behavior and attentiveness at school assemblies held in the gymnasium. These assemblies are held at significant times such as Remembrance Day, Christmas, Spirit Week, and when a school team is leaving for a provincial competition or when a team returns with a victory banner to be hung in the gymnasium. On these occasions the entire school population congregates in the gymnasium for the event. These assemblies are not stressful events where it is anticipated that there will be public displays of misbehavior; rather, the assemblies are usually led by students and the audience is attentive and genuinely interested in the event. Parents and guests at these events often make laudatory remarks regarding the overall positive impression created by the

gatherings

Only one of the participants made a direct negative comment regarding the students. Grandy stated, "I would like to see the students more, more involved and taking more pride in the overall building, the overall school itself. I don't think we have done near enough of good enough job yet in the sense of making students have a real sense of pride in who they really are." Grandy's commentary resonates with the increase in vandalism that was noted at lunch time midway through the second semester. One particular area of the school was experiencing significant damage to walls and windows. It was decided to monitor the affected area with increased supervision which necessitated the scheduling of additional supervision for teachers. The staff recognized that the vandalism was the work of a small group and not a problem to be associated with the general student body.

Parents and Community

The majority of participants directly expressed their views that parents and the community have a positive perception of the school and are overtly supportive of the school. One of the participants voiced a contrary opinion stating that the public impression of the school was not always positive.

The majority view regarding parental and community support for the school is supported by the significant attendance of parents and community members at a broad variety of school-sponsored events throughout the year. Events such as hockey games,

musical productions, band concerts, and graduation ceremonies are all well attended by parents as well as members of the general public. Grandy's journal references the school's graduation exercises which have been held in the town's new hockey arena for the past two years. One of the reasons for moving the exercises outside the school was to permit larger numbers of people to view the events. Grandy said

I feel that this event clearly identified for everyone the impact the school has on the community. And the degree of support the community has for the school. The night of the graduation saw in excess of fifteen hundred people come to the Dome to watch the students graduate. What it said to me and to the rest of the community is the degree of cooperation that it took to bring such an event to fulfilment. This event was not just the work of the teachers and the students, but of numerous parent groups and a number of community organizations. It said clearly that our school was the school of the community and was supported as such.

Community support for the school is also evidenced by the partnership which has developed between the school and a large industrial employer in the area. For the past two years the school has entered a team in a national robotics competition. This undertaking costs approximately \$30,000.00 per year and would not be possible without a substantial financial contribution from the company as well as access to the company's engineering expertise.

Despite their common view that parents are highly supportive of the school, three of the participants raised concerns about the degree of knowledge parents have about what actually goes on in the school on a regular basis. Jesse stated, "I think that there's not, there's not enough being done at the school level to make people aware of what's going on. The majority of parents do not realize what's, what's going on at our school." John and Grandy offered similar comments.

The opinion expressed by Jesse, John, and Grandy is substantiated by observation of the school council. In my capacity as chair of the school's finance committee I was asked to attend a meeting of the school council to participate in a discussion of a fund-raising scheme the school council was planning. The school council was planning to raise money to support student travel when students traveled out of town to represent the school at various competitions. During the discussion I recommended to the school council that the fund-raising concept should be expanded to include school needs beyond the identified need to support student travel. The school council agreed and I agreed to garner the input of the school's departments respecting specific needs requiring significant financial support. At the next monthly meeting of the school council I presented a report itemizing the needs which the departments had identified. The list had a cost of approximately \$28,000.00 and did not include the costs associated with a major upgrade in computer technology which the school badly needs. Parent and community representatives were surprised at the scope of the identified needs and several of them

stated they were not aware of the areas which required attention. The school council consequently decided to organize a major fund raiser for the next school year which would address a number of the school's needs.

Mary made an interesting comment regarding her perception of parental influence in the school. Mary said:

if the parent is from a low-economic background then there doesn't seem to be much done. But, if somebody comes in, . . . somebody that's got some, some kind of say in our community or does a lot for our school. . . . I think that we get attacked.

Although Mary was the only participant to make this type of comment in her interview, several teachers were overheard throughout the year making comment about the influence of certain parents. Early in the school year a number of changes were made in the way the school buses dropped off and picked up students at the school. It was felt that the manner in which this had been done for many years was potentially dangerous. A number of arrangements were attempted utilizing different parts of the school parking lots as well as driving routes around the school. This became a nuisance since the changes proved to be confusing and were often ignored by parents who dropped off their children at school. Amongst the teaching staff, it was well known that a small group of parents was pushing for changes and appeared to have considerable influence over the process.

Participant perceptions of the school

The participants' perceptions of their school were encapsulated by Alphonsus when he said, "I guess in general that it, it is the school taken as a whole organ is, is incredibly human, with all the faults and the strong points and the good and the deficient that that implies." All participants commented that the school functioned quite well, that there were many positive things happening, that the school had a positive atmosphere and as John said, the school was "a good place to be." However, the participants drew specific attention to aspects of the school which they felt detracted from the life and purpose of the school.

Jesse stated, "our school has a great reputation across the province. Not only academics, but also for sports and also for other extracurricular activities such as drama, public speaking and so on." Jesse's remarks are substantiated by the school's academic record. Each of the past three years students have won substantial scholarships to a variety of educational institutions within and without the province. The school's athletic teams win regional and provincial banners each year and the 2000-2001 school year saw the school recognized for its athletic accomplishments by being designated the "4A School of the Year" for the province.

The school also excels in art, drama, and music. The school has a very active art club which organizes an expansive art show each year. This art show attracts large numbers of people from the community as well as parents and students. The school's

drama club draws on theatrical expertise from the community to produce plays which are challenging as well as entertaining. The school's band program is highly regarded. The school band travels to a band competition in Halifax each year. This competition attracts school bands from eastern Canada and the northeastern United States. This year the band won three medals at this prestigious competition. The school's Robotics team which has entered a national robotics competition in each of the past two years has won a number of awards each year. This competition is attended by approximately two dozen schools from across Canada and the United States.

When asked to identify the most important thing she had learned about the school over the past three years Tara replied, "That the students are the most important." Tara's response is obviously supported by the wide range of activities sponsored by teachers. The school has the traditional athletic and non-athletic activities found in most schools, but also is sensitive to the unique needs of students. This past year saw the formation of a club which provided opportunities for the expression of unique student talents. It had been observed that there was a relatively small group of students in the school who possessed literary and artistic talents, but who did not seem to fit in with students and teachers who were active in the larger art and drama clubs. It was decided to create a niche for these students so that they would belong to a school organization under the tutelage of a teacher. This challenging activity was taken on by a senior teacher and proved to be a successful and rewarding experience for all involved.

Mariah summarized her perception of the school by saying, "I feel the school is progressive. There are a lot of initiatives, I guess, that come across the desks of the teachers and the administrators and in staff meetings that are always brought to the forefront." This perception of the school is reflected in the special services division of the school which includes two teacher units for a program called Risky Business. These teachers are responsible for monitoring and counseling high risk students who are in the youth justice system or who have special needs and/or circumstances which place them at risk of not completing school.

The school is also committed to professional development with an ongoing program which focuses on the individual needs of teachers. In the autumn of 2000, a one-day professional development workshop was held entitled "Bring Your Own Brain" which drew the link between brain research findings and learning. This workshop was organized by the school in cooperation with the school board and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.

Mariah's perception of the progressive nature of the school is evidenced by the school's policy on smoking. The school council adopted a policy effective September of 2000 which prohibited the possession and usage of tobacco products on school grounds and at school events. The policy included an extensive education component for students as well as school-sponsored smoking cessation programs for interested students. The school took pride in the fact that it was the first school in the province to adopt and

implement such a policy. Difficulties with this policy arose later in the year. These problems will appear in a subsequent section of this paper.

The positive perceptions of the school were tempered by numerous references to aspects of the school's life which acted as drawbacks to the school's attempts to fulfill its mandate. The participants identified problems associated with the structure of some of the classrooms which are located in interior instructional areas called "pods"; these classrooms do not have windows and often have problems with heat control and lack of fresh air. Reference was also made to the significant amount of administrative work which is required of teachers. Mariah stated that teachers seem to be "consumed by day-to-day operations". Alphonsus remarked that diligence given to administrative matters may preclude adequate attention being given to what Alphonsus called "annovances". Teachers are frequently heard complaining about the administrative paper work and the recurrence of problems which do not appear to be getting attention in a timely fashion.

Several participants drew attention to the lack of materials and the cause of this problem which is the unavailability of adequate funding to purchase materials which are required. This is a major issue for the school. The departments' budgets have been frozen for several years. Approximately sixty-five percent of the school's curriculum budget is consumed by paper and photocopying costs. The remaining thirty-five percent is not adequate to meet the instructional needs of the school. The participants specified the need for a major computer technology upgrade as a priority. This will be impossible unless the

school can access significant funds from some outside sources. Problems with the computer network are frequent causing frustration and delays.

Standards

The participants voiced concerns with respect to the application of academic standards and inconsistencies in student evaluation. Four of the participants spoke at length on these matters, also, they are frequent topics of conversation amongst teachers.

Alphonsus stated, "I sometimes think that we strive too much to bring all learning to a level of knowledge, and you can do that to anything. If you prescribe the question and you prescribe the answer it all becomes knowledge." Alphonsus' statement reflects views commonly expressed by teachers in all departments of the school. Teachers are often heard saying that their students have great difficulty handling questions on tests or assignments which require a level of thought beyond simple recall of basic facts. Tom's comment on the results obtained on standardized and criterion referenced instruments which test student understanding beyond the level of basic knowledge supports these views. Tom said:

One of the things I found surprised me that I learnt about the school and one thing that I find very difficult to come to terms with is the results on some of the testing that goes on in the school, some of the formal tests and some of the criterion tests.

In his interview, Grandy referred to a conversation he had with a student who had recently graduated from the school and had gone on to university studies. Grandy

summarized the graduate's comments this way

in some cases you have teachers who make you think about what it is that you're learning and other people just give you the material and so long as you can give back the answers it's fine. But what you find when you go to university is having the answer is not enough, you have to understand why you're doing something. This commentary from a former student parallels Jesse's reference that the school's teachers have "a variety of different approaches to teaching." Academic expectations of students vary considerably and cause friction between teachers especially when a course is being taught by more than one teacher. Grandy identified this inconsistency when he said

I still don't think... we've hit a level where we can say "yes", we're satisfied with what we're expecting of students. There are degrees of it, you can see glimpses of it in different areas, in different people, with different students. But, there is still that, I guess it's, that reluctance to say look, I can accept this point, but then I'm going to bring the people to it.

