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**THE PRINCIPAL AS LEARNER: PERCEPTIONS, BELIEFS
AND EXPERIENCES OF NINETEEN NEW ZEALAND
PRINCIPALS**

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree
at the
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by

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ABSTRACT

The research began with a personal question about how one learnt educational management. The research participants consisted of 19 principals who were selected on the basis of distribution between primary, secondary, male and female. Two questions guided the research. How did these principals perceive that they learnt to be principals? How did they perceive that their learning impacted on their practice? A self-study paralleled the study of the principals, as a study of an educational manager who was not a principal.

The qualitative methodology applied in the study was grounded theory. The methodology and the retrospective, biographical nature of the study through interview, meant that the research was phenomenological and interpretative. The main source of raw data was the transcripts of interviews, documents and literature.

These principals perceived that their critical learning related to educational management was learning of attitudes and values as well as knowledge and skills. This learning could be traced in the first instance to family and upbringing, to their own education and their careers in teaching and middle management. Because this learning was the foundation on which their learning as principals, was based, I called this foundational learning. The research indicated that foundational learning influenced the nature of the principalship.

The learning of principals after appointment was conceptualised as experiential and intentional. Experiential learning occurred in the contexts of initiation, dealing with crises and problems, routine management, managing change, taking part in specific events, and through the process of being a principal for an extended period. Experiential learning appeared to consist of two main types, situational and emergent. The latter comprised new learning created by learning over time from a variety of experiences. Intentional learning aimed to meet learning needs and included all the deliberate formal and informal learning activities such as gaining qualifications, attending courses and conferences, visiting other institutions and reading professional literature. Barriers and limitations to learning constituted another relevant aspect of principals' learning.

The principals perceived that their foundational learning had a major impact on practice as the source of values, attitudes, systemic knowledge of educational management and management skills. They perceived that their experiential learning had the most direct and significant impact on their practice because it was most likely to produce practical and relevant learning. Intentional learning had a subsidiary function, supporting and growing experiential learning. In this way, intentional learning impacted on practice. Personal, systemic and external learning barriers and limitations appeared to impact on practice in idiosyncratic ways.

Foundational, experiential and intentional learning was cumulative, contextualised within particular schools and situations and inter-related through impact on practice. Consequently each principal's story was different and unique. I concluded that each principal was a unique product of learning, accumulated over a life time and developed within schools, each of which represented a unique environment. As a result, each particular combination of principal and school represented a unique configuration in terms of learning to be and being a principal. The self-study supported these conclusions. On the basis of the findings of the research, I drew out a number of professional development implications. If heeded, the professional development implications could reorient educational management education by focusing on the unique configuration of principal as sum of foundational, experiential and intentional learning, and his or her particular school or organisation as a particularised environment of educational problems. These problems may need to be defined uniquely to be resolved.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Purposes Of The Study

The main purpose of the study was to understand better how educational managers, especially principals, learn their roles. These roles involve technical management, educational and professional leadership (Schön, 1987; Stewart & Prebble, 1993), moral leadership (Duignan, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1991a) and legal accountability under the Education Act of 1989. The principal's job is described by the Education Review Office (ERO) (1996b), as being both "complex and important" (p. 29). The job is also described by many researchers (Grady, Macpherson & Mulford, 1995; Southworth, 1995; Thody, 1996), such as Alcorn (1990) as "characterised by ambiguity, dilemmas and contradictions" (p.7). The problems of educational management, which I discerned in my own practice and in the performance of some principals, challenged and intrigued me resulting in this study. I aimed to identify the salient points of the learning of a number of principals by exploring their reflections and memories of learning experiences. I wanted to contribute to the body of qualitative knowledge available on principalship by gaining a better understanding of principals' experiences of learning principalship, and thereby being in a position to assist principals to understand themselves as principals and learners and, as a result, perhaps experience enhanced success in parts of this challenging job.

Furthermore, I aimed to assist providers of professional development to increase their capacity to support principals in solving their problems. The Education Review Office Reports (1995; 1996b) strongly encourage principal training. One of the Reports, *Professional Leadership in Primary Schools* (1996b), is very specific about the responsibilities of providers, stating that providers should deliver high quality training that is informed by research. I intended that this research would make a contribution to that purpose.

The Research Context: A Personal Perspective

Background

Using one's own experience is a common and acceptable source of problem identification in research, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990) and others (Anderson, 1990; Bennis, 1991; Schön, 1991). Furthermore the background to this research is described here in some detail to establish my predisposition and explain my personal involvement in the topic. My background is as a provider of educational management training and education. I have no practical experience as a principal. My interest in educational management developed from the late 1970s when the Department of Education began to promote training for educational managers. I became involved in that training, as a learner myself and simultaneously as a provider of training courses for middle managers and principals. My growing interest and involvement in educational management prompted my entry into university study of educational management that provided a blend of academic theory and practical skill development. This study conducted over a decade, gave me three inestimable benefits; first, knowledge, skills and understanding of educational management issues over a broad spectrum; second, a network of colleagues outside the familiar secondary area - primary principals, early childhood education head teachers and other tertiary providers; and third, and most importantly, a measure of confidence in educational management practice and theory at a time of major change. Study for the Masters of Educational Administration degree co-incided with three major developments that called for a great deal of practical learning. First, I moved into working full-time as an educational manager, namely as the director of the postgraduate unit in my tertiary institution. Second, the institution began the first of a number of major restructurings that profoundly altered the structure of the institution, interpersonal relationships and the philosophical basis on which the institution operated. Third, national reform of educational administration (Lange, 1988) began, which had major implications for the continuing education unit as a provider of training and education for principals. Over the next six years I was learning and practising the theory myself, and at the same time, teaching educational management and providing courses for principals who were learning to manage Boards of Trustees in the new environment.

My education continued informally over the period from 1990 to 1995 through professional development. As a member of the management team of the institution, I participated in management team training programmes within my institution and attended

many courses provided for educational managers from the early childhood education, primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors. I had access to a good library, well stocked with books and journals on educational management. In short, I had ready access to theory. But how did the theory work in practice?

Theory In Practice

Managing any new job is likely to be demanding, but managing a new job in a period of major change is particularly challenging (Ellis, 1996; Fullan, 1991; Wylie, 1995b). In the first years of reform I often felt under-resourced to handle the scope of the job; beleaguered by pressures to complete too much at once. Like Bennis (1991) I felt a "victim of a vast ... unconscious conspiracy to prevent me from doing anything whatever to change the ... status quo" (p.13). For example, one of the issues in 1989-1990 was how to handle the deep-seated anger that the reforms generated among some principals and communities. Anger was often directed at front line Government-appointed providers of the training. After confronting an angry group of principals or parents, I always felt a sense of guilt and responsibility, as if, had I presented the issues differently, I could have assuaged the anger. In research, much work remains to be done in the area of the nature, causes and consequences of emotionality in the change process (Fullan, 1997; Hargreaves, 1997). For my part, being on the receiving end of principals' or community anger, I felt that it was my learning and experience of educational management that had been inadequate. This is partly how this study was initiated.

Within two years, many of the problems disappeared as schools settled into the new ways. The postgraduate unit that I managed expanded greatly in terms of full-time administrative staffing, employment of professional staffing, budget, reconstruction of buildings and provision of training and professional development through qualifications. Management issues of being a provider were related then to growth, consolidation and policy orientation.

One problem that did exist in the period from 1991-1995 arose out of a measure of internal conflict. This is described here as background to the research and to indicate an important issue relating to appraisal and self-reflection, to which I return in Chapter Five. The source of the conflict between the professional staff, who provided the courses, and the management of the postgraduate unit, was competition for limited resources. Management was intent on following the new market driven philosophy of providing high quality programmes to meet client needs. This policy was adopted as a result of my prior learning of providing for the learning needs of principals and teachers, and the market

driven philosophy of my newly appointed assistant. I saw the client-focused approach as essential for successful management of course provision for principals and teachers. However, the new client-centred direction which solved problems with clients, created problems with some of the professional providers of courses. They saw the new direction as a loss of control of their professional domain - which it was. The result was a measure of conflict between some professionals who saw the postgraduate unit as an administrative body whose function was to carry out the wishes of the professionals as course providers, and the managers of the unit who saw themselves as managers with responsibility for direction of policy. Before these management issues could be resolved, history, in the shape of a second major re-structuring of the entire institution, overtook the postgraduate unit which ceased to exist in its previous form. At that point I left the institution to pursue this study.

The Personal Catalyst For The Research

As I reflected on my educational management experience, I realised that I had experienced a few management problems, associated with what appeared, in hindsight, to be basic educational management issues of communication and interpersonal relations and therefore problems for me to resolve. At the time, however, they appeared to be issues to do with others' resistance to change and largely outside my control. Reflecting on this management problem from a distance, led me to question more deeply the learning process in educational management. I questioned why some difficulties that I could perceive clearly from the safety, wisdom and clarity of hindsight were not seen in that light at the time. The literature on educational management to which I had access was comprehensive and professional development opportunities abounded throughout the period. Consequently in such a learning climate, I wondered that there should be any major discrepancy between availability of opportunity to learn, general willingness to learn and actual learning. It seemed an issue worth pursuing in the form of a self-study.

While this investigation is not principally about my own personal experience of educational management, that experience gave birth to questions about learning to be an educational manager. That experience is, therefore, the background, and, to some extent, a reference point for the investigation into the learning of school principals. As the research proceeded, my experience of learning educational management provided insights into learning in this field. The principals' learning experiences helped me to analyse and understand my personal experience of learning. The self-study was an extension of the research problem rather than a comparative study.

The Research Context: Principals' Learning

As a provider of educational management courses over many years, I was aware that a problem existed for some principals. In short, some principals appeared to attend many courses and then leave their schools as apparently unsuccessful principals. Who or what caused this failure to learn? The principal-as-learner? The provider? The environment? The environment for principals is now described as background for this study.

The Learning Environment For Principals Since 1988

As in my own case, the reform of education created the learning environment for principals after 1988. Recommendations for reform of administration of education stretched back to 1962 when the *Report of the Commission on Education (The Currie Report)* was published (Barrington, 1990, 1995; Bennett, 1994), but this advice went largely unheeded until 1988. In that year, the Labour Government commissioned a review and the result, *Administering for excellence: Report of the Taskforce to Review Educational Administration (The Picot Report)* (1988), recommended sweeping reforms in the administration of schools. The Picot Report gave rise to *Tomorrow's Schools: The Reform of Education in New Zealand* (Lange, 1988), a policy document drawn up by David Lange, Labour Prime Minister and Minister of Education. In her study, Bennett (1994) found that this policy statement went well beyond the Picot Report and in her words "became a means of legitimating overt and direct political influence in education" (p. 37). The major changes are outlined briefly.

The reforms abolished the Education Department and the local Education Boards, replacing them by a policy Ministry and locally elected Boards of Trustees to govern schools. Partnership with the community was stressed. The managerial roles of the principal and the governance roles of the Board were written into the legislation. An Education Review Office was established to monitor schools and ensure accountability. The Government retained control of key aspects of managing schools; initially through control of the Charters and funding, and later through requirements related to curriculum and performance management. The main thrust of the reforms was enshrined in the Education Act of 1989. The school's Board was given "complete discretion to control the management of the school as it thinks fit" (Part. VII, Section 75, p. 46) while the principal was given the role of "the Board's chief executive in relation to the school's control and management." (Part VII, Section 76, p. 46). The principal had responsibility to "comply

with the Board's general policy directions" (Part. VII, 76, Sub-section 2a, p. 46) but at the same time, somewhat ambiguously, had "complete discretion to manage as the principal thinks fit the school's day to day administration." (Part VII, 76, Sub-section 2b, p. 47).

Much of the philosophical underpinning to the reforms was drawn from the world of business. Schools as providers of services were to be responsive to their communities (Robinson, Timperley, Parr & McNaughton, 1994; Robinson & Timperley, 1996). Private and public providers were to compete on an open market to provide advisory assistance and other services to schools. Parents were to be given choice in selecting schools. Market forces would prevail (Cusack, 1992). It was expected that well managed schools would attract students and thrive. Poorly managed schools would be clearly identified and their bad managers would be required to reform or depart. The reforms had a dramatic impact on what and how principals had to learn (Manthei & Gilmore, 1994). A key question with reform is the time-frame for the proposed reforms (Rae, 1989). In New Zealand's case, the style adopted was what Holdaway (1989) called the "earthquake model" (p. 39) of change. Sullivan (1994) stated that this was deliberate political policy to prevent capture by the education providers, namely, the teacher unions and professional educators. Consequently, principals, especially primary principals, had to learn a great deal in a relatively short time-frame. Thus, to the stress of major change was added the pressure of urgency. In addition, the reforms co-incided with economic and social upheavals world-wide that lay beyond the scope of education to change (Fullan, 1997; Hargreaves, 1997; Thew, 1992), but which created a difficult learning environment for principals (Education Review Office, 1997).

Recognition of the need for training and education of principals was an early feature of the reform era. "The key to success in implementing Tomorrow's Schools in New Zealand lies in appropriate selection and training of principals" (Barrington, 1989, p. 39). Specifically, it was acknowledged that all principals needed formal learning in order to do their jobs successfully. This was particularly critical because the educational reforms created new challenges, while removing traditional agents of support (Alcorn, 1992; Bennett, 1994; Cusack, 1992).

A number of training programmes based on participatory, reflective learning theory were designed and implemented throughout the country and these were supported positively by principals and communities (Lovett, 1993; Marks, 1993; Murdoch, 1992; Robertson, 1993, 1994; Strachan & Robertson, 1992; Wadsworth, 1990). In addition to Government initiatives in funding contracts for targeted training, and Government's

continued support for groups such the Advisory Services and Teachers' Centres, assistance for principals came from private and public consultancy and training services. For such services, schools had the discretion to use Government provided funds (Lange, 1988). Self-directed learning was available through written materials derived from the practical experience of credible New Zealand practitioners such as the Principals' Implementation Task Force and from well known providers such as Tom Prebble and David Stewart who were associated with the earliest educational administration training in New Zealand (Stewart & Prebble, 1993).

In addition, learning in the field of educational management was supported nation-wide, by formal structures of accreditation through Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics. The unit I was managing was one such provider. Informally, principals were supported by associations such as the New Zealand School Trustees Association, the New Zealand Educational Administration Society, the New Zealand Association for Research in Education and by their own professional associations, both regional and national. Research on the educational reforms was carried out by most Universities (e.g. Ramsay, Harold, Hawk, Kaai, Marriott & Poskitt, 1990; Ramsay, Harold, Hawk, Marriott & Poskitt, 1991; Wadsworth, 1990), the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (Wylie, 1992, 1994, 1995a, 1995b) and the Ministry of Education itself (Mitchell, Jefferies, Keown & McConnell, 1991). The results of this research were disseminated to the training providers and principals to assist professional development.

Evidence Of Problems For Some Principals

Most principals and parents adopted a positive stance and were prepared to get on with the real job of education (Barrington, 1989, 1997; Bennett, 1994; Macpherson, 1989; Mitchell et al., 1991). However, despite this generally positive attitude and despite the wealth of training opportunity which aimed at developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for success, some principals experienced difficulties in managing the changes. Evidence of difficulty could be found in high profile media reports of management failures, professional reports of high stress levels and regular advice from principals themselves that they needed more training. Wylie (1994) noted in her annual reporting of progress, that "almost all principals ... would like more training (94%) with another 2% unsure" (p. 53).

Newspaper headlines, such as the following, hinted at grave situations that perhaps had implications for principals' learning. *After the siege*. (Panckhurst, 1994, Section 3, p. 1), which referred to a much publicised dispute between a principal and Board of

Trustees. *There must be a better way for kids* (Taylor, 1995, Section 8, p. 5). *Sad outcomes predicted years ago* (Dunphy, 1995, Section 1, p.6) and *Stress 'driving principals out'* (Young, 1995, Section 1, p.4). Many media reports were based on official, public Education Review Office Reports or the proceedings of Board of Trustee meetings which were open to the public. The situation has not improved since I began this research. For example, a recent Education Review Office Report (1996b) stated: "Of the 206 primary schools investigated in the second half of 1995, 45 were operating unsatisfactorily" (p. 25). That represents almost 22% of the schools investigated. Poor performing schools appeared to be localised. *The New Zealand Herald* of 9 September, 1996, pointed to the fact that most of the under-performing schools were in South Auckland, an area of major socio-economic problems relating to unemployment, inadequate housing and poor health. The link between socio-economic factors and success in schools was also made by university researchers such as Gordon (1995) and more recently by Thrupp (1997a, 1997b). However, the Education Review Office through its Reports (1996a, 1996b) has rejected the argument that non-school issues diminished responsibility for poor school achievement, maintaining that the "principal is responsible for promoting high levels of achievement for all students regardless of their home circumstances" (1996b, p. 17). Successful South Auckland schools, whose clients came from the same low socio-economic areas, were held up as proof of the Education Review Office stance (1996a). It appears that the Education Review Office believes that school failure is, to a large extent, indicative of a principal's failure to learn how to manage successfully in that type of environment. "Many of the issues raised ... highlight the importance of training and education to the performance of primary school principals" (1996b, p. 29). The Education Review Office emphasis, which appeared to situate many problems of management in principals' failure to learn, was challenged by many researchers such as Grace (1998), O'Neill (1998) and Thrupp (1998). It is clear that debate about principals' learning is on-going.

The Challenge For Researchers And Providers Of Professional Training

Most schools and principals established good working relations with their communities and Boards, and sorted out any differences of opinion amicably (Wylie, 1992). Nevertheless, I believed in undertaking this research, that the existence of even a small number of malfunctioning schools was of major significance for the large number of people who were affected by that situation. Especially concerning to me as a provider was the fact that assistance for failing principals, traditionally provided by the Department of Education, was removed by the reforms. It seemed to me that this factor, together with the importance of educational management training and education, as well as the complexity

and difficulty of the learning in question, called for rigorous, on-going research into principalship. I was aware that finding answers through research was not going to be easy because as Stewart and Prebble (1993) found, "more than half a century of research into organisational behaviour has produced few empirically validated solutions that principals can call upon to meet the challenges of their work" (p.124). The post-1988 situation, then, seemed to involve four significant features: a number of schools experiencing difficulties, the removal of the traditional pro-active support systems, high Government expectations for principals and the general failure of research to provide solutions to problems of educational management.

How should I, as a provider and researcher, go about meeting the challenge of making a contribution to solving problems of educational management practice? By examining my own experience and the experience of some principals, I aimed to find some possible answers to these questions.

Research Questions

Given the purposes of the research which I described at the beginning of this chapter, I decided to focus on learning itself. I wanted to know if principals saw themselves as learners; what they felt they had to learn as principals and what knowledge and skills they brought with them when they became principals. I wanted to know how they identified their learning needs and how they believed that they met those learning needs. I was interested in knowing if their learning involved them in making personal choices about what they had to learn. I was curious about whether they believed they had failed to learn and why. I was interested in their perceptions of the impact of their learning on their practice.

These queries are subsumed in two main research questions related to the principals' perceptions and beliefs about their learning.

1. How did these principals perceive that they learnt to be principals?
2. How did they perceive that what they had learnt impacted on their practice?

Organisation Of The Research Report

The report is divided into seven chapters.

Chapter Two discusses the literature search which helped to extend my thinking about the philosophy of educational management and learning theories which could be relevant in the context of principals as learners, and clarify issues with regard to what it is that principals have to learn and how they learn. The chapter is divided into three parts; theoretical frameworks, practical application frameworks and existing research on issues related to principals' learning. On the basis of this information, I outline the gaps in the literature which will be investigated in the research.

Chapter Three describes the research methodology; that is, the main epistemological assumptions implicit in the research. In this regard, qualitative research is discussed in relation to a research topic which is interpretive and phenomenological, and which includes autobiography in the form of self-study and the retrospective data from principals. This section is followed by description of the application of the grounded theory methods used to collect and analyse the data.

Chapter Four describes the research process. This chapter provides an account of the research chronology and the procedures that were followed in the process of reaping the benefits and meeting the constraints of the methodology.

Chapter Five describes the research findings in two parts. Part One describes the findings related to the self-study. Part Two sets out the findings related to the principals in terms of categories, themes and propositions which are then developed by supporting evidence from the data. Here the voices of the research participants are heard so that the reader may glimpse the engaging lives of these principals and experience the force of some of their perceptions.

Chapter Six discusses the findings related to the research questions and some of the more important issues raised in Chapter Two.

Chapter Seven sets out the conclusions drawn from the findings, implications for principals and providers of professional development for principals. The chapter also describes the limitations of the research and makes recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE SURVEY*

Introduction And Overview

To background principals' perceptions and beliefs about their learning to be principals, I conducted a survey of relevant literature. The survey was extensive because of the number of related issues which I needed to explore to contextualise their learning. For convenience, I have divided this chapter into three parts. Part one, theoretical frameworks, describes the theoretical underpinnings of educational management, providing some answers to the question, *what is educational management?* Philosophical and epistemological issues of what constitutes knowledge in the context of educational management, and how this knowledge is identified as theory, are touched upon briefly in order to explicate the direction and focus of the research. Part one also addresses relevant theoretical underpinnings with regard to learning itself, preparatory to linking learning and educational management. This section provides some answers to the question, *what is learning?* Part two, called practical application frameworks, describes specific learning required by principals to carry out their roles, and the variety of learning modes and strategies used by principals. Part three outlines a number of important studies of principal learning and what I believe to be the gaps in the literature. In this way the second and third parts of the chapter answer the questions: *What do principals have to learn? How are they assisted in their learning? What are the findings of some research with regard to principals and their learning of the job? Where are the gaps in the literature?*

The chapter concludes with a summary of the research argument.

* The literature search was on-going throughout as the grounded theory process of theoretical sampling identified new emphases.

Definitions

In this study the terms "educational administration", "educational management" and "principalship" have been used. The terms, "educational management" and "educational administration" are used interchangeably. My preference is to use the term "educational management" to refer to what principals and other educational leaders do, because of the connotations that "management" has of encompassing subjective as well as objective elements. However I have used the term "educational administration" when discussing literature which used that term, or when I refer to the period when that term was in common usage.

