



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

Research Commons

<http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/>

## Research Commons at the University of Waikato

### Copyright Statement:

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

The thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of the thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from the thesis.

**EXPLORING THE PROCESS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE  
IN ENGLISH MEDIUM SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL  
ASSESSMENT IN VANUATU**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree**

**of**

**Master of Educational Leadership**

**at**

**The University of Waikato**

**by**

**Gayleen Harrison Tarosa**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

**Hamilton, New Zealand**

**2013**

## **ABSTRACT**

Educational change is ongoing. It is generally aimed at improving teaching and learning, but usually comes with challenges. Scholars have devoted a great deal of research to minimise the challenges faced by implementers of change, but there is no one method that fits all situations. A method that works in a particular country may not suit other countries.

Vanuatu has experienced numerous educational changes since attaining political independence in 1980. However, official reports show that educational standards in Vanuatu are declining, which suggests that some recent educational changes may not have contributed to the enhancement of teaching and learning. This is therefore a concern that needs to be addressed.

This study sets out to explore this issue by investigating the process of educational change management in Vanuatu through the experiences, perceptions and expectations of Ministry of Education (MoE) officials, head of schools, and teachers, with specific reference to the change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment process. While a small amount of research has been done on some aspects of educational change in Vanuatu, none had been carried out specifically on the implementation of the recent change to senior school assessment. As well as contextualising the process of educational change within the Vanuatu education system, this study also examined educational change management from a global perspective in order to identify ways to improve such processes for the Vanuatu education system.

The research data for this study were gathered by means of a qualitative case study approach which used individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Participants included two Ministry of Education officials, two heads of senior secondary schools and four senior secondary teachers. The heads of schools and teachers included in this study were

from urban centre senior secondary schools in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The data were collected within the month of November, 2012 and were analysed using thematic analysis.

The key findings reveal that the participants welcomed the change to the English medium senior secondary school assessment process, as it enables Vanuatu to have its own national certificate at this level. However, the study also identified several factors that appeared to have hindered the implementation process. Hence, participants' experiences, perceptions, and expectations were used to develop a proposed change management process framework for the Vanuatu education system, and to develop recommendations for improving the implementation of future educational changes in Vanuatu.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*First and foremost I would like to humbly give glory, honour and praise to the almighty God for this achievement.*

This Master's thesis journey has been a challenging one during which my husband's mother and his adopted mother both passed away. However, there are a number of people without whose support, this thesis might not have eventuated, and to whom I am greatly indebted.

My sincere and heartfelt gratitude goes to my chief supervisor, Professor Christopher Branson and co-supervisor, Frances Edwards for the invaluable contribution you made towards the completion of this thesis. It was a great privilege and honour to learn from your wealth of academic knowledge. Your guidance, dedication, understanding, encouragement, patience, interest, and enthusiasm regarding this thesis enabled its completion. Thank you for sharing this learning experience.

I thank the New Zealand Government for the sponsorship of this study. Staff of the Waikato international Students' Centre; Caitriona Gyde, Deonne Taylor and Matt Sinton: thank you for your great support and encouragement during the course of this study. My sincere thanks are also extended to the Student Learning staff, especially Dawn Marsh, Andrea Haines and Marie-Michelle Wells.

I am also grateful to the staff at the Department for Professional Studies in the Educational Leadership Centre, especially Jeremy Kedian for his timely advice and knowledge about the system. Special thanks to Dr. Sue Dymock, Dr. Margaret Franken, Rosanna Luoni and Sylvia Rutkowska for your support and advice during this challenging journey. Thanks to librarians Anne-Ferrier-Watson and Yvonne Milbank for their great assistance about the library and Alistair Lamb for assistance with the formatting of this thesis. Thanks to Alison Annals for proofreading my thesis.

In Vanuatu, special thanks to the staff of the Ministry of Education, in particular, Mr. Roy Obed and Mr. Charlie Robert, for permission to do this research. Thanks are also extended to Robert Reggie and Jonathan Tarip for access to their respective schools to collect data. Great thanks to Cedric Croft, the Technical Advisor VEAU and Adrian Alamu, the Assessment Officer SPBEA- Fiji. I am profoundly indebted to my participants, whose real names cannot be mentioned here for ethical reasons. Your experience, knowledge and willingness to discuss what can be difficult topics, is greatly appreciated. Without your assistance this research would not have proceeded. *Tankio tumas lo yufala!*

I am also grateful to be part of Hamilton Seventh Day Adventist church and also Solomon and Vanuatu S.D.A family group during this journey. Thank you to the Vanuatu community, and friends in Hamilton, and also friends, colleagues and extended family members in Vanuatu for your continuous encouragement and prayers during this period. Special thanks to Len and Judy Martin, Joan Fraser and Julie Barbour, for their great assistance and encouragement during my stressful moments. Thank you also to my niece, Rebecca William, for your generous time and support. Great thanks to my lovely sister, Lanelle Tanangada, for your positivity and encouragement.

My biggest vote of thanks goes to my beloved mum and dad, and my siblings who supported me to reach this chapter of my life. Special thanks go to my mum and my brother Dr. Griffith Harrison, who took care of my baby who was five months old when I left him to embark on this journey. To my dear husband, Tasau Tarosa, thank you for your understanding and endless support, but most of all, for allowing me to pursue my dreams. To my lovely children; Vaite, Troy, Tylah and Griton, the love, joy encouragement, support, patience, tears and frustrations that we shared through this journey enabled me to reach the finish line - You have been my best inspiration, *soleplep wele ngin kem!*

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the people who have been part of me, always believe in me, and along with God, have been my 'footprints in the sand'

*My dad:* Pr. Gideon Harrison Navat

*My mum:* Miriam Gideon Harrison Navat

*My siblings:* Dr. Griffith Harrison, Charlie Harrison, Gayreen Harrison-Bihu,  
and Anderson Harrison

*My dearest husband:* Tasau Tarosa

*My precious children:* Vaite Tyrah Tarosa, Troy Griffith Jr. Tarosa, Tylah  
Terry Tarosa, Griton Navat

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 An overview .....	1
1.2 The context of the study .....	2
1.2.1 Geography and demography.....	2
1.3 The education system.....	3
1.4 My interest in the study .....	8
1.5 Statement of the problem .....	9
1.6 Significance of the study .....	10
1.7 The organisation of the thesis .....	11
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>12</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 Educational change .....	12
2.3 Educational change process .....	13
2.4 Leadership and educational change .....	23
2.4.1 Concept and Models of Leadership .....	23
2.4.2 Leadership for change management .....	25
2.5 Stakeholders in educational change .....	26
2.5.1 Stakeholders' role and involvement in educational change .....	26
2.5.2 Stakeholders' professional development in educational change .....	31
2.6 Reaction to change.....	33
2.7 Educational assessment .....	35
2.7.1 Assessment Practice .....	35
2.7.2 Types of assessment .....	37
2.8 Summary.....	38
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>39</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	39
3.2 Research paradigms .....	40
3.2.1 The research paradigm for this study.....	41
3.3 Type of interpretive research .....	42
3.4 Case study research as the qualitative research methodology .....	43
3.5 Research methods.....	45
3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews.....	46
3.5.2 Document analysis .....	49

3.6 Research process .....	50
3.6.1 Access to institutions.....	51
3.6.2 Selecting participants .....	51
3.6.3 Conducting the interviews.....	53
3.6.4 Data transcription and participant checking.....	54
3.7 Ethical concerns .....	55
3.7.1 Informed consent.....	56
3.7.2 Access and acceptance .....	57
3.7.3 Anonymity, confidentiality and privacy.....	57
3.8 Maintaining quality in educational research.....	58
3.8.1 Trustworthiness .....	59
3.8.2 Credibility .....	60
3.9 Data analysis .....	60
3.10 Summary.....	61
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DATA PRESENTATION.....</b>	<b>63</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	63
4.2 Internal assessment (IA)improves students' performance.....	64
4.2.1 Understanding the types of assessments .....	66
4.2.2 Benefits of Internal assessments .....	69
4.3 Experiences of educational change .....	71
4.4 Barriers to successful educational change.....	73
4.4.1 Poor management and implementation.....	73
4.4.2 Limited consultation .....	74
4.4.3 Clear and uniform vision .....	74
4.5 Experiences of the English medium senior secondary school assessment change.....	76
4.5.1 The change process.....	76
4.5.2 Benefits to teacher professional learning .....	79
4.5.3 Constraints of the change process.....	82
4.6 Future aspirations.....	91
4.6.1 Development of human resources .....	91
4.6.2 Improvement in the change management process.....	92
4.7 Summary.....	93
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>95</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	95
5.2 Potential benefits of the proposed change .....	96
5.3 Prior knowledge .....	100
5.4 Positive outlook .....	105
5.4.1 Previous change experiences .....	105

5.4.2 Attitudes towards nationalisation.....	108
5.5 Pre-implementation.....	110
5.5.1 Goal and Vision of Proposed change.....	110
5.5.2 Professional Development .....	112
5.6 Balanced implementation strategy.....	114
5.6.1 Transition.....	115
5.6.2 Planning and Managing the Process .....	116
5.7 Stakeholders involvement.....	119
5.8 Summary.....	121
<b>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>124</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	124
6.2 Limitations of the current study .....	124
6.3 Suggestion for further research .....	125
6.4 Recommendations .....	126
6.5 Conclusions .....	128
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>143</b>
Appendix 1: Approval from University of Waikato Ethics Committee .	143
Appendix 2: Letter of request to the Director of Education Services.....	144
Appendix 3: Invitation letter to participants .....	147
Appendix 4A: Participant Information sheet for Principals.....	148
Appendix 4B: Participant Information sheet for Teachers .....	150
Appendix 4C: Participant Information sheet for MOE Officials .....	152
Appendix 5A: Consent form for Principals and Teachers.....	154
Appendix 5B: Consent form for MOE Officials .....	155
Appendix 6A: Interview Schedule for Principals .....	156
Appendix 6B: Interview Schedule for MOE Officials .....	158
Appendix 6C: Interview Schedule for Teachers .....	160

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Table 1: Total number of secondary schools in Vanuatu, 2007-2011 .....	5
Table 2: A List of the pseudonyms and respective roles for each of the research participant.....	52
Table 3: A list of the pseudonyms and respective role for each of the research participants .....	64
Figure 1: The Stages of Change by Michael Fullan (2007) .....	18
Figure 2: The Fourth Way platform by Hargreaves & Shirley (2009) .....	22
Figure 3: Proposed change management process framework for Vanuatu Educational system .....	123
Figure 4: Proposed change management process framework for Vanuatu education system. ....	126

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 An overview

Research shows that educational changes, in general, have regularly taken place in many parts of the world including, America, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand (Gronn, 2003; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998), such that the situation in Vanuatu is no exception. There is a growing concern amongst teachers, parents and school communities (i.e. the main stakeholders) in Vanuatu about continuous educational changes and reforms, particularly as many of these are seen as not having been adequately implemented. Importantly, the literature also suggests that while educational change is common globally, successful and sustainable change is difficult to achieve unless its leadership and implementation is better understood (Branson, 2010; Duke, 2004; Fullan, 2011; Hargreaves & Evans, 1997). Many of the changes that have occurred in the Vanuatu education system appear to have been ineffective for a number of reasons. As such, this research project begins with the belief that there is a need to explore the experiences, perceptions and expectations of the main stakeholders involved in educational change, including, Ministry of Education (MoE) officials, head of schools, and teachers about the educational change processes, which have taken place in Vanuatu and, in particular, the change to the English medium senior secondary school assessment process. For the purpose of this study, 'nationalisation' refers to the national qualification earned at the end of year 12 level. Therefore, 'English medium senior secondary school assessment' will be used interchangeably with 'nationalisation' from here onwards.

This chapter will outline the context of this research topic. It will also highlight the main areas to be studied, the reasons for undertaking the study and the significance of this study. It will conclude with a presentation of the thesis structure.

## **1.2 The context of the study**

The republic of Vanuatu, which means “the islands, the people that existed, that still exist and will always exist” (Institute of Pacific Studies, 1980, p. 11), formerly known as the New Hebrides, gained political independence in 1980 after almost 80 years of being administered by the British and French Governments (Van Trease, 1987). As a result, there are two languages of instruction, English and French, used in the formal schools, throughout the country. The English schools are referred to in this research as English medium schools and the people who use this language are called Anglophone. The French schools are referred to as French medium schools and the people who use this language are called Francophone. The capital city of Vanuatu is Port Vila, which is situated on the island of Efate, and it is from here that the office of the Ministry of Education (MoE) oversees the educational system for the entire country.

### **1.2.1 Geography and demography**

Vanuatu is a scattered archipelago with a total land area of 12,190 square kilometres. It is situated in the South West Pacific about 1,500 miles northeast of Sydney, Australia, 600 miles northwest of Fiji, and 300 miles due east of New Caledonia (Peck & Gregory, 2005). The nation forms a ‘Y’ shape with its 83 islands. Vanuatu has three municipalities, one on Santo, another on Tanna and the third is on Efate, where the capital city of Port Vila is situated. The nation is further divided into six provinces. Out of 111 developing countries, Vanuatu is ranked as the world’s most vulnerable country as assessed by the commonwealth Vulnerability Index (Vanuatu National Assessment Report, 2010), because its geographical location means that it is highly prone to the devastating effects of earthquakes, cyclones and tsunamis. Education and schooling is regularly disturbed by these disasters thereby providing an impression of ongoing interruption and change amongst those affected.

Vanuatu, though a small nation, is characterised by diversity in terms of political parties, cultures, languages and customs (Hindson, 1995). According to the Vanuatu National Statistics Office (2009), the total population was 234,023 with an annual growth rate of 2.3% since the last census in 1999. In addition, there are small numbers of Europeans, Asians and other Pacific Islanders. There are about 100 different languages and cultural groups present. Christianity is the dominant religion in Vanuatu with Presbyterian, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Assemblies of God, Church of Christ, Apostolic, and the Neil Thomas Ministry as the predominating denominations in terms of populations. Again, within the context of schooling, this growth in population, along with the diversification of languages, cultures and religions, exerts constant pressure for educational adaptation and change.

### **1.3 The education system**

The education system in Vanuatu is currently administered under the 2001 Education Act No. 21 of the Republic of Vanuatu's Constitution. There does not appear to have been an Education Act prior to this 2001 Education Act, but the MoE was using the School Administration Act of 1983 to administer the schools (J. Kaltau, personal communication, June 25, 2013). The 2001 Education Act provides the legal basis for administering and meeting the goals of education for Vanuatu. Within this Act, more emphasis was placed on decentralization of the administration of schooling so that more responsibility is given to Provincial Education Officers (PEO). Hence, the specific functions and powers of the Minister, Director General (DG), the Directors, and the PEO were explicitly outlined in this Act (Education Act, 2001). More importantly, this decentralization was seen as necessary because of the geographical isolation of many Vanuatu schools so that, when changes needed to happen, the PEO, who are the key administrators of any desired change, would be able to oversee and direct the changes in their respective provinces.

The majority of secondary teachers in Vanuatu are employed by the Teaching Service Commission (TSC). Other secondary teachers are employed by private schools and church authorities. However, it is worth noting that the church schools are partly subsidized by the government (Whippy, 2004).

The education system of Vanuatu is unique in the sense that it provides formal education in two languages of instruction influenced by the two past colonial powers, Britain and France (Ministry of Education, 2009). It has a dual system of education: the French school system and the English school system. Since independence, the country aimed to have one system using two languages of instruction. In 1986, the unified junior secondary education curriculum was produced and in 1991 the primary education curriculum was produced (Ministry of Education, 2010). Ultimately, the aim is to produce a unified curriculum inclusive of the senior secondary schools as well, which will achieve a harmonisation in the education system of Vanuatu. The system consists of early childhood education through to senior secondary education. Secondary education is divided into two parts: junior secondary schools and senior secondary schools. Below is a table showing the total number of secondary schools in Vanuatu:

**Table 1: Total number of secondary schools in Vanuatu, 2007-2011**

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Medium of Instruction</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Gov of Vanuatu</b>	English	30	30	31	33	32
	French	11	11	11	11	11
<b>Church (Gov Assisted)</b>	English	15	18	15	15	15
	French	13	13	13	13	14
<b>Church</b>	English	2	2	2	2	2
	French	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Private</b>	English	7	6	6	6	4
	French	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Community</b>	English	1	1	1	1	1
	French	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>
	<b>French</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>80</b>

(Source: Digest of Ministry of Education, 2012; J. Kaltau, personal communication, June 25, 2013).

Table 1 shows the total number of both French and English junior secondary and senior secondary schools, which are operated by different Education Authorities. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on the English medium schools only, not the French medium schools. Even after Vanuatu gained independence from being administered by Britain and France, its education system remained largely influenced by these two colonial powers. Following the gaining of independence, the English senior secondary schools continued to have their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination managed, moderated and evaluated in England, in year 11. Then it changed to the Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate (PSSC) for year 12 and the New Zealand Bursary for year 13 in 1992. These were administered by Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA) in Fiji and New Zealand respectively. In 2004, the New Zealand Bursary was replaced by the South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC), which is administered by SPBEA. Some Anglophone schools are using the University of the South Pacific (USP) courses in year 12 and 13 as their entry points to tertiary education, which is administered by USP (C. Roberts, personal communication, October 29, 2012; MoE, 2010; T. Tari, personal communication, October 25, 2012). However, it is worth noting that due to the nationalisation, 2013 is the final year for USP courses at senior secondary schools (Garae, 2013)

The Vanuatu education system has external examinations at the end of year 8, year 10, year 12, and year 13. There is a year 14 examination also but only for Francophone (French medium) schools. The year 8 and 10 examinations are administered by the Vanuatu Examination and Assessment Unit (VEAU), while the year 12 Anglophone (English medium) schools were administered by SPBEA, based in Fiji until 2012. It is this latter change that is to be the focus of this research.

Thus, one of the most recent changes that the Vanuatu education system is going through is in the area of senior secondary school assessment. Senior

secondary schools in Vanuatu mainly consist of year 11, year 12 and year 13. Assessment normally happens in the two higher levels. Currently, the year 12 and 13 students have two components to their assessment: the internal assessment component and the external examination component. Previously, the SPBEA centred in Fiji administered these two components as it has done for all its member countries: Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands and Cook Islands. The internal assessment is done throughout the whole of Year 12 while the external assessment is done at the end of year 12. However, this SPBEA senior student assessment structure is to be dismantled and each member country is being urged to assume full responsibility for coordinating and facilitating its own senior student assessment processes.

Hence, the current major educational change in Vanuatu is to do with the shifting of the monitoring and evaluating process of senior secondary schools' assessment from SPBEA in Fiji to be administered by the VEAU. This change began with the year 12 internal assessments in 2011, where the Technology (IT), Biology and Agriculture subjects had their internal assessments administered by the VEAU. In 2012, all other year 12 subjects' internal assessments were administered by the VEAU. It was planned that by 2013 both the internal and the external assessment components for year 12 would be coordinated and facilitated by Vanuatu educational personnel.

The need to introduce the proposed change is understandable and supported, but it is equally important to ensure that the change process is conducted in the most appropriate way. The senior assessment process is a very important component of each student's schooling as not only its outcome but also its perceived credibility contributes towards his/her future life.

## **1.4 My interest in the study**

I have taught Science, Mathematics, Chemistry and Physical Education in Vanuatu secondary schools for sixteen years. During this period of time I noticed there were a few changes made to the education system in Vanuatu, but, importantly, many of these changes did not achieve the intended outcomes. Thus, from my personal experience, it would seem that teachers, students and my country as a whole could become victims of unintended outcomes during the implementation of educational change strategies unless the change process is closely monitored. For example, there was a change called Top-up schools and another called Basic Education. A Top-up School was introduced to cater for students who had not been successful in the year 6 final examination so that they could continue on to year 7 at a secondary school. The Top-up school was a primary school that included year 7 and 8 classes. A student, who failed her/his year 6 examination, was expected to remain in the Top-up school for years 7 and 8 following which they would have to pass another examination in order to be allowed to enter year 9 at a secondary school. Non-success at this level would lead to the student having to leave school. This concept was piloted in only a few schools before it was abandoned and replaced by Centre Schools. The Centre School, which is also known as Basic Education in Vanuatu, made allowance for every child to stay in primary schooling until the end of year eight (MoE, 2010). These two changes happened simultaneously; and, while the life of the former change was very short lived, the latter is still in use. In both cases, teachers and students had great difficulty in trying to implement the desired programmes. For example, the Basic Education programme required a number of primary teachers, who had graduated with a primary school teaching certificate, to teach specialised subjects in the lower secondary school, year 7 and 8 levels, without any prior professional training. That is,

the professional practice of these teachers was expected to be comparable with that of the secondary teachers who had previously been teaching the year 7 and 8 subjects. The primary school teachers did their best to implement the desired changes but when the results were poor, these teachers were blamed.

Thus, as a very experienced secondary school teacher in Vanuatu I have both a professional and a personal wish to ensure that any desired educational change can be effectively and successfully implemented. For the benefit of the students, whose learning will be influenced by any change, and for the principals (head of schools will be used interchangeably with principals in this thesis) and teachers, who have to implement the change and try to ensure it is successful, it is very important for the change process to be led and supported properly by the MoE officials. This issue is of particular concern to me as the Vanuatu educational system begins to adopt a new senior school assessment process. As this assessment process occurs in the very last years of secondary schooling, if the change is not done properly the futures of the students could be adversely affected.

## **1.5 Statement of the problem**

Educational change in Vanuatu is ongoing but it is often to do with consultants, foreign advisors and experts drafting policies for these changes, providing very little to do with the Vanuatu context (Sanga & Niroa, 2004). These educational changes aim at enhancing learning and improving systems and practices. However, statistics show that the quality of education in general for Vanuatu is declining (Digest of MoE 2012; Ligo, 2011; Tari, 2004). These statistics and their interpretation, raise important questions such as 'What strategies were adopted to manage educational changes in Vanuatu?' 'Was Vanuatu prepared for these

changes to be effective when implemented?' 'Were these changes successful, why or why not?' While these questions are significant and somewhat broad, they need to be addressed in order to help guide future changes in Vanuatu. To begin to address these questions, this particular research focuses on the area of English medium senior secondary school assessment, which is currently adapting to a recent change in its management and administration from SPBEA to the VEAU. No research has been done in this area and the researcher feels that it is significant for this research to be carried out at this point in time to explore underlying issues hindering the success of this particular change in Vanuatu to the English medium senior secondary school assessment process. Hence the research question for this study is:

**What are the experiences, perceptions and expectations of MoE officials, head of schools and teachers of the educational change process associated with the change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment in Vanuatu?**

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

This research project explores the Vanuatu educational context with a particular focus on how a change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment procedures has been managed and experienced. The information gathered from this study will be useful to government organisations in Vanuatu such as the Ministry of Education (MoE), especially the planning officers; Education Authorities; school leaders; political leaders; teachers; parents; and students. It will also be useful to the VEAU personnel to assist them as they lead the change in assessment procedures and minimize some of the challenges Vanuatu encountered in earlier educational changes and reforms.

While it is realised that change cannot be fully controlled, it can be more effectively led when it is better understood (Fullan, 2001). The findings generated from this research may be used in the planning of future

educational change processes and also to help make the change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment an effective and sustainable one. As an outcome of this research project, a framework for the Vanuatu education system to follow is proposed so that future educational changes are more able to minimize the challenges and thus create more successful changes.

### **1.7 The organisation of the thesis**

This thesis consists of six chapters. This first chapter presents an introduction to the thesis, where the significance of the study is mentioned. The need to explore the MoE officials, head of schools and teachers' perceptions, experiences, and expectations regarding the change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment procedures is explained. The second chapter examines the literature on educational change and includes a particular focus on educational assessment as this is at the heart of the change being explored in this research. The third chapter presents the research design and methodology used in this research project, including the procedures of data collection, and ethical considerations. The fourth chapter outlines the findings and illustrates the themes that emerged as a result of the analysis of the data gathered during this study. The fifth chapter discusses these findings in relation to the educational change and student assessment literature reviewed in preparation for this research. Lastly, the sixth chapter brings together and summarizes the research project, examines some limitations, provides suggestions for further research, and presents recommendations to not only address the concerns previously raised about the effectiveness of educational change initiatives in Vanuatu but also to identify and initiate a way to improve the effectiveness of such changes in the future.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature pertaining to educational change process management with particular reference to the change process management of the English medium senior secondary school assessment. Initially the section will briefly review change, leading to an explanation of educational change and this will be followed by an elaboration using references to the literature on the stages in the process of change. Next, leadership and educational change are discussed. The subsequent part of this section describes the significance of stakeholders' roles and involvement in the change process. Stakeholders in the context of this study are teachers, principals and Ministry of Education (MOE) officials. Further discussion of the professional development of stakeholders follows, and the review concludes with a discussion of educational assessment which is at the heart of the change management process explored in this study.

### 2.2 Educational change

Calls for change and reform echo across the world, every day (Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 2007). Change has been part of human behaviour throughout the known history of the world (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005). Surprisingly some people do not want to have their stable lives interrupted by foreign change. What is change? Even our understanding of change has changed over time. According to Stiegelbauer (1994), change is no longer an event that is selected and announced; change is now approached as a process. He argues that many of the changes required by current societal and educational demands go deeper than expected. Change involves taking risk at times. It is assumed that because of this, some people are resistant and reluctant to accept change that will affect their lives (Bridges, 1995; Levin, 2008). Bridges (1995) explains change as

'situational', for example, a new boss, a new team role, a new policy and so on. Due to the rising demands of global, economic and technological development, change is an inevitable feature in organisational life (Bridges, 1995; Wiseman, 2010). The core of education and knowledge is change (Razzaq, 2012). Knowledge and curiosity have brought enormous change to the human situation and its social, physical and cultural surroundings (Waddell, Cummings, & Worley, 2000).

With regards to education, Fullan (1991) defines educational change as "learning how to do something new" (p. 289). Fullan (1991) also points out that successful implementation of educational change is a complex process with no clear solution. This suggests why educational reforms are often not well implemented, causing a huge deficit of finance, human resources and loss of potential (Credaro, 2006). There are a variety of factors that may facilitate or inhibit educational change. Moreover, the process of educational change is a dynamic one involving interacting factors over time. When more factors work against implementation, the process will be less effective but when more factors support implementation, more change in practice will be accomplished (Lewin, 1951). The results from various studies on educational change make it clear that influencing factors often have a different impact in different settings of educational change (Fullan, 1991; Fullan et al., 2005; Gross, 1979). Thus, the process of educational change will be briefly discussed in the following sub-section. The contributions of Kurt Lewin (1951), Peter Senge (1990), Jeff Hiatt (2003), Michael Fullan (2007), and Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) in regard to the change process will be examined.

### **2.3 Educational change process**

Numerous scholars and theorists have contributed towards the development of the theory of educational change processes globally. A selection of prominent theorists' work will be shared here.

## **Kurt Lewin's Work**

Lewin (1951) introduced one of the earlier models of change theory and his work is significant because he was one of the first researchers to conceptualize change as more of a process and not just an event. He understood that when contemplating change, the existence of 'pros' and 'cons' will always be present. Lewin noted that the status quo will remain if the forces against change outweigh the forces for change. Change occurs when forces for change become greater than forces against. Lewin (1951) proposed a three step process in his change model.