Concerns with standards is an issue with the special services teachers as well. The special services teachers provide assistance to approximately ninety students. Many of the students receiving supports from the special services teachers are registered for academic courses, but receive extra help on a regular basis and are accommodated by writing tests in the school's learning center rather than the regular classroom. Mariah reported the

following about this practice

A couple of teachers have approached me and felt that perhaps in special education one of their biggest concerns is that students seem to perform, not just better, but extremely better once they start getting special education, and they're kind of at odds about well, this student gets 20th in my math test, starts getting special education now and he's coming back up with 90s because they're writing a test in the learning center or getting extra help. And that bothers me. Because, again, I think we're shooting ourselves in the foot if that's what's happening, if these students are getting an elevated, or a certain amount of assistance which is deemed above and beyond what they should be getting.

The issue identified by Mariah is a source of frustration for a large number of teachers. Teachers report that some students do little work in class because they know that when they have to write a test or complete an assignment they will receive a level of assistance allowing the students to achieve a high grade. Teachers have been heard to say that the level of assistance being given is unacceptable and that it constitutes a modification of a course and not a genuine accommodation as per the Department of Education guidelines. Students who do not receive assistance from the special services teachers often complain about this practice, they see it as unfair because the students receiving the assistance score significantly higher than they do.

Inconsistency in evaluation practices is evident amongst staff members. Some

teachers offer “retests” when students do not achieve a passing grade on a chapter or unit test. The school does not have a formal policy addressing this matter. Students and parents complain about the inconsistency. Some feel the practice is a good one while others feel it promotes poor work habits in students since they know they have a second chance to get a passing grade.

Alphonsus referred to changes in evaluation schemes late in the school year in order to address what is perceived to be unsatisfactory class performance. Alphonsus gave the example of an adjustment that had been made to the evaluation scheme for a grade twelve course. The overall class performance had been judged to be below the acceptable level and so an adjustment was made such that term work was given a heavier weighting than it had originally been given. This adjusted the class performance upwards. However, one student had achieved marks in a very narrow band of excellence. As a result of the change in an evaluation scheme, this particular student benefitted little from the adjustment while other students who had achieved inconsistent grades throughout the year benefitted much more from the adjustment. This had implications for the ranking of grade twelve students. The ranking system uses grades from predetermined courses in order to rank students for the purpose of scholarship eligibility.

Gender

The school's teaching staff of forty-three has thirteen females. Two of the females occupy leadership positions in the school: one is a vice-principal and the other is a department head.

In the course of their interviews, the three female participants initially stated that gender was not a significant issue in the school. However, as the interviews progressed, a clearer picture of their views and experiences emerged. Mariah focused on expectations of female and male teachers stating, "I don't think it makes a difference whether you're a man or a woman in terms of expectations." Later in her interview Mariah intimated that gender is an issue which does make a difference in the life of the school. Mariah said:

But, you know, it's certainly something I'm always cognizant of and I'm glad to see that there are a significant number of women on our staff and traditionally in high schools it's been, and still very, very much, even on our own staff, a male dominated profession.

Mariah's reference to "a male dominated profession" was followed by her description of the female teachers when she said, "I mean I'm glad we have twelve or thirteen and not two or three. Because I think we form our own significant kind of subculture." and then, "I guess I appreciate the fact that we are a community of women." These descriptions convey a sense of separation and perhaps even inferiority with respect to the larger male component of the teaching staff.

Mary's comments centered on her observations that female teachers are more heavily involved in non-teaching activities than male teachers are. Mary stated, "I think you see women doing so much more than you see the men." Continuing, Mary said, "I think that's been created because there are people on staff, a few women on our staff that do things and they don't ask for help." When asked to give a reason for this Mary said, "I don't know why that is. I don't know if it's because they seem to take that, I don't know... just like we are in our own house, right, we take our motherly role."

Mary's observation regarding the degree of female involvement in non-teaching school activities is interesting because when the non-teaching activities are analyzed it is apparent that many male teachers are involved in a wide range of extracurricular activities. Female teachers are also involved in these aspects of school life, but there are certain activities which are led almost exclusively by female teachers year after year. These involvements are year-long activities requiring extensive planning and many hours of attention. Two such activities are the staff social committee and the student council.

Mary directly stated that there should be more females on staff. She stated, "We don't have enough females on our staff." Tara similarly commented that having more female teachers would be beneficial. Tara said, "I think it would make a difference", and, "It may add another dimension." Jesse also stated, "I think there should be more females than there are. And I think that if there were more females, I think the school would be a better place socially." Jesse continued, "I think women would bring an extra dimension

to not only the teaching, but also to the, to the tone and atmosphere of the building.”

As mentioned previously, one of the school’s two vice-principals is female. All of the participants stated that they saw this as a positive aspect of the school’s administration. Five of the nine participants did not perceive a difference in the manner in which teachers reacted to or worked with the female vice-principal versus the male vice-principal. Four participants did refer to differences.

Jesse stated, “I’m sure there are people who feel that she would be inadequate because of her gender.” Marv commented, “They questioned [her] judgment and authority.” In both these instances the participants were referring to some of the male members of the staff. These comments are consistent with observations made at staff meetings where I noted that certain male teachers frequently questioned the comments and opinions of the female vice-principal whereas the male vice-principal did not experience the same scrutiny as regularly.

Manah, Marv, and Tara referred to some of the male teachers bypassing the female vice-principal and going to the male vice-principal or to the principal with issues and concerns even though the female vice-principal was the administrator with the delegated responsibility for those issues and concerns. Tara stated, “For traditional male teachers it took a lot of—it took a lot out of them to have to ask [her] for something. [She] would be bypassed actually.”

Leadership positions in the school are filled mainly by males. Two of the three

administrators are male, four of the five department heads are male, most of the school's committees are chaired by men, the three teachers' representatives on the school council are men, and the school's finance committee which oversees the school's accounts and adjudicates requests for special funding does not have a female teacher on the committee. Staff meetings are dominated by men due to the fact that male teachers occupy almost all leadership positions in the school.

The triangulation of data provided by the participants' interviews, observations, and analysis of the school's leadership structure resonates with Mariah's reference to the school being "male dominated". Leadership and, therefore, power is held almost exclusively by men. This artifact of the school's culture will be further embedded because the female vice-principal is leaving the school to take a principalship in western Canada. In the next school year the school's senior administrative positions will be occupied by men.

Structures

The school has a traditional departmental structure. Each teacher is assigned to a department; a teacher may be attached to more than one department as a result of their teaching assignment for a given year. The five departments are led by department heads who have the responsibility for monitoring their academic area. The department heads are expected to hold meetings with their teachers, identify departmental issues, oversee evaluation formats for courses, and monitor the instruction within their departments.

Department heads usually meet with one of the vice-principals two days before scheduled staff meetings to discuss issues prior to a general discussion at the staff meeting

Grandy described his dissatisfaction with the current departmental structure by saying, "If I was to redesign the school right now I would do away with the departmental structure as such and I would embrace a structure that the universities have looked at in the sense of chairs over certain areas." Grandy perceived the departmental structure as an obstacle to learning when he said, "I guess that I'm starting to come to the realization that the integration of all these subject areas is of much more importance than the actual facts that are going to be taught."

Jesse voiced displeasure with the role of the department head by stating that department heads did not have sufficient time to adequately perform their duties. Department heads have the same teaching duties as regular classroom teachers. Jesse felt the role of the department head had been reduced to that of a messenger rather than a true leadership role with regard to policy formation. Jesse described the department heads as, "more of a go-between rather than doer or administrator. A cosigner of policy." I don't think [they're] near that whatsoever." He continued by saying, "I think that the department head should sit in at the administrative decision and policy making and have a say. Perhaps not a final say, but I think we should have a say in what goes on in our school." Department heads have expressed their concerns regarding their roles. The lack of clarity associated with the role of the department head has produced inconsistency as

well as a degree of uncertainty among teachers

Although the departments are formal structures, they operate loosely. The departments do not have a regular schedule of meetings. Each department meets at the beginning of the school year, but may not meet again for a considerable time. One of the departments met only once this past school year. At the regular staff meetings departments do not report on their activities or concerns, there is no place on the agenda for this to occur. Department heads are not required to meet with their teachers prior to the department heads' meeting with the vice-principal which is held prior to the scheduled staff meetings. Teachers have commented on the nature of these meetings wondering on whose behalf the department heads speak. Many teachers have concluded the department heads speak as individuals and not on behalf of their respective departments.

The school's pod structure was identified by participants as an isolating factor. A pod is a teacher preparation area found at the center of a group of classrooms. There are three of these pods located on the second floor of the school where all of the school's regular classrooms are found. The pods are known as the math pod, the English pod, and the social studies pod. Each pod has approximately ten teachers associated with it. These teachers use the pods for preparation purposes as well as a coffee room at recess and a lunch room. Teachers whose instructional spaces are located on the ground floor tend to use the staff room for the same purposes. This would include approximately ten

individuals who teach physical education, technology courses, and who work out of the learning center

Participants spoke directly about the effect the pod structure has on teachers. Jesse said, "going in there at 8:30 in the morning and coming out, if you have a full day, and not knowing what's going on, it has an effect on you. You almost lose concept of what's going on around you...you're confined." Alphonsus referred to the isolating impact of the pod structure. Alphonsus described the pod structure as "a structure that superimposes itself." And, unless you, you find yourself "bouncing around in several fields in, in substantial amounts of time you probably quickly absorb into that." Alphonsus also said, "you gravitate toward that structure that we have, which often, but not always, determines the folks around you and those you come to know best."

The pods are known to differ in terms of tone and atmosphere since certain teachers are recognized as dominating their pods. Tara referred to these differences when asked what confidential advice she would give to a new teacher. Tara said

The dynamics at recess time from one pod to another pod is phenomenal in that building. Spread yourself out a little bit. It might be comfortable to be in a certain pod because everyone welcomes you there, but pick up for one week and go to another pod with your coffee and sit down.

Tara's advice also speaks to the fact that many teachers are very closely tied to their pod. For these teachers their day is centered in and around the pod where morning coffee,

recess break, lunch, and preparation time are taken. Consequently, the colleagues who utilize the pod in a similar manner tend to be their closest associates.

Teachers often remark that due to close association with a pod area they can go for days without seeing certain teachers. This reality can produce some embarrassment, for example, when a teacher discovers that one of their colleagues has been out of school for a period of time and they did not know of the absence due to the lack of regular contact.

Staff - Administration Relationship

The relationship between the staff and the school's administration has a history which predates the formation of the new high school in 1998. Grandy, Tara, and Tom stated that when the new school opened in 1998 the school's administrators had to deal with a history of tense relationships between teachers who had taught in the building previously and the administration. Tara referred to this history as "baggage" which accompanied the group of teachers who constituted the largest section of the new staff. Tom, new to the school in 1998, had heard about the tense relationships before coming to the school and Mariah had heard of the same difficulties. Sam, also new to the school in 1998, observed the same problem early in the first year of the new school's existence. Sam said, "The other thing that I picked up very early is that there was, I guess, a level of tension between administration and certain, what I'll call veteran or core members of the staff."