The term "principalship" is used to refer generally to the legal role and position of the educational leader of a school. Educational management is a shared role. Principalship generally, except in one or two cases which do not feature in this study, is not shared but defined by law as the responsibility of the single person appointed to a job. I use the words "learning to be a principal" in an on-going continuous sense in the belief that learning in general, but especially in a complex job, is never completed, and that the words "to be" imply both preparation for the job and the process of learning while being in the job.

Because I have been a manager in an educational institution, and not a principal in a school, I have used the term "educational manager" at times to refer either to the leader in an educational institution or in a school.

PART 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Knowledge In Terms Of Educational Management

This research deals with learning educational management: learning related to being a principal of a school. Consequently, my first question is, what constitutes knowledge in the field of educational management which has to be learnt? What follows is a brief discussion to highlight contextual aspects of the debate on the subject. According to Bates (1982) that question calls for consideration of the philosophical and epistemological debate relating to educational administration. Until the 1970s,

knowledge with regard to educational administration, influenced by the organisational theory of the business world, was described largely, but not completely, according to theoretical frameworks of behavioural science (Griffiths, 1995). In simple terms, what could be defended rationally on the basis of observation, survey, experiment and analysis counted as knowledge. Theories were justified according to acceptable empirical processes (Evers & Lakomski, 1991, 1994, 1995a, 1995b; Punch & Wildy, 1995).

One of the clearest examples of the epistemology of educational administration current in the 1970s, is to be found in the text book *Educational Administration: Theory, Research and Practice*, used by many principals studying during the 1980s. The authors, Hoy and Miskel (1978) claimed, "one way to understand how such an organization as a school functions is to develop typologies, or classification schemes" (p. 31). But as Bates (1982) pointed out reviewing this book, "readers may search in vain for a single *educational* idea" [his italics] or a reference to "curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation" (p. 2).

Since the 1970s, through what Denzin and Lincoln (1994) called "a quiet methodological revolution" in the social sciences, qualitative, interpretative research has upset the monopoly which "statistics, experimental designs, and survey research" (p. ix) once had. This meant that, in the 1980s and 1990s, knowledge in terms of educational administration has come to include hitherto excluded data, especially that based on lived experience and related to values and human interaction (Greenfield, 1975; Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993). Knowledge about educational administration has come to incorporate dimensions of value as well as fact, practice as well as theory, common-sense as well as rationality and education as well as administration (Bates, 1982). To this extent, the epistemology of educational administration has changed. What this means for principals is that they should expect their learning to include knowledge and skills that will enable them to administer the basic routines of the school effectively. However they must also learn how to manage people as members of dynamic learning communities to achieve personal and social, group and individual goals.

Despite the broadening epistemological parameters of educational administration, debate relating to what constitutes knowledge in the field of educational management which a principal might be expected to learn, and how it may be known, is by no means at an end (Griffiths, 1995; Lane, 1995; Maddock, 1994; Owens & Shakeshaft, 1992; Robinson, 1993). There are those like Evers & Lakomski (1991, 1994, 1995a, 1995b)

who believe that the answer to better knowledge of educational administration requires better science in order to develop a holistic explanation of knowledge. On the other hand, there are those like Griffiths (1995) who consider that "the practice of administration is largely an art and reflects the personal style of an administrator and the environment in which the person functions. Much of this lies beyond the reaches of theory as we know it" (p. 152).

In view of the on-going debate about what constitutes knowledge in educational administration, researchers have some freedom of choice. What is obligatory is that researchers make explicit the interpretation of knowledge which they are using (Gronn, 1984). I have adopted a view of knowledge that includes lived experience and human interaction in all its variety. Extending the boundaries of educational management knowledge must lead to richness of explanation, greater diversity of meaning, tolerance of diverse points of view and, consequently, greater scope for solutions to problems. This research is based on that assumption.

In its simplest form then, my answer to the question, *what is the educational administration knowledge that principals must have* is twofold. It is knowledge that can be ascertained by empirical methods: namely, knowledge of schools as organisations and social entities with practical goals, systems, structures and ways of operating. It is also knowledge that is able to be defined by qualitative methods; namely, knowledge of human interactions, meanings, perceptions, values, beliefs, intentions and feelings. Therefore, in this particular study, which aims to research principals' learning in the field of educational management *retrospectively*, the following position is taken; namely, that it is defensible to rely on principals' statements about their perceptions, beliefs and intentions and descriptions of their unique lived experiences within the environment of their schools, as the source of credible knowledge of educational management.

Theories Of Learning

Evers and Lakomski (1991) assert that a "real problem, shared by all educational researchers, is how best to conduct inquiry into human learning itself" (p. 232). The problem derives from an appreciation of the complexity of learning and learning issues. Complexity occurs perhaps because all learning involves change in beliefs or behaviour

or both (Bell & Gilbert, 1996; Kuhn, Gracia-Mila, Zohar, & Anderson, 1995; Marton & Booth, 1996), the extent of which is difficult to discern or measure. As a result of investigating the literature on learning, I concluded that many theories have some relevance to a study of principals' learning. There is not space in this study to explore in detail all these learning theories. However, some theories seemed to have more explanatory power in the context of this study than others. This section explores briefly eight major theories about learning in order to provide background and a context for issues related to principals' learning.

Underpinning the complexity of learning itself, are epistemological and ontological questions. Does the world exist "out there" to be known and understood and transferred into the mind through a process called learning, which Freire (1972) described as the "banking system" (p. 46) of learning? That is, segments of learning are deposited into the mind. Or is learning an internal process involving the creation of knowledge in the mind, constrained by and in the context of interacting with the world? (Hendry, 1996). Do principals learn verbal and intellectual skills, cognitive strategies and attitudes in response to stimuli? (Burns, 1995). The first two sections below on behaviourist and constructivist theories relate to these questions. Other important questions relate to aspects of methods and styles of learning. How do principals learn? The aspects of learning deemed most relevant and useful to the current study include action learning, experiential learning, adult learning, learning transfer, learning styles and barriers to learning.

Behaviourist Theories

There are several aspects of behaviourist theories of learning that I consider to be particularly relevant to this study. First, behaviourist theories of learning depend on an objectivist or positivist view that reality exists externally to humans; that the world, or this reality, can be knowable using empirical methods of observation and experiment. Therefore learning involves translating that external reality into understanding and knowledge by the processes of teaching and learning to become, as far as is humanly possible, an internal reality for the learner. Gergen (1991) described the positivist position as being "deeply committed to the view that the facts of the world are essentially *there* for study. They exist independently of us as observers, and if we are rational we will come to know the facts as they are" (p. 91) although, as Gergen (1991) noted, the facts would be defined according to our perspectives. This aspect of the behaviourist view of learning interested me. It raised the issue of the learner's attitude to

learning, and as a corollary, raised the question as to whether the learner needs to know learning theory to learn effectively. In other words, does the learner need to believe that there is a real world "out there"; for example, an ideal principal doing a perfect job, which the learner must try to discover and copy as part of the learning process? Do tutors and instructors have this view?

The second aspect of the behaviourist position of interest to me in this study, is that learning is able to be identified through study of behaviour change as shown in what the learners say and do. I intended to ask principals about their perceptions of behaviour change as part of the learning process. I also wondered about the role of behaviourist theories of stimulus-response and conditioning in the development of principals. Given that principals in New Zealand almost invariably come up through the ranks first as students themselves, then as teachers and middle managers in schools living in the shadows of different principals, I wondered at the effect of these experiences on their learning as a type of conditioning. According to behaviourist theory, experience is not significant for the creation of knowledge itself (Bednar, Cunningham, Duffy & Perry, 1992; Duffy & Jonassen, 1992), although it may be important as a process to bring learning about, or as a means of identifying the learning that has taken place. I wondered whether behaviourist theory of conditioning and stimulus-response would have greater explanatory power in terms of understanding learning than other theories, in the context of learning to be a principal in times of firmer Government and community direction and scrutiny.

Behaviourist and objectivist research thinking, however, is no more static than is thinking in qualitative research. Greeno, Collins and Resnick (1996) argued that recent advances in understanding cognition and learning sought to combine "individual, social and environmental factors in a coherent theoretical and practical understanding" (p. 15). Greeno et al. (1996) predicted that the situated perspective of learning would increasingly come to influence the behaviourist and cognitive perspectives or at least gain recognition as having equal significance in learning and thinking. They considered that in practice, each learning perspective could contribute to learning in a different area. For example, applied to principal training, the behaviourist perspective could apply to knowledge transmission and skill development, the cognitive perspective to understanding of principles, and the situative perspective to a synthesis in practice. This is an oversimplification of the position because of the limits of space preclude further discussion. However the argument for a role for behaviourist theory in understanding

how principals learn some things is clear, and therefore, worth bearing in mind during this research.

One aspect of learning which seemed inadequately explained in behaviourist theory, is the role of experience in learning. To examine this further, I looked to constructivist theories.

Constructivist Theories

Constructivism is a branch of philosophy which focuses on cognition and "personal systems of meaning" (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992, p. 46); that is, knowing as a result of lived experience. Schwandt (1994) noted that the concepts of constructivism and constructivist tended to reflect the "intent of their users" (p. 118) which was to understand the "complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (p. 118). I found informative as a way of thinking about how principals learn, the theorising of Kelly (1963) and Hendry (1996). Kelly developed concepts of constructivism which he called personal construct theory. Personal construct theory is based on epistemological assumptions that we can know reality only subjectively through our personal constructions. These constructions are constantly being revised through interaction with the world. As a result of interacting, people theorise about the world and develop personal constructs to guide their thinking and action. Construct theory therefore rests on the conclusion that individuals as social beings, are embedded in culture, but that the experience of individuals within a culture, being different, may direct their learning in different ways. One of Kelly's (1963) theories is that while people are influenced by their background and upbringing, they do not need to be constrained by them forever. "No-one needs to be the victim of his [sic] biography" (p. 15). Kelly believed that each person was a scientist with considerable control over his or her view of the world which was demonstrated by anticipating events and reacting accordingly. Each developed a system of evolving constructs and each person's pattern of constructs was different and unique from that of others. The individuality of the personal construct process was part of a social system and as such was influenced by others and influenced others. Because of this social aspect, people's personal constructs were often similar. Indeed they were what Kelly called "permeable" (p. 79) although they could resist change and be impermeable. Kelly's theory also incorporated a degree of theory "incompatibility" (p. 89) and personal choice in selecting between conflicting constructs.

Hendry (1996) summed up the over-all constructivist position well. He identified seven principles of constructivism. These are listed in full here to indicate the definition which underpins my understanding of constructivism in relation to principals' learning: (a) "Knowledge exists in minds of people" (p. 20) only, although specific knowledge exists in some minds and not in others; (b) the "meaning or interpretation that people give to things, depends on their knowledge" (p. 21); (c) "knowledge is constructed from within in inter-relation with the world" (p. 21), and that knowledge is constrained by the world; (d) "knowledge can never be certain because we cannot 'step outside' our own knowledge" (p. 21). Our knowledge is valid only as long as it is supported, or not proved wrong by the world. (e) Over the years knowledge becomes "common knowledge" (p. 21) because it comes from the species called human, although we can never be sure that meanings are similar. (f) "Knowledge is constructed through perception and action" (p. 22) and through communication. (h) "Construction of knowledge requires energy and time" (p. 23). Hendry also makes the point that creating knowledge is a "satisfying" (p. 23) activity in which we indulge from childhood. Von Glasersfeld (1994) stressed that the reality which individuals create by their lived experience and "trial and error" (p. 162) is not ontological reality but their "viable conception of the world". This experience-created learning will significantly influence behaviour. Such a view of learning appears to cohere with learning to be a principal when one considers that principalship is very much a lived experience for which learning is on-going.

Constructivism has its critics (Clark, Marshall, Olssen & Morss, 1996) as Bell and Gilbert (1996) and Zuber-Skerritt (1992) noted. Critics claim that constructivism lacks precision in using terms and raises "ontological issues of realism and relativism" (Bell & Gilbert, 1996, p. 51) without providing satisfactory explanation. Critics have also condemned the individualistic dimension of Kelly's theory (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). Another criticism is that constructivism is a cognitive approach to learning with little consideration given to affective learning, intuitive thinking, skill development or the influence of culture and power. However Kelly rejected criticisms of this kind as interpreting personal construct theory too restrictively by ignoring the emphasis on social interaction. He also considered that critics failed to take note of the utility of personal construct theory when it came to accounting for many obvious aspects of learning, such as the individual's opposition to change when change meant abandoning cherished theories. "This insight is of importance to any educationalist who is concerned with conceptual change" (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992, p. 65). Bell and Gilbert (1996), who argued in support of constructivist theory, answered the criticism with the

acknowledgement that more research needs to be done by researchers in this area "to prevent this powerful and useful view of learning being thrown out 'with the bath water'" (p. 51).

However, heeding Kelly's arguments and linking Hendry's (1996) principles with Bell and Gilbert's discussion, which was contextualised within teaching science in schools, it seemed to me that the concerns of critics that constructivism ignored some aspects of the social nature of learning, intuitive learning, skills and the affective domain, could be answered in Hendry's definition of constructivism. If one accepted that constructivism located knowledge and learning in the mind, which is also the source of intuitive learning, and that constructivist-created learning owed its very existence to interrelation with the world and was tied to perception and action over time, it is difficult to accept that the omissions claimed could exist in any major way. Denis and Richter (1987) described intuition as part of all learning to some degree. Intuitive learning, they claim, "operates like a single thread in a tapestry ... [that is] not nearly as strong or as useful as it is when it is woven with other learning modalities" (p. 26). This view, sympathetic to constructivism, appears to be supported by Guba and Lincoln (1989) and also by Brookfield (1993a), Schwandt (1994) and Candy (1987, 1981). The latter argued for a constructivist interpretation of self-directed learning which he termed as a social activity, and therefore not simply cognitive.

Constructivist theory related to principals and their learning could be taken to imply that each principal's experience and learning as a principal would be unique because of the personalised nature of experience since people develop theories about their world from birth (Davies, 1986). This will be one of the key focal questions in the research. To what extent are principals' learning experiences individualistic? To what extent are they common?

Construct theory in its individualism has connections with self-directed learning and even critical theory because of the general aim of construct theory of understanding one's world through reflection and interaction with the world. These theories are explored later. The basis of constructivism in all its dimensions is mental activity in social settings. This is very much the working world of principals where mental activity and action combine. I turn now to theories of learning as activity.

Action Learning

Action research, as a method of systematic development, is an effective way of group and individual learning (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Theories of action learning combine subjective and objective kinds of data. These theories were developed, in reaction to behaviourism, to create an alternative way of theorising about learning. Learning was conceptualised as linking the cognitive aspects of learning (subjective) and the product of learning such as the problem or task (objective) through the dynamic of action (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). It is a process or model of learning that includes reflection as the learners reflect purposefully and intentionally on their actions and thoughts in ways that impact on both cognition and further action. Implicit in further action is the element of evaluation; gathering feedback from internal and external sources for reflection. The nature of reflection is discussed more fully in the next section.

Emphasis on the group and the individual, together with the internal/external dimension, suggest both the strength and the difficulties of this method of learning (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). It is a strength to use group dynamics as a learning tool. However it is a possible difficulty, that action research depends on learners' openness to criticism and learning itself, their willingness to test their theories and adopt changes if better ways are indicated by the research. Action learning implies deliberate, structured and thoughtful action to achieve articulated goals. It is very much the kind of learning situation which principals could encounter. Would principals see their work in such a learning context? Learning in action is one specialised, structured form of experiential learning, a branch of learning theory which merits separate investigation as a way of explaining how principals learn.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is learning from experience by "observing, undergoing or encountering" (Boud, Cohen & Walker, 1993, p. 6). Experiential learning has "within it judgement, thought and connectedness with other experience ... it involves perception and it implies consciousness; it always comes with meaning" (p. 6). Experience itself is defined as the "interaction between learners and a social, psychological and material environment or milieu. It is learners interacting with this milieu that constitutes experience" (Boud & Walker, 1991, p. 13) and that milieu is the "social, psychological and material" (p.16) environment. Boud et al. (1993) identified five important

propositions about learning from experience: (a) "Experience is the foundation of and the stimulus for learning" (p. 8); (b) "learners actively construct their experience" (p. 10), (c) "learning is a holistic process" (p. 12), (d) "learning is socially and culturally constructed" (p. 13), (e) "learning is influenced by the socio-emotional context in which it occurs" (p. 14). Experiential learning has thus many points of reference with constructivism and action learning.

According to experiential learning theorists (Henry, 1989; Zuber-Skerritt, 1992), one of the most influential exponents of learning from experience is Kolb (1984), who traced experiential learning back to Dewey, Lewin and Piaget and developed a process model of learning which drew on research in psychology, philosophy and physiology. In particular Kolb (1984) drew on Vygotsky's theory that learning and experience were inextricably linked in a way that led to human development occurring. In the model developed by Kolb (see page 22), learning is described in terms of a process of constructing knowledge rather than in terms of learning outcomes. Concrete experiences are followed by reflection and observation which leads to abstract conceptualisation followed by active experimentation. This leads to more concrete experience and so the cycle goes on, although in practice, not necessarily sequentially. The experiential learning processes involve a number of cognitive activities. For example, concrete experiences require apprehension, abstract conceptualisation requires comprehension, reflection and observation require intention and active experimentation requires reaching out or extension from what is the current position. As a result of these activities, learning occurs. Different kinds of knowledge develop at each part of the process. For example, reflection on and observation of concrete experience leads to divergent knowledge. Abstract conceptualisation as a result of observation and reflection causes assimilation of knowledge. Active experimentation after abstract conceptualisation creates convergent knowledge and concrete experience related to active experimentation develops accommodative knowledge.

Kolb (1984) described the experiential learning process as "holistic" and "integrative" combining "experience, perception, cognition and behaviour" (p. 21). He stated that learning should be thought of as "emergent through accommodation and assimilation" (p. 26). Literature on experiential learning generally confirmed this view of the integrative nature of experiential learning (Boud & Walker, 1991; Schön, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1991b), and the centrality of being and doing when it came to learning as adults (Boud & Griffin, 1987; Boud & Walker, 1991; Burns, 1995; Knowles, 1990; Saddington, 1994; Sparks, 1993; Wadsworth, 1990).

Kolb's (1984) analysis of experiential learning is based on the theory, that for learning to occur, "the simple perception of experience is not enough; something must be done with it" (p. 42). Furthermore, there must be some experience to form the basis which can be transformed into new learning. Wadsworth (1990) found the model useful in his study of principals and I expected to find the model of use because of the site-based, experiential learning of principals in this research.

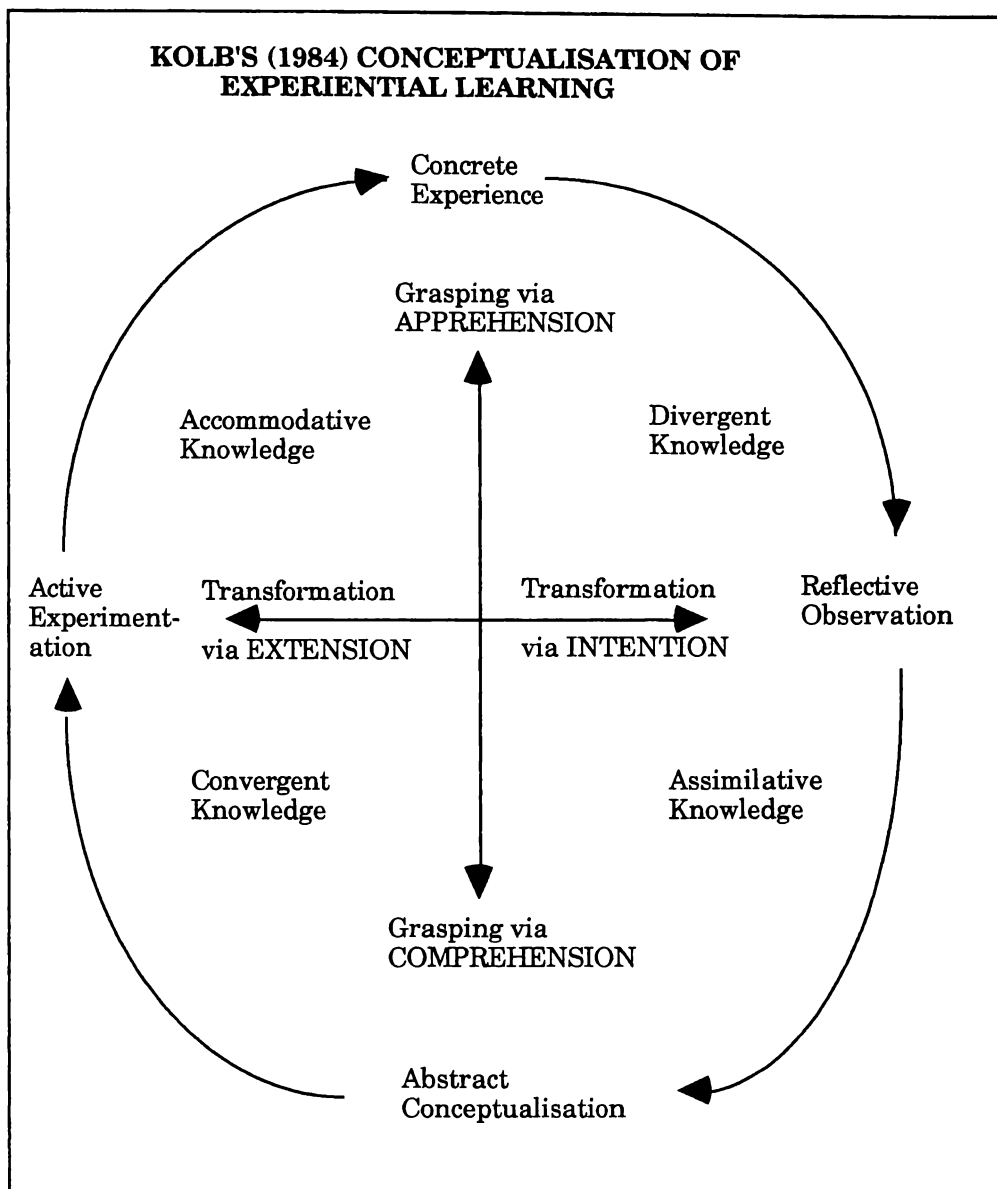


Figure 1: Structural dimensions of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984, p. 42)

Henry (1989) considered that Kolb's model of experiential learning was overly abstract and general to the extent that it could cover all theories of learning. One of Henry's main contributions to the debate it seems to me is her endeavour to keep what is different about experiential learning theory, vis-a-vis other learning theories, to the forefront. What all proponents of experiential learning theory have in common is "their determination not to neglect the human side of learning and to acknowledge the role of affect and conation, alongside cognition" (Henry, 1989, p. 27). I interpret this to mean that the individual learner, as a human being, is placed centre stage since the implication is that one learns from one's own experience. Anyone else's experience would have to be made part of one's own experience using reflection. Schön (1991) suggested that some people learn in very sophisticated ways, developing a special kind of knowing so that they become unusually competent performers. He suggested that others could learn by studying and reflecting on the practice of such experts, comparing their own ways of managing and those of the experts.