1) Unfreezing current practice: This is getting ready for the change. Getting ready is a disruption of normal routine. The more we feel that change is necessary, the more urgent it is, the more motivated we are to make the change and thus get ready to move away from our comfort zone. This is when the weighing up of pros and cons must happen before further action is taken.

2) Change the practice: Lewin calls this process 'transition'. This is to do with the inner movement. People are 'unfrozen' already and are moving towards a new way of being. This step is a challenging one. A lot of support is needed in terms of training and coaching. A clear picture of the desired change must be communicated to the people who will be affected so they do not lose sight of where they are heading.

3) Refreezing new practice: This step is the establishment of stability. Change is finally accepted and people become comfortable. However, this process can take time.

This final step in Kurt Lewin's three-step process has been criticized by other scholars for its rigidity (Connelly, 2008; Hiatt, 2003). This process does not fit very well with modern thinking, where flexibility rather than rigidity is demanded (Connelly, 2008). This is due to a very high number

of changes happening nowadays compared to the past. However, Kurt Lewin was more concerned about reinforcement and sustainability of change (Connelly, 2008), which is also a concern for many change leaders today.

### **Peter Senge's Work**

Senge's (1990) work is of significance because he recognises the need and the importance for individuals to change, before a group can change, and then, only then, can an organisation change. This is a controversial notion, because other scholars including Bridges (1995), Donaldson (2006), Gross (1979), and Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) argue that change cannot belong to an individual because the process of change involves more than an individual. However, this may suggest that Senge recognises that individual must make the change before any process can proceed which will involve more than an individual.

Senge (1990) introduces the 'Learning Organisation' in his work of the Fifth Discipline, defining it as "an organisation that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future" (p. 14). With this notion of school as a learning organisation, Senge entrenches five assumptions about educational change.

1. Capacity to change in schools is not constant.
2. Schools represent communities of learners.
3. Teachers are adult learners.
4. Principal's role in a learning organisation is that of "head learner."
5. System leader's role is to create a context that fosters ability to learn and change on a continuous basis.

The five assumptions above concentrate on making the school a place where staff members engage themselves in continuous learning both individually and collectively. It also suggests that although the teacher is an independent learner, his/her learning is dependent on the learning of other teachers, students and staff in the school community.

Senge (1990) identifies five learning disciplines for change in schools. They are:

*Personal mastery*- This discipline requires people within the organisation and community to realize their potential, their skills.

*Mental models*- This discipline requires people to look at visualizing the big picture. Many times, people are short-sighted about things and cannot easily see the benefit of change.

*Shared vision*- This requires the leader to share the vision he/she has with the rest of the community, so they all understand the vision.

*Team learning*- Once they understand the vision, the team can communicate and work together towards achieving the shared vision and enhancing learning in the community.

*System thinking*- These four disciplines above will then be able to provide for the system thinking, which is the fifth discipline if utilized effectively in an organisation. As it is the system, it concentrates on the whole organisation.

From Senge's (1990) work, it seems that educational system leaders, the heads of schools, and teachers have to think systemically to understand the interdependence and interrelationships of their systems and beyond for effective educational change process (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009).

They also have to work on their five disciplines, in order to create a successful change.

### **Jeff Hiatt's Work**

Like Senge (1990), Hiatt (2003) reiterates that change management can be successful if individuals change. Hiatt (2003) focuses on individual change stressing that one step must be completed before moving onto the next step, otherwise the change will not be successful. He proposes a process of five steps, called the ADKAR model, for successful change management.

A- Awareness of the need for change

D- Desire to support and participate in the change

K- Knowledge of how to change

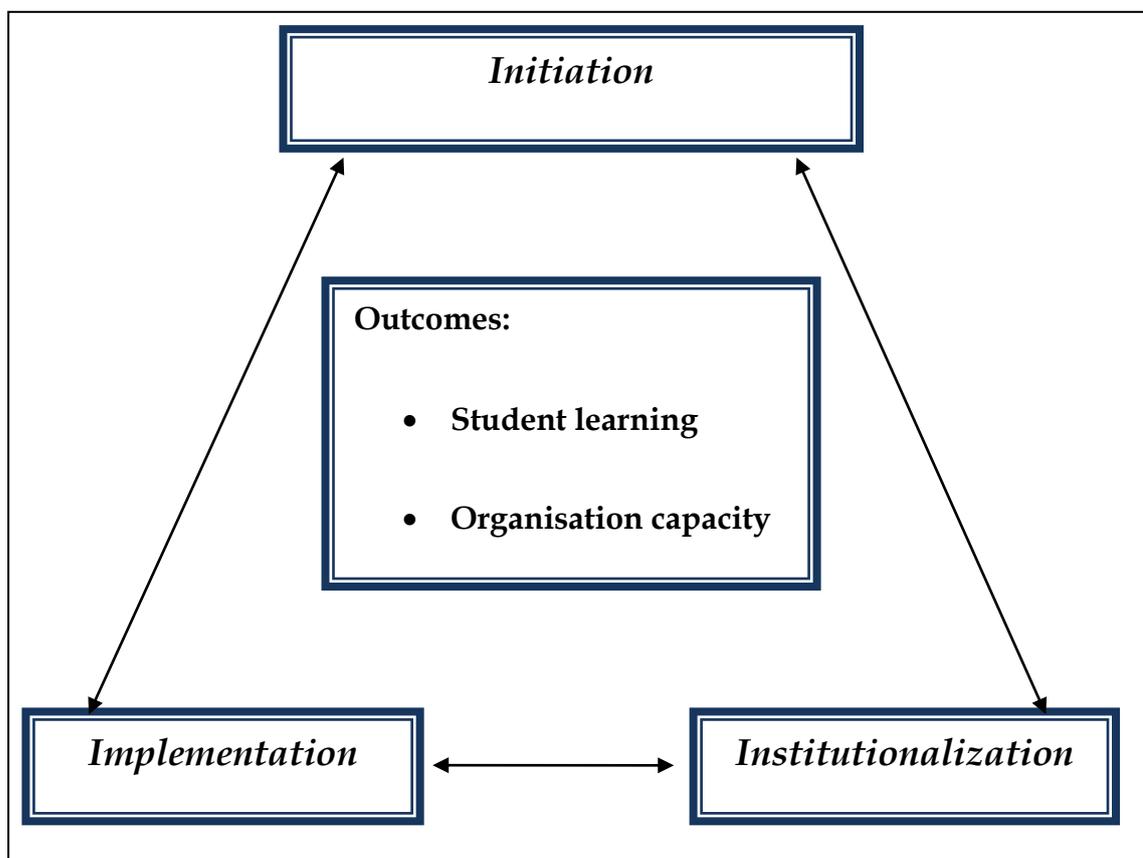
A- Ability to implement the change

R- Reinforcement to sustain the change

The first step is mostly to do with explaining why there needs to be a change. This is vital; when it is understood well, the rest of the steps can then be successful. The second step is to participate and support the change voluntarily and without force; the third is when individuals have the knowledge of the change and how they can be supported through training and formal coaching; and the fourth step is to do with how they can perform in the change. The fifth step is the sustainability of the change which is crucial, together with its reinforcement, which ensures the maintenance of change and that new outcomes are measured (Hiatt, 2003).

## Michael Fullan's Work

Fullan (2007) acknowledges that there are a lot of terms and descriptions given to the process of change by other scholars. He then divides the change process into three different phases or stages. The steps are: Initiation, Implementation, and Continuation or Institutionalization. When these three steps are accomplished, the result is positive and the change is effective. Below is an overview of Fullan's change process. (See Figure 1)



**Figure 1: The Stages of Change by Michael Fullan (2007)**

Generally, Fullan (2007) refers to initiation as the stage of preparation and readiness for change. For example, in the case of the change under investigation in this study, the stage of initiation would have been the time when the Council of Ministers (CoM) approved the proposal by SPBEA for MoE to take control of the assessment from SPBEA, raised

awareness about the change to stakeholders, and began professional development and curriculum preparation.

The implementation stage is when the change or idea is put into practice. For the change being examined in this study, this stage began when the Internal Assessment (IA) procedures for the selected subjects were managed and moderated by VEAU in 2011, moving through the same process for all subjects in 2012. This is to be followed by the External Assessment (EA) for some subjects in 2013 and then, it is hoped, that all subjects in 2014.

The institutionalization or the continuation stage comprises the sustainability and further improvement of the change. For example, in the change in this study, a review of what happened throughout the initiation and implementation stages could be done in the future. For instance, PEO's could visit to relevant schools to ensure competence. Actions taken would help to sustain and improve the change.

For these three stages, Fullan (2007) discusses the factors affecting each of the stages during the change process. Below is a brief summary of these factors.

- A. **Initiation**- is affected by the existence and quality of innovations, access to information, advocacy from central and/school administrators, teacher advocacy, external change agent, community pressure (support, opposition, apathy), new policy and funds, and problem solving and bureaucratic orientations.
- B. **Implementation**- is characterised by local factors related to the change (need, clarity, complexity, and practicality), and external factors (school district, board and community, principal, role of teacher).

C. **Institutionalization**- is affected by lack of interest and support by higher authorities including the principal of schools, which can influence whether the change i) gets embedded ii) has skilled and committed administrators and teachers during the institutionalization/continuation, and iii) has established procedures for ongoing maintenance.

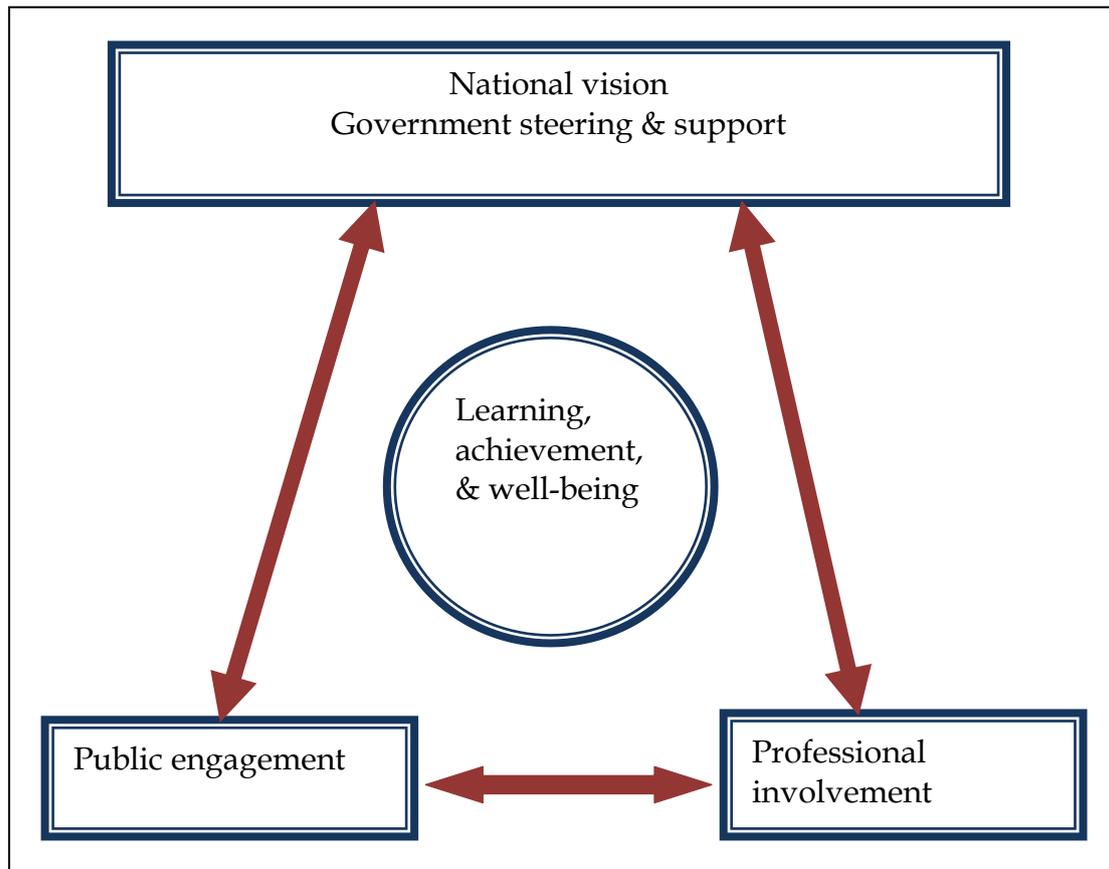
Reflecting on factors that affect change and the limitations of planning change, Fullan (2007) concludes that change is possible even in difficult situations. Like Senge (1990), he suggests that a possible solution is 'developing learning organisations'. Fullan suggests that everyone in the system should be involved, not just the school or the district (Credaro, 2006; Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves, 1993). The state or government must also be involved. Expressing their aspiration, building their awareness, and developing their capabilities will initiate effective change. However, it is worth noting that Elmore (2004) argues that successful educational reform is to do with the teachers and schools, and not the external body but this may not be true as schools will always need the support of the external body (Evans, 2010).

The failure of educational change is more than the problems associated with a lack of good materials, ineffective professional development or minimal administrative support. Fundamentally, educational change fails at least partly because of the assumptions of planners and lack of solutions to solve substantial problems (Fullan, 2007; Fullan et al., 2005; Hargreaves & Reynolds, 1989). Most changes do not take into account the local context and culture, and this is very problematic (Fullan, 2007). Furthermore, Fullan (2007) says that change promoters need to be committed to change and skilled in the change process as well as in the change itself. Earlier Lighthall (1973, as cited in Fullan, 2007) had stated that, educational change is a process of coming to grips with the multiple realities of people, who will be the main participants in the implementation of change. Even

as far back as 1973, culture was already mentioned as a factor that must be considered in change management. Therefore, Fullan (2007) brings this back to remind leaders that culture must be considered during the initiation process of change.

### **Hargreaves and Shirley's Work**

The contribution of Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) is to acknowledge that leaders are still searching for new ways to bring about successful educational change. They suggest that while educational change is common, successful and sustainable change is difficult to achieve. Therefore, educational leaders are still looking for ways to help minimise the difficulties inherent in the educational change processes. They categorise all previous attempts at successful educational change as the "Three Ways": 1. Innovation and Inconsistency; 2. Markets and Standardisation; and 3. Performance and Partnerships. In response to this perception of a general lack of success in educational change, Hargreaves and Shirley propose a "Fourth Way" that seeks to emphasise *Inspiration, Innovation, Responsibility and Sustainability*. Below is the Fourth Way platform. (See Figure 2).



**Figure 2: The Fourth Way platform by Hargreaves & Shirley (2009)**

This Fourth Way consists of:

**A) Six pillars of purpose and partnership that support change** - 1. An inspiring and inclusive vision. 2. Strong public engagement. 3. Achievement through investment. 4. Corporate educational responsibility. 5. Students as partners in change. 6. Mindful learning and teaching;

**B) Three principles of professionalism that drive change** - 1. High quality teachers. 2. Positive and powerful professional associations. 3. Lively learning communities;

**C) Four catalysts of coherence that sustain change and hold it together:**  
1. Sustainable leadership. 2. Integrating networks. 3. Responsibility before accountability. 4. Differentiation and diversity.

The authors argue that these together describe all of the needs and interests of each of the main stakeholders involved in an educational change - government, business partners, parents, students and teachers - so as to create a more beneficial and sustainable educational change.

The models proposed by the different scholars above may appear dissimilar but they are closely related to each other in terms of the processes of change. They have guided the researcher to identify which, if any, of these processes were used in the change management of the English medium senior secondary school assessment in Vanuatu.

## **2.4 Leadership and educational change**

The importance of leadership in the management of change has been discussed by many scholars (Bush, 2003; Fullan, 2007; Guthrie & Schuermann, 2010; Levin, 2008). Leadership is at the heart of initiation, implementation and institutionalization of change (Fullan, 2007; Hargreaves, 1993; Razzaq, 2012). It becomes more crucial when the change is systemic or a large scale reform. Thus, this sub-section presents a survey of leadership theories with relevance to change.

### **2.4.1 Concept and Models of Leadership**

Scholars and practitioners have tried to define leadership from a range of different perspectives, but there is still no precise definition. For instance, Goddard (2003), Bush (2003) and Pardey (2007) state that leadership is quite difficult to define. Cuban (1988) reports that Warren Bennis, who is regarded as a pioneer in the field of leadership, said there are in excess of 350 different definitions of leadership but there is no clear understanding of what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders. He states that there is however a clear distinction between a manager and a leader: "a manager does the thing right; a leader does the right thing" (p. 190). With regards to change, leadership is not about being 'in charge'; it is about leading the

change. There are different styles of leadership being practiced. These styles have been described by different theories that can be seen in literature today (Bass, 1985; Bennis, 1969; Bush, 2003; Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005).

Leadership is very important in education and it is a lively topic for recent research (Razzaq, 2012). With the expansion of the importance of leadership in education, many scholars (Bush, 2008; Cheng, 1996; Firestone and Martinez, 2009) have shared their views on particular aspects of leadership. Bennette (2000) says that leadership is about “ideas, dreams and vision, aspirations and hopes” (p. 30). In addition, McEwan (2005) reminds us that leaders are not to make assumptions about their staff but rather, find facts to help in the process of leading a school.

A number of scholars (; Bush, 2008; Bush & Glover, 2003; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999) have developed different leadership models. Reviewing works of seminal theorists, Marzano et al. (2005) present the models shown below:

- Transformational leadership is mostly to do with change. It is assumed that the main focus of leadership is commitment;
- Transactional leadership is to do with trading one thing for another. It is based on the exchange of benefits to achieve organisational goals;
- Servant leadership assumes that effective leadership emerges from a desire to help others;
- Situational leadership has the basic principle of adapting leadership behaviour to follow the maturity rule based on the willingness and ability of those being led to perform a particular task. Four styles

mention for this model are: telling style, participating style, selling style, and delegating style;

- Instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning and the emphasis is directed and impacted on the influence of the leader. The four dimensions identified are: resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence.

These leadership models can be used by a single leader in different situations (Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley, & Beresford, 2000; Marzano et al., 2005). This may mean that a leader who uses more than one lens to view a situation can be a better leader. The change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment in Vanuatu needs effective leadership to produce an effective outcome. Leaders need to view the change and its challenges through more than one lens and should aspire to inform and guide stakeholders through the process of this change.

#### **2.4.2 Leadership for change management**

Scholars have raised awareness about the different styles that leaders use in managing change. Everard, Morris and Wilson (2004) stress the need for a different style and structure of management to manage change as opposed to those approaches needed to manage the status quo. The requirements they propose for the management of change include “a distinctive mix of knowledge, skills, personal attitudes and values, and the capacity to orchestrate them” (p. 249). They have developed a list of characteristics they consider requisite for managing change but have also stressed the need for developing the right synthesis of these qualities instead of treating them as a checklist. In this way, the focus is on a systemic approach (Fullan, 1991; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009) by investigating the needs, goals, complexity, feasibility and context of change, envisioning the future, and studying the current situation by

taking into account the readiness, capability, and driving and restraining forces for change (Day et al., 2000; Razzaq, 2012).

Managing school change and improvements is one of the most complex jobs of a school leader. The school leader needs to understand the change process in order to carry out and lead an effective change. As Fullan (1993) points out, a school leader must understand the change process to lead and manage change and improvement efforts effectively. Coleman and Glover (2010) also affirm that management is best when transformational leadership is used instead of the status quo of transactional leadership.

Transformational leadership will help to link the school community and other stakeholders to the school and the change. When the link is established, the change can be more successful (Fullan, 2007; Hall & Hord, 2011). As confirmed by Hargreaves and Shirley (2009), a successful and sustainable educational change is one that has the six pillars described in section 2.3 above, which are to do with an open system and not just the governmentally directed change. In addition, Pounder (2003) stresses that transformational leadership enhances individual commitment to the group or organisation because they are part of the change. Therefore, for a school to be successful, teachers, parents, community and business partners, administrators and students must share some of the leadership functions.

## **2.5 Stakeholders in educational change**

### **2.5.1 Stakeholders' role and involvement in educational change**

This sub-section describes the literature on the roles of stakeholders and the ways that they can be involved in educational change. MoE Officials, Principals and Head Teachers, and teachers are all often involved in educational change.

## *MoE OFFICIALS*

The MOE officials' roles are vital in that, it is these people who do the planning of educational change in an education system. Fullan (2007) affirms by saying that, the administrator and his or her staff is the most powerful advocate in the initiation of change. They are the ones who carry out surveys and questionnaires in schools and they are the people responsible for the planning of change. The administrator is crucial in maintaining the focus on where the initiation of change is directing them to. When there is degrading, devaluing or gaps in the system, that is when research into specific areas is undertaken and changes may be made based on the findings. Unfortunately, sometimes, change occurs due to an external mandate (Fullan, 1999; Saario, 1979; Ministry of Education, 2006). The officials' role is mainly in the initiation and institutionalisation of change.

Fullan (2007) refers to governments as federal and state governments in USA, provinces in Canada and national governments in countries that are governed by one system. They can push *accountability*, provide *incentives* (pressure and supports) and foster *capacity building*. Fullan (2007) stresses that if governments apply only the first two criteria, the result of the change will not last. If all three are applied then the educational change has a better chance of long term survival. Other researchers such as Darling-Hammond (2000) and Elmore (2004) note that accountability, incentives and capacity building need to take place together for an improved and sustainable educational change. This makes the role of the government officials significant in educational change.

As government officials have a powerful role in educational change, their involvement is important. As Elmore (2000) points out that "the job of administrative leaders is primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of people in the organisation..." (p. 15). The three roles that

they play in the educational change process must be carried out, through to the implementation of the change. This is where their involvement becomes vital. According to Saario (1979), MOE officials or administrators become catalysts for change. Their involvement as catalysts generates initiative in the system.

In the investigation of the change process this study focuses on, it was necessary for MoE officials to be catalysts for change. Moreover, it is important that the three possible roles for MoE officials are employed effectively for a successful change to be achieved.

### *Principals/Head teachers*

Fullan (2007) views the principal's role as that of "the gatekeeper of change" (p. 74). Principals are very influential in any change process. They become the door to change delivery in schools. Principals are the key agents to systemic change and are central players (Kelly & Peterson, 2007) in school reforms. For a successful change to occur, the principals' views in the planning and development stages are vital. They lead their school communities in any state or province and in the country at large. Therefore, for effective systemic change to occur, these leaders need to be made aware of the objectives and goals of the proposed changes (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998; Firestone, & Martinez, 2009), so that the change can be implemented more efficiently. In fact, advocacy for educational changes must be given to the principals. They then implement the change through their teachers, parents and students. For change to be successful, the principal as the gatekeeper must establish and build good relationships (Bryk & Schneider, 2003) with the school community.

The principal's involvement in the change process as the gatekeeper then becomes that of mediator, between the MOE officials and the school community. Building relational trust is an element of effective

principalship (Bryk & Schneider, 2003) and will enhance the success of change and improvement. Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow, & Easton (1998) add that an examination of successful and improving schools shows that their principals had two major foci: first to reach out to parents and school community to strengthen ties; and second, to expand professional capacity of teachers to enhance professional community growth toward quality of instruction. Successful principals become successful when there is improvement in the school, which is a characteristic of change in the school (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Fullan, 2007; Hall & Hord, 2011). Fullan (2007) states that successful principals have:

- 1) An inclusive, facilitative orientation;
- 2) An institutional focus on student learning;
- 3) Efficient management and
- 4) Combined pressure and support.

When principals acquire and practice the above, educational change can be effective and sustained.

### *Teachers*

The critical role of teachers in the teaching and learning process makes them one of the most important stakeholders in the education system (Razzag, 2012). As most changes in education ultimately aim to improve the process of teaching and learning, it will therefore directly affect teachers (Levin, 2008; Razzag, 2012). They are the key implementers of changes in the classrooms. Credaro (2006) stresses that teachers are in an ideal position to initiate change. They are the indispensable agents of educational change. If they decide not to implement the change, then they will not carry out the change (Carnall, 2007; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992;

Hargreaves & Evans, 1997), and therefore, there will not be any change. However, teachers' perspectives in the development of changes are frequently ignored (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998; Bailey, 2000). Due to their critical role, their perspective on change is vital. Bailey (2000) stresses that any change process can improve if researchers, policy makers and administrators work with teachers rather than disregard them.

Hargreaves (1994) points out that, political and administrative campaigns for educational change often "ignore, misunderstand or override teachers' own desires for change" (p.11). Yet, even while they are unaware of the teachers' desires, authorities still presume that the standard of education is low due to poor teaching practices used by teachers. This suggests the great importance of involving teachers in educational changes and reforms. Hargreaves and Evans (1997) view the involvement of teachers as an urgent matter in educational change. They point out that "it is time for teachers to be the included vanguard of reform, and not be made its marginalized victims" (p.13).

Stakeholders are vitally important from the initial stages of any organisational change because they are usually the ones who are directly involved or affected by the change. They need to be psychologically prepared to make this change. Bridges (1995) notes that "transition is the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the new situation" (p. 3). He further stresses that, if transition does not occur, change will not work, because transition is to do with people. Therefore, involving stakeholders in this change is important, especially at an early stage rather than at the end. For this study, the teachers were the implementers, and they needed to fully understand the change and to have been made aware of the goals at an initial stage for the change to be effective.

## **2.5.2 Stakeholders' professional development in educational change**

MOE Officials, principals, as well as teachers, can all be involved in professional development to support educational change. In this section the literature on professional development of stakeholders is reviewed.

### *MOE Officials*

Saario (1979) suggests that officials and administrators must be flexible and not tied to traditional patterns of behaviour and reactions. Furthermore, their training should be more in "competencies than heroics, more in commitment than ambition" (p. 331). This suggests that officials and administrators need to be committed to their jobs. When there is a change, officials must be trained to go out and ensure that there is a proper awareness within various stakeholder groups. They themselves must be absorbed in the change before they can step out to inform others. Fullan (2007) affirms that ongoing professional development for staff is important. If they are to help in capacity building, they have to engage in it themselves.

Fullan (2007) emphasizes that MoE officials need to train themselves then interact with other districts or provinces to strengthen capacity building and improve plans to enhance change (Corcoran, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Elmore, 2000; Tomlinson, 2004).

### *Principals*

As a gatekeeper of change, the principal must be involved when the goal and the direction of any educational change initiated is being planned by the District Officer or the MoE (Fullan, 2007). Once a systemic change is planned, it is vital for principals to be fully aware of the plan, what is expected of the plan and of its intended outcome. Principals are regarded

as the pivotal point of success, so their professional learning about the particular change should be broadened (Fullan, 2007; Levin, 2008).

In this study, principals' professional development is vital to assessment and learning, and also to achieving the change effectively. In any change, continuous learning support is very important (Duke, 2004; Elmore, 2000; Fullan, 2001; James, Connolly, Dunning & Elliot, 2006; Leithwood, Bauer & Riedlinger, 2006). Leithwood et al. (2006), stress that training should encompass the team as well as the individual principal. Once the principal understands the change he/she can lead it more effectively. McCallum (2007) points out that over the years the approach towards the professional development for principals proved deficient. Principals need continuous professional development to support their efforts towards the teaching of any proposed educational changes. Hoffman and Johnston (2005) also add that principals spread innovation through their 'principal network' (p.18). This suggests that once the change is clarified and understood, principals are likely to use their network to effect change.