Many teachers, who belonged to the “veteran or core” group referenced by Sam, voiced their hope that the formation of the new school would bring a new stage in relationships between teachers and administration. These teachers perceived the new administrative structure, a principal and two vice-principals, as a positive development in that regard. John and Mary felt the new administrative structure resulted in teachers’ problems being addressed more quickly. All of the participants spoke positively regarding one of the administrative team being female. Mary stated her belief that the new people in the administrative structure, the two vice-principals, brought a more “caring side” to the administration of the school.

Tara and Tom identified the core of the poor relationship between staff and administration to be the teachers’ perception of the manner in which they were treated by the principal. Tara referred to the principal as task oriented. Tara said, “And his way of handling that was to tell people, instead of encouraging people to do their job.” Tom also referenced the principal’s interactions with teachers. Tom stated, “his way of dealing with people sometimes gives people the impression that he is not concerned and this causes people a lot of discomfort and causes people to reject some of the things that he may want done.”

John and Mary expressed their dissatisfaction with the level of support given teachers by the school’s administration. John stated, “I’m not sure that the administration has been a good administration.” John felt that the administration had not done enough to

procure instructional materials for the school and that leadership was needed if the school was to progress in that regard. Mary stated that teacher course assignments were sometimes not handled in a forthright, honest fashion. Mary stated, "The courses that are given to us, the honesty behind why they're given to us. I think there's a lot of dishonesty that goes on in our school. I think if we were told the reasons why things have to go a certain way, I think we'd be more accepting of it."

Dissatisfaction with inadequate planning was referenced as a problem. Tara expressed her concern that at times events which affect the whole school are not as well planned as they should be. Tara stated

But, if it's going to affect most of the people in the building then planning has to go into it. When people make really quick decisions about things, like the closure of school for a workshop or sports day, or our school council makes a decision about a certain day. I think they could be so much better if they were well planned. Tara's concern is shared by many teachers. Teachers complain when they are faced with events which are viewed as unnecessary interruptions which result in a loss of instructional time. An example of this occurred in the second semester when a decision was made to suspend classes on a Friday afternoon so that students and teachers could attend a high school hockey game. Parents complained to the district director that the school had lost too much instructional time throughout the year and that the decision to suspend classes to attend a hockey game was not in the best interest of the students. The

district director ordered that regular classes would be held on the Friday afternoon

Alphonsus also referenced the numerous interruptions which detract from classroom instruction. Alphonsus said, "we may lose balance sometimes interruptions and the day-to-day stuff, the announcements at odd times and things that tend to annoy people maybe there are other methods of doing it as legitimate, but maybe haven't quite quite gotten to us "

The relationship between staff and administration came to a head as a result of an incident which occurred during the afternoon of Friday, November 3, 2000. During the last period of the day substitute teachers and some off-duty teachers were directed to position themselves in the corridors of the school in order to intercept students who had been permitted to leave their classrooms. No other teacher was aware of this event.

All intercepted students were immediately sent to the school's main office on the ground floor where they were detained by the principal until their teachers used the intercom to report that students were missing from class. The main office quickly became blocked with students. The students were then moved into the school's cafeteria where there was more space. Students complained loudly about the treatment they were experiencing. One student who had been allowed to leave her classroom to take medication was prevented from doing so. Some teachers left their classrooms to look for their students. They were told to go back to their classrooms and use the intercom before their students would be permitted to return to class.

Near the end of the period all students were sent back to class. Many teachers were told by the students that they had failed a test which the administration had set up to see how much time would elapse before missing students were reported to the office. Some students thought the exercise was hilarious while others could not believe that they had been treated in such a fashion.

At dismissal time several teachers went straight to the main office to voice their anger over what had occurred. This resulted in public confrontations between the principal and some teachers. Other teachers were so angry that they felt it best to leave the school quickly and either call the principal over the weekend or see him on Monday to discuss the matter.

News of the Friday afternoon event spread quickly amongst parents. Two parents approached me on the weekend inquiring about what had occurred. These parents were at a loss to understand why the event had occurred. Other teachers were contacted by parents as well.

Upon their return to school on Monday, November 6th, many teachers had confrontations with the administration. The two vice-principals told teachers that what had occurred on Friday afternoon was a deviation from a plan to determine how many students were leaving their classrooms per period and for what reasons. The vice-principals said the principal had changed the plan without consulting them. Later on Monday, the principal circulated a memo to all staff stating that a process would be put in

place to deal with teachers concerns regarding Friday afternoon

On Tuesday, one of the program specialists from the district office came to the school to report that the district director had received complaints about the Friday afternoon occurrence. The program specialist had been sent to the school to establish a process by which the deep feelings of the staff could be aired in an effort to repair the significant damage done to professional relationships in the school. A meeting was held after school chaired by the program specialist and attended by teachers who had written letters of complaint to the principal. The program specialist explained that the district director had decided to close school on Thursday afternoon so that the staff could meet to deal with the issues. The meeting established an agenda for the Thursday afternoon session which would see each staff member given the opportunity to express their concerns after the administration had spoken about the event and its aftermath.

This staff meeting was held in the school resource center. Tables and chairs were arranged in a large semicircle. The program specialist opened the meeting with a brief description of the agenda saying that the three administrators would speak first and then each staff member would then be given an opportunity to express their feelings and concerns.

The principal spoke first apologizing for any embarrassment and discomfort experienced by the staff. The principal stated he should have given more thought to the repercussions of his actions. He accepted responsibility for his actions and described the

event as “a breach of faith” on his part. The two vice-principals then spoke, also apologizing for the impact of the event on the staff and students.

Each teacher was then given the opportunity to speak, only one teacher did not speak. Some teachers displayed emotion as they spoke. Voices cracked. Teachers stopped to compose themselves. People cried openly as they vented their feelings and listened to others do the same. The following is a sample of the comments made during the two-hour session:

“I felt incompetent on Friday.”

“I didn’t want to come to work this past week.”

“I wanted to kill somebody on Friday.”

“I was placed in an untenable position on Friday.”

“I didn’t know what to do.”

“I wanted to quit.”

“I went home and cried.”

“I was embarrassed in front of my students.”

“A student said, ‘You’re in trouble now, sir!’”

“One student said, ‘You failed the test on Friday!’”

“On Friday, there was an abuse of power by the administration.”

“It is unfortunate that the events occurred. I feel our staff morale has been dealt a powerful blow. It will take considerable time for this injury to heal. The

perception of our school has been harmed as well. It appears that many of our parents have been left wondering if we really know what we are doing. I have heard many of our students comment on the inexplicability of the events.”

Many teachers spoke of the pride they had in the school and of their commitment to help the school recover from the damage incurred.

At the conclusion of the session the program specialist stated the healing process would take time and great effort would be required if the school was to recover from the damage done by the events of November 3rd. He stated his intention to work as a facilitator with the administrators and staff in order to expedite the healing process.

In his journal Tom summarized teachers feelings:

They felt that they had been lured into a situation and trapped, that the administration did not trust them to make decisions in their classes, and most people were genuinely hurt that people who they felt were their trusted leaders would do something to embarrass them. This situation had a profound negative impact on our staff. It has set us back three years.

In his interview, Sam described how the incident identified a sense of separation between the teaching staff and the administration. Sam said:

There has to be a sense of us, that you are one of us, you're our leader, but you're one of us. It disappeared. I don't know if we ever had it. But, I think that's an important thing there.

The event of November 3rd shook the school to its foundations. It was a public disclosure of an organizational weakness. For the members of the teaching staff who had taught with the principal for several years, the event was confirmation that the staff-administration relationship had not changed with the opening of the new school. For teachers who came to the school for the first time in 1998, the event riveted their attention on an unpleasant reality which released high levels of anxiety.

The school's students were affected as well. The students knew why classes were canceled on Thursday afternoon. They were aware of the high level of tension between the teachers and the administration. On Friday morning, November 10th, the principal addressed the students over the school's public address system apologizing to any student who felt they had been mistreated by what had occurred the previous Friday afternoon.

Over the weeks and months that followed, teachers frequently discussed whether or not the school could recover from the trauma and whether or not the staff-administration relationship could change positively. Even though many teachers commented that they did not think they had the energy to continue with their many and varied activities, they did continue with them. These teachers stated the students needed activities and should not be punished because of the mistake that had been made. However, a broad consensus developed. Sam voiced the consensus when he said, "There's going to be a change with new administration. I think that's the only chance we have of changing the relationship."

Espoused Values and Shared Basic Assumptions

Schein (1992) defines espoused values as “the articulated, publicly announced principles and values that the group claims to be trying to achieve” (p. 9). Espoused values are typically inscribed in statements of philosophy and mission statements intended for public display. The espoused values and the shared basic assumptions of an organization are not necessarily congruous. If congruity does not exist, the espoused values will predict what people will say in certain circumstances, but will be at odds with the actions people take when the values should be a determinant of behavior (Schein, 1992).

Espoused Values

The school’s espoused values are clearly stated in the Student Handbook (see Appendix G) which is provided to each student shortly after the opening of school in September. The espoused values are reflected in the Principal’s Message, School Philosophy, Code of Ethics, Code of Behavior, and statement of Rights and Responsibilities for Students, Teachers, and Parents.

The Principal’s Message refers to the successes which the school has achieved since the opening of the new school in 1998. The ongoing process of “building a tradition of excellence” is stated also.

The School Philosophy lists the major objectives for the school. The philosophy includes reference to the establishment of an atmosphere that reflects Christian perspectives and values. It states the school is dedicated to academic excellence as well as

the development of individual student talents. The objectives of the school will be achieved in a social climate based on respect and responsibility.

The Code of Ethics highlights the responsibility students must take for learning. Students are to take advantage of educational opportunities. Students are to take responsibility for their actions and show respect for others. Mutual respect between students and staff is emphasized.

The Code of Behavior is based on the need for a positive learning environment and itemizes the characteristics of such an environment. It lists the following characteristics: positive attitude, high morale, teamwork, sharing responsibilities, safe and healthy environment, opportunities for involvement, personal identity, recognition of achievement, shared activities, community interaction, and involvement of parents and guardians.

The Rights and Responsibilities of Students, Teachers, and Parents reiterates the statements of principles and values contained in the School Philosophy, Code of Ethics, and Code of Behavior.

Relationship to Shared Basic Assumptions

The broad program offered by the school and the great efforts made by the teaching staff to provide the program are consistent with the espoused values and principles reflected in the school's espoused commitments to academic excellence, development of student talents, and the provision of opportunities for students to become

involved in a wide variety of activities. The frequent involvement of parents and guardians in the school's program is consistent with the school's publicly stated value of their contribution to the overall attainment of the school's objectives. In recognition of this contribution the school presented certificates of appreciation to its volunteers at a special assembly held in the gymnasium. At this assembly, several dozen volunteers were thanked for their assistance throughout the year.

The teamwork associated with the school's committees is evidence of consistency between espoused values and shared basic assumptions regarding staff, students, parents, and teachers' perceptions of the school. The fact that teachers, parents, and students can work together on matters as diverse as school growth, provincial tournament preparations, school council or graduation committees reflects a high degree of congruity between what the school publicly espouses and the behaviors referenced.