The importance of reflection dominates discussion on learning and the concepts keep recurring in this research. Reflection is "a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage, to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations" (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985, p. 19). Stewart and Prebble (1993) described reflection as a learning tool related to action; namely, the process of "thinking about what [principals] do as they do it" (p. 119) with a view to introducing modifications if necessary. Reflection, therefore, has three elements: remembering purposefully and thinking about past experience for some present and future purpose, adopting an analytical and critical stance with regard to what is currently being done, and preparing for future action. Some theorists today contend that reflection is the main tool for handling successfully the fluid, dynamic and unstructured nature of practice (Boud & Walker, 1991; Boud et al., 1993; Schön, 1987, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1991b; Stewart & Prebble, 1993). I wondered if I would discover examples of this kind of reflection among principals in the research. Reflection requires planning as it does not happen spontaneously (Brookfield, 1994; Ecclestone, 1996; Sparks, 1993; Stewart, 1997; Usher, 1991). Nor is reflection beneficial of itself (Bright, 1996). Reflection also needs to be critical. This means looking inward in as objective a fashion as possible since self-deception is always possible (Boud & Walker, 1991). To ensure reflection that would be critical but nurturing and educative, Boud and Walker (1991) and Stewart (1997) stressed the need for training in reflective procedures and, at times, the need for an external facilitator. One aim should be perception transformation through awareness of the cultural origins of our habits of thought (Mezirow, 1981). Critical reflection is

discussed in the next section and the role of reflection in research is described in Chapter Four.

Henry (1989) helped to clarify for me some of the complexities of experiential learning. And it is complex (Bright, 1996; Henry, 1993; Saddington; 1994). It is also powerful and likely to create deep-level learning. In particular, in relation to principals and their learning, I expected that experiential learning would be a very important aspect of principals' learning. I wondered how experiential learning related to change and how the principals' earlier experience of learning as teachers would impact on their learning as principals. Another area of learning theory which appeared to be particularly appropriate for this study was adult learning theory and it is to the andragogical aspect of learning that I now turn.

Adult Learning

Principals' learning lies obviously within the realm of adult learning. In this section the concept of adult learning is discussed in terms of models and the key characteristics of self-directed learning, critical thinking and self-study. Although there is an extensive literature on adult learning (Boud & Griffin, 1987; Brookfield, 1987; Garrison, 1992; Garrison & Shale, 1994; Knowles, 1984/1990; Schön, 1987), Garrison (1992) noted that, to date, educators searching for a unique framework on which to base adult education have not had much success. Knowles (1984/1990) developed an andragogical model of adult learning, a model that has developed a large following over recent years (Boud, 1987). This model placed at the centre of adult learning, (i.e. principals' learning), such factors as the centrality of the learner's perception of a need to know, the importance attached to being treated as a self-managing person, recognition and appreciation of experience, readiness to learn, orientation towards learning, and motivation, especially internal pressure to learn. To these factors, Pietrykowski (1996) added power or the desire to be in control because of the close relationship of knowledge and power.

Bell and Gilbert (1996) considered the dichotomy of pedagogy and andragogy to be false in that the distinctions claimed for andragogy applied also to pedagogy if at a different level. However, I found the andragogical-pedagogical distinction useful for social reasons; namely that in my experience, adult learners such as teachers and principals, were more likely than child learners to demand a greater share of classroom control and often maintained that being treated "like children", that is failure to

distinguish andragogy from pedagogy, was an impediment to their learning. I also considered that the factors of the andragogical model listed above would be helpful in investigating principals' learning.

In an attempt to provide an appropriate framework for adult learning, Mezirow (1994b) constructed "an abstract theoretical model of adult learning" (p. 243). This was a model of transformational theory or perspective transformation theory, based on the theory that critical reflection as an adult would lead to the transformation of meaning structures. Transformation would come about through critiquing assumptions to determine whether a belief, "often acquired through cultural assimilation in childhood, remains functional for us as adults" (Mezirow, 1994a, p. 223), especially since, he believed, adult learning should always have social goals; that is, a desire to improve society. Change comes about through "critical premise reflection of premises about oneself" (p. 224). Mezirow believed that "there are four ways to learn: by refining or elaborating our meaning schemes, learning new meaning schemes, transforming meaning schemes, and transforming meaning perspectives" (p. 224). This learning would occur through instrumental learning (controlling the environment) or by communication, particularly discourse. Mezirow maintained that most adult education concentrated on the instrumental side of adult education instead of the communicative and educative side.

The transformational model led to considerable interest and debate (Mezirow, 1991, 1994a, 1994b; Newman, 1994; Tennant, 1993, 1994). It is not necessary to develop the debate here because the basic premise of transformational learning for adults and in my case, principals, appears to be accepted. Given the social nature of schooling and education, transformational theories of learning, seem particularly appropriate. But what interested me in this study, is that Mezirow, in emphasising perspective transformation, was indicating the deeply personal and individual nature of adult learning. Perspective transformation is something that happens to individual learners or groups of individual learners because of the interiority of the learning process.

Within these frameworks of adult learning, the key characteristics of andragogy and the transformational model are self-directed learning and critical thinking or critical reflection. Brookfield (1987) discovered at least 30 different terms which were used to cover the general area of self-directed learning. However in most cases, self-directed learning indicates a degree of control by the learner over what is learnt and how learning

takes place. The key word is "degree" since in cases of tuition, the educator must have a place somewhere in the process in order to qualify as an educator (Garrison, 1992). Furthermore, self-directedness by the learner may be shown in a decision to reject self-direction in preference to being instructed by an expert. However when it comes to the learner creating knowledge in the mind, that is the responsibility of the learner only (Garrison, 1992). A learner can not usually be forced to learn.

Linking self-directed learning and critical thinking points to one of the dilemmas of self-directed learning. The self-directed learner could be influenced toward individuation and away from the developmental and communicative ideal which is at the heart of critical thinking (Jeffcoat, 1995) and transformational learning. As stressed above, there will always be individuation in learning since all learning takes place in individuals whether the individuals are learning through a process of communication with another person or within a group (Brookfield, 1994; Entwistle, 1988; Marton & Booth, 1996, 1997). The individual needs to learn how to "use" others to aid his or her own learning.

Reflection, in general, is a "complex internal process in which the individual detaches from the external world to engage in inner 'dialogue' and contemplation of ideas and abstract concepts. While this thinking is purposeful it is not necessarily critical" (Garrison 1992, p. 137). Critical thinking appears to have three parts: accessing new ideas or information, checking against prior knowledge, and honing through discourse with others. Garrison (1992) considered that the learner could not create new knowledge through self-reflection alone without verification by interaction with others and by lived experience. The role of critical thinking in individual learning is very important especially for learners such as principals whose work is dynamic and complex. One of the elements of critical thinking is examining the philosophy behind what has to be learnt, to identify issues of social injustice and cultural hegemony. I wondered to what extent principals would engage in critical thinking at this level and whether I would be able to discover this kind of critical thinking if it did occur.

Garrison (1992) argued that self-directed learning and critical thinking required an integrative theory on the grounds that "to be a critical thinker, one needs to be self-directed; and conversely, to be a self-directed learner, one needs to be a critical thinker" (p. 145). At the centre of the equation is open-mindedness. Open-mindedness implies willingness to test one's own knowledge and theories in interaction with others; to assume responsibility for such testing (self-directness) and to act or not act cognitively

as a result (critical thinking). In this way individual responsibility and shared control may result in an integrated model. These deeply personal aspects of adult learning are related to self study which I address next.

Self study is a growing area of research into adult learning (Brookfield, 1993b; Candy, 1987; Denzin, 1989; Schön, 1991; Steier, 1991; Weiser, 1987). For example, Brookfield (1987) sought insights into learning through examining his own most "significant personal learning" (p. 65). By studying his own experience in personal relationships, Brookfield felt that he developed a capacity to see things from the other's point of view and, therefore, was in a position to modify his behaviour accordingly. This kind of critical reflection, or referencing outwards to others and inwards to the self leading to changed behaviour, has been found by many to be beneficial in terms of a deeper understanding of self and also of others (Begley, 1995; Garrison, 1992; Schön, 1991). It follows therefore, that one of the most important aspects of learning for adults, such as principals, is learning-to-learn about oneself. Garrison (1992) noted that learning-to-learn involves self-awareness and self-monitoring. Bennis (1991) went further, commenting that self-knowledge is "critical" (p.16) and that failure to know one's self can lead to harm to the self and the organisation. Knowing the self is not a simple straightforward matter. As Brookfield (1993a) noted, selves are "culturally formed and bound" (p. 236); not "autonomous, innocent" selves but "embedded" in cultural "values, needs and beliefs". He went on to state that the "most critically sophisticated and reflective adults cannot escape their own biographies." Although readers will recall that earlier, I noted Kelly's (1963) comment that we can escape from our biographies, according to Bell and Gilbert (1996), the learning that we do is constrained by what we are, and our ability to be self-directed learners in some situations is affected by aspects of our backgrounds - including family experiences and prior education. Other researchers provided confirmation of the theory (Candy, 1981; Curry, 1997; Demorest & Siegel, 1996). I was interested to follow up the relationship of self-knowledge and change in the research.

Learning Styles

Another perspective of learning, relevant in the research context, is that of learning style. Individuals have preferred (Inbar, 1995; Lovett, 1993), but not fixed (Boyatzis & Kolb, 1994) ways of learning. Educationalists have endeavoured to analyse learning styles. For example, Kolb (1984) identified styles according to his model (page 22

above), as being related to the concepts of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. He also identified the task preferences that were related to the styles. According to Kolb, those who preferred to learn through concrete experience learnt better if they were given quality feedback from friendly and supportive teachers and peers, if the learning was related to real life problems, and if they felt self-directed and autonomous. They did not like theoretical reading assignments. Those who preferred reflective observation situations were less motivated by task related work and more concerned with the stimulation of expert input and controlled discussion. These learners did not like task oriented situations where they were required to complete a task. Those who preferred abstract conceptualisation learnt best with "symbolically related factors such as case studies, thinking alone and lecturing" (p. 200). They in turn did not like affective and behaviour oriented learning environments such as role plays, sharing feelings and dealing with here and now information handouts. Those who preferred active-experimentation preferred small group discussions, projects and practical problem solving. Concrete experience learners and active experimentation learners had more in common in preferred learning styles. Reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation also had features which appealed to the same kinds of learners.

While it is useful to analyse learning styles, the value comes from the realisation that individuals differ in their *preferred* learning styles without implying that all fit into one style, or that each person uses only one style consistently (Burns, 1995; Piggot-Irvine, 1997). Kolb (1984) noted that even though learners have a preferred learning style they use all four learning styles at times. I hoped to be able to identify principals' learning styles.

The motivation of learners is another important dimension of learning style. Bell and Gilbert (1996) described the considerable bodies of research into learning strategies and styles and the particularly useful concepts related to learning motivation; namely, surface-level learning, deep-level learning and strategic-level learning (Entwistle, 1987, 1988; Marton, 1988). Surface-level learning occurs where the learner is motivated to complete what has to be learnt as quickly as possible, absorbs uncritically, and attempts to find the right answers. Deep-level learning involves adding to what is already known in a reflective or lasting way, being concerned to learn what is relevant personally and content-wise, to investigate the thinking behind the new material and to adopt a critical stance regarding the conclusions. In strategic learning the learner is able to identify learning situations in terms of the significance of the learning required. Consequently,

both styles of learning are used deliberately and discriminately. Deep-level learning operates in two different ways; either step by step in a logical sequence or by overview first, followed by analysis of parts; that is, moving from the big picture to the parts. Versatile learners use both learning styles deliberately. Obviously a strategic learning style is more likely to be productive of learning than either surface-level or deep-level learning alone. Levels-of-learning are interpreted variously in the literature depending on the learning situation (Entwistle, 1987). Levels may relate to the intention of the learner, for example, to learn enough to gain a pass on an assignment, or levels may relate to analysis of behaviour to improve performance through change - the kind of double-loop learning described by Argyris (1976). Learning styles are indeed variable and operate within a variety of learning strategies, some of which are discussed below.

From the view point of adult education, Mezirow (1994a) considered that social learning that resulted in social action was one of the most significant motivational aspects of adults learning. Wanting to serve is an essential ingredient of, and motivation for learning related to leadership according to some educationalists (Brandt, 1992; Duignan, 1998, Holford, 1995) and business experts (Covey, 1990). The latter described the way people are motivated through delegation. He stated that "trust is the highest form of human motivation" (p. 178), since it established a feeling of contributing to the social welfare of the group. Such motivation could be expected to encourage learning. Another interpretation of social motivation was provided by Crow and Glascock (1995) in an American study. They argued that socialisation led to evolving motivations during a career with new challenges for learning. It was clear from the literature that theorising about principals' learning and transfer of learning was going to be challenging in its complexity.

Learning Transfer

One of the complex questions I wanted to explore in this research was how principals' learning impacted on their practice through change. Consequently learning transfer was an important theoretical concern for me. A number of studies provided useful information (Anderson, Reder and Simon, 1996; Kuhn et al. 1995). Learning transfer can occur in a variety of degrees from a large amount to a negative amount. Transfer depends on many factors, such as awareness of the need for learning, attitudes to change and the capacity to respond positively to change, the nature of the new learning situation, the comprehensiveness and specificity of the first learning situation,

and the skill of the tutor in blending abstract ideas and practical demonstrations. Degree of practice or guided exposure to the new learning situation, and the "number of symbolic components that are shared" (Anderson et al., 1996, p. 8) between old and new, are particularly important for learning transfer. For example, a structured method of problem solving using a paradigm sequence might be an example of this kind of transfer. Kuhn et al. (1995) described another theory of transfer. The second theory is that transfer is related to the extent that the activity that the problem solver engages in, is reproduced. An example of this second kind of transfer might be the transfer that is required for learning to solve a dispute or absorb quantities of written material. The difficulty of transfer lies in the fact that in most cases the problem solver learns the new strategy within limited contexts. Kuhn et al. (1995) also found that people may retain old and new learning and strategies at the same time. The consequence is that the problem solver may choose the "wrong" strategies to solve a problem or at least include some solutions that could be called wrong. These findings seemed to support my own experience as a teacher trainer.

Argyris and Schön (1974) underscored the difficulty of learning transfer in defining the differences between theories espoused and theories-in-action. However they expressed the belief that the transfer of new learning would be possible if people understood clearly enough the elements of both theories, had adequate skilled assistance, self-motivation and a problem which they could control. Robinson (1993) developed a Problem-Based Methodology aiming at enabling transfer of learning using Argyris and Schön's theory of "double-loop learning" (p. 87). Robinson proposed transfer of learning through a process of problem structuring and critical dialogue which would enable the learner to see how his or her theories-in-action impacted on the problem itself. Success in transferring learning appeared from her research to depend on a number of human issues relating to the complexity of the problem itself and the willingness of those involved to come to grips with it. It appears that only if the problem is relatively simple, the learner highly motivated and the facilitator highly skilled, is transfer of learning through Problem-Based Methodology likely to occur.

This research was based on the expectation that principals could recall and provide examples to show how what they had learnt had become part of their practice. However I could foresee that one problem for principals, and therefore for this research, in attempting to account for transfer of learning, would be memory loss. While I agreed with the relevance of the findings of Kuhn et al. (1995) in many cases, I suspected that once new learning replaced old learning, many learners would tend to forget both the

old learning, and, in many instances, how and when they developed new learning. The next part of this section deals briefly with an important dimension of all kinds of learning but especially transfer of learning; namely, memory.

Memory and learning are closely linked (Burns, 1995). "Learning is the acquisition of information while memory involves the storage and reception of that information" (p. 172). Burns goes on to explain that memory is not a single unit but is made up of multiple processes. The most important and complex process of learning is the retrieval of information (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). Memory acts on past and present experience as "working memory" (Baddeley, 1993, p. 21), enabling the individual to make choices among options provided by memory.

The issue of autobiographical memory is discussed in Chapter Three in the context of research methods. Here a brief discussion is concerned with relating learning and memory to principals' learning. For example, with regard to experiential learning, I wondered whether memories of the principals from their own school days and early teaching days, would influence principals' behaviour through learning transfer when they become principals themselves. Transfer of learning may depend on the degree to which memory is successful in supporting new learning in the early stages, during the process of internalisation through practice, and while old learning is being unlearned. Some memory processes decline with age in a variety of different ways (Burns, 1995), and may make it more difficult for older principals to learn new ways in times of rapid change. These issues of memory and remembering will need to be considered in the research, since most of the data will be memory dependent.

Barriers To Learning

Barriers to learning have been the focus of much research (Apps, 1987; Argyris, 1976; Argyris & Schön, 1974; Boud, 1995; Boud & Walker, 1993; Sparks, 1993). Knowles (1990) noted that adults learn what they perceive to be necessary for their own personal and professional security; that adults resist new learning if it requires changing deeply held beliefs and if the new learning is likely to impose threat. This has already happened in New Zealand where, since the reforms began, many principals retired, sought early retirement or other employment (*The New Zealand Herald*, 23.3.95, Section A, p. 4; *The New Zealand Herald*, 7.3.97, Section A, p. 19).

The most pessimistic view of principals as learners came from Gray (1987). Writing as a provider of courses for principals, and using data supplied by some 40 training providers and principals, he considered that principals as a whole "present more problems as learners than other groups of managers" (p. 35). Gray noted that often they failed to see that they had anything to learn. One problem concerned authority. In schools principals have authority. In training sessions they are asked to give up that authority. Often they attended courses expecting to be given a set of best theory and practice, and objected to having to make personal choices from among options in ways that required that they reflect upon their own experience. However Gray admitted that principals were "very varied as individuals even though they seem to revert to type en masse" (p. 42). From my own experience as a provider of courses in the early years of the reforms, I felt some sympathy for Gray's position.

Gray (1987) also identified an important difference integral to learning itself. In schools, students learn prescribed content in instructional and normative ways. Learning is about knowledge. In management, on the other hand, learning "is organised around experience (process)" (p. 37) and learners as individuals are expected to know what their own learning needs are. Another significant difference Gray identified, was a difference between primary and secondary heads. The former were more accepting of training than the latter. The latter were often very critical and spent time arguing theory instead of concentrating on their own personal learning. They were anxious about their status. In particular many objected to learning which required that they get to know themselves. They wanted to know others and believed that they knew themselves well enough (Brady, 1996). They wanted to help others to learn. Gray (1987) believed that principals did not take well to the role of the principal-as-learner. He identified the machismo attitudes prevalent in the operation of many schools and noted the difference between this attitude and the usual facilitative ways of professional development leaders. This is an interesting point to pursue in view of the importance of the role of principal in supporting staff development (Marks, 1993). Another anxiety for some principals was their fear of being exposed as lacking basic competence in the skills of reading and writing (Apps, 1987). I found Gray's comments particularly enlightening in view of his experience as a provider of principals' training and expected that my research would shed some light on the kinds of barriers to principals' learning which he enumerated. Many of Gray's (1987) views were echoed by Sergiovanni (1991b) who described principals' mind sets as impediments to new learning, and mental blockages that prevented them from differentiating actual and ideal views of performance. Barth, in a conversation with Sparks (1993), noted that some principals felt it immoral to use

school money for their own development, and that to admit to needing development was to draw attention to the fact that one did not know everything, a situation not conducive to their idea of the educational leader. Another impediment to principals' learning was "their past experience" (Sparks, 1993, p. 18) of unproductive learning sessions.

Specific barriers to learning also exist in every strategy intended for learning. For example, strategies such as appraisal may not operate as learning experiences (Glanz & Neville, 1997; Ker, 1992; Peel & Inkson, 1993; Townsend, 1995), personal circumstances or gender expectations may influence attendance in learning programmes (Green & Manera, 1995; Robertson, 1995), or the learning opportunity may have been impaired by lack of specific relevance, or the allocation of too short a time to allow learning to occur (Wylie, 1994). Furthermore, the multiple motivations and priorities of learners may undermine completely or partially the learning intentions of the learning providers. Barriers to learning are a significant question to be pursued in this research.

Drawing The Threads Of Theoretical Frameworks Together

From the literature review, the argument thus far, is that when principals learn educational management they learn about a structured field that consists of systems, processes and procedures often set out in educational legislation and regulation. It is also a field of human interaction; of diverse purposes, goals, beliefs and values, often conflicting. It is a field that is non-rational and rational, because it deals with the emotions of many different groups and individuals. When they learn educational management, principals create their own meanings and interpretations based on their unique life experiences, their socialisation and interaction with the world around them.

There are many different theories of learning. Considering Evers and Lakomski's (1991) comment that finding the best way to conduct inquiry into human learning itself, is a challenge for researchers, I have looked to more than a single model of learning for answers to the research problem. Those which I have chosen to explore all appear to provide elements which could be useful in explaining how principals learn to be principals in unique ways. Behaviourist theory suggests external shaping of learning; for example, through imposed systems of accountability. I wondered about the role of stimulus-response and conditioning in the development of principals, especially in the

post-1988 years. Constructivist theory, especially personal construct theory, posits internal construction of knowing and being able to perform in individualistic ways within a social framework. Constructivism, appeared to provide a theory of principal learning through experience, reflection and interaction with the world, and place the perspective of the individual clearly at the motivational centre of learning. Being a principal is about living and acting in a hands-on role on a daily basis. Consequently, theories of learning in action and experiential learning are particularly appropriate. Action theories and experiential learning theories, I believed, would allow for emphasising the holistic, social and integrative nature of learning. In addition, adult learning theory could clearly be expected to provide relevant theory since all principals are, obviously, adults. Adult learning theory highlights the special features of adult education with regard to mature learning skills; namely, self-directed learning, critical thinking, self-study and reflectivity. The individual-centredness of learning suggested the appropriateness of investigating learning styles.