### *Teachers*

Hargreaves (1994) discussed the process of change with teachers, commenting that integrating the bottom-up strategies with the top-down strategies may help teachers to find change easier. An implementation strategy which integrates the two is more effective than using only one strategy. Teachers are so vital in carrying out change. Hargreaves (1994) points out that successful educational change requires the involvement of teachers. If the involvement is to be productive, teachers are required to acquire new knowledge of the curriculum or new techniques (Durrant & Holden, 2006; Levin, 2008). This means that teachers are not just technical learners; they are social learners too. Moreover, checking on what teachers already know helps with the professional development of any proposed change (Hewson, 1992; Presseisen, 1995). Teachers need to be continually

developing their own skills. This is especially true for teachers in remote schools, like many in Vanuatu. Teachers tend to adapt themselves without further training. This may be one reason why politicians and administrators make false assumptions about teachers without actually addressing their problems (Hargreaves, 1994; Hargreaves & Reynolds, 1989; Lick, Clauset, & Murphy, 2013).

Teachers' professionalism is very important. Many times, this is lacking in the change process as is argued by Hargreaves (1994). The possibility of poor performance by a teacher may be due to the following: the teacher is unskilled, unknowledgeable, unprincipled, overloaded or a combination of all four (Hargreaves, 1994). He goes on to explain that the remedy for these is to provide professional training. It is essential that teachers do improve their learning. Fullan (2007) points out that, personal learning every day is necessary for any success. In addition to continuous training, teachers need to change their cultures. They do not need to be in the same environment for too long. By moving to a new one, they are refreshed and exposed to new perspectives and perceptions which will enhance their professionalism (Hargreaves & Evan, 1997). In a change process, all this should be considered with even greater urgency as most educational changes requires teachers to gain new professional knowledge and skills.

## **2.6 Reaction to change**

Awareness of stakeholder reactions to change is very important in the approach to any form of educational change, particularly the reactions of teachers (Duke, 2004; Elmore, 2004; Levin, 2008). Leigh (1988) defines resistance as "any conduct that tries to maintain the status quo in the face of pressure to change it" (p. 69). Carnall (2007) adds that "resistance to change is really resistance to uncertainty" (p. 3). This explains why people fear to take risks and stresses the importance of making stakeholders aware of the proposed change in order to minimise their negative

reactions. Hargreaves and Evans (1997) warn that educational reform should not exclude teachers from its creation and implementation. Including them may reduce the reaction that they might have towards the change.

Teachers' situations and their contexts and where the change is proposed are very important in an approach to the early stages of the change process, as they are very influential. Thus people's feelings about change are crucial as their reaction may have implications for the success of the change process. Carnall (1999) emphasises that "change creates a strain both for those who support change ... and for those who are indifferent, opposed or fearful of change" (p. 13). For instance stressors such as, stress through the form of overwork, the challenge of leading change towards uncertainty, and the pressure of dealing with other people's stressors which can have impact on change (Carnall, 2007).

Reactions to educational change can include distrust and resistance or acceptance of the change. Resistance to change is normal or natural as people are so used to what they do every day that they are reluctant to let go of their status quo and step into uncertainty (Branson, 2010; Bridges, 1995; Carnall, 2007; Cedaro, 2006; Hargreaves & Evans, 1997; Lumby, 1998). Bridges (1995) adds that if people do not transition well into the change, that means they will not let go psychologically and will resist the change and will then contribute to its likely downfall. It is natural for people to be comfortable in their zone and change may affect their sense of comfort. That is why leaders must consider the desires of people in the process of change. Leigh (1988) categorises the sources of resistance to change, as including cultural, social, organisational, and psychological factors. These can be further divided into two groups- technical and behavioural categories. The latter is the more difficult one to deal with, so the change leaders have to take careful consideration of behavioural factors in any resistance to change (Carnall, 2007; Leigh, 1988).

In this study, a consideration of the reaction to change was important due to the previous educational changes that have happened in the Vanuatu education system. Previous educational changes occurred mainly in accordance with the Education Master Plan, and the Millennium Development Goals. Education in Vanuatu has been adopting and using leadership styles and school reforms that do not prepare students to face life after school in the Vanuatu context (Mwarakurmes, 2012; Niroa, 2004; Nirua, 2004; Puamau & Teasdale, 2005). When changes happen, people must be considered at the early stage for change to be effective and successful (Carnall, 2007; Hall & Hord, 2011; Hargreaves & Evans, 1997). Specifically, in the change of assessment in English medium senior secondary schools (the focus of this study), teachers' desires and emotions must be carefully considered in the change process for an effective change to occur.

## **2.7 Educational assessment**

Educational assessment is the centre of all services provided by education because it indicates the effectiveness of these services (Mansell, James & Assessment Reform Group, 2009). Mansell et al. (2009) suggest that perhaps, no area of education policy is as consistently newsworthy as assessment. This may explain why educational assessment has gone through significant changes globally, in the last few decades (Witte, 2012; Earl, 2013). Some of this change has been to do with assessment practices and this will be briefly discussed below.

### **2.7.1 Assessment Practice**

Educational assessment is vital in measuring a child's development. In fact, assessment is now becoming the critical point of discussion in education (Deneen & Deneen, 2008; Witte, 2012). Teaching, learning and assessment always work hand in hand. According to Morrison (2008), assessment is important because of the decisions that teachers and

educators make about students when teaching and caring for them. So, the decisions taken will either help all children to learn effectively, or it will leave some out. Morrison (2008) has outlined general principles which should guide both policies and practices for the assessment of young children:

- Assessment should be for children's benefit through direct service to children or in improved quality of educational programmes.
- Assessment should be done to fit specific purpose without using the same assessment for other purposes.
- Policies for assessment should be designed to recognise that validity and reliability of assessments increase with children's age. Therefore, some types of assessment should not be used with young children.
- Assessment should address well-being and motor development.
- Assessment should be linguistically appropriate as some children's first language may not be the language of instruction in school.

Assessment information should be shared with parents as an ongoing process in their involvement with their child's education.

Witte (2012) point out that while assessment practice has improved over the years, teachers could achieve more if they used the information they gather from students' learning more effectively, when planning and teaching. He argues that the issue in many classrooms is not of insufficient assessment but that teachers are not utilising the collected information to help pupils' learning.

### **2.7.2 Types of assessment**

Recently, more focus and research has been geared towards formative assessment (FA) in educational assessment. Summative assessment (SA) involves using the typical high stake tests at the end of a teaching period. FA is always done internally, while the SA can be used both internally and externally. Hence, the discussion here involves formative and summative assessments which are the two main types of assessment used in the senior student assessment processes in Vanuatu (Deneen & Deneen, 2008; Chapuis & Chapuis, 2008).

Cowie and Bell (1999) define formative assessment as, “the process used by teachers and the children to recognise and respond to pupil learning, in order to enhance that learning during the activity or task” (p.101). According to Deneen and Deneen (2008), formative assessment could be called ‘informative assessment’ (p.49). Clarke (2005) adds that, formative assessment is also known as ‘assessment for learning’ (AFL). The above scholars have all raised the importance of formative assessment in learning. Thus, FA serves two main purposes in assessment: It helps the teacher to find out whether the students are learning what they should be learning and then it helps teachers to improve teaching and learning practices in response to this (Clarke, 2005; chapuis & Chapuis, 2008; Deneen & Deneen, 2008; Earl, 2013).

Summative assessment is the assessment that sums up the progress of learning (Deneen & Deneen, 2008; Wylie, Gullickson, Cummings, Egelson, Noakes, Norman & Veeder, 2012). It measures the knowledge, skills and abilities that someone has at a certain point. Additionally, it also contributes to the total of the end of year or course overall marks (Deneen & Deneen, 2008; Earl, 2013; Wylie et al., 2012). It is the internal summative assessment that adds to the end of course or year’s mark in Vanuatu.

Understanding educational assessment and its practices is essential for teachers and other stakeholders involved in educational change, in order to improve its processes with the aim of an effective educational assessment system throughout the country. The difference between the types of assessment and their distinct purpose is an essential consideration in my study.

## **2.8 Summary**

This chapter has reviewed the literature aligned with educational change. Researchers have found that educational change involves taking risks and that the successful implementation of educational change is a complex process. However, results from previous studies have shown that when fewer factors work against the change process, the change can be far more effective. The chapter also highlighted the ideas of key theorists who have contributed towards the development of educational change process. Literature on different stakeholders in education was also reviewed. Their involvement and roles in educational change were found to be of great importance in any educational change. It also looked at the professional development of stakeholders as being one of the important elements of effective change.

The chapter went on to examine literature on the impact of leadership on educational change, with particular reference to the models of leadership and its management. Different contexts require different approaches towards leading change.

Literature around educational assessment was reviewed, especially regarding the distinction between types of assessment and assessment practices.

The research project design and methodology that were used in this study are discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

Research design is a vital part of a research project and the search for an appropriate research tool is founded on the issue of “fitness for purpose” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011, p. 73; Memua, 2011). This implies that the design has a plan that would fulfil the aim of the research (Briggs, Coleman & Morrison, 2012). This chapter will provide an explanation of the methodological basis for this research. It includes the paradigm in which the study is situated, the interpretivist paradigm, and describes the case study methodology used, which involved primarily semi-structured interview and documentary analysis.

The research aimed to explore the initial process of change implemented in the English medium senior secondary school assessment process in Vanuatu. English medium senior secondary schools in Vanuatu have been using qualifications from abroad since the country gained independence in 1980. In 1992, the Pacific Secondary School Certificate (PSSC), which is governed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA) based in Fiji, was introduced into the Vanuatu education system. SPBEA continued to provide this qualification to Vanuatu until 2011 when it decided to hand over some of the responsibilities to Vanuatu. This meant that the management would now be under the Vanuatu Examination and Assessment Unit (VEAU). The country began by being responsible for internal assessments (IA) for three subjects, namely: Agriculture, Biology and Technology. In 2012, other IAs for year 12 subjects were included and by 2013 the external examination component was being managed by the VEAU with assistance from SPBEA. This will be the first ever Vanuatu National Certificate for English medium senior secondary schools in the country.

The key research question for this research project is:

**What are the experiences, perceptions and expectations of MoE officials, head of schools and teachers of the educational change process associated with the change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment in Vanuatu?**

Initially, a description of the chosen paradigm for this research will be presented, as “different paradigms reflect different views on the nature of reality” (Briggs et al., 2012, p. 107). This study was qualitative and interpretivist in nature as it collected people’s views, expectations and experiences. The research approach and research methodology used for this study will also be described. Then an explanation of the methods of collecting data will be made, followed by a description of the research process itself. Finally, the ethical considerations will be discussed and the chapter will end with a summary.

### **3.2 Research paradigms**

Research paradigms are sets of values, beliefs, practices and philosophies shared by communities of researchers which purposefully regulate inquiries pertaining to a particular discipline (Denzin, Lincoln & Giardina, 2006; Donmeyer, 2006; Neill, 2006; Usher, 1996). According to Schnelker (2006), a paradigm is a lens through which individuals view the world, a set of basic beliefs, accepted on faith, that present a basis for the total research process. Paradigms present a big picture, a view of the world and how it works, such that each paradigm has its own particular theories and concepts. Furthermore, each paradigm has consistent views about *ontology* (the nature and form of reality), *epistemology* (the nature of knowledge) and *methodology* (procedures used to investigate, and the rationales behind the procedures). More specifically, Lather (2006) suggests that educational research is usually classified under one of three paradigms: the scientific/positivist paradigm; the naturalistic/interpretive paradigm; or

the critical theory paradigm. This study was situated within an interpretive research paradigm; and this will be discussed further in the next sub-section.

### **3.2.1 The research paradigm for this study**

The interpretive paradigm is mostly concerned with knowledge about the world held by individuals and groups of people. An interpretive researcher cannot accept the idea that there is a reality 'out there' in the world which exists irrespective of people. Interpretivists see reality as a human construct (Cohen et al., 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Mutch, 2005; Neill, 2006). The central endeavour in the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience.

To retain the integrity of interpretive research, efforts are made to understand the perspectives of both the researcher and the research participants (Cohen et al., 2000), and the focus is on constructed worlds/realities as opposed to found worlds (Lather, 2006). In other words, subjectivity plays a role in how a person constructs their reality. Koul (2008) notes that subjectivity leads to results that are complicated to analyse and interpret objectively. However, she argues that because generally it is more difficult to be objective in human research than in scientific settings, "subjectivity is an integral aspect of such research" (p. 2).

Consequently, the epistemology of an interpretive paradigm is that knowledge is acquired by investigating the phenomena. The ontology of this paradigm reflects the belief that there are multiple realities and truths. Because of this, the interpretive paradigm may consist of both quantitative and qualitative approaches and often uses mixed methods to investigate a research question. It also takes into consideration how people differ from each other in terms of their views and conceptions of social reality. According to Koul (2008), trustworthiness comprises credibility (via

member checking), transferability (via thick description), dependability (via outside review) and conformability (via data audit). Trustworthiness is discussed in detailed in section 3.8.1. The interpretivist paradigm seeks the understanding and meaning of people and situations which also involves the subjectivity of the researchers. The interpretive paradigm is appropriate for this study because it seeks to explore the perception and experiences of the participants about the process of change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment in Vanuatu. People create knowledge and meaning about the world around them based on their past and present experiences and knowledge (Cohen et al., 2011). Thus, the study is based on the view that reality is created by the person and his/her experiences.

### **3.3 Type of interpretive research**

In carrying out any research, it is important for the researcher to decide which type of research methodology will be best used to get useful data. There are various types but Meyer (2001) states that the most important distinction is between qualitative and quantitative research methodology. By the data collected in the broader educational context, qualitative research methodology provides a detailed consideration of the holistic picture in which the research topic is embedded (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Briggs et al., 2012; Charles & Abbas, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Researchers employing a qualitative methodology set out to explore a particular aspect of education by collecting the data, using relevant and suitable methods, then generating ideas and hypotheses through inductive reasoning (Cohen et al., 2011, Creswell, 2012; Memua, 2011). Qualitative research methodology is often concerned with processes such as learning, change, and professional development (Briggs et al., 2012; Creswell, 2008).

Since this study focused on how teachers, heads of schools, and MoE official experienced the change to the English medium senior secondary

school assessment process, a qualitative research methodology was considered most relevant. Cassell and Symon (1994, as cited in Kohlbacher, 2006) judge qualitative research methodology to be appropriate to research questions focusing on organisational processes and outcomes, and trying to understand both individual and group experiences of work. The use of a qualitative approach in this study enabled the participants to share their experiences about the process of change in the Vanuatu educational system.

As qualitative research methodology relies on the views of participants and seeks deeper understandings of a particular phenomenon (Briggs et al., 2012; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2012), the methodology used in qualitative research requires the researcher to establish an ethical and collaborative partnership with the participants. If the researcher is transparent and accountable, he or she will be able to establish a rapport with the participants faster, and the collection of data can be more meaningful. Additionally, the strength of qualitative research methodology lies in trustworthiness (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2012). In order to achieve these outcomes, the researcher in this study employed the methodology of case study by actively involving the participants and allowing them to freely express their experiences, views and expectations, primarily through semi-structured interviews. The following section provides a justification for the use of case study as the approach to qualitative research methodology for this particular study.

### **3.4 Case study research as the qualitative research methodology**

In qualitative research there are many different research methodologies available. Johnson and Christensen (2012) explained case study research as “a form of qualitative research that is focussed on providing a detailed account of one or more cases” (p. 395). It is a very useful methodology for

educational researchers. A case study is defined as “an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon (i.e., a case), set within its real-world context – especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident: and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). This implies that case study research assumes that the examination of context and other complex conditions that are related to the case being studied are essential to understanding the case itself. Briggs et al. (2012) define case study research in educational research as a “critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgements and decisions in order to improve educational action” (p. 156). Yin (2012) suggests that there are three different types of case studies, these being: descriptive, explanatory and exploratory. The descriptive study addresses cases which consist of the *what* questions; the explanatory study addresses cases which consist of the *how* questions; and the exploratory study addresses cases which consist of the *why* questions (Bassey, 1999; Cohen et al., 2007; Yin, 2012). Thus, case study methodology can be used to answer the how, what and why questions posed by researchers. The case study that is used in this research is within the boundaries of descriptive study, along with some elements of both the explanatory and the exploratory, as the main research question posed is a ‘what’ question: What was it like for each of the participants during the change to the English medium senior secondary school assessment change process?

According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), case study methodology in research has been around for a long time, and has been successfully used in different disciplines, such as medicine, law, business and the social sciences. Case studies are often used to get rich first-hand information on the particular social reality that is under study (Bassey, 1999; Bouma, 2000; Briggs et al., 2012; Merriam, 1998). Case studies present detailed descriptions of the lived experiences of each case or individual. They show how individuals perceive the various phenomena in their social world and

how these individuals are affected by these phenomena (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Merriam, 1998). This particular focus on the individual is a strength of the case study (Meyer, 2001) because the researcher can fit this particular method to their research project and to the environment accessible by the researcher for a particular case under investigation.

The unique portrayal of real people in real social situations can also be provided by a case study (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Their feelings, perceptions and accounts of events can be studied (Briggs et al., 2012; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). According to Stake (1995), “the researcher seeks greater understanding of the case in order to appreciate its uniqueness and complexity, and its embeddedness and interaction with its contexts” (p. 16). This indicates that the emphasis upon the uniqueness of events in their contexts is of importance in a case study. Hence, for this study the researcher chose to explore the case of assessment change in Vanuatu and to understand the unfolding social situation in which it occurred.

Thus the particular research methodology in this study is the descriptive case study. This guided the selection of research methods. In this case study, the experiences, perceptions and expectations of officials, principals and teachers within the education system of Vanuatu were explored by means of interviews and document analysis. The following section describes these research methods in more detail.

### **3.5 Research methods**

Research methods comprise all the strategies used for collecting and analysing data in a research project. Using different approaches and understandings helps to broaden the understanding of readers (Cohen et al., 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The way we see the world depends on what we are using to see the world and where we are looking from. Research is something that scholars use to view the world from

different perspectives. There are different types of research methods involved in these perspectives. According to Cohen et al., (2011), finding an authentic and appropriate research method to collect relevant data to view these perspectives is vital. In the context of this research, the researcher intended to obtain trustworthy data using socio-culturally appropriate data collection methods. The semi-structured interview and documentary analysis were deemed the most appropriate methods for this study's Melanesian research context (Otsuka, 2006).

### **3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews**

The semi-structured interview is a research tool used mainly in the social sciences and educational research. While a structured interview has a formalised, limited set of questions, a semi-structured interview is flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview in response to what the interviewee says. The interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a limited number of predetermined questions or themes to be explored (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Mutch (2005) states that this type of interview is open to changes along the way. Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin, and Lowden (2011) mention that because individuals can respond by talking (instead of writing), and by expanding their comments where they feel it is necessary, the semi-structured interview is arguably the most common form of interviewing in social science and educational research.

The semi-structured interview method was chosen in this study for two main reasons. First, it is flexible, allowing for additional questions to be asked. However, the interview process must be not only flexible but also reliable. To be reliable, the researcher establishes a limited set of key questions to be asked of each participant. To be flexible, the researcher is ever mindful of seeking to elaborate on the answers provided to the key questions through the use of probing questions specific to each

participant. Probing questions are always very useful in research to gain better understanding of the interviewee's views and explore more on the topic or theme (Menter et al., 2011; Whiting, 2008). The second main reason for the researcher choosing this method was because it suits a context where people feel more comfortable talking and sharing ideas rather than writing. It is believed that using the appropriate strategy may enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of this research (Cohen et al., 2011).

For the success of the interview in this research, the following process was used: the interviews were scheduled at a designated time and place, to last for no more than one hour; interviews were audio-recorded; and they were organised around a set of predetermined questions. It was also essential that the interviewer remained alert so as to ask questions emerging from the dialogue (Whiting, 2008). The predetermined questions became the main questions and the emerging questions were the probing questions. These guidelines helped to establish rapport between the researcher and the participants. The flexibility allowed participants to express their views and thereby to enrich the data being gathered during the interview.

#### ***3.5.1.1 Strengths and weaknesses of the semi-structured interview***

Although semi-structured interviewing may be referred to as one of the best methods to use in qualitative research, it has its strengths and weaknesses as a research tool. As agreed by scholars like Botha (2001), Menter et al. (2011), Mutch (2005), and Whiting (2008), one of the strengths of this method is that it allows the researcher to gain deeper knowledge by asking probing questions. Secondly, the interview method is a flexible method of data generation. Cohen et al. (2007) note that the interview uses "multi-sensory channels" (p. 349), including speaking, hearing and non-verbal channels. Thirdly, interviewees can provide detailed answers which are relevant to their context. This will help the researcher to

understand more about why things happen the way they do. The final strength is that the interviewee can ask for clarification which helps the researcher to gather more accurate information and at the same time to realise that a question needs refining (Menter et al., 2011).

Semi-structured interviewing also has weaknesses. It is time-consuming and expensive (Botha, 2001; Menter et al., 2011). To carry out a successful interview, the researcher needs to familiarise him or herself with the interviewee, carry out the interview in a professional manner, and conclude the interview in a polite and unhurried way. The semi-structured interview also requires the researcher to find a suitable venue and to be there to do the interview, which can be expensive. In addition, the social interactive nature of interviewing means that sensitive topics can be difficult to discuss face to face. Though skill and experience can help overcome this, in some contexts it may not be possible culturally. Finally, interviewing can be vulnerable to personality differences, power dynamics, and gender and generational differences for the interviewer and the interviewee. For example, in some parts of Vanuatu it will not be proper for a female to be in a room with a male counterpart doing an interview. In this situation, the researcher has to have a third person present or the interview must be in an open area or a room with a see-through wall.

Therefore, in this study the weaknesses of the semi-structured interview were considered and attempts were made to minimise potential problems. For instance, with regard to time and cost, the researcher made certain that most of the arrangements and formalities concerning the data collection were carried out within a very short timeframe. In addition, the researcher paused during the interview to allow the participant to express him or herself more. Gestures during the interview were also done politely from beginning to end to make the participant feel at ease and gain familiarity, for example, a hand-shake at the start of the interview. Fortunately, in the

part of Vanuatu that the research was carried out, there were no problems with personality or gender differences as mentioned above.

### **3.5.2 Document analysis**

In addition to semi-structured interviews, this project employed document analysis. Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as “a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet-transmitted) material” (p. 27). A document can contain words and images. According to Bowen (2009) this can include material such as advertisements, agendas, minutes of meetings, manuals, books and brochures, letters, maps, newspapers and programme proposals. Labuschagne (2003, as cited in Bowen, 2009) explains that in document analysis the analytic procedure entails finding, selecting, making sense of, and synthesising the data that are contained in the documents and then organised into major themes.

Document analysis can be used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a form of triangulation. Methodological triangulation is used in qualitative research to present an alternative proposition to validity and reliability, with trustworthiness and authenticity used to understand qualitative studies (Bryman, 2008; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). According to Eisner (1991, as cited in Bowen, 2009), by triangulating data, the researcher attempts to provide a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility. However, to gain validity and trustworthiness it is vital that document analysis is combined with another research method. By triangulating the data, the researcher should raise the confidence of the reader.

With regard to the use of document analysis, Bowen (2009) discusses five specific functions of documentary material. Firstly, documents can provide the researcher with information about the setting or the context in which the research participants operate. The documents provide

background information and history about the context and the research topic which can help the researcher during the interview. Secondly, information from documents can suggest some questions that the researcher needs to address or observe during the collection of data. Thirdly, information contained in documents provides supplementary research data. They can be valuable additions to a knowledge base. Bowen (2009) encouraged researchers to search library catalogues and archives for documents to use as part of their document analysis. Documents from the past and present can be compared to identify changes. A final report and periodic reports can also be examined to give a clearer picture of how an organisation or programme has been performing over time. Finally, document analysis can be used to verify findings. This has been used by sociologists where they must have lots of evidence from a variety of sources to raise confidence in the trustworthiness of their findings.

In this study, the researcher reviewed a number of documents on the planning of Vanuatu Education, the development goals and the education strategy, as well as reports by SPBEA and the VEAU on the planning and implementation of the English medium senior secondary school assessment change process. The review of documents was used to gain more insights to the process of change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment, and as important objective data to compare and contrast with the more subjective data provided by the participants.

### **3.6 Research process**

This section will explain the process that was used in this study, covering the following: access to the institution, selecting the participants, conducting the interviews, data transcriptions, and participant checking.

### **3.6.1 Access to institutions**

Before embarking on a research project, it is essential for the researcher to seek formal permission to access the necessary institutions or to contact suitable participants. For this study the researcher had first to get in-principle permission via email to carry out research in Vanuatu from the Vanuatu Director of Education Services, prior to receiving ethics approval from the host institution. Upon receiving permission, the researcher informed the Ethics Committee that approval had been granted for this study to progress. After receiving the approval from the Ethics Committee (appendix 1), the researcher then submitted a formal request (appendix 2) back to the Director of Education Services in order to gain formal permission for the research to proceed. Following the receipt of this permission, additional requests were also made to the relevant Education Authorities and the heads of schools to carry out the research in their respective schools and offices.

### **3.6.2 Selecting participants**

There were eight selected participants in this study. The confidentiality of these participants in this research is vital so the followings pseudonyms are used: Trevor, Telina, Terry, Tari, Trelly, Talisha, Terina, and Tyson.

The following table lists the pseudonyms for each of the participants and their respective roles in the Vanuatu education system.

<b>PARTICIPANTS (PSEUDONYMS)</b>	<b>ROLES</b>
Trevor	MoE Official
Telina	MoE Official
Terry	Head of school
Tari	Head of school
Terina	Teacher
Talisha	Teacher
Trelly	Teacher
Tyson	Teacher

**Table 2: A List of the pseudonyms and respective roles for each of the research participant**

The participants for this study were selected based on the important role they played in the initial change process. MoE officials played a key role in the planning of the current change. Fullan (2007) describes the head of schools' role as that of "the gatekeeper of change" (.p. 74). They become the passage of change deliverance to schools. Head of schools are the key agents in systemic change, so it was important that head of schools be among the participants. More specifically, heads of the senior secondary schools chosen were present in their posts for over three years and could be easily accessed by the researcher for this study. The teacher participants from these schools were those who had been personally involved in implementing the change in their schools and also could be easily accessed by the researcher in terms of transport. They were selected based on the number of years that they had been teaching the subjects selected for the research in the year 12 level. Hence, the subjects chosen were Agriculture and Biology because not only were these subject included by the MoE in the change process but also these were the only subjects in the participating schools where the teachers had taught the subject for five or more years. The internal assessment process for these two subjects was the first to be nationalised according to the MoE change strategy. The heads of schools were visited and times were made to meet

with them so as to not only talk about the aims and process of the study but also to talk about other possible participants in each school.

It took almost two weeks for the researcher to visit all participants. This lengthy duration was due to the inconvenience in the timing of the study. It was getting towards the closure of 2012 academic year, so all three groups of participants were very busy. Fortunately, as an educator and an aspiring leader within the Vanuatu education system, the researcher was welcomed to do this study despite the busy schedules of the participants.