Significant events convey knowledge about shared basic assumptions and espoused values. Three of the participants identified a major drug bust as a significant event in the life of the school. This event occurred very late in the 1999/2000 school year. The school had received many complaints about the availability of drugs at the school and had dealt with a number of students who were obviously under the influence of drugs. The school's administrators made observations over a period of time and concluded that one particular student appeared to be the source of most of the drugs at the school. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police were notified and worked with the school to conduct a

successful drug bust during school hours. Mariah, Tara, and Tom felt that this event illustrated the school's value of a safe and healthy environment for students. The fact that the school's administrators agreed to have the drug bust conducted while school was in session was evidence of the school's commitment to its public duty and responsibility. Mariah believed the event said, "We stand for justice." Mariah, Tara, and Tom believed the drug bust sent a strong, clear message to students regarding personal accountability for actions. Following the drug bust, a letter was sent home to each parent and guardian explaining what had occurred at the school. Parents, guardians, and the community were highly supportive of the actions taken.

On two occasions teachers and administrators took direct action when some members of two athletic teams behaved inappropriately. Both instances involved students skipping school. The consequence of the misbehavior was prohibition from participation in an upcoming event which in one instance was a provincial tournament. Parents of the affected students complained that the discipline was too severe, but the teachers and administrators maintained their decisions based on the stated principle that students must accept responsibility for their actions.

Student-teacher relationships appear to reflect congruity between espoused values and the shared basic assumptions regarding students and staff. Observation of student-teacher interactions allowed me to characterize these interactions as mutually respectful and relaxed. The school experiences discipline problems in which disrespect

and aggression are exhibited, but these problems involve a small minority of students and are not characteristic of the general student population. Students, parents, and guardians appear to be satisfied with the nature of student-teacher relationships. The principal congratulated the teachers for their efforts in this regard by stating that he and the other administrators received very few complaints from students, parents and guardians with respect to treatment of students by teachers.

Congruity between the shared basic assumption regarding standards and the espoused values respecting academic excellence and tradition of excellence is not high. The participants' discomfort with what they perceive to be lax standards and inconsistencies in evaluation practices does not corroborate the claim in the School Philosophy that the school is "dedicated to academic excellence".

The degree of congruity between the three remaining shared basic assumptions regarding gender, structures and staff-administration relationships and the espoused values is difficult to ascertain. The statements of espoused values address student-teacher relationships as well as parent-guardian-teacher relationships and not the internal aspects of the school's life as described by the shared basic assumptions regarding gender, structures, and staff-administration relationships. The problems associated with these three shared basic assumptions appear to be incongruous with the espoused values which guide the formation and maintenance of teachers' relationships with students and parents/guardians. It may be that the espoused values are not perceived by teachers and

administrators as being applicable to professional relationships within the school

Organizational Memory of the School

Walsh and Ungson (1991) describe the essence of organizational memory as "decisional stimuli and responses that are preserved in particular storage bins." These bins encompass the components of an organization including its members, culture, and structures. Walsh and Ungson maintain that organizational memory is not limited to the individuals in the organization, but has efficacy at the collective level when experiences are shared by the group. Schein (1992) proffers that a group's shared basic assumptions, the powerful determinants of thought and behavior, are rooted in shared learning. This prerequisite shared learning necessitates a high degree of membership continuity. Schein (1992) states, "A group has a culture when it has enough of a shared history to have formed such a set of shared assumptions." (1992)

The new high school has a three-year history of shared learning. Of the forty-five teachers who formed the professional staff in September of 1998, thirty-nine have remained at the school for the past three years; this group of thirty-nine constitutes a significant continuity of membership as referenced by Walsh and Ungson (1991). When the new high school began its first year of operation approximately seventy-five percent of the staff had taught together in the same building now occupied by the new school. The principal and all of the department heads of the new school held the same positions in the school which occupied the same building prior to September of 1998.

When asked if the school was indeed a new school when it opened in 1998, John replied, "For the people who had been there like myself for twenty-four years, it was certainly no big change. I think for people who had been there a long time, it was just a continuation." Sam, a newcomer to the school in 1998, when asked to describe one of the things he learned about the school in the first few months of teaching there, said

I learned that it was a school that was struggling to reach an identity that was [the new school]. For a big part of the teaching staff, it was still [the old school]. And, not just the teaching staff. In some aspects, the students. Certainly support staff. There was a strong sense of, well, that's how we've done things, this is the way it's always been done.

The practices and policies which had been part of the previous school were transferred in their entirety to the new school. A commitment was made during the first meeting of the new staff to review all of the practices and policies so that amendments could be made or policies could be affirmed by the new staff. However, a formal process for doing this was not implemented.

Tara stated in her interview that during the first year of the new school many teachers regularly referred to the "old ways" of doing things whenever a practice or policy was questioned. Tara felt that "a lot of people didn't like new people coming in" because the new people were a challenge to the status quo. Mariah observed a similar reaction from some teachers whose perspectives on how the school should be run were anchored

solidly in their collective history. Mariah referred to the division she detected as a sense of "us and them." Alphonsus, like Tara and Mariah, observed a propensity for holding onto the "old ways." Alphonsus said, "I believe the inherent problem was that such a large contingent of the new [school's] staff was in fact the old [school's] staff."

An example of this occurred during the first year of the new school's life. The school's administration recommended a significant change in the format of the parent-teacher night scheduled for early November. Instead of parents meeting with teachers in their classrooms, all teaching staff would be located in the gymnasium with a desk and chairs in place for each teacher; each teacher's area would be separated sufficiently from adjacent teachers to permit private consultations to occur. It was explained to the staff that one of the high schools in the town had switched to this format some years ago and found it to work well. Parents had reported satisfaction with the format because it allowed them to see which teachers were free for consultation and which teachers had a number of people waiting to see them; also, it eliminated the wandering from classroom to classroom associated with having teachers located in their classrooms.

The recommended change engendered much debate. Most of the teachers who were accustomed to meeting with parents in separate classrooms strongly stated opposition to the proposal claiming that privacy would be compromised and that the "old way" of meeting with parents to discuss student progress was the proven way to proceed. Teachers who had taught at the school where the proposed format had been adopted

several years before supported the change stating privacy was not compromised and that parents overwhelmingly preferred the open format versus the classroom format. The administration decided to implement the proposal on a trial basis. The parents would be asked to report their reactions to the new arrangement before they left the school.

Holding the parent-teacher night in the gymnasium worked very well. The great majority of parents reacted favorably to the change because it improved the process for them. Despite the parents' positive reaction to the change, many teachers continued to voice their displeasure with it. However, since that first parent-teacher night for the new school, all have been held in the gymnasium using the open format.

Mariah expressed the view that the teachers constituting the minority who were new to the school in 1998 have had little impact on the school's identity. Mariah commented, "We have kind of been assimilated into doing things the way it's always been done." Mary described the school as, "a new school with old ways." These perceptions are supported when the school's written policies are analyzed. These policies were the policies of the previous school, over the past three years of the new school's existence, only minor modifications to some of the policies have been made. The minor modifications were made on a piecemeal basis. They were not made as a result of a formal review of policy. This indicates a perception that the policies were acceptable guidelines for the new school. Written policy arises from shared experience and is a major component of organizational memory. This is evidence that the new school's

organizational memory overlaps substantially with the organizational memory of the previous school

Alphonsus and Grandy have perceived a slow evolution over the past three years. Alphonsus termed this evolution as, "a melding of the old and the new." Grandy felt the gradual change in the school was due to the fresh ideas and approaches brought to the school by the new teachers who arrived in 1998. Grandy said

I think in some cases they took the best of what they believed their school had. And very often they left the things that probably were weaknesses or, or were things that if they could've changed back then they probably would've, but they didn't have to take them with them. So they came with what I perceive now, probably as a lot of strengths and not necessarily a lot of baggage.

Grandy referenced the changes in the school's graduation ceremonies as an example of the impact of new people in the school community. The decision to move the ceremonies away from the school was strongly supported by newcomers and the format of the graduates' ecumenical church service was substantially affected by the new people, as well.

Tom expressed his view that the school would not change substantially until a significant portion of the most senior staff members retired and were replaced by new teachers with different experiences. Tom stated that for a large section of the staff the old school was the only school they had taught in for all or most of their careers.

Consequently, these senior teachers were firmly attached to a common, shared history. Tom felt the significant change which would occur as a result of retirements would propose challenges accompanied by progress. Tom stated, "It can be painful, and I've seen it being painful, but it can be very rewarding. The way we did it before is not in the memories of most of the people."

The school's organizational memory is an emergent abstraction well rooted in the shared history of the large contingent of teachers who taught in the building prior to 1998. The three-year history of the new school is short compared to the twenty-three-year history of the previous school. The new teachers who came into the school in 1998, as well as the small number that have joined staff since that date, have had an influence on the school's organizational memory, however the influence has not been substantial.

John's comment that the new school was "just a continuation [of the old school]" is understandable given the reality of the change which occurred in 1998. The structure of the building was the same as before, three-quarters of the staff was not new, the policies and procedures were unaltered, and, the leadership component of the new school was very much that of the old school. Despite the overt efforts to emphasize the existence of a new school, including a new name for the school, in the minds of most staff members this was not a new educational institution.

Perhaps it is still not a new entity.

Transmission of the school's organizational memory

The majority of participants described orientation to the school as a process which requires a substantial amount of time. Those participants who came to the school as newcomers in 1998 felt their formal orientation was too brief and inadequate. Sam and Tom felt they were left to their own devices with respect to their orientation to the school. Mariah believed that the short time frame in which school reorganization occurred prohibited the development of a thorough orientation plan.

Those participants who were not new to the school in 1998 indicated that orientation to the school could be difficult given the school's size and the complexities of its life. Several participants identified the school's written policies as items which required thorough explanation. Failure to follow these policies due to inadequate knowledge can cause problems for new teachers.

Currently, when a new teacher arrives at the school, the school administration recommends a mentor to the new teacher. This mentor acts as a resource person for the teacher and can provide advice on a variety of matters. John and Mary felt that the interaction with a mentor could be a positive experience but, depending on the individual selected, the process could be negative. John expressed his view that too much influence from a mentor could cause a new teacher to adopt the opinions and attitudes of the mentor which may not be in the best interest of the newcomer. John felt that new teachers have to be given enough personal space to permit them to reach their

own conclusions regarding their role as a staff member. Similarly, Tara said she would advise a new teacher to be a "risk taker", a person who is not afraid to try something new. She felt it would be a mistake for a new teacher to be reluctant about trying an initiative because senior teachers were doing something different.

Mary perceived the school administration as having too much influence over the selection of a mentor. She perceived this as a form of control over the new teacher. Mary felt it was best for the newcomer to have a free choice regarding the person they approached to help them become orientated to the school, she described this as finding a "buddy." Mary said:

I think that the buddy system is the best thing to do – to show you around and introduce you to people. Like for example, Barb, she's new to our staff so, we've taken her to lunch quite a few times and now she's comfortable and at staff meetings she sits with us. You know, I wish someone had done that for me – it's a friendly face whenever you need one – if you're not an outgoing person, then – if you're scared about walking in that staff room – you know it's intimidating.