Learning is unlikely to be effective without successful learning transfer. As adults, individuals and members of dynamic groups, principals make decisions about the content and process of learning. This is one of the significant factors which affects learning transfer. Learning is about change. Sometimes principals as learners are in control of change. Sometimes they are swept into learning situations by the forces of change. Their feelings and attitudes to change and particular change situations are crucial to learning change management. Often there are barriers to learning which cover the whole spectrum, from barriers which are beyond the control of the individual, to those which the individual generates personally and can do something about.

Theories about all these different aspects of learning educational management have helped to provide the background to my investigation into the ways principals learn and into the ways their learning impacts on their practice. Against the theoretical background of what constitutes knowledge in the field of educational management that has to be learnt by principals, and what learning theory helps to explain the specific learning of principals, the practical application of this learning in the school setting, as illustrated in the literature, is now discussed.

PART 2: PRACTICAL APPLICATION FRAMEWORKS

Specific Learning Required By Principals

Part 1 of this chapter examined literature which addressed the question of what constituted educational management knowledge and learning educational management from the philosophical and epistemological perspective. Part 1 also provided an overview of eight theories of learning itself which appeared to have particular relevance in backgrounding principals' learning.

Part 2 is devoted to learning requirements for principals in the school setting. The major learning requirements of New Zealand principals are identified and discussed briefly. This section is organised around three general areas of social, personal and professional required learning and two specific areas of leadership and managing change. The specific areas overlap the three general areas but are important enough to warrant additional comment. The learning modes and strategies that are available for principals' learning are next reviewed. Current research into principals' learning is woven into the whole of Part 2 but is expanded in Part 3 through discussion of specific examples of research of principals at work. The first parts set the scene for the final section, which identifies where I consider there are knowledge gaps in the literature.

Although learning is a holistic and interactive process, the differing objectives and expected outcomes of principals as learners make it convenient to study the phenomenon of their learning from a number of perspectives. Bell and Gilbert (1996) called these perspectives social, personal and professional. Mezirow (1981) referred to three areas of adult learning as domains, terming them technical as relating to work, practical, relating to communication, and emancipatory, relating to power and freedom to grow. Mezirow's categorisation was based on his interpretation of Habermas. Habermas (Gibson, 1986) himself implied that three types of knowledge, empirical, hermeneutic and critical theory, arose from three related sets of objectives or interests; respectively "technical control, interpretation and the struggle for freedom" (p. 37). Although these three models of analysis are not synonymous, there are sufficient common threads to suggest that a three-way study is an appropriate way to examine

principals' learning. In the context of this investigation, I have chosen to study learning under the headings of social, personal and professional.

Social Perspectives Of Principals' Learning

There are social perspectives to principals' learning. The social nature of learning has been discussed earlier as part of constructivist theory and the nature of adult learning. That discussion indicated that we are all different because of our different interactions with the world in which we develop our identities, our feelings and our meanings. This means that what principals have learnt before becoming principals will be mediated by on-going social interaction and the learning that derives from that while they are principals.

Bell and Gilbert (1996) also noted that while learning is constrained by the social culture in which the learning takes place, that social culture is itself affected by the unique input provided by the learner. For example, individuals have "partial agency" (p. 68) only and are "partially determining and partially determined." Applied to the concept of educative leadership, social theory of principals-as-learners means that in being an educative leader, the principal will put a unique stamp on the role in a particular context. The social dimensions of learning have important implications for principals because of the impact their socially-derived learning is likely to have on practice. Principals need to be aware of the hegemonic dimensions of culture; aware of the influence of the majority culture on their own thinking and the pervasiveness of this culture in all that they have to learn (Fiske, 1992). In short, principals, as products of social learning, are also instrumental in the transmission or changing of social learning.

I wondered whether principals were aware of the social dimensions of their learning and how their socially-derived learning might impact on the school as a social entity, given the dominant position of the roles of principals within their schools. I also wondered whether their social learning would be evident to me as a researcher.

Personal Perspectives Of Principals' Learning

There are also personal perspectives to principals' required learning. In some ways it is difficult to describe personal learning separately from the social perspectives of learning because of the extent to which personal development is socially constructed. However personal perspectives must be considered because not to do so is to downplay the effect

of the uniqueness and individuality of each learner (Bell & Gilbert, 1996; Kolb, 1984; Ribbins & Marland, 1994; Southworth, 1993, 1995). The personal dimension must also be considered in the context of the importance of the principal within the school. This importance is noted more fully in Part 3 of this chapter.

Individuals use reflection to "reconstruct their knowledge" (Bell & Gilbert, 1996, p. 69) in ways that are deeply personal. To explore the personal nature of principals' learning, I describe the important concepts of self-concept, self-esteem, motivation and personality. Central to learning is self-concept and self-esteem (Boud, 1995). Burns (1995) stated that self-concept has three dimensions, "the present self-image, the ideal self, or how we would like to be, and the self we believe others perceive" (p. 205), rightly or wrongly. Self-concept includes all the attitudes that people have about themselves related to a particular role and events and is both cognitive and affective (Hamlyn, 1983; McCarthy & Schmeck, 1988). Although self-concept can change with different circumstances, overall it is difficult to change in adulthood. Self-image, an aspect of self-concept, is the picture of how people see themselves. Throughout life people are influenced by significant others who act as mirrors showing them how they should see ourselves (Huguet, Charbonnier & Monteil, 1995). Self-esteem is the collection of feelings about the self which results from negative and positive judgements. If the self-image is positive, the individual "will reach out towards self-actualisation" (Burns, 1995, p. 207). If it is negative, this movement will be hindered. "Positive self-concepts and negative self-concepts are maintained through a feedback system that validates the level of self-esteem. The self-concept is a self-fulfilling prophecy" (Burns, 1995, p 208).

Self-concept develops from childhood (McCarthy & Schmeck, 1988). "Every child has experiences that bend him or her towards future ways of acting, thinking and feeling. Feelings of trust, or mistrust, pride or shame, confidence or doubt, result from early life experiences and become part of the individual" (Burns, 1995, p. 206). Self-concept is very important in leadership. People with positive self-concepts tend to do well and success provides affirmation and further success. Since the locus of control is internal, to some extent people tend to create their own success. People with low self-esteem usually tend to look to others for approval, are more dependent on others and tend to conform to those in authority.

I have explained the concept of self-concept in some detail, because I expected to find that self-esteem and self-concept would be very important for principals in their

learning and would influence motivation and personality. Motivation and personality are both elements which are an integral part of the development of principals (Southworth, 1995). "Motivation is the willingness to exert high levels of effort towards goals" and "is the key to learning" (Burns, 1995, p. 180). "Motivation seems to depend on personal experience and interpretation of context" (Burns, 1995, p. 182). Personality "is the way in which the individual habitually responds to and interacts with their [sic] environment" (Burns, 1995, p.193). Personality is affected by environment (Gronn, 1986). Individual differences occur in personality, motivation and self-concept. Consequently one would expect that principals would differ in the way they carried out their jobs and in the success they enjoyed. This would be a question to follow up in the research. Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) concluded that not everyone can lead a school "in the direction of making itself better than it is" (p. 185). Would the principals in the research provide support for this statement?

Burns (1995) maintained that a major omission in the whole area of training is "consideration of how systematic individual differences affect preferences for training methods, and the efficiency and transference of training" (p. 220). I have developed the concept of personal learning, because I wanted to investigate principals' learning from the point of view of individual difference.

Professional Perspectives Of Principals' Learning

Professional learning itself is concerned with the nature of the job, with the role of the principal. A great deal has been written about the principal's role by academics (Alcorn, 1990, 1992; Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Schön, 1991, Sergiovanni, 1991b, 1992b) and by those who have had experience as principals themselves (Barnes, 1994; Cardno, 1996; Rentoul, 1996; Robertson, 1993, 1994), and it is clear that principals "vary widely in how they conceive of their role" (Leithwood, 1990, p.71). Leithwood noted four different foci in principals' styles or patterns of practice. These foci were administrative, interpersonal relations and climate, programmes, and students.

However, in describing the principals' professional role, perhaps the starting place should be the professional role as specified by statute and regulation. I remind the reader of the legislative context described in Chapter One; namely, that by law the principal is the "Board's chief executive" (Education Act, 1989, p. 46) with "complete discretion to manage as the principal sees fit the school's day to day administration" (p. 47) subject to the Board's policy directives. What the principal as manager "sees fit" to do is greatly

constrained by official guidelines. The Ministry of Education has provided National Education Guidelines (1993) related to achieving national achievement objectives in curriculum and learning generally, and National Administration Guidelines related to management practices in the areas of curriculum, employment, finance and property. The Education Act (1989) itself specified responsibilities with respect to health education, suspensions, guidance and counselling, attendance and reporting. The Public Finance Act (1989) and subsequent amendments, set out the manner of financial reporting required of principals and Boards of Trustees.

As a senior public servant under the State Sector Act (1988), the principal came into the sphere of influence of the *State Services Commission (1994) The Senior Public Servant* for further definition. The Commission set out the standards expected; such as, "a high level of knowledge and competence" and "a strong sense of personal responsibility, personal integrity and commitment to the public good" (p. 5). The principal was required to promote core values, evaluate staff performance and provide support and development to ensure that the core values were met. The State Services Commission even went further and provided examples of what the principal was not to do, such as showing favouritism, putting self-interest first or promoting a political viewpoint. It can be seen from this that educational administration as discussed in the first part of this chapter, is more than systems and structure and clearly incorporates values and attitudes.

To ensure compliance by Board and principal, a special agency of the Government, the Education Review Office, was set up to monitor and evaluate the performance of principals, boards and schools. Since 1989 the Education Review Office has done that most conscientiously and has made its findings public. Furthermore, the Education Review Office has produced a number of reports to inform the public and guide principals and boards in the detail of their respective professional roles. Some of these have dealt with curriculum, learning, assessing student achievement, managing staff performance, professional leadership in primary schools and secondary schools. In 1997 the specific job-related learning required of all teachers including the principal, was set out in a series of documents emanating from the office of the Secretary for Education, the Performance Management Systems (PMS) documents. These documents laid down guidelines i.e. the requirements for "effective performance management of schools" (PMS 1, 1997, p. 1). These guiding documents from the Education Review Office and the Secretary for Education continue to increase in number year by year.

Most specifically from the principal's point of view, in 1995 the Education Review Office outlined core competencies for school principals. The Core Competencies could be seen as the core curricula of principals' learning, some of which principals would have when appointed and some of which would be developed through learning on-the-job (Education Review Office, 1995). Competency-based principal training is well known in several part of the world such as in Florida (Snyder & Drummond, 1988). The Education Review Office's competencies are based on the work of a strategic human resource management consultant who interviewed four principals from a range of schools, and consulted with the educational interest groups. A set of 19 competencies were listed under five headings. These were intellectual (seven competencies), results orientation (one competency), interpersonal relationships (six competencies), adaptability (two competencies) and professional/technical (three main and six sub-categories). While admitting that the document is "useful", Austin (1996) considered that competencies relating to student management, staff appointment and management and the output of both students and staff were insufficiently highlighted. She also observed that the document ignored the need for principals to have thorough knowledge of themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, and enough confidence in themselves to be able to promote staff strengths.

I have discussed the *Core Competencies* in some detail because this important contribution to the description of the New Zealand principal's role and task is both recent and authoritative, in that it is referenced to the legislation pertaining to principals, and generated by the Government's Education Review Office. From this account of statutes and regulations it is clear that what principals have to learn has become very specific since the education reforms began in 1989. In this context I wondered to what extent principals would follow some of their Australian counterparts, and describe themselves as "powerless functionaries so encumbered with rules ... and so bound in by public laws, that [they] do not have to lead anyone anywhere They simply ... obey regulations, and move at the head of the crowd" (Mulford, 1988, p. 34). However, whatever the constraints, principalship is about leadership which is discussed next.

The Question Of Leadership

The question of leadership has already been introduced in discussion of the social, personal and professional dimensions of principals' required learning. However, leadership warrants further discussion because of the importance of this learning to principals. If principalship is about leadership, how does a principal demonstrate

leadership when the leadership role in education has effectively been taken over by the State in the name of the consumers of education, and is constantly subjected to redefinition? Austin (1996) had a valid question when she asked, "who then has the leadership role?" (p.3). She answered her own question saying that "there are three main players: the Ministry of Education, the Boards of Trustees and the Principals". While the three players are inextricably bound together in the education enterprise, who would claim that these are equal players? It is interesting to consider leadership as described by academics and then compare this to the leadership required by the principal in today's prescribed school.

Leadership has been defined variously (Barnett, Caffarella, Daresh, King, Nicholson & Whitaker, 1992; Barth, 1993; Begley, 1995; Guthrie, 1991; Heitmuller, Leuzinger, McAfee, Smith & Pajak, 1993; Wolcott, 1973), although six leadership roles keep recurring: (a) a visionary role, the role of developing the school's broad philosophy and mission to meet community goals, (b) an educational leadership role, guiding the achievement of school objectives (Rallis & Highsmith, 1986), (c) a supervisory role of leading teachers to achieve the objectives (Southworth, 1990), (d) an organisational role of developing a supportive school structure and climate, (e) maintaining the school on a daily basis over time, creates an administrative role, (f) co-operating with and leading teachers and other staff creates a team leadership role. These definitions are developed a little further by reference to the work of two leading American exponents of professional leadership, Thomas Sergiovanni and Joseph Murphy. In describing the concept of leadership, they shifted the emphasis from form and role to substance.

Sergiovanni (1992a) argued that alternative forms of leadership would be required if we wanted "more committed and self-managing" teachers (p. 41) and schools that were communities of learners who thought of themselves as colleagues and professionals. He considered that leadership needed to be thought about in different terms (1992b), terms not of process but of substance. "The more leadership is emphasised, the less professionalism flourishes" (p. 49). Sergiovanni did not abandon leadership. He argued for the morality of leadership on the grounds that of all the sources of authority, "bureaucratic, psychological and technical-rational ... competence and virtue should predominate" (1992a, p. 49).

Reflecting on the world-wide trend for reform in educational administration, Murphy (1995) commented that this indicated "a rather deep leadership void in schools" (p.13). He developed Sergiovanni's (1992a) theme of the need for new thinking, new

metaphors of leadership emphasising morality. The metaphors Murphy (1995) used were the "leader as community servant" (p. 13), "the leader as organizational architect" (p. 15), "the leader as social architect" (p. 17) and "the leader as moral educator" (p. 19). Murphy considered that the role of the principal was changing and detailed the changing nature of the role as leading from the centre, that is, sharing power, becoming more consultative; delegating leadership responsibilities (real responsibilities); developing collaborative decision-making, and "bringing shared authority to life" (p. 25); "enabling and supporting teacher success", "helping to formulate a shared vision" (p. 27), "cultivating a network of relationships", "allocating resources consistent with the vision" (p. 28), "providing information" and "promoting teacher development" (p. 29). At the same time, principals found that the reforms called for "an enhanced management role", "a diminished instructional role" (p. 30), "extending the school community" (p. 31), "promoting the school" more, "working with the governing board" (p. 32) and "connecting with parents" (p. 33). I have described the theories of these two well known theorists, because they make clear how principals may show leadership within the guidelines provided by Government.

Learning leadership is closely related to the concept of leadership style. A principal's leadership style is central to ensuring that a leadership void does not exist in New Zealand schools and that a school's climate and culture are conducive to growth and learning. Leadership style refers to the way an individual generally addresses leadership issues. It is the result of whole-of-life experiences, personality, experience and situational factors in which the leadership situation is embedded. Sergiovanni (1991b) described leadership settings in schools as being generally "loosely-coupled" (p. 110) in the area of sharing decision making and "tightly coupled" (p. 110) in the area of core values and goals. Sergiovanni advocated a leadership style which was balanced; "resilient for the school's core of values and beliefs and flexible for the day-by-day articulation of those values in teaching and learning" (p. 111). A resilient leadership style is characterised by "will power, tough-mindedness, self-confidence and self-discipline" (p. 165) in pursuit of core values and goals. According to Sergiovanni every principal demonstrates both resilience and flexibility at times depending on the situation but I wondered whether life experience oriented a principal to one or the other style of operating.

Cultures also impact on leadership. "Some cultures emphasise transactional control through the distribution of incentives, while others work by transforming the goals and aspirations of organizational members" (Mitchell & Tucker, 1992, p. 31). It appears

from the literature, that transformational leadership is one of the most important aspects of successful principalship, and principals need careful preparation for transformational leadership (Bush, 1995; Stewart & Prebble, 1993). This dimension of good principalship may not be learnt on the job. Southworth (1993) made the very useful point that leadership in practice is very much more dynamic and complex than the literature implies. He also considered that transformational leadership needed to be "mediated" (p. 79) by transactional leadership. One was not better than the other rather the two are "mutually dependent and complementary" (p. 79). I hoped that principals in the study would clarify the relationships of these two aspects of leadership for me.

How is leadership learnt? Leadership is learnt behaviour, knowledge and skill. Heredity undoubtedly provides some with advantages in the form of ability and physical attributes. Upbringing, education, experience and opportunity nurture leadership. Having the knowledge and being able to act with a high degree of skill and confidence are all important attributes of good leaders. However, as Dussault and Barnett (1996), Glover, Levacic, Bennett and Earley (1996) and Sergiovanni (1991b) found, when they researched school leadership, there is no single style of leadership that can account for excellence.

How do such views of leadership fit into the structured bureaucratic scenario of statute and guideline, Education Review Office Report and "Mandatory Requirements as Prescribed by the Secretary" (PMS 1, p. 1) which I described above? In the light of these directives, Murphy's (1995) metaphor of leader as community servant perhaps appears to take on old meanings in new settings, that is, the principal as the Government's educational whip at the local level. On the other hand a community servant/leader could use the advantages of having clear guidelines and an unequivocal mandate to bring about rapid change if that should be necessary. A community servant/leader who could rise above the political sting of central enforcement (Bennett, 1994; Bottery & Wright, 1997) could harness the talents of teachers, students and community for both a common and an individual good. Not to do so would leave substantive leadership void in schools unfilled (Murphy, 1995). How would leadership at the local level be affected by rigorously defined leadership at the national level? How would the leadership styles of principals reflect their individuality and react to an environment of freedom-in-harness? The question of leadership was one which I aimed to illuminate in the research.

The Question of Learning And Change

Change is an integral part of both learning and managing. Consequently I looked to change theory for some direction in exploring principals' learning because principals live and work in a constantly changing work-place (Fullan, 1991, 1997; Hargreaves, 1997; Owens & Shakeshaft, 1992). This work-place is a social system as well as an instrumental system (Sergiovanni, 1991b) and like all social systems must change to meet its needs (Knowles; 1990, Leach & Graham, 1996). No change will be introduced successfully in such a social system without the collaboration of most of the workforce (Hargreaves, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1991a, 1991b, 1992a, 1992b). Consequently, as leaders, principals may need to develop new skills and sensibilities of the different ways in which their teachers may see change. I expected that learning processes and structures for handling resistance or delaying tactics, and bringing people along towards goal achievement, would be required. Consequently, I expected that learning to change themselves and to manage change in others would be an important feature of the research.

What makes change problematic is that its inherent complexities are both rational and emotional (Hargreaves, 1997) for principals as well as for teachers. For example; society requires change for progress, but if there is change, there are those who are hurt by it, object to it and resist it. Change causes some people to feel endangered or threatened and some to feel stimulated and challenged (Fullan, 1991). Some feel both. Change usually means increased pressure and requires an increased work-load (Fullan, 1997; Grace, 1995). In educational change, the role of the principal is crucial for success since it is the principal, as legal and symbolic head, who must appear to be the change leader, supporter and monitor (Fullan, 1991; Marks, 1993; Strachan & Robertson, 1992). Nor is change easily controlled. The results can be unintended and damaging. This is especially the case since much educational change involves a redistribution of political power at local and national levels (Webb & Vulliamy, 1996; Wildy & Punch, 1995). Change varies in momentum. There are times when environmental change is so extensive that it becomes revolutionary. For some principals, change in the era of educational reform after 1989 was revolutionary. It was clear from the change theory literature that investigating attitudes to and experiences of change would need to be an important part of this research.

Formal And Informal Learning Modes And Methods

A wide range of formal and informal learning modes and learning methods are available for principals in New Zealand. Some of the most important are described below.

Formal Learning Modes And Methods

Principals' learning is supported by degree or diploma courses in educational management provided by Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and private providers. These courses provide a blend of theory and practical application. How helpful are they to principals? Although advocated by the Education Review Office (1996b) as advantageous for principals' learning, having educational management qualifications is not necessarily a strength. As Boud et al. (1993) reflected. "Between the three of us we have many educational qualifications, but we are nevertheless conscious that very little of our present learning has been prompted by any of our formal studies" (pp. 2-3). A formal course of study at tertiary level may not target the most acute and immediate learning needs. Well-qualified academically and a recently retired principal of a large New Zealand secondary school, Rentoul (1996) asked as he reflected on his practical experience and academic background, "just how relevant is theory as a guide to practice?" (p.1). He concluded: "In my case I would say that extensive post-graduate studies in education did not constitute adequate preparation for a school leadership role" (p. 3). Brookfield (1987) likewise considered that the learning which he regarded "as the most important, profound and crucial ... has very little to do ... with my participation in formal courses of instruction" (p. 64). Sergiovanni (1991a) expressed concern that the endeavour to professionalize educational leadership through credentialing, rather than emphasising teaching expertise, could have adverse effects on schools, by separating administrators and teachers, threaten democracy in schools, and make it harder for women to become principals.