Prospective participants were all given their letters of invitation in person by the researcher (appendix 3). An information sheet outlining the nature of the research was also given to each participant, along with a verbal elaboration of its purpose and processes so as to ensure a full comprehension of the study and its requirements (appendix 4A - 4C). All proposed participants agreed to participate in the research. The consent form was signed prior to the interview (appendix 5A - 5B) to indicate that the participant fully understood his or her role in the interview process and to confirm their willingness to voluntarily be a participant in the research.

### **3.6.3 Conducting the interviews**

For this study, the researcher communicated personally with each participant about the interview venue. The arrangements for the venues for the majority of the participants were made prior to the interview day. Others were done on the day, due to communication difficulties. The interviews for school participants were carried out at school, while the MoE officials' interviews were conducted at their office sites but in a vacant room for confidentiality. Because of their busy schedules, interviews were conducted at times convenient to the participants. During the interviews, all efforts were made to attend to the psychological and physical safety of each participant. The researcher made certain that the

participant did not need to feel stressed about the interview process by anything they might say and that the questions for each participant were not intrusive or too personal. If there was something personal in the interview, then the participant would signal for the recorder to be paused, then the interview would continue. All participants tried to be on time for their interview schedule; however, for unforeseen circumstances, two scheduled interviews could not proceed and the researcher had to go back another time. All interviews were done face-to-face for a period of approximately one hour. The interview questions (appendix 6A - 6C) were derived from the core question of the research which was:

**What are the experiences, perceptions and expectations of MoE officials, head of schools and teachers of the educational change process associated with the change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment in Vanuatu?**

All of the interviews were conducted in the language that the participant felt most confident to use. Therefore, of the eight participants, six used English and the other two used a mixture of English and the national language spoken in Vanuatu, which is Bislama (*mixture of English, French and indigenous languages*).

#### **3.6.4 Data transcription and participant checking**

Following the individual interviews, a transcription was made by the researcher of all that was said during each interview. Transcribing someone else's words is a difficult task especially when the background is a little noisy or windy. The transcription process is also made more difficult when participants use a language other than English. The onus is on the transcriber, in this case the researcher, to ensure that the translation meets with the approval of participant. It is a really time consuming job as the researcher must listen over and over again to capture the words correctly (DiCicco- Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In this study, all interviews

were transcribed on site in Vanuatu before the researcher returned to the University of Waikato. Each participant's interview was uploaded from the recording device onto a laptop. Each participant was allocated their own folder on the researcher's computer for data and transcription. Each of the transcripts was then returned to the respective participant for him/her to check that what had been said had been recorded and transcribed correctly. Grammatical errors were not corrected to preserve what the participants actually said.

### **3.7 Ethical concerns**

Ethical considerations are a vital part of research. Bell (2005) confirms that "ethical considerations may be called differently and used in a less formal way, but have been relevant for a long time" (p. 45). Ethical considerations are based on respect for the participants. For this study, moral and ethical considerations were important since the qualitative method of semi-structured interviewing was used.

Guillemin and Gillam (2004) claim that the research process has two key ethical dimensions: procedural ethics and ethics in practice. Procedural ethics are to do with the first stage of the research process. This includes the submission of the research ethics proposal to the relevant research ethics committee to analyse, make suggestions for improvement and to approve the research. Ethics in practice refers to the ethical issues that the researcher may encounter during the time of the study in the field while collecting data. For instance, if there was a conflict during the collection of data, then the researcher needs to resolve the conflict following what is best practice ethically in the context.

As part of this research process, the researcher was required to obtain ethics approval from the Waikato University Human Research Ethics Committee. The researcher was granted approval by this committee, as well as by other institutions where the research study was undertaken. In

order that the participants were not affected in an adverse way by this study, a key ethical decision was to use pseudonyms instead of actual names in this thesis.

Ethical considerations central to this project included: gaining informed consent, access and acceptance, anonymity, confidentiality and privacy. These considerations are addressed below.

### **3.7.1 Informed consent**

Informed consent is a vital ethical principle in educational research. The consent process has been described as a cornerstone element in the ethical process (Finch, 2005). Cohen et al. (2011) further describe informed consent as a way of obtaining prior consent and approval of the participants who are to be involved in the research process. This concerns making sure all participants are *fully* aware of the process involved in the research and that all have an adequate understanding of the nature of the research project. A thorough explanation of the research information aids the achievement of this ethical consideration.

In this study, the researcher made certain permission was sought from all necessary leaders before entering the school and the MoE premises. The researcher then made a first visit to the institutions to introduce herself and confirm arrangements for the collection of data. Time was given for each participant to read through the consent form (appendix 4) and a more detailed explanation of the research was then provided to each participant. Once the information was well understood, the participant signed the consent form if they wished to remain involved in the research. Upon signing the consent form, the participants were not only consenting to participating in the research but also indicating that they fully understood a number of important factors. Mukherji and Albon (2010) note that these include, but are not limited to understanding:

- that participation is voluntary;
- the right to withdraw at any time;
- that their confidentiality and anonymity is safeguarded;
- that data will be safely and securely stored after collection.

Therefore, the researcher made certain these points were clear to the participants.

### **3.7.2 Access and acceptance**

Cohen et al. (2011) warn that, as researchers are only human, they need to gain proper access to the participants and the institution or organisation that the research would evolve around. This is one of the initial stages of the process of research. This is when the researcher reveals the purpose, aims, benefits and risks of the study, and the procedures that will be involved (Bell, 2010). This is essential as it clearly outlines what the study is about so the researcher can gain the trust of the organisation and be granted permission to carry out the research. In this study, the researcher was requested by the supervisor to get permission from the MoE person responsible for research in this field before proceeding with an ethics application. So, contacting authorities for in-principle permission is vital. It is during this time that both parties become aware of each other and make collaborative decisions on the dos and don'ts of the study depending on the context. Therefore, this provides an opportunity for the researcher to reflect on the research design so as to improve the research practice to suit the context (Finch, 2005).

### **3.7.3 Anonymity, confidentiality and privacy**

According to Tolich and Davidson (2011), anonymity ensures that the researcher cannot identify which respondent gives a particular response.

Confidentiality is when the researcher knows who the respondent is but will not make his or her identity known to the public. However, researchers often confuse these two terms. Briggs et al. (2012) support this perspective by simplifying them as: confidentiality is a promise made to a participant/respondent that is known, while anonymity is a promise that is made to participants/respondents that are not even known by the researcher. Thus, anonymity can be used in cases such as questionnaires where the researcher does not have any hint of knowing the participant. Unlike anonymity, confidentiality can be used in cases such as interviews. In this study, the researcher explained to each participant the purpose of the study and that pseudonyms would be used throughout the research so that confidentiality would be maintained.

Cohen et al. (2011) explain that privacy is keeping some aspects of someone's personal life from the knowledge of the public. This means that the researcher has a duty to respect the participants' rights to privacy throughout the research process. For example, in this study, pseudonyms are used for individual participants and schools, and the information collected has been treated with great confidentiality during the research process. When the researcher shows respect for each participant's confidentiality and privacy, then trust will be developed, allowing for better responses from participants.

### **3.8 Maintaining quality in educational research**

An important part of doing research is the notion of minimising researcher bias, which in turn contributes to the quality of outcomes (Bell, 2005; Burns, 2000; Memua, 2011; Mutch, 2005). The researcher must be able to convince the reader about the trustworthiness of the research. Mutch (2005) noted that in "quantitative design research, you need to convince the reader that your study is valid and reliable" while in "qualitative design, you need to convince the reader that your study is trustworthy

and credible” (p. 114). Thus, Briggs et al. (2012) affirm that applying the concept of reliability to case study research is problematic. As this project is a case study, this section will discuss trustworthiness and credibility as the principles that can convince the audience of the value of the findings of case study research.

### **3.8.1 Trustworthiness**

Mutch (2005) defines research trustworthiness as the clear documentation of research decisions, research design, data-gathering and data-analysis techniques. The trustworthiness of qualitative research can be established by addressing the principles of credibility, transferability, and dependability. Furthermore, the trustworthiness of a qualitative study can be increased by maintaining high credibility and objectivity. For example; the findings of research that give credibility and trust demonstrate good ethical consideration (Menter et al., 2011). This requires that the design and methods used in the research are robust.

More specifically, qualitative case study data can achieve trustworthiness by the design of the research - its conduct and its research question; the time spent in the actual interview and the time the researcher spent establishing a working relationship with the participant; and continual alertness to the researcher’s potential bias (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Mutch, 2005). All these contribute to achieving trustworthiness in a qualitative case study. Hence, within this particular chapter, every effort has been made to provide a rich description of the design of this research in order to enhance its trustworthiness for the reader.

A well-designed study whose findings are supported by data contributes to a project’s trustworthiness. If the researcher cannot be trusted by the participants then it will be quite difficult to get good responses from the participants. As an ‘insider’ in the context of this study, the researcher

maintained good relationships with the participants by making prior visits to negotiate for convenient time. That having been done, the participants cooperated very well throughout the research in spite of their busy schedules. Thus, the evaluation of the findings was based entirely on the rich data collected.

### **3.8.2 Credibility**

Credibility means that the researcher has ensured that the findings resonate with those in, or who are familiar with, the case or setting. Here, credibility means that the researcher must take into consideration all contextual complexities and address problems that may not be easily understood (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006; LaBanca, 2010). Triangulation is a technique commonly used to establish credibility. Triangulation requires the researcher to use more than one data source, or data-gathering technique. For example, an interview can be done, then an observation can follow or a document analysis can be used to gain better credibility. Another technique is member checking; when transcripts are returned to the participants to check if they fit within their understanding and that the purpose of the study is being maintained (Mutch, 2005). For this study, credibility was achieved by using more than one data gathering method: semi-structured interview and document analysis and also by member checking, with the transcripts being checked by participants.

### **3.9 Data analysis**

Analysing data is that part of the research process where the researcher makes sense of the information collected. In qualitative data analysis, findings taken from raw data are transformed into new knowledge during the process of analysing (Burns, 2000; Creswell, 2012). Briggs et al. (2012) argue that analysis is not, in practice, something that can be left to be considered towards the end of the research project. For instance, before a research project is ever begun, the type of analysis that will be used may

aid in determining the type of research that is to be done. The analysis of qualitative data occurs throughout the research project.

Miles and Huberman (1994) highlight five steps in carrying out data analysis following qualitative interviewing: listening to the tape and transcribing the interview; re-reading the transcripts; coding the interview; summarising the coded data; and interpreting the data. After the collection of data and the transcription, the next thing to do is to analyse the data (Delamont, 1992; Gerson, 1998). Scholars like Cohen et al. (2011), Mutch (2005) and Creswell (2012) agree that there are many data analysing strategies and approaches. Four main types of analysis are: semiotic analysis, discourse analysis, thematic analysis, and visual analysis. This research project adopted the thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis is commonly used in qualitative research. It takes its characteristics from the data and then categorises these according to patterns and themes found in the data (Howitt & Cramer, 2008; Mutch, 2005). The data analysis of this study was done by colour coding different themes that emerged from the data. This produced the main themes as presented in the findings chapter: internal assessments improve students' performance; experiences of educational changes; barriers to successful educational change; experiences of the English medium senior secondary school assessment change, and the future aspirations (see chapter 4 for findings).

### **3.10 Summary**

This chapter has described the research designed methodology relevant for this research project. It outlined the general methodological framework and the specific research methods used to gather and analyse the data. The study used an interpretive paradigm and a qualitative methodology to gather the experiences, perceptions and expectations of MoE officials, principals and teachers. Specifically, the case study methodology used

semi-structured interviewing and document analysis to collect data from the participants. These methods allowed participants to share their views and, where possible, for these to be compared with written documents. The management of the research project was also described. Relevant ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research, and these were also described in this chapter as follows: participants were asked to sign a consent form before the research began; they were given information about the study's purpose; and they were assured that their real names will not be used in the final report on the study. The importance of trustworthiness and credibility to ensure the quality of the research was also discussed. The chapter concluded with a description of the data analysis approach, i.e. thematic analysis, that was used in this research.

The following chapter will present the findings from the data analysis.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DATA PRESENTATION

### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the transcribed data obtained during the data collection process. The research project explored the experiences, perceptions and views of Ministry of Education (MoE) officials, principals and teachers of the educational change process, in particular, the change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment in Vanuatu. The research question was:

**What are the experiences, perceptions and expectations of MoE officials, head of schools and teachers of the educational change process associated with the change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment in Vanuatu?**

The data collected for this study were based on relevant documents pertaining to this study and questions from three different interview schedules for the three groups of participants: MoE officials; heads of senior secondary schools; and teachers. There were two MoE officials, two heads of senior secondary schools and four senior teachers. The data were then analysed and themes were developed. The emerging and recurring themes that appear of significance to this research project include internal assessment improves students' performance, experiences of educational changes, barriers to successful educational change, experiences of the English medium senior secondary school assessment change, and future aspirations.

In this study, there were eight selected participants. The confidentiality in this research is imperative so I have used the following pseudonyms: Trevor, Telina, Terry, Tari, Trelly, Talisha, Terina, and Tyson.

Below are the participants and their roles in the Vanuatu education system.

<b>PARTICIPANTS (PSEUDONYMS)</b>	<b>ROLES</b>
Trevor	MoE Official
Telina	MoE Official
Terry	Head of school
Tari	Head of school
Terina	Teacher
Talisha	Teacher
Trelly	Teacher
Tyson	Teacher

**Table 3: A list of the pseudonyms and respective role for each of the research participants**

The specific names of schools, offices, islands, provinces, communities or any individual who may be mentioned in participant responses are not included in this description of the data. Since Vanuatu is a small island nation, this means that individuals involved in this study could easily be identified if further details were provided. Therefore, only general information is provided about the eight participants.

Of the eight participants, five were males and three females. Their qualifications ranged from Diploma to Bachelors Awards with two of the eight participants holding a Diploma and the remaining six participants holding a Bachelor's degree. However, one of the participants had taught as an untrained teacher for five years then went for further training where he attained a bachelor's degree. The participants' teaching experience ranged from five years of teaching to twenty years of teaching. They are all indigenous Ni-Vanuatu.

#### **4.2 Internal assessment (IA) improves students' performance**

The professional understanding of the two types of assessment, summative and formative, is actually a key part in the senior secondary

school assessment as teachers need to be able to design tasks and prepare students well in order to be able to give the students their best chance. In this section, I present the views and experiences of officials, principals and teachers on their understanding and practice regarding internal assessments and, more particularly, their experience and understanding of the role of internal assessment within the context of the senior secondary school assessment process.

In brief, there are two types of assessment that students do in senior secondary school. One is called internal assessment, where students are assessed throughout the year and the other is called external assessment, where students have to sit for an examination at the end of the year. Prior to 2013, Vanuatu students were doing the same external examinations as most of the other Pacific Island countries such as: Fiji, Samoa, Kiribati and others. Internal assessment is done within schools by the particular subject teacher or teachers and was moderated externally by Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA) until end of 2011. The internal assessment process is an important part of this research as the change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment process in Vanuatu began with the internal assessment process alone, and so this research is situated around this particular process in the educational change strategy.

All of the participants supported the idea of internal assessment and spoke highly about it as they all saw its positive impact on students' learning. Telina from the MoE explained her view about it below:

**From what we see happening in schools today, is that schools are moving away from a more summative assessment to a much more student-teacher involvement. So I think some students are much more happier with that and also because it involves more teachers**

**and students so that way you can actually find out what those kids are good at.**

The majority of participants noted that students no longer have to cram everything in preparation for a final three hour paper which was the sole determinate of their level of academic success in each subject, as was the practice during their own time as students. Present students have the opportunity to show their skills and be assessed throughout the year. In the past, the only pathway to university was through the three hour examination paper. That is to say, in the past external summative assessment alone determined a student's future but now the relative quality of the student's school work throughout the year can make an important contribution in determining his/her future.

#### **4.2.1 Understanding the types of assessments**

Internal assessments were newly introduced into the senior secondary schools in Vanuatu around the late 1990s. Therefore, the researcher wanted to find out from the participants what they understood about this form of assessment, given that the assessment changes specific to this research began with the internal assessment process and only then gradually moved to the external assessment component. Specifically, the research sought to determine how well the participants understood internal assessments compared to what had been described in the literature.

From a theoretical perspective, internal assessment consists of formative and summative components: the formative component helps improve teaching and learning, while the summative is used to provide a formal measure and evaluation of a student's accumulated learning (Witte, 2012). The external assessment (examination) is normally referred to as the summative assessment. The internal summative assessment mark from each subject in senior secondary school is normally added towards the

final three hour external examination mark to give an overall total which is used to grade a student. Normally, each subject in senior secondary school has a proportion of summative internal and external assessments. For example, Agriculture used to be 50: 50, where 50% of the mark is from the internal summative assessment and 50% is from the three hour external examination. Below is what Tyson, a senior secondary school teacher, said about student assessment:

**What I understand about formative assessment is that they are assessments that I give in class like activities and exercises that are not required by the prescriptions, they are assessments that I do basically for evaluation of my teaching and also for students learning just to evaluate my teaching and how students progress through our course. Summative assessments are assessments that are done for the purpose of collecting and recording marks, which is (later) used for ranking.**

Tyson revealed a valid point here, where assessments are used not only to measure students' progress; it is also important for teachers to use it to evaluate their teaching. If more teachers understood the true purpose of assessment and use it in this manner, their teaching and learning techniques would continue to improve. In addition, this would enhance students' performance in their internal assessments which will raise their grades in the overall examination result. Thus it would make the change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment more effective for students' overall performance.

Telina, who is one of the MoE officials, had a similar understanding about formative and summative assessments but emphasised that she had not understood the difference until attending a workshop just a few weeks before the research took place. This workshop helped her to understand the two terms better. Her current view now is that:

**Summative assessment is an assessment that normally takes place after completing a topic or subject. Although the student may look bright to what they have just learnt, that does not mean they understand the topic or subject. Formative assessment guides you and tells you what you know and what you do not know, so that you can improve.**

Due to the change in the management of English medium senior secondary school assessment, which leads to nationalising assessment at this level, the MoE officials are having to become more intimately involved in the change. Accordingly, they are now beginning to understand more about assessment and what is actually happening in schools with teachers and the students. Hence, the possibility of better support to schools to improve teaching and learning becomes more likely.

Terina shared a similar view about her understanding of the terms:

**Formative assessment is to do with short term assessments. It is to do with quiz, short and small quizzes and unit tests when we see performance of other students. It helps to assess our progress. Summative assessments are those that students do such as mid-year exam and end of year exam.**

All participants revealed their understanding of internal assessments which consist of formative and summative assessments, and from their answers to the interview questions it would seem that they clearly understood these two types of assessments and were able to differentiate between the two. Though it was one of the changes introduced to Vanuatu towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, teachers and MoE officials involved in this study, were able to give a clear understanding of internal assessments. This is important as assessment plays a vital role in a student's learning. The data gathered in this study

suggest that the participants involved in this study understood the formative and the summative assessment processes quite well.

#### **4.2.2 Benefits of Internal assessments**

All participants indicated that having internal assessments in senior secondary school is good. Most of the participants went through the Vanuatu educational system when there was very little internal assessment in junior secondary school and none in senior secondary school. Below are the participants' views about the perceived advantages of internal assessments. Tari highlights a belief that the introduction of internal summative assessments has improved students performance when he suggests:

**In the past we have relied heavily on summative assessments, particularly the final examinations. But nowadays, the trend has changed. This is a good thing because, with the introduction of the internal assessment, I see students perform better than the previous years when reports were based only on a three-hour examination at the end of the year.**

Most of the participants went through Vanuatu's education system when there was no internal assessment. The work done throughout the one year or two years was examined in a three hour period. The view of the participants was that such a dependence on a single examination was unlikely to provide an accurate reflection of the student's academic ability. Some students may not be very good at writing a three hour paper. On the same note, if a child has some problems the night before that may distract him/her from doing well in the three hour paper the next day, so getting some assessment marks prior to the three hour examination is much fairer.

When asked for an opinion on internal assessments, Terry, a head of school, said:

**When I attended senior secondary school I had to work hard for the end of the year exam. The introduction of IA has helped the students to perform better because some of their assessments are done before the end of year assessment. I told one of my classes that I wish one day that there will be no more summative assessments for all students in Vanuatu, so pupils can be assessed continuously through IAs only.**

Tyson, a teacher participant, shared a similar comment:

**One thing I found about the IAs that students do, they do better when there are only few to be done. So in the subject I am teaching, there was a review and the total number of assessment given was reduced and that really improved the students' mark. You find that it benefits students.**

Each participant willingly shared their experiences and views about having IAs in senior secondary school assessments. Senior secondary schools comprise students in their teens. This group of students tends to be vulnerable in lots of ways. Participants compared the group using more IA with student performance prior to the introduction of more IA usage and could see an improvement trend in the performance of students since more usage of IA was introduced.

Moreover, these data show that each of the participants had a very positive outlook about the importance of the first stage of the change process being explored in this research. This suggests that any negative comments about the process were unlikely to have originated from an objection to the desired outcome, but rather, to the process for achieving it.

### **4.3 Experiences of educational change**

This section presents the experiences and views of officials, principals and teachers regarding educational change and its effectiveness. All participants acknowledged that during their years of working in or with schools to date, there has been a great deal of change to some areas of the education system of Vanuatu. Numerous scholars, who have contributed to the educational change literature, have indicated that a person's previous history of experiencing change influences their level of acceptance and commitment to any new change initiatives (Branson, 2010; Fullan, 2007; Lick et al., 2013). If the person has had previous positive experiences of educational change then they are likely to look favourably on any new change. However, if the person has had negative experiences from previous educational changes then it is likely that they will look unfavourably upon any newly proposed change. Here Tari, one of the head of school participants, shared his experience of the few changes he can think of:

**Certainly there were changes in the Vanuatu education system. From my early junior secondary, there was what we still have today, Year 10 Leaving Certificate. It is a course offered from year 7 to year 10. Though students are still doing that qualification, it is only from year 9 to year 10, Year 7 and year 8 have been phased out of that qualification. Senior secondary school back then was using curriculum from Cambridge in UK. The certificate awarded was General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE). The Cambridge curriculum was replaced by Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate (PSSC) which was offered in the new year level in the system, year 13 which was then replaced by the New Zealand Bursary. Then the New Zealand bursary was then replaced by the South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC) which is still in use to date while the PSSC remained at the year 12 level.**

According to Tari, it was likely that after gaining political independence in 1980, the English medium senior secondary schools continued with the Cambridge curriculum. The management of the senior secondary school assessment process has continued to change until recently when the Council of Ministers agreed, in response to SPBEA, that there is a need for a national qualification at this level. Other changes that a majority of the participants mentioned were the: introduction of vernacular into lower primary schools; Top-Up schools; year 6 examination shifted to year 8; Centre Schools; and Basic Education; harmonisation of the Vanuatu education curriculum, which leads to the Vanuatu qualification. These were some of the changes that took place in the Vanuatu education system from 1980 through to the present.

Apart from the changes above that were mentioned by most of the participants, one of the participants explained her view on the dual system that exists in the Vanuatu education system, that is, the Francophone and the Anglophone system (see chapter 1.3). Below is Telina's explanation of the change:

**From my observation, it is like our education system has been moved from a more colonial based system to a more Vanuatu based system. So we have been moved from a divided system into a more unified system. Though we said it is Vanuatu education but we are still divided with language barriers but now the Vanuatu curriculum statement will guide us so every material used in both mediums of school will be the same.**

These educational changes have come about between the gaining of political independence and the present day. They may have happened because the country would like to improve the education system and make it more aligned to the needs of Vanuatu students.

## **4.4 Barriers to successful educational change**

Educational change happens in all countries around the world and, as acknowledged above, this is the case in Vanuatu. Any form of change, whether big or small, comes with both challenges and benefits. Therefore, this section will present some of the barriers to successful educational change that emerged from the data. The educational changes which had taken place in Vanuatu since it gained political independence in 1980 were not seen as being as successful as most of the participants in this research would have liked. They gave various reasons for this failure and the following subtitles emerged from their responses.

### **4.4.1 Poor management and implementation**

Participants presented their view on the changes that each of them mentioned and the majority of them mentioned that, in their view, many of the changes were unsuccessful. When asked why they thought these were unsuccessful, poor management and implementation emerged as the most common reason for the lack of success of these changes. Here is what one of the participants, Terry commented:

**I think they were not successful because the changes were mainly trial and error. They make a change, the heads of schools and teachers try to implement it then another change comes in.**

Implementation in educational change is very important. The way any process of educational change should be carried out must be planned well to have a more effective outcome (Fullan, 2001; Gross, 1979). Trial and error, to a teacher, or an educationist, may simply appear as another change programme that will be tried this year and let go of next year. Whether the changes were well planned was quite difficult to assess but, from the participants' perspective, comprehensive planning was not apparent. Another teacher participant, Trelly, outlined his past experiences of educational change below:

**The changes are more like trial and error. The planning might be there but it is not seen in the implementation, so it seems unsuccessful.**

#### **4.4.2 Limited consultation**

According to the participants, many of the previous educational changes in Vanuatu seemed to come in with very little consultation with the schools in preparation for the eventual implementation of the change. This was contrary to recommendations in the change literature (Duke, 2004; Fullan, 2007), which advise that consultation should be done in the initial stage of a change process. Some of the participants think that if all schools throughout the islands of Vanuatu had been made aware of any of the previously proposed changes, these would have been more successful. According to Tyson, a teacher participant, awareness about these past changes was limited to schools close to the main centres only:

**My school is close to the centre so we get information about changes. According to my understanding, awareness and questionnaires should not go to schools around the centres only but should go as far as Torba (Nothern province) and Tafea (Southern province). I think they should get opinion from every school before they carry out a change.**

#### **4.4.3 Clear and uniform vision**

Furthermore, participants saw the need to manage a particular change more transparently. The objectives, visions, and reasons for a proposed change need to be well explained to implementers and the school community at large. The proposed strategy for the change has to be made clear to those likely to be affected, as Tari, a head of school participant, elaborated:

**From my point of view, I don't think these changes were really that successful because changes don't just come about in a matter of days or within the next year as did some of these changes. Changes do need a lot of time for results to show. Most of these changes need to be implemented and evaluated properly for a number of years before we can say for sure whether they were successful or not. Five to ten years would be more appropriate ... to evaluate whether those changes were effective or not.**

The above statement is in agreement with Fullan (2007) regarding the period of bringing about institutional and systemic reforms.

The review of documents indicated that these changes may be trial and error due to the fact that the Vanuatu education sector is funded and driven by donors and development partners, and international advisors but without a uniform vision as elaborated in one of the documents below:

**The education sector has been developed around the different agendas and parallel offices and systems of donors, rather than around a Government of Vanuatu national education sector strategy. The time and energies of education staff have been consumed by responding to donor projects and advisor needs, and local ownership, self-reliance, and trust has been lessened. There continues to be duplication and waste (MoE, 2006, p. 8).**

Tari, like most of the other participants, considered that the changes that they had experienced were not very successful because: they were poorly managed and implemented; consultation with primary stakeholders was limited; and the vision for the changes was not clear and not uniform with all stakeholders. The participants thought it would have been more effective if they were more clearly informed about the planning processes of these change.

These were the barriers described by the participants from their experiences of previous educational changes in the Vanuatu education system as well as supported by some documents as shown above.