Tom also referred to the benefits of this form of orientation. Tom had observed:

I think that is happening in a number of incidents that where a couple of new teachers have been buddying up with certain people and that relationship has been very beneficial to not only the new teachers, but also to the senior teacher and having some role in shaping a career.

Sam believed the orientation to the school needed to include orientation to the

community and to the district office. Basic information such as the availability of accommodations would be of considerable help to new teachers arriving from elsewhere. Sam also felt the orientation should identify personnel at the district office whose responsibilities and expertise should be known to teachers at the beginning of the school year.

When asked to articulate confidential advice the participants would give to a new teacher, the participants focused on key aspects of the school's life. Tom's advice highlighted the fast pace which characterizes the school and which can be a difficult adjustment for individuals accustomed to a slower pace associated with smaller schools. Tom stated:

The pace of the school can become very quick. They have to be aware of that and to make sure that they're well planned. I think in a school our size it's hard to go from day to day. The new teacher would have to realize that it is important to be very well planned and have certain goals and objectives laid out throughout the year.

Tom's observation of the pace of life in the school is accurate. Even senior teachers who have been in the school for many years are often heard to comment on the hectic pace. Loss of instructional time due to a variety of interruptions can put pressure on teachers to finish prescribed curriculum in a reasonable fashion.

Teacher involvement in non-curricular activities adds to the hectic pace. As well, Grandy cautioned new teachers about their degree of involvement in these activities.

Grandy said, "be prepared to carry your share of what's happening, but don't be abused in the sense of taking on everything." Grandy commented that new teachers often take on too many responsibilities, he said new teachers have to learn to say no when they feel they are becoming overloaded.

Alphonsus referred to the size and physical arrangement of the school as detractors to the maintenance of a positive atmosphere in the school. Alphonsus felt that new teachers have to adjust to a degree of impersonality characterizing the school. He said, "I believe they should expect, again in part because of the physical layout that there will be segments of our teacher and student population you never get to know."

Alphonsus said he would advise a new teacher to be open-minded with respect to academic expectations of students. Alphonsus said

Be prepared to be extremely flexible on expectations. I think that one of the unspoken beliefs is that the individual teacher is pretty well personally responsible for the level of achievement that he or she needs. And, accommodations will be made.

Alphonsus also said personal job satisfaction will arise from adherence to one's own standards. He stated, "Trying to follow the caveats and whatever of the administrative rule and regulation, that will cover your posterior, but it won't give you much satisfaction." Alphonsus' hypothetical advice echoes concerns with the school's academic standards identified earlier. His comments also reflect dissatisfaction with pressure to make accommodations in order to produce positive academic results.

Sam's advice to a new teacher highlighted what Sam perceived to be the inner political machinations of the school. He stated:

I would tell the teacher that as in any school there is definitely a power pyramid. you get it at a staff meeting, and it's not just department heads that speak are heard, are listened to. there is a sense of power within the school. So I would try to tell them to be aware of what, of who they are, and what they are, and if there are agendas, hidden agendas or otherwise.

Sam's reference to a "power pyramid" meshes with comments made by Tara and Grandy with regards to how new teachers should conduct themselves in their interactions with staff. Jesse, Tara and Grandy said they would advise new teachers to listen carefully to what teachers are saying in order to determine attitudes and perspectives, as well as, keep themselves out of trouble. Grandy advised, "follow the axiom that you have two ears and one mouth, listening to what's happening before you speak on things." Jesse advised, "I would advise them to be careful of staff room conversation. I think that they should be there perhaps to listen." Advice of this nature could be interpreted as a warning, a warning to attend to the power of influential people.

At present, the transmission of the school's organizational memory is highly unstructured. It appears that what a newcomer learns about the school, as well as the speed with which they learn it, very much depends on the person(s) the newcomer interacts with during their first few months of employment. This is an issue which is of importance to the school because approximately one-half of the teaching staff will qualify

for retirement over the next several years

Chapter Five

Conclusion

This chapter contains the following sections: (a) a summary of the findings, (b) a description of the grounded theory, (c) a list of recommendations addressing the major issues identified by the case study, and, (d) recommendations for further study.

Summary of findings

This case study was conducted in a high school in western Newfoundland and Labrador during the 2000-2001 school year. The purpose of the study was to answer four research questions:

1. In the views of the participants, what are the shared basic assumptions of our school?
2. In the views of the participants, does incongruity exist between the espoused values and the shared basic assumptions of our school?
3. In the views of the participants, what constitutes the organizational memory of our school?
4. In the views of the participants, how should the school's organizational memory be transmitted to new teachers?

The nine participants in the study were staff teachers. I was an insider who taught with the participants. Five of the nine participants had taught in the school building prior to 1998 when the school was a denominational high school, three of the participants were

reassigned to the school in 1998 when the new school was formed by the reorganization of the school zone, and one participant came to the school in 1998 from another part of the province. I was reassigned to the new school in 1998.

Data for the case study was obtained from participant interviews, participant journals, statements of values, and observations of the school's life. The constant comparative method of data analysis, as described by Merriam (1998), was utilized to identify categories and subcategories within the data. Following identification of categories and subcategories, a grounded theory was developed. The grounded theory is substantive since it emerged from the lived experiences of the participants, many of which I shared.

Shared basic assumptions

The constant comparative method of data analysis identified eight shared basic assumptions.

1. **Colleagues.** All participants described their colleagues as a group of individuals doing their best to provide high quality education for the students. Teachers interact with one another in a relaxed and cooperative manner. A significant degree of negativity displayed by some staff members was identified as a problem.

2. **Students.** All participants described the students positively, stating that the great majority of students were good to work with both in and out of class. The positive comments were tempered with reference to a small minority of difficult students.

3. **Parents and Community** Parental and community support for the school was perceived to be high. Views were expressed that most parents did not have sufficient knowledge of what occurs in the school on a regular basis and that some parents had more influence than others.

4. **Participant perceptions of the school** The participants expressed their positive perceptions of the school referring to the school's accomplishments as well as its efforts to meet the needs of a diverse student population. Participants identified problems associated with administrative work, limited finances, and the poor structure of some classrooms.

5. **Standards** Four of the participants identified inconsistencies in student evaluation and concerns with academic standards as significant issues for the school.

6. **Gender** Leadership is primarily provided by men. The leadership component of the school is dominated by men; approximately 70 percent of the staff is male. Two of the three female participants felt the school would benefit from a larger number of females on staff; only one of the male participants shared this view.

7. **Structures** The school's departments do not function as well as they should. The role of the department head requires clarification. The school's pods are isolating factors for teachers.

8. **Staff-Administration Relationship** A lack of trust characterizes the relationship between the teaching staff and the school's administration. This lack of trust existed

before the new school opened in 1998 and grew substantially as a result of the incident that occurred on November 3, 2000

Espoused values and shared basic assumptions

Congruity exists between the espoused values and four of the shared basic assumptions respecting staff, students, parents and community, and perceptions of the school. Incongruity characterizes the link between the espoused values and the participants' concerns with evaluation inconsistencies and academic standards

Organizational memory of the school

The shared basic assumptions that have been identified are the foundation of the school's organizational memory. These shared basic assumptions are the major determinants of behavior. The written policies, practices, and rituals are other components of the organizational memory.

Transmission of the school's organizational memory

The participants indicated that orientation to the school is a complex matter requiring considerable time. However, the participants did not offer a substantial amount of advice regarding the manner in which a newcomer's orientation should be structured, other than to recommend that a newcomer would be well advised to establish a relationship with a trusted colleague with whom they could confidentially discuss professional matters.

The unstructured process by which the organizational memory is currently transmitted to newcomers is an important issue for the school considering the large number of retirements that will probably occur over the next few years.

Grounded Theory

The formation of the new high school in 1998 arose from the school board's decision to reorganize the local school zone, an artifact of the removal of the denominational system of education. The school board's decision to reorganize the local school zone was followed by a consultative process involving parent, student, and teacher representatives from five school councils. This consultative process, established by the district director, identified issues deemed to be pertinent for the smooth transition from the denominational system to the nondenominational system. The various committees that formed the working groups in the consultative process focused on issues related to student adjustment to the new schools. The process did not examine the reorganization of the zone's schools from the teachers' perspectives. In retrospect, this omission parallels the finding of Michael Fullan (1991) that when new schools are formed little attention is given to the important matter of school culture from the teachers' perspectives.

The opening of the high school in September 1998 supposedly marked the birth of a new school. The high school had been given a new name as recommended by the school council representatives who participated in the consultative process headed by the district director. The high school no longer had a religious name. The school's new name

incorporated the name of the community. During the summer recess the religious component of the school's name had been removed from the front of the building and had been replaced with the community's name, but the shadow of the old name was clearly visible on the brickwork to which the school's name was attached. When I first observed the new name for the school with the shadow of the old name visible on the brick wall, I wondered if this was an unintentional symbol of our reality. Was this a new school? Or, was the change only superficial, and not substantive?

The lived experiences of the participants, as well as my own observations and experiences, have led me to the conclusion that the high school is not substantively different from the school that existed in the building prior to September 1998. The organizational memory of the school is essentially the organizational memory of our school's predecessor. Those teachers who had taught in the previous school had a long, collective experience which created a set of shared basic assumptions that remained intact as those teachers made their seamless transition in 1998. The school's name had been changed, but the practices and policies were identical and the school building was unaltered. For those teachers, who formed approximately three-quarters of the staff, the most palpable artifact of change was the presence of about twelve new colleagues.

For the newcomers to the school the transition was not seamless. We were in a new environment. The new school was much larger than the schools we had left. We encountered large numbers of new students and a large number of new colleagues. The

policies and practices of the school did not arise from our collective experiences. We had to adapt quickly to the new school which necessitated accepting the policies and practices carried over from the predecessor

The policies and practices of the school have not seen significant change over the past three years. In September 1998, it was stated that a process would be put in place to review the school's policies and practices, but this was not done. The school growth committees, which have met sporadically over the past three years, have not developed new policy nor have the committees proposed substantial changes to existing policy. The school's departments have not been a force for change in this regard either.

The school council was a source of new policy. During the 1999-2000 school year the school council developed a policy prohibiting the possession and use of tobacco products on school property. The proposed policy was forwarded to the staff for reaction and comment. The proposal did not garner a significant amount of formal reaction from the staff. Several teachers commented that a similar policy had been attempted previously, but had not been successful.