Having said that, it is obvious from other research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994; Lovett, 1993; Robertson, 1993, 1995; Stewart, 1997; Wadsworth, 1990) that principals find the mix of input by experts and practitioners, together with a programme that appears relevant and focused on real school problems, with regular, sustained interaction with peers and colleagues to be invaluable. Above all, the principals in these studies claimed, in evaluating their formal course learning, that they found solutions to many

problems of practice, that their job satisfaction was enhanced, and that they were helped in their careers. The motivation of principals who study for qualification courses and their estimate of the usefulness of the courses in personal and practical terms will be analysed in this research.

Informal Learning Modes And Methods

Role Modelling, Mentoring And Coaching

Among the methods available to support principals' learning are role modelling, mentoring and coaching. Role models provide personal learning and indirect teaching. The novice observes the more experienced from a distance with role models unaware usually of the learning taking place. With respect to principals' learning, role-modelling can be negative as well as positive. This research study may shed light on that particular subject.

Although there is some confusion caused by the variable meanings of the term (Gorinski, 1995), mentoring is the process where a more experienced person advises, guides, coaches and counsels a less experienced person (Irvine & Lovett, 1996). At the heart of mentoring is the relationship between the person being mentored and the person mentoring. The mentor relationship calls for openness and honesty and for the revealing of strengths and weaknesses. The relationship is improved if the relationship includes a measure of reciprocity but this is not easy for many mentors. Pocklington and Weindling (1996) state that mentoring is particularly important for new principals since "it is not possible fully to prepare someone for headship prior to taking up [the] post" (p. 177). Given that the first year of principalship has been found to be characterised by "considerable anxiety, frustration, and self-doubt" (Daresh & Playko, 1994, p. 36), mentoring is particularly appropriate as a learning strategy for new principals. In their study of mentoring for new principals, Pocklington and Weindling (1996) supported this contention, especially in developing relationships with the governing body and staff, and dealing with senior staff whose performance was unsatisfactory. Developing the whole school plan was another topic for which new principals sought the help of a mentor. I hoped the research would provide comparative studies.

Coaching is similar to mentoring in respect of the more experienced assisting the less experienced. In fact, Barnett (1995) used the terms interchangeably. He stressed the importance of cognitive coaching, referring to coaching in skills which require thinking

and understanding, such as thinking strategically or politically or with regard to problem solving; the kinds of topics for which Pocklington and Weindling (1996) also found new principals wanted mentor assistance. Coaching is one of the most effective ways of assisting those newly appointed to senior positions of responsibility.

Some professional associations provide a buddy system for new principals. A buddy system is a more informal system of support with a greater focus on socialisation and induction than is the case with mentoring and coaching. However the buddy could perform the role of mentor or of coach. One would expect mentoring and coaching to be of short duration, the aim being transfer of control to the principal as experience and expertise grows (Irvine & Lovett, 1996; Schön, 1987).

The literature survey indicated the value of role modelling, mentoring and coaching. I hoped that the research would indicate the extent of their usefulness to the New Zealand principals in the research study.

Structured Programmes Of Learning

In recent years, a number of structured programmes have been developed to assist principals learn the principal's job. Some examples were set up in the early 1990s by a group of researchers at Waikato University as part of the School Leaders' Project which aimed at identifying the learning needs of school leaders prior to determining how best to meet those needs. The basic premise was that learning is most effective when it is job-centred, supportive and non-threatening. The system involved peer partnerships. Matching of pairs was carefully organised and the programme included a blend of whole group seminars and skill training, discussion of theory and setting up support networks. Such programmes have many advantages for principals in that members are able to select a peer with whom they feel comfortable, and obtain neutral feedback from someone from outside the school (Robertson, 1994, 1995; Strachan & Robertson, 1992; Wadsworth, 1990). Other programmes emphasised training in strategies for developing reflective principalships (Stewart & Prebble, 1993).

Overseas examples of peer learning include Peer Assisted Learning developed in the United States (Barnett, 1990) and the Educative Leadership Project, (Duignan & Macpherson, 1987), Project Queensland Leader Development, (Crowther & Limerick, 1995) and Problem-based Learning (Grady et al., 1995) developed in Australia.

In the current research, I was interested to find out to what extent participation in structured learning was evident among the principals in the research and how helpful they found such programmes.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning theory has been described in detail in Part One of this chapter and is noted here simply to remind readers of the importance of experiential learning especially if the principal is of a reflective and evaluative frame of mind (Schön, 1987) and is prepared to apply rigorous tests of "validity and utility" (Schön, 1991, p. 10) to the product of reflection. One aspect of experience which has not been mentioned earlier is the learning that results from anecdotal talk. Bell (1994), Boud and Griffin (1987), Schön (1991) and Watson (1996) note that learning may take place when we talk about our learning. By so doing, experiential learning can be turned into knowledge propositions for sharing and debate, thereby creating insight (Brookfield, 1993a). In undertaking this research I expected to find that principals would learn more through experience as a learning mode than through other types of learning. I was also interested in the impact of traumatic events as learning experiences and the kinds of learning these events provided.

Courses, Seminars And Conferences

Courses, seminars and conferences are the basic sources of learning opportunities for principals in New Zealand and indeed in some cases tend to be the only learning sources used by principals (Lovett, 1996; Sewell, 1998). Professional associations target principals' learning needs through surveys of members and traditionally the Government, through its special agencies, has accepted its responsibility to provide training to support prescribed changes. I wanted to explore the importance of courses, conferences and seminars with principals to identify the extent to which they valued these strategies for learning. I was interested in knowing the nature of the learning that principals perceived they achieved through informal discussions and meetings with colleagues as a consequence of their attendance. I was particularly interested in the impact of these kinds of learning opportunities on practice.

Networking

One of the most likely consequences of attending courses, seminars and conferences, I expected would be networking. Networking is using informal contacts for advice, counselling, clarification and general support. Often networks are established formally under Ministry contracts and this was a well used strategy during the early years of the reforms (Bennett, 1994; Ramsay et al, 1991). However networking is used widely as friendship and professional support and grows out of all kinds of formal and informal contacts. Hallinger and Murphy (1991) noted that "perhaps the most important influences on the behaviour of school leaders are the attitudes and behaviours of other leaders - past and present - with whom they come in contact" (p. 520). The research will study the place of networking in aiding principals' learning. For example, networking has obvious links with meeting social needs, but how does networking affect the uniqueness of individual learning?

Appraisal

One management factor that is specifically related to learning and formative development is appraisal. Appraisal of principals is prescribed by statute and regulation (Education Act 1989; State Sector Act, PMS 1 1997). It must be carried out by the Board of Trustees and must focus on the learning needs and professional development of principals as well as accountability. Consequently principals should expect the appraisal system to help them in their learning. This has been found to be the case in research in Britain (Hewton & West, 1992). Principals need to be trained to obtain the maximum benefit for themselves from their own appraisal and in order that they may become skilled appraisers themselves, able to act as role models for their senior staff (Bollington, 1992; Gane & Morgan, 1992; Townsend, 1995). Principals' success in appraising their staff has an impact on school tone and climate (Gitlin & Smyth, 1989; Hattersley, 1992; Leithwood, 1990; Simons & Elliott, 1989; Snook, 1997). Principals will be asked about their experiences of appraisal as a learning strategy and their perceptions of their individual learning as a result of appraisal.

Identifying Learning Needs

To enable effective learning to occur, learning programmes need to be tailored to meet individual needs as studies have shown that people have highly varying strengths and weaknesses (Hall, Mackay & Morgan, 1986; Rentoul, 1996) and different needs at

different times in their careers (Leithwood, 1990). Individual learning needs are identified in four ways; by the individual's own feelings and awareness of needs (Bell & Gilbert, 1996), by the provision of new material to be absorbed such as changes to curriculum, legislation or policy affecting school management (Crowther & Limerick, 1995; Wadsworth, 1990), by needs identified by others such as could be the case with appraisal or a school inspection (Leithwood, 1990; Strachan & Robertson, 1992) or as part or result of a course, consultancy (Lovett, 1993; Marks, 1993; Robertson, 1994; Robinson, 1993; Stewart & Prebble, 1993), or school development project.

As I noted earlier, Burns (1995) commented that it is hard for adults to change their self-concept but Mezirow (1995b) considered that a habit of mind could be changed, once identified, by critical reflection of basic assumptions. Needs identification is closely related to critical reflection, self-knowledge and motivation (Boud, 1995; Davie, 1987; Macfarlane, 1994; Marsick, 1988; Sergiovanni, 1991b). It is very important for learning itself, since much learning requires a conscious effort over an extended period of time. Beliefs about adult learning and oneself as a learner, confidence in one's self, self-esteem and self-image also contribute to attitudes to learning needs. Self-knowledge is an integral part of learning (Poskitt, 1995; Steier, 1991). Indeed, the importance of self-knowledge for personal development is taken for granted generally by researchers and providers of professional development (Reason & Marshall, 1987). I discovered that despite the fact that educational learning providers urge people to gain self-knowledge as part of identifying learning needs (Barnett et al., 1992; Daresh & Playko, 1994; Day, 1992; Duignan, 1998; Snyder & Drummond, 1988), little guidance appeared to be offered on how this might be done or why it should be done. Stewart and Prebble (1993) suggested the use of a series of analytical questions and Barnett (1995) suggested the use of a mentor. However, little information was provided about why self-knowledge was important and how the self impacted on the job. Identifying learning needs related to the self was one of the features of learning which would be followed up in this research.

Interestingly enough, a recent study into coping strategies for dealing with stress (Whitehead & Ryba, 1995) appeared to show that learning and developing new or more sophisticated skills was not seen as a way of reducing stress. Another interesting feature is that literature on individual learning needs identification is far less readily available than is literature on school and personnel development as a whole. This might suggest that it is left to outside agents to propose that such and such is important for principal learning. Certainly, training providers and commentators from overseas (Begley, 1995;

Björk & Ginsberg, 1995; Conway & Calzi, 1995; Hallinger & Leithwood, 1996; Hallinger & Murphy, 1991; Tam & Cheng, 1996) and in New Zealand (Education Review Office, 1996a, 1997; Lovett, 1993, 1996; Sewell, 1998; Wadsworth, 1990) appeared conscious that principals have learning needs. Hall et al. (1986) who studied 15 principals in Britain, noted that deputy principals, who provided the greatest pool from which principals were appointed, displayed "highly varying strengths and weaknesses" (p. 218) with major consequences for preparatory training. This will be considered in the research.

Conclusion: Practical Application Frameworks

In this section I have argued that although learning is holistic, the ways principals learn may be studied from the point of view of meeting their social, personal and professional learning needs. This is an important distinction because it means that principals' learning must be studied from the point of view of the principal as individual learner (personal and social) and from the point of view of the individual learner as principal (social and professional). Professional needs are largely prescribed by Government and Ministry of Education and by the need for schools to meet local and community educational goals. Consequently, the tangible/intangible, holistic nature of educational management calls for professional learning of considerable complexity.

The individuality of the learner requires an investigation of learning styles such as those identified by Kolb (1984) and Bell and Gilbert (1996). In Part Two it is suggested that individuals use different styles to suit their purposes and needs at the time. Most people have preferred styles and providers of courses and learning strategies need to take preferred styles into account when planning programmes and courses by providing a variety of learning strategies.

Learning modes and methods include individual, paired and group learning methods, short and extended in-depth methods, formal and informal ways of learning as well as the daily experience of work which, I believe, is likely to be the most important aspect of their learning. The study of principals' learning will investigate which modes and methods principals use for their individual learning and what their perceptions are of the importance of these experiences, modes and methods.

PART 3: EXISTING RESEARCH ON PRINCIPALS

Introduction

A great deal of educational research related to principals, principalship and the management of schools is undertaken because of the importance of education. Education plays a critical role in providing for the health and social well-being of the nation, the economy and, indirectly, the body politic and democracy itself (Björk & Ginsberg, 1995; Smith & Blase, 1991; Myers, 1993, 1996; Pedder, 1993). This may help to explain the interventionist attitude of business in education (Carter, 1996; Clink, 1996; Irwin, 1994, 1996; Kerr, 1993, 1996; Myers, 1993, 1996). Effective principals are important to children's well-being and their learning (Björk & Ginsberg, 1995; Stewart & Prebble, 1993; Wadsworth, 1990). It is widely acknowledged, and not just in New Zealand, that within the school system, the principal, as chief executive, is likely the single most significant factor leading to the successful management of schools, for example; Austin, (1996), Bifano (1989), Dussault and Barnett (1996), Hall et al. (1986), Mortimore and Mortimore (1991), Ribbins and Marland (1994), Sergiovanni (1991b), Southworth (1990) and Rus (1995). In researching Canterbury schools, Gordon (1994) found that "there is little doubt that principals are the key players, and set the management style for the whole school (some are very hierarchical and exclusive; others work on networks and processes of inclusion)" (p.119).

In its broadest context, the education and training of principals is a matter of national importance (Education Review Office Report, 1996a). Considerable research literature exists describing the professional preparation and training of principals (Begley, 1995; Björk & Ginsberg, 1995; Crowther & Limerick, 1995; Kirby & Bogotch, 1996; Daresh & Playko, 1994; Duignan & Macpherson, 1987; Pocklington & Weindling, 1996; Robertson, 1994; Snyder & Drummond, 1988; Stewart, 1994, 1997; Strachan & Robertson, 1992). The principal's job, then, carries grave responsibilities with far-reaching consequences of the learning or failure to learn. The learning scenario is characterised by on-going challenge in educational (Bush, 1995; Wylie, 1994, 1995a, 1995b), social and economic (Nicholson & Galliène, 1995; Rae, 1989, 1996; Rentoul, 1996, Thrupp, 1996, 1997a, 1997b), moral and political dimensions (Bennett, 1994;

Dimmock, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1992a, 1992b). This mix of educational significance and task complexity added urgency to this research study. Among the earliest literature surveyed were studies of principals internationally and in New Zealand. These are discussed next.

Existing Studies

There are a number of current studies of British and American principals, and several New Zealand studies undertaken mainly as research for masters or doctoral degrees, which have helped to extend knowledge of the complex task of the principalship, what and how principals learn.

International Studies

A number of ethnographic and descriptive studies of principals have provided insights into the principal's work since Wolcott's (1973) well-known ethnographic study dispelled the myth that a principal lived an ordered life like a captain on the bridge, fully in control of the direction the ship was taking. For example, the ethnographic study of Hall et al. (1986) concentrated on describing secondary headteachers' actual work which was then contrasted with the prescribed role and the ideal role as defined by the Department of Education and Science. The study was based on observations of one working day of each of 15 headteachers and a detailed study over a year of four of the headteachers. At the end, the four were "judged on the criteria of 'Ten Good Schools' " (p. 214). The main focus was on what headteachers experienced, how they perceived their roles, and their strengths and weaknesses. Headteachers' learning and training was described in terms of the need for traditional kinds of in-service training and the need for training tailored to meet individual needs. Headteachers-as-learners was at best an implication rather than a specific finding of the research.

Southworth (1995) undertook an ethnographic study of headship based on an in-depth study of one headteacher. His focus was on three main issues; leadership, power and identity and the "thick description of the subject and the settings observed" (p. 30). Consequently while Southworth dealt with aspects of the principal's learning to be a headteacher, his research focus was on understanding and explaining the role and revealing how a head's identity developed through interacting with the environment.

Close links were drawn between the daily activities of the headteacher's life and professional and personal beliefs.

Several other studies, which focused on headteachers' perceptions of the job and their descriptions of their life experiences, dealt with learning but in an incidental way. For example, Ribbins and Marland (1994) used two broad themes to research seven headteachers of large secondary schools. These themes were preparing for headship and professing headship. The total research study had three levels. The first aimed to report pictures of the headteachers as "situated"; that is, from their point of view. The second aimed to contextualise the portraits with information from "significant others" and the third to subsume the first two levels and investigate the headteachers-in-action. To date, the first part only appears to have been completed. This research was invaluable in the context of my own research as the questions used in the interviews helped to shape my questions as I describe in Chapter Three. Ribbins and Marland interviewed the principals about their up-bringing and schooling, their career development and key learning experiences. The emphasis on learning is less direct than I intend in my study.

Mortimore and Mortimore (1991) carried out a study of seven primary headteachers, six female and one male, a study designed to let them "speak for themselves" (p. vii) although in the public view as identified headteachers. One of the headteachers was Canadian, the remainder British. All were considered to be effective in their jobs. The interview questions led the headteachers to describe their personal and career backgrounds, their personal philosophies of education, priorities, intentions and critical experiences. Descriptions of learning experiences and learning itself were common to all narratives. In their conclusion, Mortimore and Mortimore (1991) stated that all the headteachers had learnt and developed their philosophies as a result of their experiences over the years. Certainly in their accounts of their experiences of headship, these heads spoke of their learning, influential mentors and critical learning incidents. "Their genesis lies in personal history, reading, experience and perhaps most of all, personal example. The power of modelling in teaching is unsurpassed" (p. 124). Mortimore and Mortimore (1991) also noted that what headteachers had to learn depended on the situations they found in their schools. This study more closely mirrors the study which I wanted to carry out than do most of the others. However the purpose of the Mortimores' study (1991) is more general than the purpose of my study, in that it seeks to portray the nature of the headteachers' on-going experience as a principal. While learning the job is certainly part of that experience, learning is not the main focus as it is in my study. Furthermore, the fact that the research participants were selected

because they were judged to be successful, suggests that the purpose of the study was to identify best practice.

In an interesting Australian study of the way principals were portrayed in 40 films, Thomas (1995) discovered that in film "there is little that is stereotypic about the role of the school principal and the types of leadership practised" (p. 1). "Their communities differ: their schools differ; there is no common mould" (p. 20). However, an important study by Grace (1995) which traced the changing nature of school leadership from the 19th century to the present, found that, in general, school leadership was moulded by the dominant political and social culture of the times. Grace (1995) argued that up until the 1940s, headteachers tended to reflect societal norms of class leadership by being hierarchical and autocratic. From the 1940s to the 1970s, headteachers continued to present much the same image, now legitimated by professional expertise rather than by class. The period to the mid-1980s was characterised by greater participation and power-sharing and acceptance of innovation. However, real democracy was not a characteristic of school management of this period. From the mid-1980s, radical reforms were introduced which claimed to democratise school management through market philosophies of meeting consumer needs. Grace studied the reactions of 88 headteachers to the reforms and found that they fell into three main categories; "the headteacher-manager" (p. 73) who largely supported the market-type reforms, "the headteacher-professional" who had serious doubts about the impact of market values on equitable education-for-all, but who wanted to do their best for their students, and the "headteacher-resisters", a small number who opted out and attempted to operate as non-Government funded schools. According to Grace (1995), headship and school management is facing a "cultural cross-roads" (p. 208) with democracy the critical issue - democracy based on the values of the market place or the values of community and equity. I wondered how the interpretations of these two different studies would be reflected in my study.

New Zealand Studies

In New Zealand a number of studies have explored different aspects of the role of the principal. Two recent studies have been conducted from a feminist perspective. Strachan (1996) studied three feminist principals from the point of view of the influence of their feminist values on their role and functioning as principals in an era of neo-liberal and managerial reforms. Barnes (1994) studied eight recently-appointed principals over an eight month period to compare her own experience as a teaching

principal with the experiences of others in order to discern issues militating against women principals. The emphasis in these studies has been on the influences and experiences of actually being principals. Learning to be principals was an incidental part of the studies rather than a focal part.

A study that was concerned with principals' learning was carried out by Wadsworth (1990) in the early years of the education reforms. As part of a Ministry contract, the School Leaders Project, Wadsworth (1990) researched the professional development needs of secondary principals. The focus of his research was to find out what principals needed to learn, and to identify best ways of meeting the needs. Although Wadsworth's research was focused on principals' learning, his orientation was directed to what needed to be done temporally and contextually. One of his suggestions was that further research should be undertaken into the lives of principals, and this suggestion is taken up in my study.

Robertson (1995) also studied principals as learners of educational leadership. From an initial study to identify the preferred and most effective ways of principals' learning, she applied theory of praxis: that is, linking theory and practice, consciously and intentionally (Robertson, 1994), and developed an action research model of learning and development. This model used three-way partnerships of learner principal, peer principal and outside consultant as an effective way for principals to learn. In Robertson's later study (1994, 1995), the learning of principals through a specific model was the focal point of the research. Many of the ideas from Robertson's (1994, 1995) research are relevant for my research, although my research picks up more on Wadsworth's (1990) suggestion that the internal lives and backgrounds of principals should be studied.

A recent study by Stewart (1997) investigated how "principals construct meaning from experiences" (p. i) in developing and putting into place School Development. The purpose of this study was to understand "the interface between principal thinking and action" (p. i) and how this operated in practice. Stewart used three case studies to explore how a range of issues relating to a particular model of school development operated. This study focused on learning within a specific context in which principals were one among many participants, but I expected that Stewart's emphasis on reflective practice would make this a relevant work for reference.

A study by Harold (1995) investigated the ways by which principals and Boards of Trustees in three rural schools negotiated the transition to local control from 1989 to 1990. This researcher was interested in “issues of power, the process of change, and the dynamics of the board of trustees as a new administration system” (p. 57). This study did not focus directly on learning but did indicate the different management styles of principals.

In summary, these studies from Britain, Australia and New Zealand, featured principals' learning from a variety of perspectives. Barnes (1994), Harold, (1995), Mortimore and Mortimore (1991) Robertson (1991, 1995), and Southworth (1995) described primary principals. Hall et al. (1986), Ribbins and Marland (1994), Strachan (1996) and Wadsworth (1990) studied secondary principals. While learning was featured in most of the studies in varying degrees, the objectives and interests of the researchers gave the description of learning a particular perspective. For example, Strachan (1996), and Barnes (1994) to a lesser extent, focused on feminist influences in being principals. Robertson developed a particular model of learning for principals. Wadsworth (1990) endeavoured to identify and meet learning needs. Barnes (1994), Hall et al. (1986), Ribbins and Marland (1994), Mortimore and Mortimore (1991) and Southworth (1995) all focused on the principal's role and identity through producing pen portraits of what principals did and what had influenced them in their ways of operating. Harold's (1995) focus was on relations with the Board of Trustees. Thomas's (1995) film study developed the theme of the humanity and individuality of principals and Stewart focused on change through critical reflection. All of these studies provide useful data for my own study of principals' learning.