## **4.5 Experiences of the English medium senior secondary school assessment change**

The new English medium senior secondary school assessment process is the particular change that this study focuses on. This change is a recent one; some of its latter components are still in the process of being implemented. It involves the changing of the management of the assessment process from SPBEA to the Vanuatu Examination and Assessment Unit (VEAU). Previously, the senior secondary school assessment process in English medium, or Anglophone schools had been managed by SPBEA since 1992.

The following themes emerged from the participants' responses about their experience of how the change was managed during its initial stage: the change process, benefits from the change process, and constraints of the change process. Therefore, this sub-section will present experiences, views and perceptions of the MoE officials, heads of schools, and teachers on these themes.

### **4.5.1 The change process**

In simple terms, 'change' is when something is done differently and not in the same way or order, while the 'process' is the way that a particular change is implemented so as to arrive at its destination or outcome (Duke, 2004, Lick et al., 2013). This sub-section presents the participants' experience of the change process associated with the change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment.

In order for this particular change to the senior assessment process to be effective, the key people who will bring about the change within the education system need to be adequately prepared beforehand. In other words, the principals and the teachers, who would be implementing the change, should have been well informed about why the change was to occur and how it was going to happen. However, this did not seem to be the situation for most of the participants in this particular research. For example, Terry, a head of school participant, briefly describes what he thought of the initial process:

**There was a written plan for this change that was agreed upon by the Council of Ministers for us to have our national programme. The engineers at the Ministry of Education developed it. I remembered seeing it but not with me now. The work started around 2010, I think. I think the MoE had a lot of consultation taken place towards the national curriculum before the actual work did happen.**

The above are Terry's thoughts about how the initial process took place. However, most of what was mentioned by Terry was in preparation for the National Curriculum Statement. Though this is important, given that the change was leading towards the national qualification, the information given to head of schools prior to the commencement of the change provided very little insight into what plans the MoE had specific to the examination and assessment unit.

Trevor, a MoE official, pointed out that:

**In 2010, SPBEA advised the Exams office to nationalise some of the courses, so they started off with Biology, Agriculture, and Design and Technology in 2011. So since then we have identified some moderators locally to help moderate the major tasks. In 2011 SPBEA wanted to hand over everything back to the island**

**country so they have informed the exams office to identify experience people to help moderate the courses as of 2012. So this year, 2012, we have all the subjects offered in PSSC moderated here in Vanuatu by people that the Exams office has seen capable of doing this.**

Though the process of this change was supposed to flow from the MoE to school heads and then on to the teachers, the interviewed teachers were not fully aware of the process of this change through the normal channels, as revealed below by Tyson:

**Ah...for nationalising, the SPBEA communicates it by coming over to Vanuatu, they station in Port Vila and schools from South they send representatives to go to this workshop in Port Vila and schools from North, all go to Luganville for a similar workshop.**

According to this participant, the message about the change was communicated to him by SPBEA through the annual workshop that they run in Vanuatu. It was not communicated through the MoE authorities or office, or by his principal.

A similar comment was made by another teacher, Talisha:

**I am not really sure how the planning process of this change is done. The SPBEA lady told us in the workshop that they are going to nationalise Biology and two other subjects. I don't know if they (SPBEA people) have been working closely with the Examinations office.**

Teachers are the implementers of change. However, in this case the above responses indicate that they may have not been fully aware of the planning of this change. Below are Terina's thoughts:

**Ah... I think there is a plan. I think the Examination office will have more to say about the planning process. What they say in the last briefing that we went to that it will be localised but they did not say that this is the planning that will be followed. The next thing that they say was that, once we are localised, the exam writers will be from Vanuatu. That's all but the whole management of that was not mentioned.**

Interestingly, the review of documents revealed that SPBEA had approved the 'nationalisation' of member countries almost 10 years ago:

**With regards to the future of the PSSC, in the Special Board Meeting in Nadi on 26 May 2003, the Board approved that the Secretariat continues to administer PSSC for the next five years (2004-2008) while discussing with member countries the possibility of nationalising the qualification (SPBEA, 2007, p. 2).**

Despite this fore-knowledge, the change to the shifting of the management of English medium senior secondary school assessment processes from SPBEA to the VEAU, started with a few subjects in 2011 and others followed in 2012 but with very limited prior warning or information being provided by the the MoE .

#### **4.5.2 Benefits to teacher professional learning**

The shift of management from SPBEA to the VEAU has come with some benefits as, like most changes, there are both benefits and challenges. One of the benefits that stood out in this particular change was the opportunity for teacher professional training, as commented on by Trevor:

**As of Last year (2011), the Exams office allocated some funding for some courses at USP to help train teachers or upgrade their skills in test item writing and next year (2013) Exams office will be having another summer course at USP to improve teachers**

**ability. So what we are doing is, we are trying to get those people appointed to come and attend this training to help improve their skills.**

In addition, Trevor highlighted the benefit gained through the need to produce a new assessment policy:

**The thing that is lacking in the MoE level at the moment is assessment policies. At the moment through the donor partners, the Examination and Assessment Unit is trying to develop an assessment policy which will be like a frame work for assessment. Along with that we also have the rules and procedures manual which should also be completed towards the end of this year, so with those documents I am sure it will help improve all the assessment practices in schools throughout Vanuatu.**

As mentioned above, such a unique opportunity for professional training will improve teachers' skills and ability for writing test items. This can be a real benefit to the teachers' learning as it adds to their professional knowledge and, likewise, benefits the students learning as teachers learn how to assess it more effectively by constructing better test items. This will certainly have an impact on the students' performance. Moreover, the development of the assessment policy and its procedural manual is certain to improve assessment practices in Vanuatu.

Another benefit of the change process is that it unites subject teachers from both the Anglophone and the Francophone mediums. These teachers will need to be united to discuss the contents of curriculum as the two mediums of instruction will be amalgamated as a result of this new national curriculum. To this end, heads of schools have cooperated already by releasing teachers to attend meetings and consultation as explained by Tyson:

**For the new curriculum that Vanuatu is developing, I found out that things that have been removed by SPBEA are inserted back again. This was due to a workshop/meeting that, three Anglophone teachers and three Francophone teachers attended and found out that ah.... some things that we've been teaching, the Francophone do not teach them in classes, some that they teach, we do not teach in class. So we're trying to harmonise or put them together so that a Francophone student who leaves school from year 12 has the same understanding of Biology in French as the Anglophone student leaving year 12.**

Amalgamation has come as a result of this change and so Vanuatu, as a country, will be able to award only one national senior secondary school qualification even though there will still be two mediums of instruction – English and French. Due to amalgamation, both Anglophone and Francophone medium school teachers have to meet and talk about how and what their subject curriculum will look like for this new national curriculum. So school teachers and school heads from these two mediums are now required to cooperate in order to form a national senior secondary school curriculum for Vanuatu, even though their respective means or medium of teaching will remain language distinctive.

Furthermore, most participants expressed their excitement about having a Vanuatu owned qualification. After 32 years of political independence, this outcome is a milestone achievement for the country. Indeed, the first ever National Curriculum Statement was developed and launched even before the actual change process designed to bring it about commenced. Participants saw this as beneficial, because it creates and provides jobs for people. The National Curriculum Statement outlined areas of improvement and development which involved different departments and sectors within the MoE. Thus, the nationalisation of the curriculum and the assessment then create additional jobs for teachers, mostly in the

areas of curriculum, examination and assessment development, as the National Curriculum Statement was transformed into documents that could be used by teachers. Below are some participants' comments:

**Nationalisation is good. It provides job to our people and we make good use of our human resource (Talisha a teacher participant).**

Similarly, another teacher, Terina commented:

**I think it is good as it helps people (teachers and educationist) move up the ladder as you can already see. We can have someone from Vanuatu actually writing the examination paper that students in senior secondary school will do. It is also good because it might be in simple English and the paper might be written according to what is reality in Vanuatu.**

Participants have outlined some of the benefits that they saw in the change process for the management of English medium senior secondary school assessment. It is important to acknowledge these positive perspectives because it supports the understanding that any subsequent negative views are based upon a true reflection upon the change rather than from a complete bias against it.

#### **4.5.3 Constraints of the change process**

This sub-section will highlight some of the constraints that the participants in this study shared about their experience of the change to the management of English medium senior secondary school assessment.

##### ***4.5.3.1 Professional development and on-going support***

Professional development and on-going support is another vital part of the process in educational change (Levin, 2008). Professional development varies, depending on the nature of the intended change. For Vanuatu, the

majority of schools are in the rural parts of the country. Due to the topography, schools in these rural areas are usually disadvantaged in many ways (Henly, 2005; Ministry of Education, 2009). One of the ways that they become disadvantaged is in the level and frequency of professional development of teachers. It gets expensive for the government to transfer teachers from one school to another, where they may get new ideas from the new environment or a new graduate. Therefore, teachers remain in those rural areas with their untrained skills or trained skills for so many years. Thus, these limited opportunities for teacher professional development affect the learning of students. The teachers do not often have the chance to go for short term professional training or refresher courses. When there are changes to the system, this issue becomes even more significant as the disadvantaged rural teachers are expected to implement the change without sufficient professional development. In addition, new untrained teachers for primary schools are often year 10 drop outs and secondary untrained teachers are usually year 12 drop outs.

Given the changes that have happened in Vanuatu's education system, it seems that professional development may have been one of those barriers to effective change as Trelly revealed below:

**I did not do any formal teacher training when I started teaching. At the first place I found it very, very difficult. It was very difficult to formulate the formative and summative assessments for senior secondary school students. I had no idea what the words formative and summative mean. The school that I first taught in did not give any assistance. I did trial and error and learnt how to do it right through experience. I did it my own way. The feedbacks that I got back from SPBEA helped me to do better.**

Being an untrained teacher in schools which do not provide professional development is quite a challenge. Only those who really want to pursue teaching as a career seem to persevere and try their best as revealed by Trelly above. This experience suggests that teaching and learning in Vanuatu's education system will improve if professional development is effectively used in schools. In addition, changes that are introduced into the system need to address this issue of professional development, especially in the rural schools of Vanuatu, which depend upon a process where new professional expectations are clarified and exercised through the internal school professional development. For many rural schools in Vanuatu, it may be unlikely that any internal school professional development actually occurs.

When participants were asked about formal or informal training given in school to assist with the development of any new assessment processes, most of them had had little previous experience of it as Tyson shared his view below:

**When I came back to Vanuatu to teach, ah... I don't recall any training for me on how to do assessments for senior secondary school. In the past there has been some training, but when I start teaching, there's never been any training, just at the beginning of this year, the SPBEA came over to Vanuatu and just introducing us to the thought of nationalising the PSSC. Yap that is what I can recall, but since I started teaching there's nothing. Though I am a qualified teacher in my subject area, when I started teaching, I found designing tasks for assessment purposes was so difficult and I had to do a lot of reading around the area of assessment to help. Besides I seek help from another senior secondary school.**

Though Tyson graduated with a Bachelors degree, this did not provide him with everything he needs to know as a teacher. He felt that a

workshop on how to design and carry out internal assessment, as expected by the SPBEA, would be useful to returning teachers and new teachers. Therefore, internal and external professional development needs to be addressed in schools in order for any educational changes to be effective.

A similar experience is shared here by Terina:

**I cannot recall any training given on designing assessment tasks for senior secondary school students. I did a lot of reading and worked my way through. I learn to do better through experience. I used the prescription. It was really hard in the first place.**

In addition, reviewing relevant SPBEA document reveals an official awareness that understanding and designing IA is problematic due to a lack of information in teacher training institutions within the region. This is elaborated below:

**It also seems that new entrants to the teaching profession have little understanding of forms of assessment that lie outside the test-examination format and function. It is possible that the training college have not yet established courses that promote the formative function of assessment (Raivoce, 2008 p. 36)**

However, though the teachers claim that assistance was not given to help them do their jobs, the heads of schools claim that professional development for assessment is provided through the SPBEA as explained below by Terry:

**Oh, we give teachers a lot of support. We have untrained teachers and we support them through departmental meetings and allowing them to contact other schools and SPBEA for IA submission dates and other enquiries.**

It is seen here that consultation with other schools and the use of technology may be used as solutions for untrained teachers in schools. Hence, running professional trainings or workshops to reinforce professional skills and ideas and to share ideas may not be seen necessary, provided the impression provided by head teacher Terry is common across all schools.

In line with this discussion of professional development, the participants recognised a lack of funding as a constraint to continuous professional development, as Trevor explained:

**At the moment, the teachers that Exams office has chosen to write exams or those who are interested to attend the summer training, most are examiners. They have been writing exams for some time or have been involve with moderating exams for some time now. If the MoE can sustain this training in providing funding for teachers that will be a really good thing as these teachers can impact their learning on others as well within the schools they've come out from.**

The school-based participants knew that training is essential for this change but the change would be more effective if MoE can continue with the funding for training and not just have a one-off summer training as this would not be sufficient. The teacher participants also acknowledged that schools do not have a proper mechanism in place for new teachers and untrained teachers, which creates a challenge if any educational change is to be implemented effectively.

#### ***4.5.3.2 Awareness and involvement of stakeholders***

The research participants revealed the absence of some main stakeholders in the process of the senior secondary school assessment change. Their opinion was that, on many occasions, the teachers, parents and students were not involved in the planning of the educational changes but only

came in at the end of the change process. This sub-section presents some of the responses given when participants were asked whether the parents and students were aware that the nationalising of the curriculum had started and that some subjects are now managed, moderated and evaluated by the VEAU Unit. In response to this question, a teacher, Trelly replied:

**From my view, the parents are not aware of it. Only the teachers are aware that nationalisation is starting with internal assessments. Most people know about the nationalisation of programme but not the current change in assessment.**

Importantly, Tyson gave a matching view:

**The students and parents are not aware of the current change. The change is only communicated to us teachers. Basically, parents don't know anything. We tell students in class briefly about the change if it affects the subject they are taking. I do not tell them the reason for the change because the change happens but no reason is communicated to me. So, parents and teachers do not know that nationalisation is already starting.**

Tari, a head of school participant, also agreed with the other participants by saying:

**Not yet, information has not gone down that far yet for parents.**

On a similar note, a more widespread awareness of the changes should include a description of the plan along with the goal and process of the change. Change processes are more achievable if all involved are aware of what is planned and understand this plan well (Hiatt, 2003). However, most of the participants acknowledged that the goals for this particular

change, and most of the other changes, were not known to them. Here is Tyson's view about it:

**Actually, the administration never come to me and sits with me and talks about the change with me or in a meeting. They just give me the paper and I read through it. I read through it and familiarise myself with those changes. They never come down and talk about those changes. I know why, may be they don't know why the changes occur.**

Tari commented:

**I have not had access to any written plan but have been informed of plans that are put in place by the MoE through the National Curriculum Unit (NCU). With regards to the goals of this change, the school gets advice from the Examination Unit on internal assessment- if there would be any change.**

Knowing about any change and its implications for parents and students, as stakeholders of a school community, is important. The lack of such awareness for this current change may lead to the participants being unnecessarily affected in their expectations of this particular change by their experience of earlier unsuccessful educational changes, which seemed to have been inadequately planned.

There needs to be more and better informed involvement of these stakeholders in the planning process of changes. In addition, reasons for the change and goals for what and where the change is leading need to be communicated to stakeholders for effective change to eventuate.

#### ***4.5.3.3 Management issues***

According to the participants' views and expectations, the VEAU is not really providing the service that is expected of it for the current

management of year 8 and 10 assessments. A number of problems were regularly mentioned and these have not really been addressed, and this may be a constraint to this new change. If the VEAU cannot manage the year 8 and 10 assessments as expected it may not be able to manage the senior secondary school assessment process. This concern creates some doubts as to what this change will be like. Below is Tyson's elaboration on this issue:

**I am afraid about the nationalisation because already our year 10 internal assessment this year has arrived very late. They were just given to us in early October when they were supposed to have arrived in term one and term two... but they send us everything in term three and that is what I am afraid of. For year 10 it has not been good and this nationalisation may be a problem. I wonder what will happen to PSSC and SPFSC.**

Terina raised her concern around the same issue stating:

**The Examination and Assessment Unit under the Ministry of Education must consider the education of students as priority, so they must make sure it is done properly. For example, the internal assessment dates must be respected and followed. I said this because from my observation in year 10, we are just next door to the Examination and Assessment office but we just receive most of our internal assessments last month, October, even for one particular subject, there was no approval. So it seems like the way handle it is not good and they must not do the same with year 12. Because if our standard is low when they go out for studies overseas, our students must be able to compete with others.**

Participants were well aware that certain selected teachers are contracted to write, moderate, and mark the examination papers for the year 8 and year 10 assessments. They were also aware that SPBEA do the same for the

PSSC and the SPFSC assessments. However the management of the year 8 and year 10 assessment processes, with regards to contractors, was not very well handled in the past as was explained by a head of school participant, Tari:

**A lot of teachers including myself question the management of this change- the shift of management of English medium senior secondary school assessment from the SPBEA to the Vanuatu Examination and Assessment Unit. I think everything falls on the Examination Unit to take up the responsibility. However, from past experience, we've had couple of issues basically to do with finance part of the assessment and also the organisational of part of the assessments. So with the taking over of SPBEA, knowing that SPBEA offers very attractive packages for this kind of work, the writing up of the examinations and also the marking of the examinations, it is really up to the Examination Unit now and the MoE to look into how this can be managed because I see already a lot of problems if the financial part to it cannot be met by the MoE or the Exams Unit. So while I welcome the change, I also have doubts within the management particularly within assessment and financing issues like marking and writing exams.**

The teacher participants had been in the system for a good number of years and had been a part of the year 8 and 10 assessments so they are expressing their personal experiences. From their experience, if these issues are not addressed properly, it may contribute to the ineffectiveness of this change. It had been a constraint in the management of year 10 assessment and it is likely that it will be a similar constraint for this change, too, unless the MoE take the necessary steps to ensure that does not happen.

## **4.6 Future aspirations**

This section will present views and expectations of MoE officials, head of schools, and teachers on how they want the future to be for the English medium senior secondary school assessment process in Vanuatu.

### **4.6.1 Development of human resources**

The MoE, head of schools and teachers want to see that people who work in the VEAU are qualified in that area. They do not want nepotism to creep into this change as happened with other changes in time past. They have witnessed how year 8 and 10 examinations have been managed and do not want similar issues that were raised then to enter the management of English medium senior secondary school assessment. Below is Trevor's comment:

**To go about making an effective change, it will involve a lot of ah...training of course, like more people are needed to go for further studies on assessment and come back and improve the system. Oh, I'll also add that, the exams office is short of staff now and it is due to the influence of nepotism in the system- people are recruited according to the superiors' nepotism lines, for example, Family, island, church groupings, and etc.. But if people are chosen on merit to help improve the system, then right people will be at the right places to make changes more effective.**

According to Talisha, one of the teacher participants, the office that is directly in charge of this change needs more human resources as expressed below:

**Though I am feeling positive about this nationalisation, I have fear now that we are developing our national certificate. We need to train more people now. They should also have a boss who can monitor their work well.**

The participants were happy that this change will take place but at the same time they tended to think of it in terms of the other educational changes that had already taken place especially in the way it is being managed so far. Below is Trellly's comment:

**I think it is a good thing, it is time but only one thing it might be another trial and error. It would be good to uplift teachers' moral in the sense that they are being promoted. So I think it is good thing but we still need very committed and qualified teachers because we want to see good things happening.**

#### **4.6.2 Improvement in the change management process**

Participants indicated in their data that important things that were to be done, such as awareness and involvement of stakeholders, limited consultations, professional training, and a better change management process, were not really being done in preparation for this change process as desired. A MoE official, Trevor, elaborates:

**The Examination office needs qualified assessment officers to do a better job. For the current change, preparation for human resource was lacking. Of course if the ministry puts funding into that and employs more people and see to implementing all these quality assurance measure, I'm sure there would be some improvement in the system. Furthermore, there is a bi-weekly radio programme run by the Examination and Assessment Unit we'll try to insert this idea of change in the next coming programmes to allow parents to understand what is happening and to know that there is a shift change happening in the Examination and Assessment Unit. I just have to say we need more awareness to parents on assessment practices. We need to let everyone know about what is happening in the Exams office**

**as it is everyone's business. It is a mechanism for change in the education system and above all in the whole country.**

On the note of change management, Talisha believes that:

**Being assessed externally our prescription gets reviewed every second or third year. Comparing that with our current curriculum for junior secondary, it has not been reviewed for the last fifteen years or so years. So that is the fear, I feel that if we are to nationalise, this prescription must be reviewed, it is not good to use the same prescription the rest of our lives.**

The teacher participants realized that preparing human resources for the change is vital so that the process of change can be followed with more consistency and less failure in the future. They also recommend that more information needs to be provided to all of the stakeholder members and the community at large.

#### **4.7 Summary**

In chapter four, I have presented the research's findings on the views, experiences and expectations of MoE officials, head of schools, and teachers regarding the educational change process and in particular the change of management in the English medium senior secondary school assessment process in Vanuatu. The key themes that have emerged included internal assessments practices improve students' performance, experiences of educational change, barriers to successful educational change, experience of the English medium senior secondary school assessment change, and future aspirations.

The participants involved in this study understood what internal assessment is and embraced the use of it in schools as it improves students' performance. However, they revealed that although this senior secondary school assessment change has begun, parents and students are

not fully aware of it just as had been the case for most previous changes that had taken place in the education system of Vanuatu. This may be due to an oversight or to poor management and implementation. In general, the participants' were delighted that the change would give them ownership of the senior student qualification and that the change has caused the education system to make some important improvements. On the other hand, they also acknowledged that professional development and on-going support, awareness of the proposed changes to all stakeholders, and management issues have been a concern with many previous educational changes in Vanuatu and are with this process of change, as well. Therefore, they considered that improved development of the human resources and better management of the change process itself, are two important ways that the Vanuatu educational system could lead change more effectively.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Introduction

The education system in Vanuatu is complex (Hindson, 1995; MoE, 2009). After attaining political independence in 1980, Vanuatu continued with the colonial education system it had inherited from the British and French. However, it was later realised that the colonial education system was not appropriate for Vanuatu, as it derived from foreigners and, thus, did not incorporate any adjustments relevant to the needs of Vanuatu students (Niroa, 2004). This suggests that some aspects of the Vanuatu education system needed to be changed to suit the Vanuatu context more (Niroa, 2004; Nirua, 2004). This perspective is still valid today because some practices, particularly those which align more closely with colonial values, continue to guide certain aspects of education in Vanuatu.

A number of changes in the Vanuatu education system have been implemented since independence. Although well intentioned, some of the changes did not suit the local context (Niroa, 2004) and resulted in a lack of success. This highlights the fact that a change to the Vanuatu educational system should not be made just for the sake of making the change. Further, the actual change process needs to be managed properly if it is to achieve the desired transformation (Branson, 2010; Levin, 2008). The process of educational change needs to be seen as being just as important as the outcome of the change.

Hence, this study has explored the experiences, views and expectations of MoE officials, principals, and teachers' regarding the change management process as Vanuatu has sought to change the English medium senior secondary school assessment procedures. This chapter will discuss the findings of this study and, thereby, provide some insight into, and guidance towards, the achievement of successful change in the Vanuatu educational system.

## **5.2 Potential benefits of the proposed change**

It was evident from this study that the change to the English medium senior secondary school assessment procedures has the potential to contribute great benefits to the Vanuatu education system and, in particular, the students involved.

First, the proposed change to the English medium senior secondary school assessment procedures encouraged the MoE, through the Vanuatu Examination and Assessment Unit (VEAU), to initiate professional learning for relevant teachers. Professional development has rarely been offered prior to this time. This initiative has uplifted teachers' morale and improved their general skills and knowledge. Furthermore, as the professional development took place during two summer holidays (2011 and 2012) it had great potential to improve teachers' assessment practices (Carnall, 2007; Earl, 2013; Elmore, 2004; Levin, 2008). The teachers who received the extra training then had the opportunity to help improve their own departments and school, by conducting internal professional learning workshops if given the chance to do so by their administration. Because of this, the VEAU not only improved teachers' professional learning but also allowed the MoE to work more closely in support of those teachers and educators. This was a great benefit as most of them had been teaching for some time without going through any professional development on assessment, or indeed any other professional development, but had simply been committed to delivering knowledge to students every year. This professional development is likely to have a positive impact on teacher performance which will in turn improve student learning and performance.

Secondly, due to the change, the MoE had to develop an assessment policy and this also has the potential to create many benefits for schools, teachers, head of schools, students and the system. Thus, this is beneficial to the

nation. In theory, given this new policy, there will be uniformity in the system and the following benefits can come from it:

- All Education Authorities in Vanuatu will ensure their schools work in line with the assessment policy;
- Heads of schools and teachers will have more confidence in their assessment practices as they will all have a shared understanding of what MoE requires of them at present and in the future;
- Parents will have more confidence in the system knowing that their child/ren can learn at any school and achieve the same outcomes as children at any other school.

According to Trevor, an MoE official participant, this recently established policy will be used as a framework for locally controlled assessments based on the recently launched Vanuatu curriculum statement. Included with this policy is the rules and procedures manual, which will also be very helpful with the new Vanuatu qualification. It is from this assessment change that the Vanuatu education system will gain further improvements in the area of assessment, which is a vital part of education.

Third, a likely outcome of this change in English medium senior secondary school assessment is an amalgamation of the two current curricula into one, so that all Vanuatu senior secondary school students will study the same curriculum. Since independence, Vanuatu has used a dual curriculum system for senior secondary schools, with two languages of instruction, English and French. The English and French schools follow a uniform curriculum up to year 10 then offer separate curricula in the senior secondary schools. With this nationalisation, the senior teachers of English medium and French medium schools were asked to come together to form a unified curriculum that both English and French mediums schools can use. According to Trevor, “the amalgamation of the two

curriculums will be done hopefully in 2014". The national certificate will then be based on this unified curriculum. In addition, the study also showed that currently there are major discrepancies in the senior secondary school curriculum, and yet students from both French and English medium schools go out to find similar jobs, or continue on to study at the same University. This is in alignment with one of the objectives of the Education Master Plan (MoE, 1999). So, for the last two years of senior secondary schooling, teachers use either French/English curriculum depending on which school system they are in. Before and after this time, their lives follow similar learning pathways. Bringing the two curricula together is yet another benefit because Vanuatu students will now be taught the same curriculum from primary school through to senior secondary school, regardless of the medium of instruction.

Fourthly, as a result of nationalisation, numerous opportunities have been created for highly experienced and skilled senior teachers to extend their professional responsibilities to include newly created curriculum related tasks. Some of these teachers may have lost their interest and enthusiasm for teaching due to long years of service; their experience may not have been openly acknowledged. Allowing senior teachers to participate in new prestigious tasks gives them recognition as qualified, hardworking teachers. This change gives such professionals an opportunity not only to re-energize and recuperate but also to be influential in curriculum areas. For instance, a teacher who had been a chief examiner had been promoted to the position of moderator. A senior teacher had been promoted to be part of the curriculum writing group. Others have been selected to attend professional development on assessments in order to be future examination writers. All this agrees with Hargreaves (1993), when he points out that, teachers and schools are often more willing to take on responsibility if they are able to see it as an opportunity to make a real

difference. Therefore, what is done in this regard is very rewarding for Vanuatu senior secondary teachers.