Informal reaction to the proposed policy was practically unanimous, almost all teachers felt the policy would fail because it could not be enforced consistently. A significant number of teachers stated that they would not even attempt to enforce the policy since it would lead to confrontations with students which the teachers felt were unnecessary. A consensus developed amongst the staff that teachers were being asked to

accept responsibility for something that was the responsibility of parents and not the school. It was felt that the policy would have the same fate as previous attempts to deal with student tobacco usage on school grounds, implementation of the policy would be its undoing. The policy was adopted by the school council for implementation at the beginning of the 2000/2001 school year. As the year progressed, enforcement of the policy dwindled until it became almost nonexistent. Consequently, the school had an official, written policy that was being ignored by most individuals.

The staff's limited, formal response to the proposed policy and the problems associated with its enforcement posed an intriguing scenario. The staff perceived the policy as an imposition on its work life. The policy was not perceived as addressing a priority identified by the staff, but rather was seen to be an unnecessary increase in teacher responsibility. A confrontation with the school council could have developed over this issue if a formal, collective response articulating the staff's concerns with enforcing the policy had emerged. This did not occur. However, the staff did respond to the policy by allowing its enforcement to dwindle as the year progressed.

The experience with the anti-tobacco policy points to a pertinent aspect of the relationship between the teaching staff and authority figures within the school community. The anti-tobacco policy developed by the school council was seen to be an intrusion, creating a problem rather than solving a problem. The policy was initially presented to the staff by the principal on behalf of the school council. The teaching staff

did not have a sense of ownership for the policy, the limited response to the proposal as well as the failure to consistently enforce the policy appeared to stem from this lack of ownership. There was a clash of assumptions. The school council assumed it was developing a policy for the benefit of the students and the staff assumed it was being forced to accept responsibility for something outside its realm of responsibilities.

Why was the staff unable to speak with a strong collective voice when asked for input on the proposed policy? I believe the answer has two components. Firstly, Akin (1991), Hargreaves (1999), and O'Neill (1995) state that large high schools tend to have characteristics causing them to be fragmented. These fragmented schools have large teaching staffs divided into academic departments in which staff members teach a discrete curriculum. Teachers in these schools tend to perceive their classrooms as their domains that are separate from other classrooms and teachers. Our school has these characteristics. Additional fragmentation occurs due to the pod structures that tend to limit day-to-day teacher contact to a relatively small portion of the total staff. This tends to prohibit broad-based discussion of issues.

The second component of the answer stems from the nature of the staff-administration relationship that is characterized by a lack of trust. The anti-tobacco policy originated with the school council, but was presented to the staff by the school principal. For the large segment of the staff that had taught in the school prior to 1998, the anti-tobacco policy as presented by the principal was not a new policy, it was a failed policy.

that had been repackaged. The past experience of this group predetermined its response to the proposed initiative. Many of these teachers commented that there was no point in challenging the proposal because they would not be taken seriously. One of the more senior teachers told me privately, "What's the point of arguing your case? Nobody listens."

I have concluded that the fragmented nature of the school's teaching staff and the lack of trust inherent in the staff-administration relationship are the two key factors prohibiting our school from dealing with its internal issues in a positive manner. These two factors are reflected in the shared basic assumptions, the powerful determinants of thought and behavior.

Since the school's inception in 1998, parents, teachers, and the community have learned to work together to attain high quality education for our students. However, problematic issues persist regarding professional interactions within the school. If these issues are to be addressed positively, the school needs to become a learning organization which "is continually expanding its capacity to create its future" (Senge, 1990, p. 174). The school is in a propitious circumstance to begin this process. The principal and one of the vice-principals have left the school to take administrative positions outside the province. The other vice-principal has been appointed to the principalship and a new vice-principal is moving in from another school.

Recommendations

This section contains a series of recommendations that I believe will allow the staff to address the significant issues that have emerged from the case study

Recommendation 1

That the new principal and vice-principal initiate a dialogue with the staff regarding the nature of the staff-administration relationship. This dialogue must focus on the lack of trust associated with the relationship as it existed when the previous school administration was present. The process needs to identify ways by which confidence and trust can be restored and maintained.

Recommendation 2

The role of the school's departments must be examined. There needs to be a clear delineation of the functions for the departments as well as clear guidelines directing the operation of the departments. This examination would also consider the role of the department head.

Recommendation 3

The fragmentation and isolation caused by the school's pod structure should be addressed by developing strategies to overcome the negative influences of the pod structure. The pod structure limits contact between teachers. Consequently, teachers tend to hear and react to the opinions of a small segment of the entire school staff. Also, the

pod structure limits teachers' experiences with instructional strategies since frequent contact with other teachers is limited to those teachers who share the same pod.

Recommendation 4

The inconsistencies in student evaluation practices should be identified and concerns with academic standards should be examined.

Recommendation 5

The interaction of the special services department with students taking academic courses requires clarification. The acceptable degree of assistance given to these students should be clear to both the special services personnel and the regular classroom teachers.

Recommendation 6

The transmission of the school's organizational memory to new staff members requires a more structured form than it currently has. The school needs to determine those components of its organizational memory which are essential for a newcomer to learn. Also, the school needs to give consideration to mechanisms through which the learning will occur.

Recommendation 7

The relationship between the staff and the school council should be examined in order to find means by which the relationship can be strengthened. The experience with the anti-tobacco policy could be used as a basis for discussion.

Recommendation 8

The staff and school council should initiate a systematic review of the school's policies and practices. Such a review would improve communication between staff and the school council and would provide formal opportunities for policy amendment as well as new policy development.

Recommendation 9

Ways and means of improving communication with parents should be considered in conjunction with the school council. Improved communication may result in greater input from parents and guardians regarding significant issues. The use of focus groups to solicit input on specific issues may be helpful in this regard.

Recommendation 10

The relationship between gender and leadership in the school should be studied with a view to determining ways in which women can assume more leadership roles traditionally associated with men.

Recommendations for further research

Recommendation 1

All of the participants in the case study were members of the school's teaching staff. No data was obtained directly from parents, guardians, students, or from members

of the broader community. Research seeking the input of these stakeholders would add to the understanding of the school's culture and organizational memory.

Recommendation 2

An in depth exploration of the female teachers' lived experiences would prove interesting given that the school has many of the characteristics of a traditional, male dominated high school. The loss of the female vice-principal further embeds these characteristics.

Conclusion

Our high school was created three years ago due to the reorganization of the local school zone. The creation of our school was a direct result of the demise of the denominational school system in Newfoundland and Labrador. The change in the school system was widely supported in our area by people who wished to see an improved school system which would provide first-rate educational experiences for our children.

The individuals who form our school community go to great lengths to achieve the goal of first-rate education for our children. Our school has realized many successes in its efforts to serve the best interests of its students. We can take pride in these efforts and successes.

However, our school has weaknesses which detract from our efforts to attain our goal. These weaknesses are embedded in the culture of our school and will require

considerable attention if they are to be corrected. The teaching staff has considerable latitude to deal with these issues and can devise strategies to ameliorate the weaknesses. The process of changing the school's culture may be compared to the work of a gardener. Greenfield (1986) uses the metaphor of the Bonsai tree to illustrate this process. Greenfield states

I suggest the metaphor of the Bonsai tree. This image is particularly apt for education. The gardener does not let the young tree simply "develop its full potential." Instead, he acts upon his own view of what constitutes a proper expression of the tree's potential, and he keeps clipping and pruning until the tree manifests that form. The difference between the gardener's task and the administrator's, or the leader's, is that trees never learn. People do, and that is where organizations and human culture come from. (p. 72)

References

- Akin, J. (1991). When the restructuring bandwagon reaches high school, will site culture bar the door? (ERIC No. ED 352 728) Unpublished manuscript
- Ashton, P., & Webb, R. (1986). Making a difference: Teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement. New York: Longman
- Brown, Jean. (1994). Grandy's River Collegiate: a case study. St. John's, Canada: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Faculty of Education
- Corbett, H.D. et al. (1987). Resistance to planned change and the sacred in school cultures. (ERIC No. EJ 363 388). Educational Administration Quarterly, 23, 36-50
- Deal, Terrence E., & Peterson, Kent D. (1990). Shaping school culture. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers
- Dovle, L.H. (1998). A framework for examining school leadership and teaching in varied organizations and social contexts: A synthesis. (ERIC No. ED 418 074) Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA
- Faucette, S.L. (1994). New leaders at work: Building coalitions and creating community. (ERIC No. ED 373 448) Paper presented at the annual meeting for Supervision and Development, Chicago, IL
- Fullan, M. (1991). The new meaning of educational change. New York: Teachers College Press

Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1996) What's worth fighting for in your school. New York: Teachers College Press

Gideon, Barbara H., & Erlandson, David A. (2001) Here's what happens when a principal says 'I want you to come up with ideas?' Journal of Staff Development, 22, 14-17

Greenfield, Thomas B. (1986) The decline and fall of science in educational administration Interchange, 17, 57-80

Hargreaves, Andy. (1992) Balkanized secondary schools and the malaise of modernity. (ERIC No. ED 349 097) Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Association, San Francisco, CA

Hargreaves, Andy. (1994) Changing teachers, changing times. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Hickcox, E. et al. (1988) Making a difference through personal appraisal. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Holmes, M., Leithwood, K. A., & Musella, D. F. (1989) Educational policy for effective schools. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Inger, Morton. (1993) Teacher collaboration in secondary schools. (ERIC No. ED 364 733) Berkley, CA: NCRVE

Lieberman, Ann (Ed.). (1988) Building a professional culture in school. New York: Teachers College Press

LeCompte, Margaret D. & Preissle, Judith (1993) Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research (2nd ed.) San Diego: Academic Press

Leithwood, Kenneth, & Jantzi, Doris (1990) Transformational leadership: how principals can help reform school cultures. School effectiveness and school improvement, 1, 249-280

Lortie, D. (1975) School teacher: a sociological study. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Louis, K.S., & King, J.A. (1992) Professional cultures and reforming schools: does the myth of Sisyphus apply? (ERIC No. ED 349 693) Madison, WI: Centre on Organization and Restructuring of Schools

Marshall, Catherine, & Rossman, Gretchen B. (1999) Designing qualitative research (3rd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Merriam, S.B. (1988) Case study in research in education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

Merriam, S.B. (1998) Qualitative research and case study applications in education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

Nias, J., Southworth, G., & Yeomans, R. (1989) Staff relationships in the primary school. London: Cassell

O'Neil, John (1995) On schools as learning organizations: A conversation with Peter Senge. Educational Leadership, 52, 20-23

- Owens, Robert G (1998) Organizational behavior in education (6th ed)
Needham Heights, MA Allyn and Bacon
- Peters, Thomas J. & Waterman, Robert H (1982) In search of excellence
Lessons from America's best-run companies Boston, MA Harper Collins Publishers,
Inc
- Peterson, Kent D (2001) The roar of complexity Journal of Staff Development,
22, 18-21
- Purkey, S C. & Smith, M S (1985) School reform: The district policy
implications of the effective schools literature The Elementary School Journal, 85, 353-
389
- Rosenholtz, S (1989) Teachers' workplace: The social organization of schools,
New York: Longman
- Rudduck, J (1991) Innovation and change, Milton Keynes: Pone University
Press
- Sahin, Ali E. & Simsek, Hasan (1996) A qualitative assessment of
organizational learning processes in selected Turkish public and private high schools
(ERIC No. ED 402 695) Paper presented at the annual meeting of the University Council
for Educational Administration, Louisville, KY
- Schein, E H (1992) Organizational culture and leadership (2nd ed) San
Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