Gaps In The Research

Considering the importance of the job, the body of research on principals as individuals and adult learners is not extensive. Past research questions have sought mainly three kinds of information. What does your job entail? What do you need to learn? and how do you learn best? These are very important questions. However there is little research on the specific issue of principals-as-learners. In schools, teachers are encouraged to look at the individual child as a starting point, so that they are able to tailor instruction to meet the needs of the individual. They seek to find out what the

child has by way of knowledge that may be built upon. They may seek to understand the background experience so that learning can become an integrative process (Milne, 1992). They may seek to understand how the child reasons and learns (Marton, 1988; Marton & Booth, 1996, 1997). In the case of principals' learning, the person of the learner is barely touched upon even when the principal is a beginner (Daresh & Playko, 1994). This may be because the personal and individual is usually downplayed by academics in favour of generalisation (Boud et al., 1993) despite repeated assertions that as far as learning is concerned, individuality is important because people learn in unique ways (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Candy, 1981; Gardner, Torff, & Hatch 1996; Knowles, 1990; Kolb, 1984; Schön, 1987; Sergiovanni, 1991b; Tennant, 1993). Course preparation often includes a component of personal revelation of experiences and identity (Daresh & Playko, 1994; Day, 1992). In my own experience of using a variety of training devices and being the recipient myself of such devices, the brief exploratory, getting-to-know-you types of exercises, which often began training sessions, were not effective in enabling either the training recipient or the training provider to identify the real basis on which the training was to be built.

The trend towards involving principals in designing and planning their own courses to ensure that the course meets individual needs, while beneficial, is no guarantee of programme success (Crowther & Limerick, 1995; Lovett, 1996). Reflective principalship courses may go some way to remedying the situation of identifying the principal as person and as learner. However, from a study of some literature on the reflective practitioner (Bartlett, Lee, Morrison & Ward, 1996; Marks, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1991b; Stewart, 1997; Stewart & Prebble, 1993), it appears likely that that reflection is related to on-the-job role fulfilment, goal achievement and strategies to repair some situation, rather than reflection on the self of the learner.

Several researchers have acknowledged the situation. Wadsworth (1990) recommended that providers of professional development should pay particular attention to the ways in which school leaders learn in the context of their hectic daily practice. Wadsworth also stated that "the internal lives of principals seem important and worthy of research" (p. 108-9). In the British context, Ribbins and Marland (1994) argued strongly for the study of the principalship through the contextualised experiences of individuals. In the general context of adult learning, Boud et al., (1993) stated that there was a "dearth of consideration of personal experience and the context of adult learning in current educational writing" (p.1). Boud and Walker (1991) highlighted the need for research into the messy realities of personal experience. Greenfield himself (Greenfield

& Ribbins, 1993) considered, after a life-time of studying educational organisations, that the focus maybe should be directed to the contextual experiences of individual practitioners. Johnson (1994) and Schön (1987) both noted the neglect of complex human issues in most research on educational administration. "The most important areas of professional development now lie beyond the conventional boundaries of professional competence" (Schön, 1987, p. 7). From this reading of literature it was clear that there was a place for further research on principals as learners and their perceptions of themselves as learners. In researching the individual learning of principals, I aim to be able to add some illumination to the debate.

Summary And Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the theoretical and practical setting into which the study will fit. I have described my understanding of what constitutes knowledge in educational management from a philosophical and epistemological perspective. This is the knowledge which principals are required to know and understand. It is knowledge which subsumes facts and theory about systems and structures which can be identified in empirical research, as well as the values, motives, intentions and feelings which can be identified in qualitative research. I have taken the view that theorising from the widest definition of what constitutes knowledge in educational management must lead to more productive explanations and, consequently, research findings of greater utility and explanatory power.

Since the study is about principals' learning, I examined a number of theories of learning which appeared particularly relevant to the educational management context; behaviourist and constructivist theories, followed by action learning, experiential learning and the special features of adult learning. I considered the role of self-knowledge and such related issues as learning styles and learning transfer, change theory and barriers to learning. What the literature search appeared to denote was that all these theories would provide fruitful material for an investigation into a field of inquiry marked by individuality and specificity.

The literature search included the practical application of principals' learning. Particular attention was paid to the demands of the current environment and the role of

leadership and managing change. Learning modes and methods, and methods of identifying learning needs, were outlined to indicate the scope of the total learning picture. Throughout this account of the practical application of learning, it was clear that a personal response on the part of a principal was accepted as an inevitable part of being human. The personal was at the heart of professional development and learning, although social interaction was an essential component of personal learning and professional learning. However, I noticed that despite acknowledgement of the importance of the personal in learning, taking account of the uniqueness of learning responses did not feature markedly in most learning modes and methods, apart from personal study and reflection. Even in that case, it appeared as if the orientation of much personal study and reflection was toward school goal attainment. I proposed research to clarify to some extent the nature of individual principal's learning and reflective practices.

I discussed some of the research currently available on the subject of principals and their roles. This study led to the conclusion that while research on the principal's role as administrator or manager, leader of staff, programme developer, visionary and community figurehead was extensive and included ways of training principals in these roles, the personal stories of principals as learners of principalship were ignored in the main or described from the perspective of role and best practice.

In conclusion, although the personal dimension was established as critical in the theory of educational management and the theory of learning, it appeared that the personal dimension of principals' learning with regard to the principalship, was then largely lost sight of in the literature relating to the practical application of that learning. This appeared to be the case whether that literature dealt with preparation for or with being a principal. Principals looking to most literature for answers to their problems of educational management, would not be encouraged to examine their own unique and personal histories for the source of problems and, therefore, likely keys to solutions. Rather they would be directed to generalised solutions or to the experience of other principals. These will be important but the experience of others might not allow them to diagnose and solve their own problems.

The research is designed to add to the knowledge of the educational management of schools by investigating the ways principals learn to be principals. It is based on the expectation that this line of inquiry will provide some suggestions for managing the most intractable problems of practice which principals face.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

PART 1: ISSUES OF METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Methodology involves explaining "the epistemological assumptions implicit in specific methods a way of looking at phenomena that specifies how a method 'captures' the 'object' of study" (Tuchman, 1994, p. 306). Methodologies are based also on ontological assumptions. I argued in Chapter Two, that explanations of knowledge in the field of educational management must encompass the full range of structural, systemic, social and moral issues, which fall within the framework of this field, and that study of learning must address the personal, social and cultural, holistic nature of learning. Although research problems themselves do not necessarily dictate which methods should be used in particular research (Anderson, 1990; Bifano, 1989; Garrison & Shale, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), some research methodologies are more suited than others to finding answers to specific research questions (Church, 1997; Morse, 1994). I concluded that a form of qualitative methodology would have the greatest explanatory power in this study of learning educational management. The first question to be answered was, which form?

Qualitative Research Methodology

Qualitative research methodology has evolved throughout the 20th century, driven by a quest for research which would deliver rigour but also take account of subjective data such as attitudes and values. Debate over the nature of rigour and truth has been a driving force in the evolution of qualitative research. However, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) noted there are many methodologies which are called qualitative, and that

"qualitative research privileges no single methodology over any other Nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods that are entirely its own" (p. 3). Qualitative research is far from unified but is "defined primarily by a series of essential tensions, contradictions and hesitations" (p. ix) because qualitative research includes both broad interpretative approaches and narrow positivist and postpositivist approaches. As Richardson (1994) noted, "the postmodernist context of doubt distrusts all methods equally" (p. 518). I interpreted this to mean that while qualitative research methodology acknowledged data and interpretation verified using stringent criteria, absolute certainties could no longer be claimed. Results must be open to challenge and debate.

Qualitative research methodology provided me with different ways of researching to find answers to the questions I wished to ask (Church, 1997). I remind the reader that these questions were how educational managers perceived that they learnt educational management and how they perceived that what they learnt impacted on their practice. For example, postpositivist methodology would enable me to work through hypotheses and propositions and, in particular, to concentrate on cause and effect. A constructivist approach would emphasise "emergent designs and emergent understandings" (Denzin, 1994, p. 502) and produce an interpretative, phenomenological text which portrayed the the knowledge, understandings and language of the people being studied. My emphasis could have been on simple reporting of opinions, analysis of themes, identification of patterns and theoretical frameworks, or formulation of theory at a pre-determined level of abstraction. I had a measure of choice. Before describing the qualitative research methodology which appeared to suit the research questions best, I explain some of the issues involved in this research problem. These are the issues of research data derived mainly from statements about attitudes, beliefs and perceptions and, since the study was retrospective, data which relied on memory. Two further issues were studying experience and self-study, since I intended to consider my own experiences of learning educational management. Each of these issues is discussed next to establish some of the epistemological and ontological assumptions underpinning the research.

Researching Attitudes, Beliefs And Perceptions

Bell and Gilbert (1996) used the terms beliefs and knowledge interchangeably. In this research, I have interpreted beliefs as a type of knowledge; that is, *what* is thought about something. I have defined attitudes as a consistent *way* of thinking about something, based on beliefs and personal theories, values and feelings (Hinchcliff, 1997), which creates a predisposition to act in a certain way. According to some philosophers, knowledge (and research data) derived from attitudes and beliefs do not

warrant the status of first class truth (Baker, 1995; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Marton, 1981). Other philosophers argued for the validity of knowledge drawn from such sources and I was drawn to this way of thinking by the utility of the arguments put forward. I cite Baker (1995) as the main spokesperson for recognition of everyday knowledge.

Baker (1995) argued that everyday knowledge, which included attitudes and beliefs, had its own integrity "no less revelatory of reality - genuine reality - than is knowledge discovered by physics or any other scientific discipline" (p. 4) because this knowledge is essential for us to lead our daily lives. Baker rejected what she termed "the standard view" of many materialist philosophers; namely, that "attitudes ... are (or are constituted by, or are realized in) particular brain states" (p. 5) and can therefore be known only by being related to something in the brain and verified by science. Baker argued for a metaphysical view based on the evidence of practice. "The nature of attitudes is best revealed by their operation in our practices" (p. 20). This philosophy, Baker (1995) called Practical Realism. The Practical Realist claims that concepts of beliefs and attitudes can "be" human truth and that they have the advantage of being able to explain human behaviour. Attitudes and beliefs can be identified by analysing intentions and by studying practice, especially cognitive practice, seen in terms of what people do, say or think. Consequently, a person's attitudes, beliefs, desires and motives, as captured through the spoken word or behaviour, are acceptable research data to explain human behaviour. Further, I concluded that I would be able to access some dimensions of attitudes and beliefs about learning educational management through the descriptive statements of the research participants.

One attribute of belief is perception. Many researchers use the term without definition, implying no more than a way of seeing (Bifano, 1989; Greenfield, Licata & Johnson, 1992) or simply depend for interpretation on common usage (Schwandt, 1994). According to Hamilton (1994), Immanuel Kant's interpretation of perception indicated that perception was "more than seeing. Human perception derives not only from the evidence of the senses but also from the mental apparatus that serves to organise the incoming sense impressions" (p. 63). I intended to use the definition of perception as it is commonly used; that is, general impressions derived from individual interpretation. One of the complaints of some researchers (Johnson, 1994; Schön, 1987) is that theorists fail to offer practical help to practitioners and it appeared to me that accepting and acting on Baker's theory of the validity and utility of everyday knowledge and a general description of perception was a helpful way of bridging the gap between academic and practitioner. As Griffiths (1995) noted, speaking of the selection and use of theory, theory should be chosen "according to the problem at hand" (p. 157). I hoped that

theoretical propositions derived from principals' own accounts of their attitudes, beliefs and perceptions would be useful in suggesting solutions to principals' problems of practice.

In this section also, I draw the attention of the reader to the question of access to attitudes, beliefs and perceptions through explanations. Speech, vocabulary, speaker-receiver interaction all impact on what passes from one person to another in research. These issues are central to what Denzin and Lincoln (1994) have called "the fifth moment" (p. 575) in the history of research, a period distinguished by "the humanistic commitment of the qualitative researcher to study the world always from the perspective of the interacting individual" (p. 575). I return to this aspect of qualitative research methodology later in this chapter as problems of interpreting experience and writing the research text.

Memory

In answer to the question "How did you learn to be a principal or educational manager?" the respondent must depend on memory. The literature review indicated that memories are an important source of special kinds of knowledge. "Memories are compilations, constructions, or compositions of knowledge. Researchers have identified three levels of structure ... we shall refer to these as *lifetime periods*, *general events*, and *event specific knowledge*" (Conway & Rubin, 1993, p. 104). This description, which Conway and Rubin (1993) developed fully in their discussion of the findings of other researchers, seemed a useful configuration for this study. I wanted to explore learning at specific times in the principals' careers; for example learning during different lifetime periods, such as time growing up, time at Teachers' College, time as an assistant teacher and so on. Conway and Rubin (1993) found that lifetime periods provided effective retrieval cues for memories. General events are repeated events or episodes. Appraisals over a number of years might be termed general events. Often general events act as reminders for other relevant experiences. "Event specific knowledge tends to take the form of images, feelings, and highly specific details indicating the retention of sensory details of objects and actions in a general event" (Conway & Rubin, 1993, p. 107) which might occupy minutes, hours or days.

Other research (Barsalou, 1988; Brewer, 1988; Collins, Gathercole, Conway & Morris, 1993; Egan, 1984; McCauley, 1988; Neisser, 1988; Nelson, 1993; Olney, 1980) indicated the different functions as well as the complex nature and structure of memory. For example, Fivush (1988) noted that event memory "helps organize our knowledge

about ourselves" (p. 277). Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault and Benton (1992) also stressed the importance of memory in enabling the self to develop a sense of identity. They developed theory based on memories as data and noted two important characteristics of memories as a source of data. They argued that part of the complexity associated with memory derives from the fact that memory of events changes over time as new knowledge alters the way remembered events are evaluated. Furthermore their feminist research into emotion showed gender differences in the ways men and women think about and remember events. These characteristics of memory will need to be borne in mind when analysing data based on memory. Knowledge derived from memory was situated in memory of experience. Experience also constituted a special research issue as I describe next.

Issues Of Studying Experience

I proposed to ask principals to reflect on their experience of learning to be principals. In other words their attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and memories would be drawn from their discussion of experiences. However, the literature search made me aware that, although the study of experience is the basis of all sociology, there are methodological difficulties associated with the study of experience and these need to be confronted. One of the problems is that experience must be translated, first by the research participant and then by the text writer. "Language, speech, and thought mediate and define the very experience one attempts to describe" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 356) and texts themselves are "shaped by the use of voice, signature, and the imagined presence of a reading audience". Another argument is that experience is holistic and comprehensive and must be processed to make it manageable and capable of analysis. The result may well be distortion or at least the creation of something different (Boud & Walker, 1993; Denzin, 1989; Marton & Booth, 1996).

A further issue is that interpreting and writing about others' experience, I must be aware of my own stories and predispositions and how they influence my research (Fine, 1994). My voice will be there in the text as well as the voices of the participants as my "research". This is a necessary part of research, for as Clandinin and Connelly (1994) note, "voice and signature make it possible for there to be conversations through the texts among participants, researchers, and audiences" (p. 425). In this way one of the primary purposes of research is achieved; namely, adding to the knowledge pool. However, I intended to go further and study my own learning experience as an educational manager and make my predispositions clear. This issue is discussed next.

Self-study

Although autobiography is well established in research, and is "one of the most rapidly developing" (p. 288) forms of life writing (Smith, 1994), writing about the self is also controversial (Duddy, 1995). There are some researchers who stipulate that the self may not study the self on the grounds that there could be too many methodological problems with the "eye" and the "I" (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, McCormack Steinmitz, 1991). As they said:

Being a studier of oneself - apart from studying oneself as the researcher - is sometimes excruciatingly difficult, sometimes impossible. Some of that has to do with developing extraordinary vision - that of seeing out of and reporting from the double lenses - researcher/researchee - often simultaneously. Some of that has to do with the pain of seeing what we would wish not to see. (p.137)

Ely et al. (1991) stressed the need for researchers of the self to be aware of the possibility that details uncovered by the research could affect the researcher in adverse ways; to accept that a researcher of the self had a moral obligation to maintain high standards of detachment and honesty; and to ensure before setting out that the personality of the researcher had the capacity to respond positively to whatever imperfections the self-study turned up. I accepted the challenge and began this self-study enthusiastically. I hoped that the experience would be enlightening, provide answers to questions of personal development and perhaps lead to what Barbour, (1992) described as "self-transcendence ... and ... transformation" (p. 180) of attitudes and approaches to issues.

As noted in the previous section, the researcher is always in the text as writer. Therefore the researcher needs to be aware of the presence of the covert self. The literature was very clear on the matter. "All texts are personal statements" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 578). "Lurking behind each method of research is the personal equation" (Vidich & Lyman, 1994, p. 24). It is now widely accepted that even the most objective of studies are subjective to a degree (Anderson, 1990; Greene, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Smith, 1994). "Do Social Scientists' personalities find expression in their work? Yes, they do." (Diesing, 1991, p. 273). Diesing goes on to describe how personalities influence all aspects of research whether the methods used include experiment, survey, interview, clinical research or ethnography. This is seen, for example, in interviewer effects on research participants (Ely et al. 1991; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Personalities also influence analysis, recording of findings and defence of theses. If one accepts these assertions, it follows that all research should be

acknowledged as self-study to some degree and the self should be made visible, as part of the verification process.

Positive reference to the overt self in research is found widely in the literature also. For example, research problems often grow out of curiosity about some aspect of the researcher's own experience, whether the problem is to be investigated by quantitative or qualitative methods (Anderson, 1990; Schön, 1991; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). That problem may well be centred in experiential learning which is itself indicative of conscious self-study on the part of the learner (Boud & Walker, 1991; Boud, Cohen & Walker, 1993; Brookfield, 1993b, 1987; Lanzara, 1991; Mattingly, 1991). This happened in my case. One of the benefits of autobiographical case studies of the self, like all case studies, is that they allow for the study of complex causal links which are not accessible through survey or observation (Yin, 1994). These references in the literature indicated to me that self-referenced investigations could lead to knowledge that was empowering for the individual, perhaps even emancipatory, and fecund in generating theory, to borrow a term used by Evers and Lakomski (1991, 1995b).

The self study, therefore, is based on the position, that autobiographical research is a well established form of research and that selves are an inherent, if often hidden, part of research. I accepted that my personal position must be up front and that my theoretical sensitivity as a researcher must be open to challenge (Burgess, 1984; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In particular, I was aware that in conceptualising, interpreting and explaining principals' learning, the danger existed that my own life history and in particular my own lack of experience of principalship could be an impediment (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994) and would need to be mediated by openness. Whereas the principals' experience represented "experience near" (Smith, 1994, p. 298), my experience as researcher and provider of principal training represented "experience distant". I would need to find ways of solving these and other problems of studying experience.

To return to the question with which I began this section. Which qualitative methodology would suit best a research problem which looked for data in everyday knowledge drawn from experience and expressed in attitudes, beliefs and perceptions, which relied on memories, and which included a self-study with the potential to become overly influential?

Grounded Theory Methodology

The research questions, and the issues subsumed within them, led me to define an appropriate methodology as one that took account of phenomenological perspectives, description or documentation (in qualitative terms) and interpretation leading to substantive theory. Grounded theory appeared to be a methodology which would meet these criteria. Grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s as a specific research methodology. Denzin (1994) noted that the "grounded theory perspective is the most widely used qualitative interpretive framework in the social sciences today" (p. 508). If so this may be because of the methodologies practical stance on knowledge creation combined with structured steps for data analysis. Punch and Wildy (1995) who employed grounded theory in their research, considered that the tools, techniques and procedures of grounded theory for analysing complex data in order to develop theory, made grounded theory a particularly appropriate methodology for educational management.

Grounded theory lies within the qualitative research framework (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) as "a *general methodology* for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273). Grounded theory is a pragmatic way of establishing everyday truth as it is "enacted" (p. 279) by humans. The grounded theory paradigm aims at precision in developing theory but it is also creative. As Strauss and Corbin (1994) stress "ours is interpretive work and ... interpretations *must* include the perspectives and voices of the people whom we study" (p. 274). The experience of the researcher may contribute also to data collection. "The researcher can get - and cultivate - crucial insights not only during his [*sic*] research (and from his research) but from his own personal experiences prior to or outside it" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 252). Grounded theory proceeds by constantly making comparisons, drawing on personal and professional knowledge and technical literature, to "break through assumptions" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 84) and "think analytically rather than descriptively about data" (p. 85). "One does not begin with a theory, then prove it" (Strauss, & Corbin, 1990, p. 23). Rather the theory evolves inductively. I considered that this process would be beneficial in helping me break out of the constraints of my prior knowledge while still being able to utilise it.

One of the significant features of grounded theory is its adaptability. Strauss and Corbin (1994) commented: "As with any general methodology, grounded theory's actual use in practice has varied with the specifics of the area under study, the purpose and

focus of the research, the contingencies faced Individual researchers invent different specific procedures" (p. 276). Grounded theory appealed as a structured yet flexible way of dealing with the research problem. As I have noted, grounded theory is process driven. Consequently issues of process such as verification, data gathering methods and analysing data are discussed elsewhere in this chapter and are not expanded further here.

Verification

The literature search on verification provided me with a number of different ways of verifying my research findings. The following discussion shows how I incorporated different approaches.

As noted earlier, qualitative research must meet rigorous standards of verification (Richardson, 1994) if the findings are to be taken seriously. Strauss and Corbin (1990) stressed the importance of rigour, but stated that the "usual canons of 'good science' ... require redefinition in order to fit the realities of qualitative research, and the complexities of social phenomena" (p. 250). They remarked that "every mode of discovery develops its own standards - and procedures for achieving them What is important is that all of these criteria are made explicit" (p. 250). Grounded theory is practical as well as precise and aims at generating new theory. Consequently, Glaser and Strauss (1967) urged that verification should not take place to the point "where verification becomes so paramount as to curb generation" (p. 28). They argued that the grounded theory processes themselves entailed verification and that theory based on grounded theory techniques should be judged on the way the techniques were used "for collecting, coding, analysing, and presenting data" (p. 224). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) commented that "some critics have suggested that [Strauss and Corbin] remain vague on how verification is accomplished" (p. 205). Consequently I examined other ways of verifying the emerging theory.