Finally, this change created an explicit need for the teachers to ensure they fully understood the nature and practice of internal assessment. If performed correctly, internal assessment should enhance the overall performance of students. Thus, teachers must carry out better formative and summative internal assessment practices for this change to be fully effective. Previously, no marks were assigned to students other than those achieved within the three hour external examination, as discussed in the findings of this study. (See chapter four). Currently, students gain a portion of their marks from summative internal assessments during the course of a year, and the rest of the marks are taken from the three hour external examination. Improvements should also be shown in these summative assessments and the external examination, which may indicate that feedback on work completed as formative assessment has contributed to students' overall learning. Deneen and Deneen (2008) explain that having students complete classroom assessment is vital, as it allows teachers to evaluate both their teaching and the progress of students on a certain topic.

Professional development for teachers, the development of assessment policy and the manual, the amalgamation of the curriculum for the two mediums of instruction in senior secondary school, staff promotions, and internal assessment practices together offer great benefits to the Vanuatu education system. These benefits are made possible and can be further improved if this significant degree of change in Vanuatu educational system is well managed. The process of educational change needs to be considered as important as that of its outcome (Jody, 2011; Levin, 2008). Furthermore, these benefits can only be achieved effectively if certain beliefs and assumptions are realized. The analysis of the data gathered in this research suggests that these beliefs and assumptions include:

- Prior knowledge
- Positive outlook
- Pre-implementation planning
- Balanced implementation strategy
- Stakeholder involvement

These will be discussed in the rest of this chapter.

### **5.3 Prior knowledge**

Existing prior knowledge comprises the knowledge and skills that a person already possesses about a certain object or behaviour. Prior knowledge is described as a lens through which people view and observe new information (Presseisen, 1995). In this research, the critically important prior knowledge is that of the teachers, who have to bring about the desired change to the senior assessment process. For this assessment change, it is assumed by the government through the MoE that the teachers involved in the change had prior knowledge about how to suitably implement the internal assessment processes. As the MoE did not organise a comprehensive and widespread professional development programme to ensure that each teacher involved in the change fully understood how to plan and use internal assessment practices, there must have been an assumption that these teachers already possessed this knowledge. As Hewson (1992) and Duke (2004) highlight, the success of any educational change is at risk unless the leaders of the change are certain that those charged with bringing about the change have the appropriate level of prior knowledge to be able to perform what will be required of them. It is, therefore, vital, with any desired educational change, that a check is made for the existence of the required prior knowledge; this serves as the starting point for understanding change (Carnall, 2007; Elmore, 2004; Levin, 2008). If the required level of prior

knowledge is not present, then the leader of the change must attend to ensuring that it is gained through professional development before the change commences.

To ensure that the change to the senior students' assessment process commenced strongly, it would have been preferable for the MoE to check that the relevant teachers across the country understood the pivotal component of internal assessment procedures. This is in agreement with Hargreaves (1993) and Hargreaves and Evans (1997) perceptions that teachers must be checked for the extent and relevance of their existing knowledge in relation to the anticipated demands of the proposed change. This should not have been assumed without checking (McEwan, 2005) because of previous public awareness of perceived assessment weaknesses amongst some Vanuatu teachers. A very recent newspaper article suggested that the 2012 year 8 and year 10 examination results were alarming. More than 60% of the students in both year levels scored below the 50% pass mark ("Storage and Security", May 2, 2013). This article should have raised concern amongst the policy makers, planners, implementers and the whole country as to how well the nation's teachers truly understood assessment procedures. Arguably, this article may imply that there is a lack of understanding in Vanuatu's teachers of formative and summative assessment. Within the proposed change, it is essential that both assessment types - internal and external - are understood and used correctly to ensure that the best outcomes are available to each student. Also, it is very important to ensure that these assessment practices are working well not only for schools in the urban centres but for the rest of the country, as well. Thus, checking the existing prior knowledge of assessment practices in this particular change process was certainly a valid activity.

It is worth noting that the participants in this research appeared to have an appropriate level of prior knowledge and understanding about both types

of student assessments. However, it must be acknowledged that this study included only a limited number of teachers and only teachers from two urban schools.

Assessment has been going through continuous change and has become a critical point of discussion in schools since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. A significant change during this period was the emphasis on the formative assessment rather than summative assessment (Clarke, 2005; Deneen & Deneen, 2008; Earl, 2013). The participants in this study frequently commented on the introduction of internal assessment; they considered that it improved students' performance, allowing more students to continue to the next year level. This supports the Vanuatu Education Master Plan's objective, which is access to education, and in particular, the provision of basic education to all children in Vanuatu (MoE, 1999). The practice of internal assessment is one of the factors that contribute to better results in student performance as revealed by the participants involved and literature from developed countries, such as England (Clarke, 2005; Deneen & Deneen, 2008).

The findings of this study also parallel those in the literature. For instance, internal assessment in this context has two main parts to it; formative and summative assessments (Clarke, 2005; Wylie et al., 2012). Formative assessment is also known as 'assessment for learning' and is used to improve student learning (Earl, 2013; Mansell et al., 2009; Witte, 2012). Formative assessment provides valuable feedback to both students and teachers (Clarke, 2005). It monitors the progress of students and helps them to improve, especially low-performing students (Witte, 2012). In contrast, summative assessment is known as 'assessment of learning'. When students receive ongoing feedback on how they can improve, they are able to do well in the summative assessment, which provides a formal measure and evaluation of a student's accumulated learning (Witte, 2012). This was the reason given by all participants involved in this study for

believing that internal assessment is effective in raising student performance. The change to assessment practices in the Vanuatu education system can be seen to reflect increasing recognition of the importance of both internal and external assessment, but particularly internal assessment.

Interestingly, this study found that most of the participants were able to explain the two common components of assessment, formative and summative. For example, Telina, a MoE officer made a distinction between the two assessments:

**For me assessment is a way to find out whether our plans are achieved or not. But in terms of summative assessment, it's an assessment that normally takes place after completing a topic or subject is covered and formative assessment guides you and tells you what you know and what you do not know.**

Participants were able to differentiate between the two types of assessment in line with the literature. Witte (2012) states that teachers often define formative assessment as what they do with their students to check on what they have covered for the day. However, he also notes that these are not the only practices involved in formative assessment. He suggests that formative assessment involves measures or procedures that are used to test the students' learning progress and to enhance this progress. Bloom (1969, as cited in Witte, 2012) states that, an assessment can only be formative if it is used to make changes for the learner, whereas it is summative if it is to do with the formalised checking of the student's academic progress after a period of time (Clarke, 2005; Earl, 2013; Mansell et al., 2009; Witte, 2012). Additionally, Earl (2013) stresses that assessment for learning, or formative assessment, has come in as an alternative to the more traditional summative assessment. It helps the teacher to monitor

students and also acts as a student-teacher conference, where the teacher provides feedback for students to improve their learning.

Tyson, one of the teacher participants, said that he used formative assessment to assess his own teaching. He found that formative strategies assisted him to get information about both his teaching techniques and his students' learning. Chapuis and Chapuis (2008) mirror this idea by arguing that it is important for teachers to note that formative assessment is not only to assess students' performance, but can also assist a teacher's own performance.

Teachers are "clearly the central characters in assessment for learning" (Earl, 2003, p. 24). They are the ones who have to create the classroom environment for formative assessment. For 'assessment for learning' to be effective, teachers must also assess the strategies that they use, because these can affect students' learning. Furthermore, when teachers, in particular, senior teachers understand these assessments and strategies and use them wisely, internal assessment can be very constructive.

In this study, the essential prior knowledge for this change is to do with assessment practices. This study's participants expressed their understanding of assessment and their concepts were consistent with the literature. However, the knowledge captured here was from the participants involved in this study only, not across the whole country. Thus, the "Storage and security", (2013) revealed that the 2012 examination results represented a serious decline. This article illustrates a perception that there is a limited understanding among Vanuatu's teachers about the types of assessment and its correct practices. This potential lack of understanding should have been checked by the MoE before the implementation of the change to ensure that the change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment process would be more effective. Therefore, this highlights the importance of the need to

validate any assumptions of prior knowledge before the commencement of an educational change. Thus, for future change to be effective, the checking for the presence of relevant prior knowledge must be seen as an essential part of the process.

## **5.4 Positive outlook**

People bring their judgments about the effectiveness, or otherwise, of past experiences of change to any new change proposal (Branson, 2010; Levin, 2008). Any expectation of an automatic positive commitment and attitude towards a proposed change is a false assumption. Rather, it must be realised that the people, and the relationships they have with each other and towards the type of change, are influential components of a successful implementation of a change (Bridges, 1995; Carnall, 2007; Credaro, 2006). Furthermore, the change strategy must begin by overcoming any lingering negative views from past changes and instil optimism about this new change (Carnall, 2007; Levin, 2008). The study revealed that some of Vanuatu's past educational changes were considered to have been not very successful. This was not an ideal starting point for the current remodelling of the English medium senior secondary assessment. The participants' views about their past and current experience of change are discussed below.

### **5.4.1 Previous change experiences**

All participants acknowledged that they had experienced change in various areas of the Vanuatu education system. This is consistent with the findings of other educational scholars, namely that change in education is ongoing (Waddell et al., 2000, Fullan, 1991; Puamau & Teasdale, 2005; Stiegelbauer, 1994). In this study, the participants' opinions were divided over the effectiveness of the changes they mentioned. A few of them talked about the two systems brought forth from the colonial days. Others gave their views on educational change to the curriculum, the rest

discussed changes to qualifications used by the Vanuatu education system. On the basis of these diverse views about past changes in Vanuatu education, it was noted that a significant number of the participants considered that some of these changes were not suitable for the Vanuatu context, and that they had not been well implemented.

Examples were the introduction of 'Top-up Schools' and then 'Centre Schools' (described in section 1.4). The Centre School, which is also known as Basic Education in Vanuatu, made allowance for children to stay in school until year eight (MoE, 2010). The gatekeeper, which was the year six examination that had been preventing students entering the next level, was phased out in 2004 (MoE, 1999; Government of Vanuatu, 2010). Earl (2013) also affirms that in this century assessment is seen as a local gatekeeper for the selection and sorting of students. The adoption of the Basic Education model into the Vanuatu education system is of some benefit to the nation as it gives all students the opportunity to be in school until year eight. However, it is still not a very good system, as there is still a gate keeper examination in year 8, and the current curriculum is not preparing students to face the real life after school in the context of Vanuatu (Niroa, 2004). This suggests that the search for educational direction in Vanuatu will continue (C. Robert, personal communication, October 29, 2012; Hindson, 1995), as change is a process and not an event (Fullan, 1991).

What follows are some examples from the participants of some of the changes that the teachers viewed as not having been successfully implemented in Vanuatu. According to Tari, the Top-up School appeared for a few years and was stopped, or rather changed to Centre School/Basic Education. Furthermore, though the participants had been aware that some of these changes did not suit the Vanuatu context, they had had no choice but to implement the changes because they were directed by the Ministry of Education. For instance, the Centre School was

implemented with very little preparation. Primary teachers were posted to take up teaching positions in year 7 and year 8 and felt that they were not capable of doing it, because they were to teach the same curriculum as a junior secondary year 7 and 8 teacher (J. Bong, personal communication, November 14, 2012). These teachers were given only a few weeks of training at the commencement of the Centre School programme (MoE, 2010). The programme continues today and primary trained teachers are expected to do their best and deliver quality junior secondary education. Though they have not received proper training, most of these teachers have implemented this and other changes that emerged, and have given the best they could to their students. However, there is a perception that, when the outcome is not as expected, it is the teachers who are highlighted as not performing their duties well, while little responsibility of this outcome is attributed to the Education system planners and policy makers, as exemplified by the following article:

**The examination results clearly indicate that the quality of education in Vanuatu is far below the expected level and this is not good enough.**

**The Government has to question its investment in the teachers because it is quite obvious that the investment in the teachers have not been put into effective practice, the concerned National Education Director said in Port Vila yesterday morning. (Ligo, 2011)**

This was published after the 2010 examination results and reflected a perception of the Centre School programme since its implementation in 2006. Though it may be argued that some teachers may not have done their best throughout the year, this is not grounds for a sweeping generalisation. Teachers need the educational authorities to connect with them and make them feel that they belong and are involved in the process

of change (Donaldson, 2006; Hargreaves, 1993). The generalisation may have been the result of some reports received by the authorities, but this could be avoided if a positive mechanism is practiced (Levin, 2008). This confirms the importance of building positive attitudes in stakeholders, especially teachers as implementers of most educational systemic change (Carnall, 2007; Hargreaves & Evans, 1997). This is essential to Vanuatu's future. Teachers need to resource themselves well and know what they are expected to be part of, in order to commit themselves fully (Carnall, 2007; Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2007; Levin, 2008; McEwan, 2005). Thus, the development of a positive outlook amongst the key participants, so as to ensure they each have a positive commitment and attitude, is essential in any change process.

#### **5.4.2 Attitudes towards nationalisation**

The focus of this study is the change to the Vanuatu's English medium senior secondary school assessment process. It examined the attitudes and feelings of the research participants towards this change. There were mixed feelings about the change, though the change itself was welcomed as it is the first time Vanuatu had developed its own senior secondary school qualification since the country gained independence 32 years ago.

The findings of this study revealed that as much as the 'nationalisation' change was welcomed, there was a fear of how well this change would be handled. The participants shared this view as VEAU was not really providing the services expected for the management of year 8 and year 10 assessments. Tyson, one of the teacher participants, elaborated on this idea:

**I am afraid about the nationalisation because already, our year 10 internal examination assessment this year has arrived very late... I don't know for the nationalisation, whether the marks will be moderated properly and will the marks be moderated in time?**

Here, Tyson is expressing his fear about the current change because though the change is a significant one, his experience of other prior changes had taught him that the MoE does not always plan and implement change effectively.

Tari, a head teacher, added that:

**The finance part of assessment for year 8 and 10 is already an issue which caused a few problems...The SPBEA offers attractive package for this kind of work, the writing up of the examinations and also the marking of the examination. It is really up to the Examination Unit now and the MoE to look into how this can be managed because I see already a lot of problems if the financial part to it cannot be met by the MoE or the Exams Unit.**

Tari viewed the change from an administrative viewpoint. The issue stated above is a critical one and can have a negative impact on the reputation of the body responsible for bringing about the change, as well as creating negative attitudes in stakeholders, especially, the teachers.

Moreover, the quotation below shows one way that the media reported the teachers' reactions regarding this issue:

**When will they pay us? ... The final marking of exams will be completed on Friday but teachers are uncertain over their payment. (Binihi, 2012).**

This reveals the fear expressed by most of the participants towards the proposed change. The VEAU must lead the change properly. Hargreaves (1993) affirms that teachers are the key to educational changes; having them involved in the decision making of the change process will contribute to a positive attitude and commitment towards the educational changes. If teachers do not like a change, it may be due to their limited

understanding of the change and this will affect the change implementation (Duke, 2004; Hargreaves, 1993). Carnall (2007) adds that, “if people understand what is to be achieved, why, how and by whom, this can help” (p. 4). So, having a positive commitment and attitude in teachers is important in an educational change for its effectiveness. Thus, any educational change process should include a commitment to building trust and getting positive engagement from the teachers’ right from the beginning.

## **5.5 Pre-implementation**

Pre-implementation is what is done before implementing the change or putting things into practice. Fullan (2007) calls this part or stage the ‘initiation of change’. This is where the agreement to make and adopt change is made. Duke (2004) has discussed the elements of a good design for educational change. The two elements that stood out for this study are the goal and the professional development. People who are involved or affected by the change need to know the goal and be clear about the vision for the change; and they need to know that professional training for this change will be provided to ensure they can face the change with confidence (Bennett, Crawford, & Richies, 1992; Duke, 2004; Fullan, 2001; Kent, 1979). Discussion based on the findings and in line with literature with regards to pre-implementation will be elaborated below.

### **5.5.1 Goal and Vision of Proposed change**

This study found that the process of this change was very similar to previous educational changes implemented in Vanuatu, where it was considered being more of trial and error with not much preparation being carried out.

The research study found that the pre-implementation process for this change was thought to be inadequate. The majority of the participants said

that a clear vision and goal for this change had not been made known to them as Terina said:

**So far we have not seen anything about nationalisation. Our head of school has not mention anything on the nationalisation for the teachers to look more into it to give them some ideas of what to be done once PSSC is nationalised.**

It appears that teachers are expected mostly to do as they are told without inquiry. This is an example of Hargreaves (1994) conviction in relation to why many educational changes are unsuccessful since political and administrative campaigns for educational change often overrule teachers' desire for change. The initial part of the nationalisation is currently happening and teachers as implementers are not fully aware of what needs to be done and where they are heading with this change. Tyson also said "the administration never talks about the goals and vision of this change".

The study found that all participants assumed that there must be a plan for this change but they had not seen it or had access to it. A document which looked like a plan or guide, outlining what needs to be done before 2013 was accessed by the researcher but it was dated 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012 and the initial stage of change began in 2011 (C. Croft, personal communication, December 10, 2012,). Participants had not seen this document.

It is agreed that awareness about the proposed change, its goal and vision, is vital at the initiation stage (Bennett et al., 1992; Duke, 2004; Fullan, 2007; Hargreaves, 1994; Kent, 1979). For this particular change, the participants considered that the pre-implementation stage was deficient.

### **5.5.2 Professional Development**

This study discovered that prior professional development, and ongoing support in the change process for this particular change, required some improvement. This was so not only for those within schools but also for the officials at the VEAU, who were managing the change. Some of the participants revealed how they had to find their own way to design tasks for IA. These participants were qualified; however, some support is needed especially for people at the start of their teaching career, and also refresher workshops for longer serving teachers would be of great help.

This finding contrasts with what the literature says about professional development in educational changes. Scholars suggest that professional development for a particular change must be done prior to implementation of change to make participants feel comfortable and confident in implementing the change (Branson, 2010; Bridges, 1995; Duke, 2004; Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves, & Shirley, 2009; Hiatt, 2003). The support by schools and MoE is necessary because teacher training institutions may not have included sufficient knowledge and skill development related to internal assessments in their training programmes. SPBEA, who monitored and managed the internal assessment and external assessment, noticed the need for professional development in assessment because it was not being included in teacher training colleges (Raivoce, 2008). According to most participants, internal assessments had been in use in Vanuatu for over two decades and the national teachers' training institution is required to train teachers to utilize formative assessment in the classroom. The Vanuatu National Curriculum Statement embraced the idea and it is hoped that this will be implemented in the revised teachers training curriculum (MoE, 2010). Although most of the teachers amongst the participants were qualified, they felt that they needed support as they believed that designing proper assessment tasks for students was very important. Heads of schools normally encourage

new entrants to the teaching profession to contact other schools for help as a support for these teachers. It is possible that the experience shared by the participants may be due to their feeling uncomfortable about asking other schools for information. It is also possible that other schools may not be very helpful in providing information. Also, new teachers may prefer to be taught or shown guidelines on how to design internal assessment tasks by teachers they know and can trust. Consulting other schools can be problematic for new entrant teachers and may lead to the late submission of internal assessment tasks for approval by principals and VEAU.

The study clearly demonstrated that prior professional development and on-going support is needed if large-scale change is to be effective. Professional development and on-going support to staff at all levels will build the capacity of the people involved in the change (Branson, 2010; Carnall, 2007) and help them to develop and apply new skills and knowledge (Dimmock, 2012; Fullan, 2005). It also keeps staff up to date with changes.

However, the participants revealed that professional development and on-going support is a concern in the Vanuatu education system due to financial constraints. If the MoE could support systemic change financially, changes like this assessment change would be more effective and the Vanuatu National Certificate in senior secondary schools would be recognised by other higher education institutions.

Participants were in favour of the English medium senior secondary schools assessment being changed. However, the traditional method and perceptions about leading change need to give way to more adaptable approaches to develop and maintain educational changes in Vanuatu. This was not really happening prior to the implementation of this change as participants revealed that they were only informed of the change in 2010 and the change began in 2011. In fact, a SPBEA report showed that the

plan was initiated by SPBEA in 2003 but Vanuatu shelved the proposal until it was too late to provide an effective lead-in time (E. Leon, personal communication, January 24, 2012; SPBEA, 2007). This explains why participants found the change to be similar to previous changes in terms of time constraints and limited resourcing in the management of the change process.

Careful pre-implementation is vital in a change process. Professional learning for personnel, the presentation of clear visions and goals of the change, an assessment of the change, and its problems are all part of the strategic planning which should be done in the pre-implementation stage of a change process (Fullan, 2007; Gross, 1979; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Kent, 1979). A lack of appropriately experienced or prepared personnel at the VEAU during the initial implementation period perhaps explains the poor pre-implementation stage of this change process as professional development should be a priority.

## **5.6 Balanced implementation strategy**

The provision of a balanced implementation plan is yet another important part of the change process. This is to do with attending equally to both the process and the people (Bridges, 1995; Carmall, 2007). Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) assert this by proposing the “Fourth Way” for leading educational change, which includes the responsibility for considering the needs of all the main stakeholders in the proposed education change (see chapter two). So, what is the difference between process and people? In this sub-section the views of Bridges (1995) will be used to shed some light on this question and, thereby, describe the importance of including a balanced implementation strategy as an essential component of not only this particular change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment, but also, of any future change within the Vanuatu educational system.

### 5.6.1 Transition

The participants involved in this study reveal that the transition phase and the planning of this change seemed to follow the similar trend to what was experienced in previous changes.

According to Bridges (1995), transition is the “psychological process people go through to come to terms with the new situation or change” (p. 3). The change is not the transition. Change is tangible and situational, which means it is the new site, the new boss, the new team roles, or the new policy. These are changes, but the transition is to do with the internal, the psychological, and the feelings that affect people involved in the change (Bridges, 1995; Hargreaves, 1994). Transition is to do with letting go, of accepting the need to end parts of current jobs or tasks and to engage with the new task or work so as to achieve a presumed better outcome. That is, transition begins with the personal feelings associated with the need to end something and will only end if the person is able to accept the new way and feel some sense of success and optimism about it.

Bridges (1995) points out that transition is more important than change. He stresses that if full transition does not occur, change will not work. This is because transition is to do with the individual or person. It is to do with people not the situation. If the person does not really understand what the change is all about, it is likely that the person will not let go psychologically and will resist the change, which may then contribute to the likely failure of the change (Bridges, 1995; Carnall, 2007; Leigh, 1988). For instance, when a couple have their first baby, they have to let go of their regular sleep, extra money and time alone- that is about accepting an end to a previous way of living and letting go. It is a new experience, it does not feel comfortable, but they have to find ways to adjust and move on. If they can adjust by following the advice from others, who have been through the same experience, or their family doctor, then the change (that

is, coping with a new baby) will be successful (Bridges, 1995). If the letting go is ignored, then the change may cause other problems in their home. This is why the proper management of the transition of the people involved in a change is very important for ensuring that successful change will occur.

With regards to this study, if the transition of the teachers and principals involved in the change was managed properly, the implementers of this change would be more confident about the change and they would not be as concerned and unsure as the study revealed them to be. They would let go psychologically, and face the change knowing that all stakeholders have the same goal and are making a new beginning together. Therefore, the appropriate management of the transition stage in a change is vital because it deals with people and it is the people who actually make the change happen.

### **5.6.2 Planning and Managing the Process**

The study showed that there was a lack of planning. The head of schools and teacher participants were quite concerned about the planning of this change, especially as it deals with the senior secondary school level which is the level closest to university or work for the students. Though one of the participants mentioned that there was an implementation plan for this change, most of the participants said that they had never seen one, although they agreed that one might exist. However, it is believed that the VEAU has some pressing planning and management issues (C. Croft, personal communication, December 10, 2012). Croft, who is the Technical Advisor to the VEAU, stressed that these issues were not new. They are: staffing and structure of VEAU; prescriptions, examiners, moderators; assessment and examining; information technology, processing examination marks, assessment; policy, planning, timelines.

The issues raised above imply an ongoing lack of planning for this educational change. According to SPBEA (2007), on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May, 2003, a Special Board Meeting in Nadi approved that “the Secretariat continues to administer PSSC for the next five years (2004–2008) while discussing with member countries the possibility of nationalising the qualification” (p. 2). In 2007, the Secretariat proposed to transfer some of the responsibilities to member countries due to the slow development of what was agreed upon in 2003. This confirms the lack of planning by Vanuatu as a member country and bears out Croft’s comment that there has been little serious or effective planning within the MoE towards the goal of nationalising senior examinations. Although the Vanuatu education system gives some evidence of limited planning of the change process, the data from this study suggests that such planning was not as effective as it needed to be.

According to the teacher participants, only teachers directly involved with internal assessments are fully aware of what is happening. Interestingly, most of the teacher participants received their information from SPBEA during their annual visit in 2010, and not through the channel of communication within the MoE. This shows that the teachers found external communication channels effective but that improvements could be made to the lines of communication used by the MoE through the VEAU.

The participants raised concerns about the management of the nationalisation of the year 12 assessments as it is a crucial change in the history of education in Vanuatu. The importance of this assessment is high as it prepares students for university. Therefore, VEAU has to carefully look after the process. Looking after the process involves looking after the people and not simply managing the process (Bridges, 1995; Carnall, 2007; Fullan, 2007; Levin, 2008). Also, it involves the need to manage the process well. Teachers and officials want to know what they will be required to do

to achieve the desired outcome (Hargreaves & Evans, 1997). Because of this, a process with no gaps is needed. That may mean that the VEAU will have to adopt a change process whereby the leader and its executive members will employ many more relevant people, so that these people will help others to transition through the change properly and come to accept it and personalize it (Carnall, 2007). This will improve the implementation of the change and bring outcomes that are achievable (Bridges, 1995). There are many strategies or models of change processes including those described by Kurt Lewin (1951), Peter Senge (1990), Michael Fullan (2007), Jeff Hiatt (2003), and Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley (2009) in chapter two. These are a few of the many scholars who have contributed to the literature on educational changes in the world and whose literature can provide closer guidance for how the VEAU can more ably manage educational changes.

Besides the strategies or models of suitable change processes, Fullan (2007) points out that leadership is at the heart of any initiation, implementation and institutionalisation of change. Thus, leadership is not about being in charge, it is about leading the people through the change. This means that leaders in a time of change have to know where they want to go, what they will use to get there, they must know about themselves and the change, and how to support the others who are involved in the change (Branson, 2010; Carnall, 2007). Therefore, there is no one definite way of leading a change as the leader must be able to respond to issues that emerge during the journey of change. The leader must know what he/she wants as the outcome of the change and so must be alert to solve issues that arise in order to achieve this desired outcome. This research revealed that there needs to be more effective leadership. The personnel in charge of managing this change must be able to lead the change by having a clear plan for the process and guiding it (Hall & Hord, 2011; Pounder, 2003), as well as being able to suitably address the issues raised by stakeholders

and school communities along the way. This will build up the necessary level of trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003) amongst the various stakeholders with the VEAU, which will lead to an effective adoption of the change.