Senge, Peter M. (1990) The fifth discipline. New York: Currency and Doubleday Publishing Group

Shafritz, Jay M., & Ott, Steven J. (1996) Classics of organizational theory (4th ed.) Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace College Publishers

Siskin, Leslie Santee (Ed.), & Little, Judith Warren (Ed.) (1995) The subjects in question: Departmental organization and the high school. New York: Teachers College Press

Smith, Bryan (1994) The fifth discipline fieldbook. New York: Currency and Doubleday Publishing Group

Steinhoff, C.R., & Owens, R.G. (1989) Managing the organizational culture of rural. (ERIC No. ED 317 369) Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Rural Educational Association, Reno, NV

Trice, Harrison M., & Bever, Janice M. (1993) The cultures of work organizations. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

U.S. General Accounting Office (1992) Organizational culture: Techniques companies use to perpetuate or change beliefs and values (Report No. GAO/NSIAD-92-105). Washington, DC

Van Wessum, Loes (1999) Collaboration and teachers' perception of professionalism in schools for secondary education. (ERIC No. ED 433 343) Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Walsh, J.P., & Ungson, G.R. (1991). Organizational memory. Academy of Management Review, 16, 57-91

Appendices A to G



Memorial

University of Newfoundland

APPENDIX A

Office of Research

June 9, 2000

ICEHR No. 1999/00-070-ED

Mr. Peter Sutherland
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Dear Mr. Sutherland:

The Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research has examined the proposal for the research project entitled "*Organizational memory in high schools: a case study*" in which you are listed as the principal investigator.

The Committee has given its approval for the conduct of this research in accordance with the proposal submitted. However, the Committee suggests that you give some consideration to ensuring that participants do not feel compelled to take part in your study, but do so voluntarily.

If you should make any changes either in the planning or during the conduct of the research that may affect ethical relations with human participants, these should be reported to the ICEHR in writing for further review.

This approval is valid for one year from the date on this letter: if the research should carry on for a longer period, it will be necessary for you to present to the Committee annual reports by the anniversaries of this date, describing the progress of the research and any changes that may affect ethical relations with human participants.

Thank you for submitting your proposal. We wish you well with your research.

Sincerely yours,

G. Inglis
Chair, Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research

GI/emb



APPENDIX B

[REDACTED]

June 20, 2000

[REDACTED]
Director

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Since January, 1999, I have been engaged in course work required for the completion of a Master of Education degree, specializing in Educational Leadership, from Memorial University of Newfoundland. I have decided to pursue the thesis route for the completion of my graduate program. I write this letter requesting your consent to conduct a qualitative case study at [REDACTED] during the autumn and winter of the 2000/2001 school year.

This qualitative case study will provide a research opportunity to explore the school's organizational memory. Organizational memory refers to stored information from an organization that can be brought to bear on present decisions. As you well know, [REDACTED] is a relatively new school. The teaching staff has been drawn from a number of schools each of which had an organizational memory that had developed over many years. This has implications for the operation of the school. The teachers of our new school have brought with them components of their previous schools' organizational memories. Are these organizational memories congruous? Are the organizational memories sources of problems because they do not contain the same or similar shared basic assumptions?

The proposed case study will attempt to answer four research questions. The research questions are designed to focus on the individual lived experiences of the participants. These questions represent the beginning of an exploration allowing for open-ended interaction and an emergent research design. The research questions are:

1. In the views of the participants, what are the shared basic assumptions of our school?
2. In the views of the participants, does incongruity exist between the espoused values and the shared basic assumptions of our school?
3. In the views of the participants, what constitutes the organizational memory of our school?
4. In the views of the participants, should the school's organizational memory be transmitted to new teachers, and if so, how?

Participation in the case study will be open to all members of the professional teaching staff of [REDACTED] as well as parent and community representatives of the School Council. If more than fifteen individuals volunteer to participate, I will select participants to obtain the experiences

of both senior and junior teachers. Also, I will select participants to ensure the inclusion of teachers who had taught in other schools before coming to teach at [REDACTED]

The case study will utilize the following components: (a) participant observation, (b) semi-structured, open-ended interviews, (c) participant journal writing, and (d) researcher observation of the school's artifacts. The informed consent of each participant will be required; a formal document will be developed outlining the research project as well as measures that will be taken to protect the identity of the school and the identities of all participants. Any tape recorded interviews and verbatim transcripts of the interviews will be reviewed by the participants and will be held in confidence. I am very aware of the need to ensure confidentiality since I will be both researcher and participant. I do not believe my professional relationship with my colleagues will be compromised since I do not have a supervisory role at the school. The recordings, transcripts, participant journals, and researcher field notes may be shared with my thesis supervisor, Dr. Rosonna Tite. The recordings, transcripts, participant journals, and researcher field notes will be retained by the researcher, in a locked drawer and destroyed once the thesis is complete.

I believe this research proposal will be of benefit to [REDACTED]. The identification and description of shared basic assumptions will be of significant use to the school as the school's stakeholders plan for school change initiatives. Failure to recognize the power of an organization's shared basic assumptions can result in the demise of well-intentioned change initiatives due to the incompatibility of the initiative and the shared basic assumption(s). The research process should also help to build a stronger school community since considerable discussion may be generated by the findings. Identification and description of shared basic assumptions should result in discussions across departments and along lines of authority within the school. Documentation of the school's organizational memory will be valuable because over the next several years a large portion of the staff will probably retire. A record of the school's organizational memory will be beneficial as the cohort of senior teachers exits the school to be replaced by new educators. It will provide a link with the school's history thereby ensuring a degree of continuity during a period of transition.

It is my intention to complete my thesis by the autumn of 2001. With your consent, and that of the participants, the results of the case study may be shared with the school staff and school board personnel.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Rosonna Tite (737-3322) or Dr. Barbara Burnaby, Dean of Education (737-8588).

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my proposed case study.

Respectfully yours,

Peter G. Sutherland

Consent Form

I.....hereby consent to allow Peter Sutherland to conduct the research, described above, in.....on the condition that he obtains informed consent from all participants. I understand that all information will be kept strictly confidential and that neither the school, nor any individual participant will be identified.

Signature.....

Date.....

[REDACTED]

June 20, 2000

[REDACTED]
Principal
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Since January, 1999, I have been engaged in course work required for the completion of a Master of Education degree, specializing in Educational Leadership, from Memorial University of Newfoundland. I have decided to pursue the thesis route for the completion of my graduate program. I write this letter requesting your consent to conduct a qualitative case study at [REDACTED] during the autumn and winter of the 2000/2001 school year.

This qualitative case study will provide a research opportunity to explore our school's organizational memory. Organizational memory refers to stored information from an organization that can be brought to bear on present decisions. As you well know, [REDACTED] is a relatively new school. The teaching staff has been drawn from a number of schools each of which had an organizational memory that had developed over many years. This has implications for the operation of the school. The teachers of our new school have brought with them components of their previous schools' organizational memories. Are these organizational memories congruous? Are the organizational memories sources of problems because they do not contain the same or similar shared basic assumptions?

The proposed case study will attempt to answer four research questions. The research questions are designed to focus on the individual lived experiences of the participants. These questions represent the beginning of an exploration allowing for open-ended interaction and an emergent research design. The research questions are:

1. In the views of the participants, what are the shared basic assumptions of our school?
2. In the views of the participants, does incongruity exist between the espoused values and the shared basic assumptions of our school?
3. In the views of the participants, what constitutes the organizational memory of our school?
4. In the views of the participants, should the school's organizational memory be transmitted to new teachers, and if so, how?

Participation in the case study will be open to all members of the professional teaching staff of [REDACTED] as well as parent and community representatives of the School Council. If more than fifteen individuals volunteer to participate, I will select participants to obtain the experiences

June 20, 2000

of both senior and junior teachers. Also, I will select participants to ensure the inclusion of teachers who had taught in other schools before coming to teach at [REDACTED]

The case study will utilize the following components: (a) participant observation, (b) semi-structured, open-ended interviews, (c) participant journal writing, and (d) researcher observation of the school's artifacts. The informed consent of each participant will be required; a formal document will be developed outlining the research project as well as measures that will be taken to protect the identity of the school and the identities of all participants. Any tape recorded interviews and verbatim transcripts of the interviews will be reviewed by the participants and will be held in confidence. I am very aware of the need to ensure confidentiality since I will be both researcher and participant. I do not believe my professional relationship with my colleagues will be compromised since I do not have a supervisory role at the school. The recordings, transcripts, participant journals, and researcher field notes may be shared with my thesis supervisor, Dr. Rosonna Tite. The recordings, transcripts, participant journals, and researcher field notes will be retained by the researcher, in a locked drawer and destroyed once the thesis is complete.

I believe this research proposal will be of benefit to [REDACTED]. The identification and description of shared basic assumptions will be of significant use to the school as the school's stakeholders plan for school change initiatives. Failure to recognize the power of an organization's shared basic assumptions can result in the demise of well-intentioned change initiatives due to the incompatibility of the initiative and the shared basic assumption(s). The research process should also help to build a stronger school community since considerable discussion may be generated by the findings. Identification and description of shared basic assumptions should result in discussions across departments and along lines of authority within the school. Documentation of the school's organizational memory will be valuable because over the next several years a large portion of the staff will probably retire. A record of the school's organizational memory will be beneficial as the cohort of senior teachers exits the school to be replaced by new educators. It will provide a link with the school's history thereby ensuring a degree of continuity during a period of transition.

It is my intention to complete my thesis by the autumn of 2001. With your consent, and that of the participants, the results of the case study may be shared with the school staff and school board personnel.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Rosonna Tite (737-3322) or Dr. Barbara Burnaby, Dean of Education (737-8588).

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my proposed case study.

Respectfully yours,

Peter G. Sutherland

June 20, 2000

Consent Form

I, [REDACTED] hereby consent to allow Peter Sutherland to conduct the research, described above, in [REDACTED], on the condition that he obtains informed consent from all participants. I understand that all information will be kept strictly confidential and that neither the school, nor any individual participant will be identified.

Signature: [REDACTED]

Date...

August 31/2000

[REDACTED]

APPENDIX C

June 27, 2000

Mr. Peter Sutherland
63 Ohio Drive
Stephenville, NF A2N 2V1

Dear Peter:

I am pleased to give my support and approval for you to approach the staff of
[REDACTED] request they participate in the research.

Good luck and I look forward to the results of your research!