Wolcott (1994) argued that research methods for verification should be balanced, thorough and open, in a discussion which he called "making a case for cutting validity down to size" (p. 369). Evers and Lakomski (1991), who attempted to bridge different research paradigms, emphasised comprehensiveness, transparency, consistency, compatibility of theory and findings and utility of findings. I thought that this description rounded out and was sympathetic to grounded theory and Wolcott's (1994) approach. Within the constraints of a retrospective study I certainly aimed to demonstrate the criteria of utility; that is, verification through the potential usefulness of the theory in

terms of practice (Lane, 1995; Evers & Lakomski, 1991). Comprehensiveness was entailed in grounded theory processes, especially in the conditional matrix, which I endeavoured to achieve through a wide survey of relevant literature. For example, the broad scope of the literature search covered theories of educational administration and learning, practical application, and description of existing studies of principals. Comprehensiveness would be sought also through the selection of a range of principals as research participants, and from a variety of relevant documentation. Developing comprehensiveness would, I expected, constitute a style of triangulation. Integrating the data from the literature survey, from interviews, from conference/seminar feedback, and from analysis of documentation would allow for a type of "cross validation" (Jick, 1979, p. 602), and denote "converging lines of inquiry" (Yin, 1994, p. 92). I endeavoured to ensure transparency through revelation of my theorising and detailed description of the process used throughout the research. This process would include inviting the comments of peers, by means of presenting papers at conferences, and by re-interviewing some of the principals involved in the research. One way I considered important for laying the foundations of rigorous verification, was my own stance as researcher-as-learner. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) stressed the importance of this stance for a researcher who wanted to keep an open mind. I concluded that verification and validation in qualitative research should be a matter of balance, common-sense, openness and the pursuit of the highest standards possible within all stages of the research design and operation. By conceptualising verification in ways that absorbed the strategies of different research theorists, I hoped to ensure rigour of my research process and findings.

Having described the methodology, the epistemological assumptions implicit in the specific methods used, it is now time to outline the methods themselves.

PART 2: RESEARCH DESIGN

In this section I describe the theory and thinking behind the research method and design as preparation for describing the actual research process in Chapter Four. I proposed to gather data primarily from three main sources; interviews, documents and literature. As I noted on page 11, the literature search continued throughout the data gathering and analysis, as part of the grounded theory process of theoretical sampling and comparison using a conditional matrix, which is elaborated below, and the

verification process. Observation constituted a minor source of data. Finally I discuss report writing.

The Research Participants

Research participants should be knowledgeable, articulate, accessible, willing and committed since the research places demands on informants' time (Anderson, 1990; Ely et al., 1991; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). They should be "determined according to the needs of the study, and not according to external criteria, such as random sampling" (Morse, 1994, p. 229). I planned to select principals for ease of access representing primary, secondary, male and female groups. In addition to the larger group of principals, I also intended to use self-study as a case study. Case studies are narrow, focused studies, concerned in the main with how things happen and why, within a real life context (Anderson, 1990; Bifano, 1989; Yin, 1994). They are justified in a context where "the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 1994, p.13). I considered that learning relating to educational administration provided such a context. The case study in this research was designed to serve three purposes: first, to provide depth and range in studying the phenomenon of learning educational management; second, to provide an additional avenue for comparison, thereby exploiting the comparative, interpretive dimensions of the grounded theory methodology. Third, the self-study was intended as a stimulator of ideas. However, I included a case study in the research design with a degree of tentativeness. Stake (1994) noted that while case studies may be required for comparative purposes, each case study is unique. The self-study, therefore, as a case study constitutes what Stake (1994) called an "intrinsic case study" (p. 237). In other words it is studied mainly for its own interest.

Research Methods

Interviewing

Interviewing is one of the most widely used but complex tools in qualitative research (Anderson, 1990; Fontana & Frey, 1994; Yin, 1994). One reason why interviewing is complex, is because it is defined by the methodology and the nature of the research topic. Furthermore, the style of interviewing will determine whether the interviewee is a "respondent", providing information, or an "informant" (Yin, 1994, p. 84) providing opinion as well as information.

I was concerned to have principals as thoughtful informants providing insights rather than respondents providing limited answers to pre-ordered questions. Consequently, I needed the principals to adopt a reflective stance. Before going on to describe interviewing further, I explain the thinking about reflection which influenced the research design. Reflection was discussed in Chapter Two in relation to learning. However reflection is a research tool as much as a learning tool. Lieblich and Josselson (1994) noted that "the importance of reflection in qualitative research and analysis, ... can hardly be overemphasised" (p. xi). Reflection as research method was expected to include structuring and restructuring ideas and thoughts in terms of concepts of learning to be a principal. In other words I expected that the data would be influenced by the act of reflecting itself at the time of the interviews and that the data collected would be a moderated, up-dated version of the learning that actually took place. The present would be present in accounts of the past. I accepted this as a feature of the data. I also expected that principals might use the product of their reflections in future action but did not set out to ensure this.

An additional reason why interviewing is complex in this research is because the research topic of learning is highly complex. Learning which influences a principal is "rooted in past experiences" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991, p. 259), "from infancy onward" (Evers and Lakomski, 1991, p. 232). Research into learning requires delving into specific professional education and career experience, political and economic perspectives (Schön, 1987). As the research method designed to discover knowledge, reflection during interviewing includes a number of inherent difficulties (Bright, 1996). On the one hand reflection about the self as interviewee creates privileged information since what the self knows about itself is knowable by no-one else. The information is also flawed since there is no way that the researcher, in a broad brush study of this kind, can know the extent to which the information may be corrupted by memory failure, deliberate intention to conceal, inability to express meanings in words or by premature closure of the discussion. Another problem is that the researcher may hear from her own frame of reference what is not the intention of the informant who is the self (Steier, 1991). "As ... researchers, we create worlds through the questions that we ask coupled with what we and others regard as reasonable responses to our questions" (p. 1). This reading of the literature indicated that the selectivity of remembering and the potential for forgetting that is part of reflection and interviewing, would be a potential area of weakness in my methods. I took steps to counter this problem in the way the interview schedule was designed as demonstrated below.

The structures of interviews are conceptualised in a number of different ways (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Fontana & Frey, 1994; Krausz & Miller, 1974). To describe the design for interviewing adopted in this research, I use the following topics; the interview schedule, semi-structured interviewing, interactive interviewing and issues.

An interview schedule which I found in the literature (Ribbins & Marland, 1994) was modified with the help of colleagues [Appendix A]. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) noted that the use of "such facilitators" (p. 67) is essential for quality interview schedules to ensure objectivity and logical development, which the researcher may be too committed to the project to notice.

Semi-structured or flexible interviewing was defined as "unstructured" by some writers, (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 273) and "focused" by others (Krausz & Miller, 1974, p. 53). Ely et al. (1991) noted that every interview is structured, the structure being a matter of choice as to the degree of openness and control allowed by the interviewer. I chose semi-structured interviewing because, on the one hand, it was important to help the principals focus on key elements of the principals' very diverse and complex job through a series of structured questions, and on the other hand, it was important to provide opportunities for principals to identify their own learning priorities and flash points of learning in as natural a way as possible. The research design took this into account and as a result it was proposed to give principals prior knowledge of the interview schedule, while advising them that the schedule was a guide and memory prompt rather than as a list of questions to be followed sequentially and rigidly. They would be able to pass on any questions if they wished. In this way I hoped to provide both focus and freedom. I deliberately refrained from requesting written lists of courses and conferences attended, believing that significant learning would be identified through open-ended interviewing and not from lists of courses attended.

Interactive interviewing is interviewing where the interviewer allows the interview to proceed very much as a conversation, where both interviewer and interviewee engage in exploration of points raised. Interactive interviewing allows the interviewer to probe further on the basis of the interviewee's responses and enables the interviewee to introduce points of importance to him or her. Throughout the data gathering, I planned to provide opportunities for interactive interviewing to facilitate getting close to the principals, an important aspect of interviewing for qualitative research (Ely et al. 1991; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Oakley, 1981; Reinhartz, 1992). I also wanted to let the voices of the respondents come through their responses as much as possible in line with grounded theory procedures. As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) noted, the interview allows

the researcher to learn about what cannot be seen and to "explore alternative explanations" (p. 65) for what cannot be seen or heard. That can only be accomplished through interactive interviewing. In the research design, the interviews were arranged to accommodate interactive interviewing through scheduling three interviews for each principal. The second interview would grow out of the first and the third out of the second.

There are a number of important issues that need to be considered related to interviewing. These relate to ethics and confidentiality, the relationship of interviewer and interviewee, the extent to which the interview data reflects the issues accurately, in this case the learning that had taken place, and pressures of time.

Ethics and confidentiality were key considerations which helped to shape the design of the research methods. As Stake (1994) noted: "Qualitative researchers are guests in the private places of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict" (p. 237). This is common-sense. However as Clark (1997) argued, ethics are theories about morals and moral behaviour. Although varied, ethics can be subsumed into two main types of theories; teleological theories which place weight on whether good or harm results from research action, and deontological theories which judge ethics on the basis of their meeting moral rules regardless of harmful consequences. Clark (1997) concluded that "it is up to the individual researcher to make a personal judgement over which ethical theory is the most acceptable as a guide to practice" (p. 159). Since the deontological theory stresses the "duty" (p. 157) of the researcher and the "rights" (p. 158) of the research participant, I favoured the deontological perspective in the research design. Therefore, the design of the research reflected the rights of the research participants above the benefits for educational management of a rigorous exploration of the strengths and weaknesses of educational management theory and learning. Research participant rights begin with gaining their "informed consent" as a research imperative (Anderson, 1990; Burgess, 1984;) and designing research which is structured to protect privacy (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and anonymity (Punch, 1994).

Confidentiality was also prioritised in the research design so that the information given would be treated as "privileged, to be divulged only in very exceptional circumstances" (Clark, 1997, p. 162) or with the research participants' permission (Anderson, 1990; Burgess, 1989). Punch (1994) noted that in researching and interpreting data there are areas of "swamp" (p. 94) because researchers disagree on what constitutes public and private information. In addition Hodder (1994) commented that accessing and interpreting documents could involve ethical issues since the researcher is

involved in translation and in attributing to others, meaning which they may not consider to be true. These considerations were incorporated into the research design.

The relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee is another important research issue in terms of obtaining quality data, establishing rapport, hearing what is being said, speaking the same language with common understanding, and maintaining appropriate communication modes through body language, voice tone, pace and pitch (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Oakley, 1981; Reinhartz, 1992). Relationship between interviewer and interviewee is discussed at length in the literature (Anderson, 1990; Burgess, 1989; Clark, 1997; Cohen & Manion, 1994; Krausz & Miller, 1974; Limerick, Burgess-Limerick & Grace, 1996; Oakley, 1981; Reinhartz, 1994). It is necessary to build a trusting relationship but at the same time keep the researcher stance of distance; "to walk the tight-rope" according to Oakley (1981, p. 33). How confident could I be that the data accurately revealed the story of their learning? According to Cohen and Manion (1994), the interview method is "prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer" (p. 272) and subject to ideological influence. Both the literature survey and experience can create blindfolds or blinkers for the interviewer (Ely et al., 1991). Despite the care of the interviewer, "subliminal cues" (Krausz & Miller, 1974, p. 49) are at work on both sides which affect both responses and interpretation by the interviewer (Scheurich, 1995). I believed that the best defence I could have, would be to try to uncover my biases, "inviting colleagues and participants to join ... in the task" (Ely et al., 1991, p. 221) and refer back to the participants as much as I could for verification of findings. Awareness of issues related to this vital relationship influenced the research design in the way the research participants received communications and were involved in the research.

The accuracy of the data related to learning was a matter of concern since the research participants were to be the sole sources of information about their learning. Ely et al. (1991) noted that one way to establish accuracy of data was to keep the research contact over a period of time. It was not possible to meet this requirement in this research except to spread the interviews out over several weeks. However the fact that the research participants were all known to me and I to them, served to establish trust and, I believe, a measure of honesty. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) suggested that building up a trusting relationship would help to encourage research participants to provide honest data. In the research design, I attempted to reflect the advice of these researchers.

In the research design, time was a critical factor for the research participants and for me as researcher. This was demonstrated in the way the research communication, the

interviews and analysis were organised. Time was also a key feature of the grounded theory process since the generation of theory called for a sequential process. Further discussion of the influence of time in the research design will be provided in the next chapter where I explain how the research design was put into practice.

Observing

Qualitative observations were not built into the research design as a major method. However since observation is the "bedrock source of human knowledge" (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 377) and since "qualitative observation ... occurs in the natural context of occurrence, among the actors who would naturally be participating in the interaction" (p. 378), it is there to add to other methods. Adler and Adler (1994) also noted that observation "consists of gathering impressions ... through all relevant human faculties" (p. 378). The implication of this is that observations would influence the research whether or not they were included as a formal method. To counter covert influence, I decided to include observations in the research design as log notes which would be used to confirm conclusions or alert me to the need for further clarification or even the need to seek alternative findings. In this way I would be able to take account of impressions in an overt way which would fit in with the ethical stance underlying the research design. The research participants deserved respect and a non-judgmental attitude from me (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Consequently, the research design needed to include all the sources of information which could influence the research findings. Observation would consist only of what could be observed in the broadest sense during the interview visits.

Using And Creating Documents

In the research design, documentation was planned as two kinds; field notes including the transcripts of the taped interviews and my written reflections which made up my research log, and all other written texts which Hodder (1994) called "mute evidence" (p. 393). In the research design the textual material was categorised as essential and general. Essential material included the Ministry of Education statements, such as the National Education Guidelines, the National Administration Guidelines and the Performance Management Systems set of documents, in addition to the Acts related to education and Education Review Office Reports. These resources were important because they made clear what the Government expected of principals and therefore could be expected to prescribe their learning. It was in the context of such documentation that principals exercised leadership and met their personal, professional and social goals. These documents were used to help define the interview schedule

questions. General textual material covered all other relevant written materials which had a bearing on the research in terms of grounding the emerging theory. This included newspaper, magazine and journal articles, books, Educational Review Office Reports for individual schools and conference papers. Television and radio programmes also provided useful material. In addition, two principals provided me with curriculum vitae.

The research design took account of the need to verify emerging theory with one's peers (Usher, 1993; Wolcott, 1994). Consequently, the research design included writing and presenting papers at conferences. I considered this particularly important in this study for three reasons. First, the education community could be expected to constitute a rich resource to affirm, suggest modifications or refute the findings. Second, as a qualitative research study, it is important for the findings to be tested in the public arena. Third, the theoretical basis of the research included controversial matters such as the nature of knowledge and learning and qualitative research methodology. Controversial issues of theory and method need to be publicly debated. A theory can usually be strengthened either by adding further confirmation or pointing out refuting examples. Perhaps no-one is able to facilitate this kind of improvement better than the person who is opposed to the theory and who, from a different subjectivity, is able to produce a well reasoned, well supported argument in support of a different claim for examination by the researcher (Huberman & Miles, 1994; Denzin, 1994).

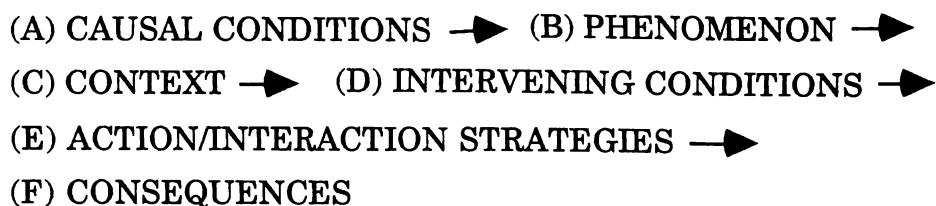
Analysing Data As A Grounded Theory Process

Janesick (1994) noted that "there is no one best system for analysis" (p. 215) of research data. In this research, designing a method for analysing the data was prescribed by the adoption of grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, 1970; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994) since grounded theory is based on a process paradigm of on-going analysis through coding, comparing and theorising. In Chapter Four, the way I used the process is described fully with examples from the findings. Here the main principles of the analysis model are outlined, to acquaint the reader with the way I interpreted analysis in grounded theory methodology.

The key principle is that data are analysed from the outset of the research so that the theory emerges progressively with data collection. The process begins with studying the data to identify concepts. The labelling of concepts is part of the coding process of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Coding becomes progressively more complex according to the relationship of one set of concepts to others. For example "open coding" (p. 72) simply provides labels for the concepts. To help tease out the

complexities of a concept, its "properties" (p. 69) or main characteristics are identified with the "dimensions" (Strauss & Corbin p. 69) of these properties; that is, the nature and qualities of the properties. [See Figure 2, Chapter Four, page 100].

Clusters of related concepts become a "category" or major indicator of theory. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 99) show the process of establishing relationships as a paradigm as follows:



The emerging phenomenon becomes a main category. Concepts become linked because of their relationships to the main category. They may be related as sub-categories identifying causes, contexts, intervening conditions, strategies of action and interaction or as consequences. Sorting concepts according to relationships is called "axial coding" (p. 97). Not all categories and sub-categories will be equally important in terms of the emerging "story line" (p. 119). Consequently, building the story line calls for selection; that is, "selective coding" (p. 117) in order to strengthen the story line. The theorising that is involved in developing this story line must take into account the happening process itself; that is, developmental action and interaction over time. In order to develop a picture with fullness and density, Strauss and Corbin (1990) described what they called "a conditional matrix" (p. 163); that is, a matrix of places where relevant data may be found, such as with individuals, different communities, the whole nation, even the universe.

The aim of the grounded theory methods is to ensure as large and as dense a net of data gathering and analysis as possible. What is different about grounded theory and other methods of analysis is what Glaser and Strauss (1970) called "theoretical sampling" (p. 105). This is "jointly" (p. 105) collecting, coding and analysing, letting the emerging theory control which data is collected next. Theoretical sampling is "sampling on the basis of concepts that have proven theoretical significance because they are ... of sufficient importance to be given the status of categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 176). Theoretical sampling requires the researcher to challenge the emerging theory by seeking differences and alternative explanations; thoroughly testing the theory for flaws or further confirmation until the theory appears to be saturated and can be put forward confidently as a core category, a set of relationships, a major theory defined as propositions. One of the ways the emerging theory may be clarified is through creating

diagrams and writing memos because these procedures help to crystallise complex patterns of theory. Diagrams, in particular, are powerful in highlighting relationships. Examples are included as Figure 3, page 130, Figure 4, page 147, and Figure 5, page 174. The core categories provide the main thesis. The actual development of the grounded theory is discussed further in Chapter Four. Grounded theory analysis and theory development includes, as well as concludes, with the writing of the report. This is discussed next.

Report Writing

Earlier in this chapter, the issue of presenting perceptions, beliefs and attitudes through explanations was raised. I return to that issue here. The research design included planning the writing of the report. Strauss and Corbin (1990) commented that "writing a grounded theory thesis 'right' is ... even more complicated than writing up the more usual types of qualitative research" (p. 233). This is because while the grounded theory memos and diagrams would provide the basis of the report, they were not written with an audience in mind and must be translated while keeping true to the findings of the grounded theory process. As noted earlier in this chapter, grounded theory is interpretive and should also include the voices of the research participants. Consequently, in addition to being true to grounded theory, the research would present the usual problems attending the researcher's endeavour to recreate lived experience in text. Denzin (1994) described this challenge as presenting particular problems of "interpretation, or sense-making, representation, legitimation and desiring" (p. 503). In other words, in writing the report I would need to define meaning by selecting the data most representative of the emerging theory and by-passing other data, present others as well as myself in the text, endeavour to do justice to actual experience in text, and adopt a writing style that I believed would help me communicate best with you, the reader.

Richardson (1994) complained that most qualitative writing is tedious in the extreme to read, despite the fact that the findings of qualitative research have usually to be read to be of practical use to anyone other than the researcher. She attributed this situation to the traditions of "mechanistic scientism" (p. 517) that constrains writers as "contaminants" of positivist results. Selleck (1978) put the blame more on the role modelling of those "busy academic spiders who spin their webs of jargon" (p. 197). It is not surprising, therefore, that research appears to have little practical impact in educational practice (Johnson, 1994; Robinson, 1993; Schön, 1987; Selleck, 1978). I aimed to avoid such criticism in the way the report was designed and written.

Among the solutions for improving writing and disseminating the findings to increase the impact of research on problems, is the recommendation that field notes be used for "full description, avoiding sociological jargon, ... letting ... imagination roam around the event, searching for patterns and larger chains of significance" (Richardson, 1994, p. 525). This way of approaching writing the report fits the grounded theory process to the extent that grounded theory seeks density in exploding the scope and range of ways of considering a problem through the conditional matrix. The research design aimed to produce a report that had weight as well as clarity in theoretical explanation, and which would be supported by the imaginative use of field notes. Another important point made by Strauss (1987) is that report writing itself constitutes an "integrative mechanism" (p. 212) which could lead to additions and further explorations to tighten the analysis. Some of the issues of design are discussed next.

Issues Of Design

In this chapter I have described the reasoning behind the choice of grounded theory and the over-all design as it related to appropriate research methods. However as Ely et al. (1991) commented, carrying out qualitative research is about "interplay" (p. 1) between the researcher and the researched in a process that is "recursive". Initially research design is simply "a flexible set of guidelines" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 14). Consequently, the research design as I have described it in this chapter is the framework within which the interplay will occur. The concepts of interplay and flexibility were also described by other researchers (Church, 1997; Morse, 1994). Janesick (1994) used the metaphor of dance to describe the "elastic quality" (p. 218) of qualitative research design. "Just as dance mirrors and adapts to life, qualitative design is adapted, changed and redesigned as the study proceeds, because of the social realities of doing research among and with the living" (Janesick, 1994, p. 218). In other words, research decisions related to design continue to be made until the last word is written. How this happened in this research is described in the next chapter.

Summary

This chapter explained the rationale behind the methodology and methods chosen for the research. The first part of the chapter provided a discussion of methodological issues. The methodology used in this research is qualitative to take account of the epistemological interpretations of knowledge relating to educational management and the learning of a group of experienced professionals, which I advanced in Chapter Two. That methodology must be appropriate for the research problem; namely principals' perceptions of their learning and the impact of that learning on their practice. The qualitative methodology which appeared to fit best the research problem was grounded theory. Grounded theory is a general methodology which aims at description, analysis and interpretation of data leading to generation of substantive theory. Grounded theory allows the "interpretations and perspectives [of those we study to] become incorporated into our own interpretations" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 280). As a general methodology, it is flexible. Qualitative methodology and grounded theory suited a study of experience and the self-study, which I intended to include.