## **5.7 Stakeholders involvement**

The involvement of stakeholders is vital in a change process (Fullan, 2005; Fullan, 2007; Kent, 1979). In this case the stakeholders referred to here are: parents, students, teachers, head of schools, and MoE officials. The study showed that parents were not part of the planning process for the change in the English medium senior secondary schools assessment or nationalisation. Information about the initial change, which was to do with internal assessment, was not even passed on to parents. However, parents provide financial assistance to senior secondary schools in Vanuatu. Fullan (2007) stresses this remarkable message: “The closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on child development and educational achievement” (p.189). This implies that parental involvement is a must in an educational change. Yet this study showed that at the time this research was undertaken, many parents were not aware of the change (although participants hoped they would be made aware of it later). It seemed that parents were not really regarded as important stakeholders when implementing this educational change, at least. This may be one of the factors which contributed to previous unsuccessful changes. Fullan (2007) points out that any change process is not linear as feedback is needed before the next stage of a change is commenced. The fact that parents had not been recognised as stakeholders revealed the urgent need to involve and inform them throughout all of the next stages of the change process.

Neither were the teachers from the participating schools fully involved in this change. Yet they are the implementers of and key to educational change. The findings showed that they were informed by external sources

and not by their internal MoE authorities. The quality of the students' learning is very much dependent on the quality of the teaching (Hargreaves, 1993), so teachers need to be involved to have a proper understanding and a positive influence (Levin, 2008) on students.

With regards to students, most of them are doing the assessment because they have to, but they may not really know how and where the assessment is being moderated or managed. Students also need to know about the change and its processes as they will be directly affected by it (Fullan, 2007; Kent, 1979). Teacher participants revealed that the students' knowledge about the how and where of the assessment is dependent on the subject teachers, but whether or not students understood their teacher's explanation is not known. Additionally, the participants assumed that more capable and aware students may informally share their views with their parents, but, this will not occur in all families. The process that has been revealed in this study is in contrast to change processes recommended in the literature. For instance, Fullan (2007) regards the role of the principal of school as being the gatekeeper or facilitator of change. Principals become the key agents to systemic change as they are the ones who need to take responsibility for ensuring that such information is passed on to everyone in the school community. However, this research revealed that the participating principal could have communicated the change process to their school communities more widely and effectively.

As far as MoE officials are concerned, their full involvement in any change process is essential. According to Saario (1979), officials and administrators become catalysts for change as they generate initiative in the system. For the officials, this change has been so rapid that it increased their workload. They worked longer hours to accomplish what was placed on their shoulders. On the other hand, they are resilient about it as they are committed to meeting the requirements of the change.

Professional development and sustainability of this assessment change must be dealt with properly in order for the change to be effective. The main stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, MoE officials, business partners) need to work together for the effectiveness of this change. Teachers should continue to commit themselves to providing feedback to students to help their learning (Deneen & Deneen, 2008; Wylie et al., 2012). Heads of schools must provide information, professional development and capacity building throughout their school community (Fullan, 2005; Levin, 2008). The MoE must continue to find funds to provide national training for teachers to keep them updated and to maintain collegiality within the system.

This study revealed a lack of awareness among stakeholders, particularly among parent, teachers and student stakeholders. This implies another contradictory message about the change processes in Vanuatu. Change processes need to involve all stakeholders' right from the start as argued by Fullan (2007), Duke (2004), Hargreaves and Shirley (2009), and Kent (1979). Thus, the authorities responsible for the Vanuatu educational changes and, in particular, this assessment change may need to improve the awareness amongst the stakeholders. In addition to the distribution of basic information to all stakeholders, what appears to be missing is an effective way for system leaders to listen and respond to any feedback in order to inform each stage of the change process. This is consistent with Gross (1979) and Levin (2008) findings that a feedback mechanism is very important in any change process to get views and beliefs of stakeholders.

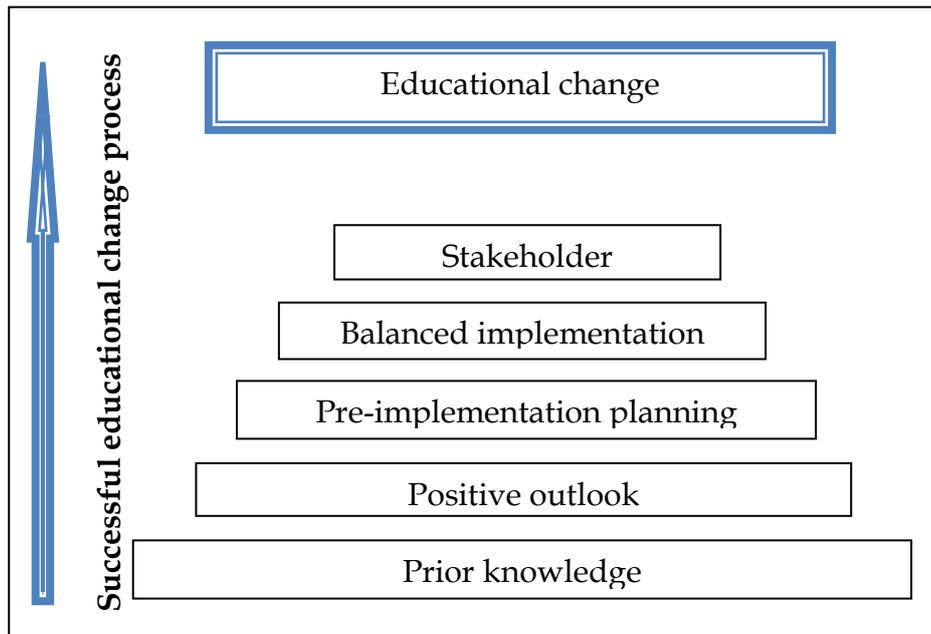
## **5.8 Summary**

This chapter has discussed what the participants reported about their experience, perceptions and expectations about educational change in Vanuatu. Particularly, it has focussed on the change in the English medium senior secondary school assessment. The study identified

potential benefits from the assessment change. In addition, the findings also highlight that these benefits are made possible and can be further improved if change in Vanuatu educational system follows a change process that is managed properly and if different types of beliefs and assumptions are taken into account. To date, the process of change has initiated some professional development for teachers, and the professional development activities have had a significantly positive effect on teacher understanding and capacity. Additionally, the change process has prompted the VEAU to develop an assessment policy. On the other hand, the study also showed that VEAU still lacks qualified personnel, which reflects poor long term planning and administration. Therefore, the development of human resources needs addressing in this educational change process.

Participants anticipated that the change process would eventually be successful. This could be seen through the expression of their aspirations as they believed that, due to the change process, the Vanuatu curriculum has been reformed and improved. Additionally, participants felt that it was of great importance that this new curriculum be reviewed on a set date and not be left for too long as has happened previously. Research on the Vanuatu curriculum and review of it can be recommended as a rich area for future academic study.

Furthermore, from the data collected, and its analysis as discussed throughout this chapter, the following educational change management framework for Vanuatu has been derived, (Figure 3). It should be noted that this framework not only includes each of the key components of a successful change process but lists these in a preferred sequential order from the bottom to the top.



**Figure 3: Proposed change management process framework for Vanuatu Educational system**

The next and concluding chapter provides a summary of the research described in this thesis and adds a brief discussion of some recommendations for the enhancement of educational change in Vanuatu along with recommendations for further research. This final chapter also describes the limitations of this research.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters outlined and discussed the findings of this study, exploring the views, experiences, and expectations of MoE officials, heads of schools and teachers regarding the process of changing English medium senior secondary school assessment in Vanuatu. The findings of this research study add new knowledge to the growing body of literature on educational change processes in developing countries with particular reference to how educational change is addressed and implemented in Vanuatu.

The research used the change in English medium senior secondary school assessment as an example of a change process management. This study will serve as a base for future studies, particularly for educational leaders and researchers from Vanuatu, and other Pacific Islanders, who are advocates for better educational change practices in their education systems.

### 6.2 Limitations of the current study

This research has some limitations. First, the study was qualitative and only involved a small sample of eight participants. As such, the perceptions and experiences expressed by these participants cannot be used to make broad generalizations, as it is not representative of a more general population. The second limitation of this study is that the participants who shared their perceptions and experiences all came from urban schools and centres. Participants from rural centres and provinces may or may not share similar perspectives. However, because of the geographical distribution and isolation of secondary schools and provincial education centres in Vanuatu and given the limited time available for completing this research, the study had to be restricted to one

urban centre. Thirdly, because of the scope of this study, students' and parents' perceptions and experiences were not investigated. Finally, the study was limited to interview and document analysis. There were no observations of classroom teaching and, hence, no attempt was made to validate the participant's perceptions of their assessment practices. In response to these limitations, considerations for further research are suggested below.

### **6.3 Suggestion for further research**

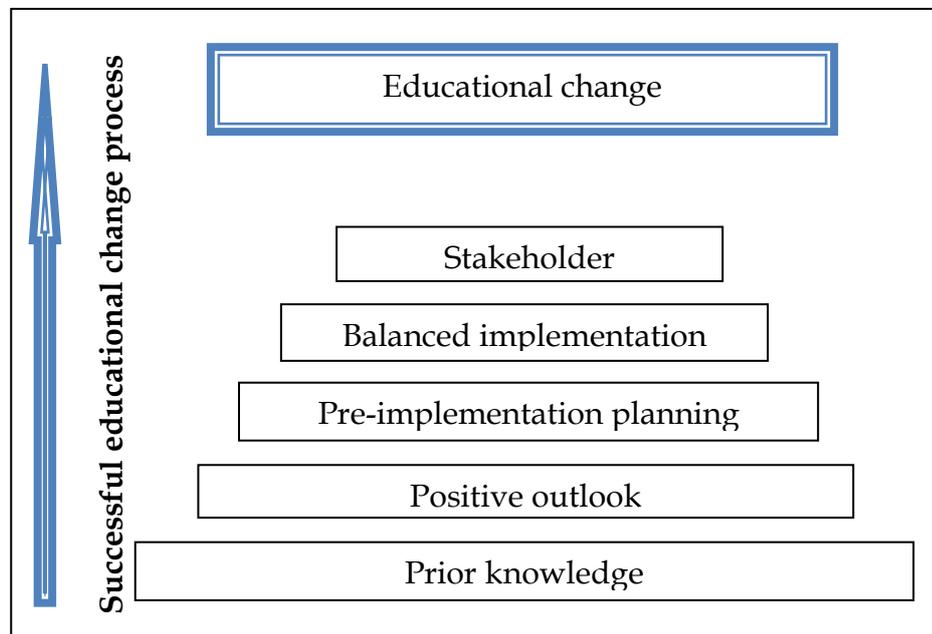
Following are considerations for further research in the area of educational change processes.

1. A study could gather data from a larger sample of participants, and possibly from other subject areas.
2. Research should be carried out in rural schools and other provincial centres as well, to investigate national perceptions of and experiences with the change management process in English medium senior secondary school assessment.
3. Investigating additional stakeholders' perceptions and experiences, including students and parents is recommended. This could reveal how well the change process of the English medium senior secondary school assessment has been communicated to those stakeholders and whether or not the change management process has been effective.
4. This particular study looked at change that involved teachers' understanding and assessment; however, assessment is a critical part of teaching and learning. Therefore, further research focusing on assessment only rather than as part of a more general study is recommended.

5. Research on the application of the change model in Figure 4 is recommended to examine its effectiveness in guiding the management of the change process.

## 6.4 Recommendations

The findings and analysis of this study, as well as the literature reviewed, give rise to a number of recommendations for future practice. These recommendations are best outlined as a potential framework for future change in Vanuatu's education system (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4: Proposed change management process framework for Vanuatu education system.**

This proposed framework for educational change management has evolved from the perceptions and experiences of the MoE officials, head of schools and teachers charged with implementing educational reforms and changes in institutions in Vanuatu. Because the sample for this study was small, generalization is not possible. However, its findings and analysis have been shown to reflect similar features to those outlined in the literature and, therefore, need to be considered in the change management process in the context of a developing country like Vanuatu. The following

explanation briefly describes each section of the framework in Figure 4 above:

### **Prior knowledge**

It is recommended that before a plan is implemented, teachers' prior knowledge about the change must be sought. This stage is important because it will help to decrease the gap between what is known and what is not known about the proposed change. Too often, assumptions are made and the validity of these assumptions needs to be checked throughout the country for effective change to occur.

### **Positive Outlook**

People bring their judgment of previous change to any new change proposal. It is recommended that these judgements are identified and addressed because they may influence the effectiveness of the proposal. It is important to ensure that most of those who will be implementing the change have a positive outlook about the proposal change before it starts.

### **Pre-implementation planning**

It is recommended that a clear vision and goals for the proposed change are made known to all key stakeholders at an early stage, and that professional development is available where necessary to help achieve the goals of the change.

### **Balanced implementation strategy**

It is also recommended that transition planning is effectively carried out to achieve a successful change. Transition planning is about attending to the psychological and subjective reactions of the people involved in the change. There must be a balance in the change process between managing

the strategy and caring for the people for change to be effective. Without a satisfactory transition process, change will not happen.

### **Stakeholder involvement**

Awareness and involvement of all key stakeholders is highly advisable as revealed by the participants and in the literature reviewed for this study. Stakeholders, especially teachers and parents, need to be an integral part of the change process from the beginning, as they can be effective in supporting and successfully implementing the change.

Apart from the framework proposed above, another recommendation would be for follow-up research to be conducted in five years' time to evaluate the effectiveness of the change to the English medium senior secondary school assessment.

## **6.5 Conclusions**

The research aimed to explore the perceptions and experiences of MoE officials, heads of schools and teachers of the educational change management processes, particularly, the English medium senior secondary school assessment change. It is hoped that the findings of this research will be useful to all stakeholders and in particular the MoE officials and the head of schools who are the usual initiators of change. To bring about change, in senior assessment there needs to be mutual understanding, hard work, continuous professional development, commitment, and dedication from all stakeholders. It is also hoped that the key findings from this study will be used to improve any future change processes in the Vanuatu educational system, and also to improve the understanding of internal assessment procedures.

The findings revealed that there were weaknesses in the change management process implemented in the educational system of Vanuatu.

Specifically, changes were based more on assumptions than on facts. Teachers as implementers were assumed to know a lot about the changes that occurred and were expected to implement them. On the same note, principals and MoE officials needed to provide continuous professional development for teachers and also for themselves. The findings also highlight the lack of a goal and a vision for this proposed change. The Government, therefore, needs to address these issues to effect any educational change in the future.

On the other hand, the findings also highlight a number of potential benefits for the proposed change. These are: the professional learning; the establishment of assessment policy; the amalgamation of French and English curricula; the nationalisation of senior secondary school certificate; and the increased usage of internal assessment. It is hoped that these benefits that have occurred due to the assessment change that was overseen by the Vanuatu Ministry of Education, through the VEAU, will continue to be monitored and where necessary, to be improved on to make this change an even more effective one.

This research revealed that most MoE officials, heads of schools, and teachers in urban areas in Vanuatu welcomed the change to the English medium senior secondary school assessment but felt it could have been implemented more effectively. Further research to establish how widely this view is held and to investigate the perceptions of other stakeholders is, therefore, recommended.

## REFERENCES

- Bailey, B. (2000). The impact of mandated change on teachers. In N. Basia & A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *The sharp edge of educational change: Teaching, leading and the realities of reform* (pp. 112-128). New York, NY: Routledge Falmer.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Bassey, M. (1999). *Case study research in educational settings*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.152.9570&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your research project: A guide for first time researchers in education, health and social science* (4th ed.). Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.
- Bell, J. (2010). *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education, health and social science* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Open University Press.
- Bennette, D. (2000). An agenda for change. In J. Dunford, R. Fawcett & D. Bennette (Eds.), *School leadership: National and international perspectives* (pp. 20-31). London, England: Kogan Page.
- Bennett, N., Crawford, M., & Riches, C. (1992). Managing educational change: The centrality of values and meanings. In N. Bennett, M. Crawford, & C. Riches (Eds.), *Managing change in education: Individual and organizational perspectives* (pp. 1-15). Retrieved from <http://books.google.co.nz>
- Bennis, W. (1969). *Organisational development: Its nature, origin and prospects*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Binihi, R. (2012, December 5). Exam markers demand their allowances. *Vanuatu Daily Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailypost.vu/content/exam-markers-demand-their-allowances>
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Botha, P. (2001). The qualitative interview as data-gathering technique: Strengths and weaknesses. *Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences*, 29, 13-19. Retrieved from <http://www.up.ac.za/saafecs/index.html>

- Bouma, G. D. (2000). *The research process* (4th ed.). Melbourne, Vic., Australia: Oxford University Press.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40. doi: 10.3316/QRJ0902027
- Branson, C. M. (2010). *Leading educational change wisely*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense.
- Bridges, W. (1995). *Managing transitions: Making the most of change*. London, England: Nicholas Brealey.
- Briggs, A. R. J., Coleman, M., & Morrison, M. (2012). *Research methods in educational leadership and management* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social research methods* (3rd ed.). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Bryk, A. S. & Schneider B. (2003). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership Journal*, 60(6), 40–45. Retrieved from [http://greatschoolsnow.com/Trust\\_in\\_Schools.pdf](http://greatschoolsnow.com/Trust_in_Schools.pdf)
- Bryk, A., Sebring, P., Kerbow, D., Rollow, S., & Easton, J. (1998). *Charting Chicago school reform: Democratic localism as a lever for change*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Burns, R. (2000). *Introduction to research methods*. (4th ed.). Melbourne, Vic., Australia: Longman.
- Bush, T. (2003). *Theories of educational leadership and management* (3rd ed.). London, England: Sage.
- Bush, T. (2008). *Leadership and management development in education*. London, England: Sage.
- Bush, T., & Glover, D. (2003). *School leadership: Concept and evidence*. Retrieved from [http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5119/2/dok217-eng-School\\_Leadership\\_Concepts\\_and\\_Evidence.pdf](http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5119/2/dok217-eng-School_Leadership_Concepts_and_Evidence.pdf)
- Carnall, C. (1999). *Managing change in organizations* (3rd ed.). London, England: Kogan Page.
- Carnall, C. (2007). *Managing change in organizations* (5th ed.). London, England: Pearson Education.
- Chappuis, S. & Chappuis, J. (2008). The best value in formative assessment. *Educational Leadership*, 65(4), 14–19. Retrieved from <http://region1rttt.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/file/view/The+Best+Value+in+Formative+Assessment.pdf>

- Charles, T. & Abbas, T. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioural sciences*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Cheng, Y.-C. (1996) *School effectiveness and school-based management: A mechanism for development*. London, England: Falmer Press.
- Clarke, S. (2005). *Formative assessment in the secondary classroom*. London England: Hodder Murray.
- Cohen, D., & Crabtree, B. (2006). *Qualitative Research Guidelines Project*. Retrieved from <http://www.qualres.org/HomeSemi-3629.html>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (5th ed.). London, England: Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). Abingdon, England: Routledge.
- Coleman, M. & Glover, D. (2010). *Educational leadership and management: Developing insights and skills*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.
- Connelly, M. (2008). *Kurt Lewin change management model*. Retrieved from: [http://www.change-management-coach.com/kurt\\_lewin.html](http://www.change-management-coach.com/kurt_lewin.html)
- Corcoran, T. B. (1995). *Helping teachers teach well: Transforming professional development*. Retrieved from [http://www.cpre.org/sites/default/files/policybrief/857\\_rb16.pdf](http://www.cpre.org/sites/default/files/policybrief/857_rb16.pdf)
- Cowie, B., & Bell, B. (1999). A model of formative assessment in science education. *Assessment in Education*, 6(1), 101-116.  
doi:10.1080/09695949993026
- Credaro, A. (2006). *Innovation and change in education*. Retrieved from <http://www.warriorlibrarian.com/LIBRARY/innovate.html>
- Creswell, J.W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Cuban, L. (1988). *The managerial imperative and the practice of leadership in schools*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). *Solving the dilemmas of teacher supply, demand, and standards: How we can ensure a competent, caring, and qualified teacher for every child*. Retrieved from <http://nctaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/supply-demand-standards.pdf>

- Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers: Why it matters and what leaders can do. *Educational Leadership*, 60(8), 6-13. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership.aspx>
- Day, C., Harris, A., Hadfield, M., Tolley, H., & Beresford, J. (2000) *Leading schools in times of change*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Delamont, S. (1992). *Field work in educational settings: Methods, pitfalls and perspectives*. London, England: Falmer Press.
- Deneen, C., & Deneen, J. (2008). *Assessing student achievement: A guide for teachers and administrators*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). *The landscape of qualitative research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage .
- Denzin, N., Lincoln, Y., & Giardina, M. (2006). Disciplining qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(6), 796-782. doi:10.1080/09518390600975990
- DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education*, 40(4), 314-321. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x
- Digest of Ministry of Education (2012). *Annual statistical report 2010-2011*. Port Vila, Vanuatu: Vanuatu Government.
- Dimmock, C. (2012). *Leadership, capacity building and school improvement: Concepts, themes and impact*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Donaldson, Jr. G. A. (2006). *Cultivating leadership in schools: Connecting people, purpose, and practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Donmeyer, R. (2006). Take my paradigm please! The legacy of Kuhn's construct in educational research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(1), 11-34. doi:10.1080/09518390500450177
- Duke, D. (2004). *The challenges of educational change*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Durrant, J. & Holden, G. (2006). *Teachers leading change: Doing research for school improvement*. London, England: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Earl, L. M. (2003). *Assessment as learning: Using classroom assessment to maximise student learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Earl, L. M. (2013). *Assessment as learning: Using classroom assessment to maximize student learning* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Education Act, 21 V.C.L (2001).

- Elmore, R. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*. Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute.
- Elmore, R. F. (2004). *School reform from the inside out: Policy, practice, and performance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Evans, M. (2010). *Changing for good: Sustaining school improvement*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin
- Everard, M., Morris, G., & Wilson, I. (2004). *Effective school management* (4th ed.). London, England: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Finch, B. (2005). Considering pedagogies for consent in research with children. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 11(1), 61-71.
- Firestone, W. & Martinez, M. (2009). Districts, teacher leaders, and distributed leadership. In K. Leithwood, B. Mascall & T. Strauss (Eds.), *Distributed leadership according to the evidence* (pp. 61- 86). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fullan, M. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change* (2nd ed.). London, England: Cassell.
- Fullan, M. (1993). Why teachers must become change agents. *Educational Leadership*, 50(6), 12-17. Retrieved from <http://msit.gsu.edu/charleswang/knowledge/documents/presentation/read5/added%20reading%205.pdf>
- Fullan, M. (1999). *Change forces: The sequel*. London, England: Falmer.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Fullan, M. (2005). *Leadership and sustainability: Systems thinkers in action*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Fullan, M. (2011). *Change leader: Learning to do what matters most*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. & Hargreaves, A. (1992). *What's worth fighting for in your school?* Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Fullan, M., Cuttress, C., & Kilcher, A. (2005). 8 forces for leaders of change. *Journal of Staff Development*, 26(4), 54-58, 64. Retrieved from <http://www.michaelfullan.com/media/13396067650.pdf>
- Gall, M. D., Gall, J.P., & Borg, W.R. (2007). *Educational research: An introduction* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson/ Allyn & Bacon.

- Garae, L. (2013, June 18). Eight year 13 graduate from Rensarie College. Retrieved from <http://www.dailypost.vu/content/eight-year-13-graduate-rensarie-college>
- Gay, L., R., Mills, G., E., & Airasian, P. (2006). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Gerson, E. M. (1998). Analysing interview data for the history of science. Paper presented for a conference on "Interviews in Writing the History of Recent Science", Standard University, Palo, Alto, California, CA. Retrieved from [http://tremont.typepad.com/technical\\_work/papers/Analyzing\\_historical\\_data.pdf](http://tremont.typepad.com/technical_work/papers/Analyzing_historical_data.pdf)
- Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Goddard, T. J. (2003). Leadership in the (post) modern era. In N. Bennett & L. Anderson (Eds.), *Rethinking educational leadership* (pp. 11-26). London, England: Sage.
- Government of Vanuatu. (2010). *Millennium development goals: 2010 report for Vanuatu*. Retrieved from <http://www.aisaid.gov.au/countries/pacific/vanuatu/Documents/vanuatu-mdg-report-2010.pdf>
- Gronn, P. (2003). Designing of leadership. In *The new work of educational leaders: Changing leadership practice in an era of school reform* (pp. 7-26). London, England: Paul Chapman
- Gross, N. (1979). Basic issues in the management of educational change efforts. In R. E. Herriott & N. Gross Eds.), *The dynamics of planned educational change* (pp. 20-46). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing Corporation
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 191-215). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and "ethically important moments" in research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(2), 261-280. Retrieved from [http://www.sagepub.com/isw5/overviews/pdfs/Guillemin\\_Article.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/isw5/overviews/pdfs/Guillemin_Article.pdf)
- Guthrie, J. W., & Schuermann, P. J. (2010). *Successful school leadership*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Hall, G. E. & Hord, S. M. (2011). *Implementing change: Patterns, principles, and potholes* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

- Hancock, D., R. & Algozzine, B. (2006). *Doing a case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Hargreaves, A. (1993). Collaboration: A key to leadership for quality in education. *The Practising Administrator*, 15(3), 16–18.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times: Teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Hargreaves, A., & Evans, R. (1997). *Beyond educational reform: Bringing teachers back in*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (1998). *What's worth fighting for out there?* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Hargreaves, A., & Reynolds, D. (1989). Decomprehensivization. In A. Hargreaves & D. Reynolds (Eds.), *Education policies: Controversies and critiques* (pp. 1-32). New York, NY: The Falmer Press.
- Hargreaves, A., & Shirley, D. (2009). *The fourth way: The inspiring future for educational change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Henly, J. (2005). The primary education improvement project of Vanuatu: A model for teacher development in the Pacific. *Directions: Journal of Educational Studies*, 27(2), 25-36. Retrieved from <http://www.directions.usp.ac.fj>
- Hewson, P. W. (1992). *Conceptual change in science teaching and teacher education*. Paper presented at a meeting on "Research and Curriculum Development in Science Teaching," under the auspices of the National Center for Educational Research, Documentation, and Assessment, Ministry for Education and Science, Madrid, Spain. Retrieved from <http://www.learner.org/workshops/lala2/support/hewson.pdf>
- Hiatt, J. (2003). *ADKAR: Simple, powerful, action oriented model for change*. Retrieved from <http://www.change-management-coach.com/adkar.html>
- Hindson, C. E. (1995). Educational planning in Vanuatu: An alternative analysis. *Comparative Education*, 31(3), 327-337.
- Hoffman, F. J., & Johnston, J. H. (2005). Professional development for principals, by principals. *Leadership*, 34(5), 16-19.
- Howitt, D., & Cramer, D. (2008). *Introduction to research methods in psychology* (2nd ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson Higher Education. Retrieved from: [http://wps.pearsoned.co.uk/ema\\_uk\\_he\\_howitt\\_resmethpsy\\_2/77/19811/5071812.cw/index.html](http://wps.pearsoned.co.uk/ema_uk_he_howitt_resmethpsy_2/77/19811/5071812.cw/index.html)