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Director of Education

[REDACTED]

c.c. [REDACTED]

APPENDIX D

[REDACTED]

September 12, 2000

Teaching Staff & School Council Members

[REDACTED]

Dear Colleagues and Parent/Community Representatives:

Since January, 1999, I have been engaged in course work required for the completion of a Master of Education degree, specializing in Educational Leadership, from Memorial University of Newfoundland. I have decided to pursue the thesis route for the completion of my graduate program. I write this letter seeking your voluntary participation in a qualitative case study at [REDACTED] during the autumn and winter of the 2000/2001 school year. Consent to conduct the case study has been granted by [REDACTED] and by [REDACTED] Principal, [REDACTED].

This qualitative case study will provide a research opportunity to explore our school's organizational memory. Organizational memory refers to stored information from an organization that can be brought to bear on present decisions; organizational memory describes "who we are and how we do things here". As you well know [REDACTED] is a relatively new school. The teaching staff has been drawn from a number of schools each of which had an organizational memory that had developed over many years. This has implications for the operation of the school. The teachers of our new school have brought with them components of their previous schools' organizational memories. Are these organizational memories congruous? Are the organizational memories sources of problems because they do not contain the same or similar shared basic assumptions?

The proposed case study will attempt to answer four research questions. The research questions are designed to focus on the individual lived experiences of the participants. These questions represent the beginning of an exploration allowing for open-ended interaction and an emergent research design. The research questions are:

1. In the views of the participants, what are the shared basic assumptions of our school?
2. In the views of the participants, does incongruity exist between the espoused values and the shared basic assumptions of our school?
3. In the views of the participants, what constitutes the organizational memory of our school?
4. In the views of the participants, should the school's organizational memory be transmitted to new teachers, and if so, how?

Participation in the case study is open to all members of the professional teaching staff of [REDACTED] as well as parent and community representatives of the School Council. If more than eight individuals volunteer to participate, I will select participants to obtain the experiences of both senior and

junior teachers. Also, I will select participants to ensure the inclusion of teachers who had taught in other schools before coming to teach at [REDACTED]

The case study will utilize the following components: (a) participant observation at meetings and around the school, (b) semi-structured, open-ended interviews, (c) participant journal writing, and (d) researcher observation of the school's artifacts. The informed consent of each participant is required; measures will be taken to protect the identity of the school and the identities of all participants. Each participant will be interviewed in the period October 1 to November 15, 2000; a second interview may be required later in the autumn or early winter. Any tape recorded interviews and verbatim transcripts of the interviews will be reviewed by the participants and will be held in confidence. I am very aware of the need to ensure confidentiality since I will be both researcher and participant. I do not believe my professional relationship with you will be compromised since I do not have a supervisory role at the school. Following the interview, each participant will be asked to keep a journal which is to be submitted to me by the end of the first semester in January, 2001. The recordings, transcripts, participant journals, and researcher field notes may be shared with my thesis supervisor, Dr. Rosonna Tite. The recordings, transcripts, participant journals, and researcher field notes will be retained by the researcher, in a locked drawer and destroyed once the thesis is complete.

I believe this research proposal will be of benefit to our school. The identification and description of shared basic assumptions will be of significant use to the school as the school's stakeholders plan for school change initiatives. Failure to recognize the power of an organization's shared basic assumptions can result in the demise of well-intentioned change initiatives due to the incompatibility of the initiative and the shared basic assumption(s). The research process should also help to build a stronger school community since considerable discussion may be generated by the findings. Identification and description of shared basic assumptions should result in discussions across departments and along lines of authority within the school. Documentation of the school's organizational memory will be valuable because over the next several years a large portion of the staff will probably retire. A record of the school's organizational memory will be beneficial as the cohort of senior teachers exits the school to be replaced by new educators. It will provide a link with the school's history thereby ensuring a degree of continuity during a period of transition.

It is my intention to complete my thesis by the autumn of 2001. With your consent, the results of the case study may be shared with the entire school staff and school board personnel.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Rosonna Tite (737-3322) or Dr. Barbara Burnaby, Dean of Education (737-8588).

Please, contact me if you have any questions regarding any aspect of the study. If you wish to participate in the study, please sign the attached consent form and return it in the envelope to my mailbox. Please understand that if more than eight individuals volunteer to participate in the case study, I will select participants in order to obtain data from sources referenced previously in this document. In any event, if you do decide to volunteer, I will make contact with you prior to the end of September.

Respectfully yours,

Peter G. Sutherland

Consent Form

I.....hereby consent to participate in the research, described above, in
[REDACTED] I understand that all information will be kept strictly confidential and that
neither the school, nor any individual participant will be identified.

I understand that:

(a) my participation in the study is completely voluntary;

(b) I may refuse to answer any question;

(c) any information gathered (as noted above) will be used only for educational purposes and that this
information may be shared with the researcher's thesis supervisor, Dr. Rosonna Tite;

(d) I have the right to decline to be audio-taped during any interview and to review any verbatim
transcripts or interview notes before analysis of the data begins;

(e) my consent will be required before the results of the case study can be shared with the entire school
staff and school board personnel;

(f) all sources of data will be kept in a locked drawer and destroyed once the thesis is completed;

(g) I have the right to terminate my participation at any time.

Signature.....

Date.....

APPENDIX E



September 25, 2000



Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for volunteering to participate in my case study this autumn.

If it is convenient for you, I would like to conduct your interview on Thursday, October 26th, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in room 324 at the [REDACTED]

It is difficult to estimate the length of the interview; however, I do not anticipate the session going beyond two hours.

You don't need to bring anything with you. I'll bring along coffee, etc. and a bite to eat!

Yours sincerely,

Peter G. Sutherland

APPENDIX F

[REDACTED]

December 3, 2000

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

During your interview on October 1, 2000, you identified as a significant event in the life of the school the [REDACTED]. You mentioned that you felt the school handled trouble directly and properly, also, you felt that teachers did not stand alone when facing difficulties.

As a continuation of my research I would like you to identify another significant event in the life of the school. I would like you to describe the event in detail and explain what you believe the school's response to the event says about our school. If you cannot identify a single additional event, then feel free to identify two or three events which you consider significant.

If you intend to use a word processor for this part of my research, it would be helpful if you would double space your work, use a two-inch right-hand margin as well as use line numbering.

Could you get this done for me by the middle of February?

Thanks for everything.

Yours sincerely,

Peter G. Sutherland

APPENDIX G

Excerpts from Student Handbook

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all students and staff of [REDACTED]. Over the past two years our school has experienced many successes and we look forward to building a tradition of excellence in the many programs that our school has to offer.

Within this handbook you will find information designed to make your school experience a satisfying and rewarding one. I look forward to working with all of you and I wish you every success at [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

[REDACTED] is a non-denominational public school operated by the [REDACTED]. It serves the youth of the communities of [REDACTED]. The major objectives for the school are the following:

To establish an atmosphere that reflects Christian perspectives and values and to enable the students to develop spiritually as they mature physically and intellectually.

To build an institution that is dedicated to academic excellence with a well qualified and dedicated staff to help each student develop his/her talents as much as possible.

To create a social climate that is based on respect and responsibility which involves everyone in the school community, so that students will respect each other as well as staff and feel a responsibility for the feelings of others as well as the property they use.

To offer programs which will assist the physical development of the adolescents so that they may enjoy good health and develop the attitudes towards sports and participation that are necessary for a long and happy life.

When a writer has agreed to provide a reference by a given date, the student can ask at that time if it is ready or was sent.

CODE OF ETHICS

This code shall apply to all students of Stephenville High. This code does not attempt to define all items of acceptable practice but rather to serve as a student guide. Both individual and collective actions taken by members of the student body may enhance or detract from the status of the school. Students are expected to be aware of the code and to observe general principles of student practice.

- A student's first responsibility is to take advantage of educational opportunities and to strive for personal excellence.
- A student does not knowingly undermine the educational opportunities of other students.
- A student takes responsibility for his/her actions in class, on school grounds or while involved in school-related activities.
- A student does not criticize the abilities or reputation of others unless speaking in confidence to that person or an appropriate school administrator.
- A student does not use abusive or derogatory language.
- Disputes arising among students that cannot be resolved by the parties involved are brought to the attention of a staff member.
- A student assists in promoting educational opportunities in class and school.
- A student makes a constant effort to improve academically and socially.
- A student respects the authority vested in the staff and realizes that they share the common goal of educational excellence and opportunity. Likewise, staff respects students.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

This Code of behavior gives the students and parents a clear understanding of how our school community is to live out the Christian values presented. The code is intended to enhance our school by creating a learning environment of intellectual, physical, and moral excellence. A positive learning environment within a school is characterized by:

- Positive staff/student attitude and high morale.

- Teamwork and the sharing of responsibilities
- A healthy and safe physical environment
- Opportunities for student involvement, commitment and responsibility
- Clear and effective communication of school expectations
- The nurturing of personal identity
- The encouragement and recognition of achievement
- Opportunities for shared activities and community interaction
- Significant involvement of the parents and guardians

This code outlines expected behavior for students and also sets appropriate enforceable consequences for failure to meet its standards. Although a certain degree of flexibility is necessary to allow for reasonable adjustments for specific situations and individuals, flexibility will not undermine the credibility of the code. Students must develop responsibility for their behavior, and understand that failure to meet the code's expectations will result in the application of the appropriate consequence. Recognition of appropriate behavior should be determined through staff, student and parents' guardian input.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RIGHTS OF STUDENTS	RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS
• to be respected • to learn in a safe and undisturbed environment • to have freedom from physical and verbal harassment • to take part in all programs offered by the school	• to respect the rights of all others - peer, staff and visitors • to promote and develop self-discipline by following the code of conduct • to attend classes regularly and punctually to be prepared for work • to take an active part in their classes • to obey all school rules and regulations

RIGHTS OF TEACHERS	RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS
• to be respected • to expect reasonable behavior of all students while involved in all school activities, including trips • to discipline students who are disruptive	• to plan and conduct an effective program, by assisting all students to learn • to provide student evaluation and report student progress • to ensure a positive learning environment by enforcing the rules of the school while recognizing the rights of all individuals • to respect the rights of all others - peers, students and visitors • to refer uncooperative students to the administration of the school • to refer poorly achieving students to the appropriate services (Academic Resource, Student Services, Administration) • to inform parents of successes and problems developing in the class with their child, (for example, poor attendance, achievement and attitude)

RIGHTS OF PARENTS	RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS
• to be respected • to expect that classes are conducted in an orderly manner • to expect that the students are provided with a worthwhile program • to confer with the staff and administration of the school • to be involved in the School Council	• to assist their child in fulfilling the student's responsibilities • to cooperate with the school to enhance the educational and social growth of their child to remain informed about the educational program • to provide a positive environment for personal growth, realizing that they are the first and foremost providers of discipline for their child

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

It may happen from time to time that a student feels that she/he has been unjustly treated. The issue must not be debated in the classroom. The correct procedure is as follows:

- Carry out the directive given by the teacher/supervisor
- At the end of the period or some other appropriate time ask the teacher for an appointment to discuss the problem. This is a necessary step
- If after this discussion you still consider that you have