- Institute of Pacific Studies. (1980). *Vanuatu: Twenti wan tingting long team blong independens*. (1980). Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific, Institute of Pacific Studies.
- James, C., Connolly, M., Dunning, G., & Elliot, T. (2006). *How effective primary schools work*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Johnson, B. & Christensen, L. (2012). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kelly, C., & Peterson, K. D. (2007). The work of principals and their preparation: Addressing critical needs for the twenty-first century. In M. Fullan (Ed.), *The Jossey-bass reader on educational leadership* (pp. 351-402). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Kent, J. (1979). The management of educational change efforts in school systems. In R. E. Herriott & N. Gross (Eds.), *The dynamics of planned educational change* (pp. 239-257). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing.
- Kohlbacher, F. (2006). The use of qualitative content analysis in case study research. *Forum Qualitative Social Research*, 7(1), Article 21. Retrieved from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/75/153January%202006#g5>
- Koul, R. B. (2008) Educational research and ensuring quality standards. *E-Journal of All India Association for Educational Research*, 20(3). Retrieved from <http://www.aiaer.net/ejournal/vol20208/5.htm>
- LaBanca, F. (2010). Trustworthiness in qualitative research [Web log message]. Retrieved from <http://problemfinding.labanca.net/2010/05/24/trustworthiness-in-qualitative-research/>
- Lather, P. (2006). Paradigm proliferation as a good thing to think with: Teaching research in education as a wild profusion. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE)*, 19(1), 35-57. doi: 10.1080/09518390500450144
- Law, S., & Glover, D. (2000). *Educational leadership and learning: Practice, policy and research*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Leigh, A. (1988). *Effective change*. London, England: Institute of Personnel Management.
- Levin, B. (2008). *How to change 5000 schools: A practical and positive approach for leading change at every level*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Lewin, K. (1951). *Field theory in social science*. New York, NY: Harper

- Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., & Steinbach, R. (1999). *Changing leadership for changing times*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Leithwood, K., Bauer, S., & Riedlinger, B. (2006). Developing and sustaining school principals. In B. Davis (Ed.), *Sustaining and developing leaders* (pp. 120-145). London, England: Sage.
- Lick, D., Clauzet, K.-H., & Murphy, C.-U. (2013). *Schools can change: A step-by-step change creation system for building innovative schools and increasing student learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lieberman, A., Saxl, E. R., & Miles, M. B. (2007). Teacher leadership: Ideology and practice. In M. Fullan (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (2nd ed., pp. 403-420). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Ligo, G. (2011, January 3). Education quality a concern: Obed. *Vanuatu Daily Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailypost.vu/content/education-quality-concern-obed?page=2>
- Lumby, J. (1998). Understanding strategic change. In D. Middlewood & J. Lumby (Eds.), *Strategic management in schools and colleges* (pp. 191-203). London, England: Paul Chapman Publishing. Retrieved from Google books.
- Mansell, W., James, M., & the Assessment Reform Group. (2009). *Assessment in schools. Fit for purpose? A commentary by the Teaching and Learning Research Programme*. Retrieved from <http://www.tlrp.org/pub/documents/assessment.pdf>
- Marzano, R.-J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B.-A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- McEwan, E. K. (2005). *How to deal with teachers who are angry, troubled, exhausted, or just plain confused*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- McCallum, N. (2007). Professional development for principals, a way forward. *The Australian Educational Leader*, 13(3), 34-37.
- Memua, J. (2011). *The experiences, perceptions and expectations of teachers, students and parents of the Community High School Model in Solomon Islands: A Case Study* (Master's thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand). Retrieved from <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/5348>
- Menter, I., Elliot, D., Hulme, M., Lewin, J. & Lowden, K. (2011). *A guide to practitioner research in education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Merriam, S., B. (1998). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Meyer, C., (2001). A case in case study methodology. *Field Methods*. 13(4), 329-352.
- Miles, M. & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Ministry of Education. (1999). *Education master plan*. Port Vila, Vanuatu: Vanuatu Government.
- Ministry of Education. (2006). *Vanuatu education sector strategy plan*. Port Vila, Vanuatu: Vanuatu Government.
- Ministry of Education. (2009). *Vanuatu education road map*. Retrieved from <http://www.USAID.gov.au/countries/pacific/vanuatu/Documents/vanuatu-education-road-map-4dec-2009-final.pdf>
- Ministry of Education. (2010). *Vanuatu national curriculum statement: Working together for a better future*. Port Vila, Vanuatu: Curriculum Development Unit.
- Morrison, G. S. (2008). *Why assessment is important?* Retrieved October 10, 2012 from <http://www.education.com/reference/article/why-assessment-important/>
- Mukherji, P., & Albon, D. (2010). *Research methods in early childhood education: An introductory guide*. London, England: Sage.
- Mutch, C. (2005). *Doing educational research: A practitioner's guide to getting started*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER Press.
- Mwarakurmes, A. (2012). Teachers views of at-risk students in Vanuatu. In K. Sanga & J. Kidman (Eds.), *Harvesting ideas: Niu generation perspectives* (pp. 191-205). Suva Fiji: USP Press.
- Neill, J. (2006). *Analysis of professional literature: Class 6: Qualitative research I*. Retrieved from <http://www.wilderdom.com/OECourses/PROFLIT/Class6Qualitative1.htm>
- Niroa, J. (2004). Why we need to rethink Vanuatu education. In K. Sanga, J. Niroa, K. Matai, & L. Crowl (Eds.), *Re-thinking Vanuatu education together* (pp. 25-31). Port Vila, Vanuatu: Ministry of Education.
- Nirua, J-P. (2004). A mountain of opportunity and hope. In K. Sanga, J. Niroa, K. Matai, & L. Crowl (Eds.), *Re-thinking Vanuatu education together* (pp. 32-39). Port Vila, Vanuatu: Ministry of Education.
- Otsuka, S. (2006). Talanoa research: Culturally appropriate research design in Fiji. In *Proceedings of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) 2005 International Education Research Conference: Creative Dissent-Constructive Solutions* (pp. 1-18), Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved from <http://www.aare.edu.au/05pap/ots05506.pdf>

- Pardey, D. (2007). *Introducing leadership*. Oxford, England: Elsevier.
- Peck, J.-G., & Gregory, R.-J. (2005). A brief overview of the old New Hebrides. *Anthropologist*, 7(4), 269-282. Retrieved from <http://www.krepublishers.com/>
- Pounder, S. P. (2003). Employing transactional leadership to enhance the quality of management development instruction. *The Journal of Management Development*, 22(1), 6-13. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=880513&how=pdf>
- Presseisen, B. Z. (1995). *Critical issue: Building on prior knowledge and meaningful student contexts/cultures*. Retrieved May 3, 2013 from <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/learning/lr100.htm>
- Puamau, P., & Teasdale, B. (Eds.). (2005). *Principles and guidelines*. Pacific Education. Retrieved from the Pacific Archive of Digital Data for Learning and Education: <http://www.paddle.usp.ac.fj/>
- Raivoce, A -K. (2008). Director's report to the board for the period October 2007 to October 2008. *SPBEA home*. Retrieved from Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment: <http://www.spbea.org.fj/>
- Razzaq, J. (2012). *The management of educational change in Pakistan educational institutions* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Glasgow, UK). Retrieved from <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/3216/1/2012RazzaqPhD.pdf>
- Saario, T. T. (1979). Leadership and the change process: Preparing educational administrators. In R. E. Herriott & N. Gross (Eds.), *The dynamics of planned educational change* (pp. 328-350). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing.
- Sanga, K., & Niroa, J. (2004). First steps and small beginnings in Vanuatu education research. In K. Sanga, J. Niroa, K. Matai, & L. Crowl (Eds.), *Re-thinking Vanuatu education together* (pp. 13-24). Port Vila, Vanuatu: Ministry of Education.
- Schnelker, D. L. (2006). The student-as-bricoleur: Making sense of research paradigms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(1), 42-57.
- Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting qualitative data*. London, England: Sage.
- SPBEA (2007). Administration of PSSC and SPFSC: Self funding and cost effectiveness. *SPBEA home*. Retrieved from the Secretariat of the

- Pacific Board for Educational Assessment:  
<http://www.spbea.org.fj/>
- Spiro, J. (2011). *Leading change step-by-step: Tactics, tools, and tales*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stiegelbauer, S.M. (1994). *Change has changed: Implications for implementation of assessments from the organisational change literature: Educational Reform Studies*. New York, NY. Retrieved from  
<http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/EdReformStudies/SysReforms/stiegel1.html>
- Storage and security of examination files a big concern: Minister (2013, May 2). *Vanuatu Daily Post*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.dailypost.vu/content/storage-and-security-examination-files-big-concern-minister>
- Tomlinson, H. (2004). *Educational leadership: Personal growth for professional development*. London, England: Sage.
- Tolich, M., & Davidson, C. (2011). *An introduction to research methods: Getting started*. Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson.
- Usher, R. (1996). A critique of the neglected epistemological assumptions of educational research. In D. Scott & R. Usher (Eds.), *Understanding educational research* (pp. 9-32). London, England: Routledge.
- Van Trease, H. (1995). The colonial origin of Vanuatu politics. In H. Van Trease (Ed.), *Melanesian politics: Stael blong Vanuatu* (pp. 3-58). Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, USP.
- Vanuatu National Assessment Report*. (2010). Retrieved from the Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSnet) website:  
[http://www.sidsnet.org/msi\\_5/docs/nars/Pacific/Vanuatu-MSI-NAR2010.pdf](http://www.sidsnet.org/msi_5/docs/nars/Pacific/Vanuatu-MSI-NAR2010.pdf)
- Vanuatu National Statistics Office. (2009). *National Census Summary Report*. Retrieved September 23, 2012 from  
<http://www.spc.int/PRISM/nada/index.php/ddibrowser/57/download/132>
- Waddell, D., Cummings, T., & Worley, C. (2000). *Organisation development and change*. South Melbourne, Vic., Australia: Nelson Thomson Learning.
- Whiting, L., S. (2008). Semi-structured interviews: Guidance for novice researchers. *Nursing Standard*, 22(23), 35-40.
- Whippy, J. (2004). Financing education. In K. Sanga, J. Niroa, K. Matai, & L. Crowl (Eds.), *Re-thinking Vanuatu education together* (pp. 114-123). Port Vila, Vanuatu: Ministry of Education.

- Wiseman, P. P. (2010). *Strong schools, strong leaders: What matters most in times of change*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Witte, R. H. (2012). *Classroom assessment for teachers*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill
- Wylie, E.C., Gullickson, A.R., Cummings, K.E., Egelson, P.E., Noakes, L.A., Norman, K.M., & Veeder, S.A. (2012). *Improving formative assessment practice to empower student learning*. London, England: Sage.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yin, R. K. (2012). *Application of case study research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Approval from University of Waikato Ethics Committee

Dean's Office  
Faculty of Education  
*Te Kura Toi Tangata*  
The University of Waikato  
Private Bag 3105  
Hamilton, New Zealand

Phone +64 7 838 4500  
[www.waikato.ac.nz](http://www.waikato.ac.nz)



#### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Gayleen Harrison-Tarosa  
**cc:** Professor Chris Branson  
Professor Brian Findsen  
**From:** Dr Elmarie Kotzé  
Chairperson (Acting), Research Ethics Committee  
**Date:** 27 September 2012  
**Subject:** Supervised Postgraduate Research – Application for Ethical Approval (EDU087/12)

---

Thank you for submitting the amendments to your application for ethical approval for the research project:

**Exploring the process of change in English medium senior high school assessment in Vanuatu**

I am pleased to advise that your application has received ethical approval.

Please note that researchers are asked to consult with the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee in the first instance if any changes to the approved research design are proposed.

The Committee wishes you all the best with your research.



Dr Elmarie Kotzé  
Chairperson (Acting)  
Research Ethics Committee

## **Appendix 2: Letter of request to the Director of Education Services**

9B O'Donoghue Street  
Hillcrest  
Hamilton 3216  
New Zealand

October 14, 2012

The Director  
Education Services  
Ministry of Education  
Private Mail Bag  
Port Vila  
Vanuatu

Dear Sir,

### **RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN VANUATU**

My name is Gayleen Harrison Tarosa and I have been teaching as a secondary school teacher for the past 16 years. I am currently on study leave and now am undertaking a research project as a requirement for the completion of a Masters in Educational Leadership at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. My project is entitled: "Exploring the process of change to English medium senior secondary school assessment procedures in Vanuatu". My study is aimed at exploring the Ministry of Education (MOE) officials', principals' and teachers' experiences and perceptions of the change process associated with senior secondary school assessment so as to ensure that this change process is conducted in the most appropriate way.

I am humbly requesting your permission to allow me, as a researcher, to conduct my research involving four senior teachers and two principals of

two selected secondary schools, an officer in the Division of Policy and Planning, and an officer in the Examination and Assessment Unit of the Ministry of Education of Vanuatu.

I intend to carry out interviews on an individual basis using a semi-structured interview schedule. It is expected that these interviews will take up to one hour at the most. The interviews will be conducted during the participant's free time and not during their working hours. Furthermore, I would like to collect documents pertaining to the current changes to the English medium senior secondary school assessment procedures that may be in the school or MOE office. Such documents may include national policies, regulations, meeting minutes and resolutions. Any such documents will be reviewed as a potential source of additional information about this change process. Please note that full consent will be sought from the school administration or the person in charge of these documents where necessary.

I am planning to begin my data collection in late October 2012. The data collected will be kept confidential and participation in this research is completely voluntary. Pseudonyms will be used to disguise the identity of each participant and the schools will not be identified in the research findings.

Research findings will inform my thesis and one copy of my thesis will be submitted to your division. However, the participants will have full ownership of the raw data. Moreover, it should be noted that the findings might be used also in workshops, conference presentations and research articles. It is my hope that the research will be of benefit to the ongoing development of the change in senior secondary school assessment procedures in Vanuatu as well as clarifying how future educational change initiatives can be more effectively managed in Vanuatu.

Professor Christopher Branson, Department of Professional Studies, School of Education, University of Waikato and Frances Edwards, Senior Lecturer in Educational assessment, Department of Professional Studies, School of Education, University of Waikato, are supervising my research and can be contacted should further information be required.

Please find enclosed a copy of the University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Committee approval letter for the research, the participant information and consent, and a sample of the interview schedule.

Thanking you for considering my request. I will patiently await your response.

Yours faithfully,

**Gayleen Harrison TAROSA**

CC: Director General of Education.

CC: PEO Policy and Planning

CC: PEO Examination and Assessment

CC: SEO Examination and Assessment

### **Appendix 3: Invitation letter to participants**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Re: Invitation to participate in a research project**

My name is Gayleen Harrison Tarosa and I have been teaching as a secondary school teacher for the past 16 years. I am currently on study leave undertaking postgraduate study at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. As part of my master's thesis, I am required to complete a research project in educational leadership. I would like to invite you to be one of the participants in my intended research study.

The research will adhere strictly to the University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Regulations (2008). Your participation is completely voluntary such that, even if you agree to participate at the commencement of the research, you can still withdraw from the project within two weeks after your interview. During the third week after your interview, I will provide you with a copy of your interview transcript so that you can review it and propose deletions, changes or additions. You will have another one week to forward such changes to me. Please note that the information collected will be used in my thesis and will be lodged in the Australian Digital Thesis (ADT) database. In addition, it may also be used in workshops, conference presentations and research articles. Furthermore, during the data analysis and discussion processes, I will endeavour to use major themes to summarize your data rather than using your individual responses or transcript excerpts so as to maintain your confidentiality.

Before you sign the consent form below, please read the relevant information about the study. If you feel comfortable with taking part in this study, please sign the consent form as confirmation that you have read and understood the research title, the research objective, the rationale and benefits, the areas that you will be involved in during the study, and the associated ethical principles. Please note that the Vanuatu Director of Education Services and the University Of Waikato Faculty Of Education Human Research Ethics Committee have given permission for this research to proceed.

## **Appendix 4A: Participant Information sheet for Principals**

*Title of Project:* “Exploring the process of change to English medium senior secondary school assessment procedures in Vanuatu”

### *Research Objective*

To investigate the perspectives, and experiences of MOE officials, principals and teachers regarding the educational change strategy used to nationalise the senior student assessment procedures/management in English medium secondary schools in Vanuatu.

### *Information about the Study*

Currently, in Vanuatu, there are proposed changes in how the senior secondary school assessment procedures are to be conducted and managed. Reflecting on research literature in relation to past educational changes it can be seen that any well-intentioned change can easily become problematic and, ultimately, unsuccessful unless it is managed very carefully. Hence, this literature suggests ways in how to lead educational change so that it can be made more effective and successful. It is for this reason that this research study will investigate the change process that is being used to nationalise the senior student assessment procedures in Vanuatu and to compare this with the guidance provided by this literature. In this way, this research will add knowledge and understanding about the current change process and its findings may provide recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of not only this particular change process but also any future educational change initiatives in Vanuatu.

### *Areas that you will be involved in the Study if you agree to participate*

As part of the data collection process, you will be involved in a semi-structured interview. You will be interviewed on individual basis. Interviews will take up to one hour at the most. The interviews are planned to be conducted during your free times. In the semi-structured interview, you will be asked some questions in relation to your experiences of the changes to the senior student assessments procedures. During this semi-structured interview, I will tape-record and later transcribe what you say. During the third week after your interview, you

will have an opportunity to delete, add or change the transcribed data collated from your interview.

This letter, therefore, serves to seek your full and voluntary permission to be interviewed and also seeks your permission to identify or provide copies of any policy documents that you may have in your office or archive, which you judge to be of relevance to more fully understanding the process of this change. Such documents would be public documents such as national and provincial government policies or any other documents related to the subject. These may include policies, letters, curriculum materials, anecdotes, memoranda, agenda, meeting minutes, written report on the subject, progress reports and newspaper clippings that might have appeared in the print media.

During the entire research process you, as a research participant, and your school will be respected and protected as much as possible. This means that your name, and that of your school, will not be mentioned in the thesis but rather a pseudonym will be used, instead. When the study is completed, one copy of a hardbound thesis will be sent to the Director of Educational Services as part of the ethical research process.

## **Appendix 4B: Participant Information sheet for Teachers**

*Title of Project:* “Exploring the process of change to English medium senior secondary school assessment procedures in Vanuatu”

### *Research Objective*

To investigate the perspectives, experiences, and expectations of MOE officials, principals and teachers regarding the educational change strategy used to nationalise the senior student assessment procedures in English medium secondary schools in Vanuatu.

### *Information about the Study*

Currently, in Vanuatu, there are proposed changes in how the senior secondary school assessment procedures are to be conducted and managed. Reflecting on research literature in relation to past educational changes it can be seen that any well-intentioned change can easily become problematic and, ultimately, unsuccessful unless it is managed very carefully. Hence, this literature suggests ways in how to lead educational change so that it can be made more effective and successful. It is for this reason that this research study will investigate the change process that is being used to nationalise the senior student assessment procedures in Vanuatu and to compare this with the guidance provided by this literature. In this way, this research will add knowledge and understanding about the current change process and its findings may provide recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of not only this particular change process but also any future educational change initiatives in Vanuatu.

### *Areas that you will be involved in the Study if you agree to participate*

As part of the data collection process, you will be involved in a semi-structured interview. You will be interviewed on individual basis. Interviews will take up to one hour at the most. The interviews will be conducted during your free times. In the semi-structured interview, you will be asked some questions in relation to your experiences of the changes to the senior student assessments procedures. During this semi-structured interview, I will tape-record and later transcribe what you say. During the third week after your interview, you will have an opportunity to delete, add or change the transcribed data collated from your interview.

This letter, therefore, serves to seek your full and voluntary permission to be interviewed. During the entire research process you, as a research participant, and your school will be respected and protected as much as possible. This means that your name, and that of your school, will not be mentioned in the thesis but rather a pseudonym will be used, instead.

## **Appendix 4C: Participant Information sheet for MOE Officials**

*Title of Project:* “Exploring the process of change to English medium senior secondary school assessment procedures in Vanuatu”

### *Research Objective*

To investigate the perspectives, and experiences of MOE officials, principals and teachers regarding the educational change strategy used to nationalise the senior student assessment procedures in English medium secondary schools in Vanuatu.

### *Information about the Study*

Currently, in Vanuatu, there are proposed changes in how the senior secondary school assessment procedures are to be conducted and managed. Reflecting on research literature in relation to past educational changes it can be seen that any well-intentioned change can easily become problematic and, ultimately, unsuccessful unless it is managed very carefully. Hence, this literature suggests ways in how to lead educational change so that it can be made more effective and successful. It is for this reason that this research study will investigate the change process that is being used to nationalise the senior student assessment procedures in Vanuatu and to compare this with the guidance provided by this literature. In this way, this research will add knowledge and understanding about the current change process and its findings may provide recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of not only this particular change process but also any future educational change initiatives in Vanuatu.

### *Areas that you will be involved in the Study if you agree to participate*

As part of the data collection process, you will be involved in a semi-structured interview. You will be interviewed on individual basis. Interviews will take up to one hour at the most. The interviews are planned to be conducted during your free times. In the semi-structured interview, you will be asked some questions in relation to your experiences of the changes to the senior student assessments procedures. During this semi-structured interview, I will tape-record and later transcribe what you say. During the third week after your interview, you

will have an opportunity to delete, add or change the transcribed data collated from your interview.

This letter, therefore, serves to seek your full and voluntary permission to be interviewed and also seeks your permission to identify or provide copies of any policy documents that you may have in your office or archive, which is of relevance to more fully understanding the process of this change. Such documents would be public documents such as national and provincial government policies or any other documents related to the subject. These may include policies, letters, curriculum materials, anecdotes, memoranda, agenda, meeting minutes, written report on the subject, progress reports and newspaper clippings that might have appeared in the print media.

During the entire research process you, as a research participant, and your Ministerial Department will be respected and protected as much as possible. This means that your name, and that of your Ministerial Department, will not be mentioned in the thesis but rather a pseudonym will be used, instead. When the study is completed, one copy of a hardbound thesis will be sent to the Director of Educational Services as part of the ethical research process.

## Appendix 5A: Consent form for Principals and Teachers

Dear Gayleen

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*please print your name*)  
of \_\_\_\_\_ (*name of school*), in Vanuatu have read and  
understood:

- the information about this study provided by the researcher.
- the nature of the research project and have agreed to participate as requested.
- that even if I have initially agreed to take part in the study, I can withdraw consent but until up to the time the interview transcript is approved.
- that taking part in this study is voluntary.
- that my identity and that of my school will be kept anonymous and any information provided by me will be treated as confidential.
- that all my data will be kept confidential and only be used as required above (publication of thesis, conferences and articles).

**Signature:** .....

**Position:** .....

**Date:** .....

*End of consent form*

## Appendix 5B: Consent form for MOE Officials

Dear Gayleen

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (please print your name) of  
\_\_\_\_\_, (name of Department/Sector) in Vanuatu  
have read and understood:

- the information about this study provided by the researcher.
- the nature of the research project and have agreed to participate as requested.
- that even if I have initially agreed to take part in the study, I can withdraw consent but until up to the time the interview transcript is approved.
- that taking part in this study is voluntary.
- that my identity will be kept anonymous and any information provided by me will be treated as confidential.
- that all my data will be kept confidential and only be used as required above (publication of thesis, conferences and articles).

**Signature:** .....

**Position:** .....

**Date:** .....

*End of consent form*

## **Appendix 6A: Interview Schedule for Principals**

### Background information and Experience on Educational Changes in Vanuatu

1. Can you tell me briefly about your teacher training and your teaching career?
2. Can you comment upon some changes that had taken place in Vanuatu education system since we gained political independence in 1980?
3. In your opinion, were they successful?
4. Why do you think they were/were not successful?

### Principals Perspectives on Student Assessment

1. Describe what you understand about student senior assessment? Summative? Formative?
  - i. Do all year 12 teachers at your school have to design the formative and summative assessments?
  - ii. Do they train to design those assessments?
  - iii. Who provides the training for them?
2. What support does your management give to your senior secondary school teachers to enhance their teaching and learning?
3. Describe the outcome of this support on students' learning.
4. How would you implement this support in the future?

### Principals Perspectives, experiences, and expectations on the change of student assessment management

1. What changes have you experienced with respect to assessments recently?
2. Describe the initial process of the change to the senior secondary school assessment as far as the communication to school community (teachers, parents and students) is concerned.
3. How did they respond to this change?
4. Describe the planning process of this change.
  - i. Was there a written plan for this change? Who developed this plan?
  - ii. How did the plan address the strategy?

- iii. How did it address people's issues with the change?
  - iv. What support or resources did you have to implement the change?
- 
- 5. What information were you given by your authority about this change, the goals of the change and the change process?
  - 6. How did you identify the change agents, leaders of this change? Were they asked or appointed? Describe your role in this change.
  - 7. What are your feelings about this change process and the future change process?

## **Appendix 6B: Interview Schedule for MOE Officials**

### Background information and Experience on Educational Changes in Vanuatu

1. Can you tell me briefly about your tertiary training and your career?
2. Can you comment upon some changes that had taken place in Vanuatu education system since we gained political independence in 1980?
3. In your opinion, were they successful?
4. Why do you think they were/were not successful?

### MOE Officials Perspectives on Student Assessment

1. Describe what you understand about student assessment? Summative? Formative?
2. What support does your management/authority give to schools to enhance their teaching and learning with respect to assessment?
3. Describe the outcome of this support on students learning.
4. How would you implement this support in the future?

### MOE Officials Perspectives, Experiences and Expectations on the change of Assessment Management

1. What changes have you experienced in regards to assessment?
2. Describe the initial process of the change to the senior secondary school assessment as far as the communication to school community (teachers, parents and students) is concerned.
3. How did they respond to this change?
4. Describe the planning process of the change to senior secondary school assessment in English medium schools.

- i. Was there a written plan for this change? Who developed this plan?
  - ii. How did the plan address the strategy?
  - iii. How did it address people's issues with the change?
  - iv. Were there changes made to your systems and structures to accommodate the change process?
5. What information were you given by your management about this change, the goals of the change and the change process?
  6. Describe the communication to stakeholders (principals, teachers, parents and students).
  7. Describe how you experienced the change. What is your role?
  8. How did you identify the change agents, leaders of this change? Were they asked or appointed?
  9. What are your feelings about this change process and the change in the future?

## **Appendix 6C: Interview Schedule for Teachers**

### Background information and Experience on Educational Changes in Vanuatu

1. Can you tell me briefly about your teacher training and your career?
2. Can you comment upon some changes that had taken place in Vanuatu education system since we gained political independence in 1980?
3. In your opinion, were they successful?
4. Why do you think they were/were not successful?

### Teachers' Perspectives on Students' Assessment

1. Describe what you understand about senior student assessment? Summative? Formative?
2. Briefly describe any training either formally or informally to assist you with developing the formative and summative assessments? How do you manage to prepare your formative and summative internal assessments?

### Teachers Perspectives, Experience, and Expectations on the change of Student Assessment Management

1. What changes have you experienced with respect to assessments? What were these changes like for you?
2. Describe the initial process of the change to the senior secondary school assessment as far as the communication to school community (teachers, parents and students) is concerned.
3. Describe the planning process of this change.
  - i. Was there a written plan for this change? Who developed this plan?

- ii. How did the plan address the strategy?
- iii. How did it address people's issues with the change?
- iv. What support or resources did you have to implement the change?
- 4. What information were you given by your management about this change, the goals of the change and the change process?
- 5. Describe the change your subject is experiencing
- 6. Describe your role in this change.
- 7. What are your feelings about this change process and the future change process?