Methods of verifying the research findings are built into the grounded theory process itself to reach high standards of rigour and a balanced, practical approach. I aimed also to demonstrate the criteria of utility; the potential of the findings to suggest solutions to practical problems although I did not intend to generalise my findings beyond the groups of principals involved, because the participants were not randomly selected.

In the second part of the chapter, the research design and methods which seemed to fit the methodology were set out. Here I discussed research participants and critical issues relating to the style of interviewing which seemed most likely to yield informative results; namely, semi-structured and interactive interviewing. I described the deontological ethical stance which would be taken, the way confidentiality would operate to protect the principals, documents which would be used and the limited role of observations. Methods of data analysis using the grounded theory paradigm were explained in general terms. Report writing was described as an integral part of the research which would help to crystallise the emerging grounded theory. Finally, the flexible nature of research design was stressed as a set of guidelines rather than a set of sequential steps to be followed. In the next chapter the way in which the methodology and methods were implemented is described in detail.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process describes the research design in action; that is, how the methods and procedures signalled in Chapter Three were implemented and modified to achieve the aims of the research. The chapter is divided into four sections; a brief chronology of the research, preparation, selecting the research participants, and managing the research process.

Chronology Overview

The background to the research was a growing awareness that for some principals as well as for me, knowledge, training and the availability of learning opportunities did not necessarily result in successful practice. As a consequence, I began this research study to answer the two questions related to learning and implementing learning in educational management which have been described in the previous chapters. A detailed chronology of the research process is provided in Appendix B. Meanwhile, this summary of the research chronology provides an overview. During 1995, I added to my current knowledge by searching a wide range of literature on educational management and learning. I also studied the literature on research methodology and appropriate research methods to find the most appropriate way to research the problem. On the basis of that study, I designed the research project and the methods to be used which I have described in Chapter Three. Throughout 1996 and 1997, I collected and analysed data according to grounded theory and began the writing which formed the basis of this report. Throughout 1998, I continued the grounded theory process of coding and theoretical sampling during the writing process to reach the substantive theory which is described in the later chapters of the report. The specific parts of the research process are now set out.

Preparing the research

Anderson (1990) commented that "a good problem [for research] should build on the strengths of the investigator" (p. 34). As my work had involved providing training and development of principals, I wanted to take advantage of that practical experience. I also decided to consider the problem in retrospect asking how a group of principals perceived that they learnt to be principals. This decision required that I interview principals. The first task therefore was the design of a schedule of questions. How was I to do that?

Trial Interviews And The Draft Schedule

I developed the research schedule by taking three steps. First I surveyed the literature on interviewing, as described in Chapter Three, and decided to explore principals' perceptions by open-ended interviewing using semi-structured interviewing techniques. Second, I drew up a draft schedule of interview questions based on my knowledge of the work of principals and the literature search. Third, I interviewed three previous colleagues who had had experience as principals. One of these was a practising principal. These interviews constituted trial interviews and the interviewees acted as referees for the draft interview schedule. These three people were all well known to me as ex-colleagues and were sympathetic to the research and to me. I was convinced that rapport was already established and that they would be frank and open in their comments as I requested them to be.

The interviews constituted very valuable experience proving beyond doubt, that interviewing of principals should take place in the interviewee's office if at all possible, since transcribing the trial interviews was greatly impeded by the noise of birds, people and transport, when I conducted the interviews out-of-doors. Each trial interview was taped with the participant's permission. The taped trial interviews varied from 2 hours in one case, to 40 minutes on average. Each interview consisted of two parts. First, the interviewees were encouraged to speak freely and generally about their careers and their learning in respect of being principals and I asked questions related to the points they were making. In the second part of the interview, I asked the trial interviewees to read the draft schedule of questions, respond to any which seemed of particular interest to

them, identify any questions which seemed irrelevant and suggest any additions. Finally I asked them to what extent they thought that the interview, and the questions uncovered the ways they learnt to be principals. The interviews were transcribed and copies returned for correction or additional comment. On the basis of their suggestions, a modified version of the interview questions was prepared and a second interview was held with the two ex-principals together for a final vetting. This schedule of questions was then used as the basis for the interviews with the research participants.

The trial principals provided much specific information about the way they learnt the knowledge and skills related to the principalship especially with regard to the behaviour of novice principals, and the school as a unique environment for each principal. I developed increased awareness of the fact that time was a precious commodity in principals' eyes to be jealously guarded against purposeless or wasteful interviewing; that the fruits of an interview could be garnered within a limited time frame; and that intense reflection and talking, when most of the talking load was of necessity borne by the interviewee, exhausted both interviewee and interviewer. By the time the trial interviews were completed in November 1995, I had learnt a considerable amount about interviewing.

On the basis of the experience of the trial interviews, I developed the research schedule proper [Appendix C]. The questions covered the whole-of-life learning, as well as learning of specific areas related to the tasks and roles of principals, and questions seeking the principals' general comments on learning to be principals. In this way I hoped that the principals would be cast as informants as Yin (1994) contended. The schedule of questions consisted of 13 main questions, each with several sub-questions. Questions covered influential factors of learning to be principals; for example, background and teaching experience, learning at different times such as novice and experienced principal, learning in specific areas such as leadership, technical management, management of change and changing personal behaviour and attitudes, managing the curriculum, school climate, school culture, power, personal learning, and finally theories about learning to be principals. The questions covered the range of memory triggers which Conway and Rubin (1993) identified.

The interview schedule was in fact very detailed. To do justice to all the areas encompassed in it, I would have had to have more than three interviews. However I decided not to increase the numbers of interviews on the grounds that to do so would impose too much on busy principals. I also thought that by sending the principals a

simplified copy of the schedule [Appendix D] to let them know in advance, the nature of the interview questions, they would have time to reflect and would be in a position to identify learning points of most significance to themselves and that these points would come through in open-ended interviewing.

Selecting The Research Participants

Rationale

The research participants were selected from principals who were known to me. Most had been involved in taking courses through the postgraduate unit of the institution where I had worked; one was a close relative. The decision to select such principals was made specifically to enhance the likelihood that the rapport which would be necessary for openness (Ely et al., 1991; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Oakley, 1981; Reinhartz, 1992, 1994) would be established quickly. I considered it vital to the research that the principals felt able to discuss their learning candidly, the failures as well as successes.

Process Of Selection

The selection was designed to ensure that the grounded theory research would have a sufficient variety of principal, educational level and location to provide examples for comparison. Initially I aimed to study equal numbers of women and men, and equal numbers of primary and secondary school principals. Choosing principals meant choosing schools and schools were chosen to give some variation in the type of school that would form the environment for the principal. I drew up a tentative list of 22 including two retired principals whom I wished to study as parallel case studies to the self-study.

Having drawn up a list, I next addressed the problem of access and making contact. It is essential for establishing rapport and trust that the research commences with the right tone (Janesick, 1994). I telephoned each principal, asked if it was a convenient time to talk, explained that I was "doing research into on-the-job learning of educational management and wondered if [they] would be interested in being a participant." If they thought they could be interested I proposed to write "detailing the research and outlining what would be required." On the basis of that letter, they could decide whether they wanted to be involved. If they did, "at a time convenient to [them], at some stage during 1996, I would arrange a series of about three interviews over a period of six to eight

weeks." I wanted to ensure that the principals were aware that the timing of the interviews would be of their choosing.

I then sent a letter describing the purpose and strategy of the research [Appendix E], together with a consent form [Appendix F]. As each principal returned the consent form, the principal was contacted by telephone to arrange the interviews.

Description Of The Research Participants

Nineteen principals from the original 22 agreed to take part in the research. One declined because she intended to retire within a few months and two failed to follow up after an initial tentative display of interest. I had expected that I might have had difficulty in gaining assent because of the pressures of time that I knew principals experienced (Hall et al., 1986; Schön, 1987; Wolcott, 1973) and was surprised and delighted at the response.

The final sample of 19 consisted of 17 practising principals and two retired principals. The practising principals consisted of eight women and nine men, drawn from ten primary and seven secondary schools. Six of the primary principals were female and four were male. Five of the secondary principals were male and two were female. Of the ten primary schools, all were co-educational. One was a middle school, that is including Forms Three and Four, and one was an intermediate school. The seven secondary schools included two single sex schools, one girls' school and one boys' school. The remaining five secondary schools were co-educational. Two of the secondary schools were Catholic integrated schools. The retired principals, one male ex-secondary principal and one female ex-primary principal had both been principals of co-educational schools.

Of course, the experience of some of the principals was greater than that represented by their current positions. Of the eleven primary principals, two of the seven women and all of the four men had had experience as principals in other schools. Three of the four primary men had been principals in rural schools as part of country service. Of the eight secondary principals, only two, both men, had had experience as principals in other schools, one in four schools and one in two schools. The average age of the practising principals at the beginning of the research was approximately 49 years 6 months [Appendix G].

The two retired principals had both been principals of two schools in medium-sized towns. The secondary male had been a principal for 17 years, the primary female for 17 years 6 months. The primary principal had been principal of two integrated schools, one of which was a special school and the other an integrated school with a special unit.

Managing The Research Process

Communication

With the arrival of the consent forms, I had made myself a timetable chart in order that I could manage at least 60 interviews. I wanted to have time to transcribe the audio-tapes and return the transcripts with at least a week for principals to read and consider the questions which had developed out of the text of the transcript. I wanted to avoid a situation where I would have a bottle neck of tapes to transcribe, insufficient time for principals to consider the new questions and subsequently need to rearrange timetabled interviews. On the other hand I did not want to lose momentum by spacing the interviews out over too extended a period.

The principals had no difficulty finding times that suited them and, in fact, were very business-like in programming the three interviews in advance. As my chart filled up, I had, of course, to slot principals in to my schedule from an ever-decreasing number of free interview weeks. I tried to restrict interviews to two per week although this was not always possible. As each principal's interviews were arranged I kept a record of what we had agreed. I sent each principal a letter of confirmation [Appendix H] and later a covering letter [Appendix I] with the summary of the questions to aid thinking and memory [referred to earlier as Appendix D] so that they could begin the reflective process.

The principals were provided with the questions at least a month before the first interview. They were informed in the question sheet instructions that the "emphasis is on **your** learning. Not all questions will be of equal significance for you. Not all need to be addressed". I wanted these busy people to start thinking about how they learnt to be principals from our initial contact to ensure that their recollections would be fecund, detailed and well considered. I had no way of knowing whether or to what extent this happened and suspected that in one or two cases, where principals had mislaid the

questions and the letter, that they had not been able to do much preparation. Some, however, clearly had thought a great deal about the issue of learning to be principal and had even made written notes or full answers.

I was very pleased with my system, feeling secure that the interviews as the key data of the research were all neatly ordered and that I could see the way ahead clearly. As it transpired, the scheduling of interviews turned out to be less than satisfactory. I found that I had to ask for concessions to fit my research programme. I had not allowed sufficient time for the grounded theory process. As described in Chapter Three, grounded theory requires that analysis commences with the beginning of the collection of data and progresses towards theory development on the basis of the early analysis. Consequently I had to rearrange all the interviews in the second half of the year and even transferred some into the next year. It would have been wiser to have arranged research participant interviews in blocks of three or four and to have set up the next block as one was coming to a close. Once the three interviews were completed, I wrote to the principals thanking them for their participation, and advising them that I would contact them when the research was completed, to share the findings with them.

The Interviews

My decision not to keep rigorously to a list of questions and not to request written lists of courses which principals had attended, had advantages and disadvantages. The principals enjoyed the reflective, interactive style and some expressed surprise at the depth of their thinking. As one principal remarked "I thought, oh no. She's going to come in here and ask me what magazine I last read and it's going to be terrible. I didn't know you could spend so much time discussing the really major issues" (FN 17.3.50*). Other principals, who had been interviewed previously and had pre-conceived ideas of interviewing were perplexed initially. I always began by explaining how I intended to structure this kind of qualitative interviewing and why, but some found it strange. As a principal said at the end of the third interview: "I wondered when we started out just where we were going because ... it was just talk about who I was and where I had come from, and what I'd done" (FN 8.3.27). This principal went on to say that the interactive style of interviewing had made him clarify his thinking about the processes of doing the principal's job. The main disadvantage of the informal style of interviewing was worry

* FN 17.3.50 = Field Note, principal number 17, interview number 3, page 50.

that important information was being missed.

All the principals with one exception preferred that the interviews should take place in their schools, and usually in the principal's office. One interview was held in the staff-room but the crash of the dishwasher dominated the audio-tape, indicating that this was not an experience to be repeated. Two interviews were held in the homes of two of the principals. One secondary principal and the one teaching primary principal preferred that the interviews take place after school. The other interviews took place in school time, usually in the mornings.

The principals were advised that the tape-recordings and transcripts were confidential to that principal and myself and that they would not be identified in any way in the research. They were reminded regularly that they could pass on any question. They were also sent a copy of the transcript a week before the next interview so that they could change, add to or amend any part of it. I myself tried always to be alert to body language which indicated sensitivity to any question. I attempted to maintain an appropriate distance while keeping good rapport. In other words, I adopted a friendly but businesslike approach in order to convey my belief that the principal was taking part in an important research study. Establishing rapport was not difficult because of prior social contact. When I asked a principal why he had agreed to be part of the research, he replied "I agreed because it was you and knowing your background" (FN 7.3.24). I tried to maintain this trusting and professional relationship by showing consideration by being on time, returning transcripts within a few days, providing opportunities for changing parts of the information they supplied, and by being careful not to waste any of their time. I almost always finishing the interviews on time.

The interviews were conducted as follows. After a brief introductory time for making social contact - very brief in cases where the principal indicated a businesslike, let's-not-waste-time approach - I introduced the interview with information related to that particular interview. For example, at the first interview, which was largely autobiographical, I informed the principals that on that occasion I wanted them to talk about their learning starting with their background, home and school, people who might have influenced them, teaching and professional career and so on. I told them that I would ask questions as we went along. By this time I was well conversant with the topics on the questions schedule and was able to introduce them naturally as we proceeded. I was mindful of the goal of "purposeful conversation" (Ely et al., 1991, p. 58) of much qualitative research interviewing and found it easy to follow the lead of the

principal in most cases. On occasions, I let the principal dwell for too long on a particular issue. In fact often I found it difficult to "get a word in". However sometimes, as I prepared to intervene to cut off a train of thought which I considered exhausted, a particularly important item of information was dropped into the account so that I was justified in not closing too promptly. On other occasions, as I contemplated, in retrospect, points we had not pursued sufficiently, I regretted spending time on what turned out to be an unproductive line of thought.

The second and third interviews, began with an invitation to the principal to change or add to anything that had been in the first interview. We then proceeded to work through the questions which I had hand-written in the margin and which had arisen naturally out of the transcript as I describe later.

My own stance in the interviews was influenced by my reading of the literature on interviewing. For example, the need to remember that I was there to learn. "As a researcher, you are a curious student who comes to learn You do not come as an expert" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 36). I also needed to resist the temptation to intervene and suggest solutions but to be friendly and interested while keeping the research focus in mind; and above all I needed to be respectful and non-judgmental (Ely et al., 1991; Fontana & Frey, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Limerick et al., 1996; Reinhartz, 1992) While I kept my own input in the main limited to probing questions or questions seeking clarification, on occasions I felt the need to provide some unsolicited information as this extract about being a new principal illustrates:

Principal

No qualification will ever prepare you for dealing with people who have got their knives out before you even come through the door.

Researcher

Was that not dealt with at any time in any of the courses you went to?

Principal

No. How could it? How would you ... ever prepare a course or even a set of ..

Researcher

Because it's not a unique situation.

Principal (surprised)

It's not?

Researcher

No.

Principal

No? Well in that case, if there are lessons to be learnt from it, they've got to be circulated. (FN 9.3.11)

The issue of "judicious entering" (p. 61) into the interaction of an interview was considered by Ely et al. (1991) to be helpful in maintaining access, strengthening rapport and discovering rich data. As Oakley (1981) noted: "Interviewees are people with considerable potential for sabotaging the attempt to research them" (p. 56). I hoped that a few interventions from me when the occasion seemed apposite could prevent sabotage.

I always reminded the principals at the beginning of the third interview that it was important to ensure that we left time for their general statements about learning to be principals. I suggested that as this was of particular interest to me, we might have to cut back on some questions which in their opinion were not so important or significant as some others. While I wanted to pursue all the questions, I wanted them to be able to identify those of greatest significance to themselves. At the end of the third interview I asked them to what extent they thought we had been able to get at the critical points of their learning. Most principals indicated that their learning had been identified and that they had found the experience enjoyable and useful. The first principal interviewed was representative of other principals when she said: "It's been good talking, because I haven't ever talked to anybody about it" (FN 2.3.27). This kind of statement reiterated the findings of Oakley (1981) in her account of feminist interviews. She indicated that the interviewees could find being interviewed therapeutic where they were able to talk openly and confidentially.

Contact was maintained with each principal for an average of six weeks. Withdrawing was not easy in cases where principals appeared to want to maintain contact and I left the door open with the request that I might be permitted to refer back at a later date with the research findings [Appendix K]. I did this through the verification questionnaire [Appendix L].

The Transcripts

When all the interviews were completed I had an average of 75 pages of transcription for each interviewee. I transcribed all the tapes myself, verbatim, for two reasons. First, I found this rather slow process gave me time to reflect on the principal as learner while I transcribed, relived and examined the feelings and impressions of the interview and build up a fuller log of ideas and thoughts as I worked. I enjoyed the

transcribing and felt I got to know the principals better as a result. Second, the cost of paying for someone else to transcribe the tapes in time and money was too great. Although my transcribing improved through practice, it was a slow process. The real cost was in the delay that occurred in processing the data which led me to have to alter the interview schedule.

Over all, however, I considered that the disadvantages of transcribing slowly myself, and the problem that this created for the interview schedule, were greatly outweighed by the analysis process that the transcribing allowed. I felt that I became immersed in the transcript data in a way that was sensitising (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and would have been impossible from several readings of transcripts. Ideas germinated and developed as I listened to each tape at least twice and read each transcript at least three times as part of preparing for the next interview. I endeavoured to retain distance as an interviewer but transcribing was an emotional experience. As one transcript followed another, from nuances of tone and text, I absorbed impressions of what it was like learning to be a principal in a sole teacher school in the remote bays of the Marlborough Sounds, and in the rain drenched, dismal heights of the Tutamoe Range. I suffered with the principal watching dispirited students dispersing when their after-school sporting fixture was cancelled because not enough transport could be provided by parents to take the students to the game. I grieved with the principal who said: "It's such a depressing environment to work in because there's hardly ever any good news" (FN 15.2.17). I rejoiced with the principal of another school whose attendance at a course enabled her to see a way through a problem of interpersonal relations, and with another whose joy and pride in his students' achievements filled him with infectious enthusiasm. Transcribing allowed me to dwell on feelings, my own and the principals, which according to Hargreaves (1997), is crucial to understanding.

After each transcription I prepared a lightly edited copy for the principal. As I noted above, I considered it part of my role as a partner in the research to be a giver as well as a receiver (Oakley, 1981; Reinhartz, 1992). My giving was a well-presented copy of the interview transcript which the principal was able to keep after indicating any corrections, additions or deletions. After all the information belonged to the principals as participants (Oakley, 1981; Reinhartz, 1992, 1994). In editing the transcript, which Morse (1994) considered an acceptable practice, I was also motivated by self-interest. I wanted the principal, in reading the transcript, to concentrate on the substantive matter; not on the verbal characteristics that are common in much speech; namely, the use of expressions such as 'I mean', 'you know', 'yeah' and 'um'. Even so, principals were

distracted by their idiosyncratic speech and thought patterns, such as the use of incomplete sentences and tendencies to leap from idea to idea. An unexpurgated copy was retained for my own use although in the end I gained no advantage from having two copies because of the need to keep quotations brief and endeavour to hold the reader's attention with interesting text (Richardson, 1994).

The edited transcript was treated to three operations before being returned to the principal. First it was open coded along grounded theory lines to identify key concepts. Secondly, the information was recorded on a chart representing the questions on the question schedule. Using different coloured pens to indicate which of the three interviews was being coded and different sized dots to indicate full or partial coverage of the topic, I tracked the topics covered, interview by interview. The third operation was to highlight words and sentences on the transcript that I wanted to ask about on the next visit and hand write questions in the margins on both copies, mine and the principal's. The chart enabled me to see which questions had not been touched upon or required further questioning, and to include them when the opportunity arose naturally. The hand-written marginal questions enabled me to ensure that I did not either repeat questions, unless I wanted further information, or forget to ask them. In this way I endeavoured to obtain the advantages both of coverage of the questions and easy, free flowing principal talk.

There was also a visual advantage to the hand-written marginal questions. Each transcript numbered from 20 to over 50 pages depending on the principal's speed of speech. While most principals spent considerable time on the transcripts, some indicated that they had time to skim read only. It was advantageous therefore to break up the transcript with coloured highlighted passages and hand-written marginal questions. As one principal said "I didn't read it word for word but I certainly ... looked at the bits that you'd highlighted and ... stickied my ... responses on to the side" (FN 6.2.1) [using self-adhesive notes]. The second and third interviews simply followed on the hand-written questions related to the categories I had identified. Initially, I identified the issues I wanted to pursue at the next interview in my covering letter with the transcript [Appendix J], but I abandoned that practice for the quicker, more practical one of writing the questions in the margins. I was alerted to the problem which the long transcript created for the interviewee by the first principal who said: "I sat down at the week-end, ... I'm not tired, I'm quite alert, I've got time ... and I thought 'Oh, oh all this' " (FN 2.3.27). Questions which did not arise naturally from the earlier discussion, I added at the end of the transcript. Most questions did arise naturally.

Observations, Log Notes And Reflections

At the conclusion of each interview I recorded what I had observed that could have relevance to the issue of principals' learning. This data helped to confirm impressions or raise further questions. The observations included data about any interactions which had occurred involving the principal and staff, students or the wider community. It also included the general appearance of the school and the administration block including the principal's office. I tried to pick up the feel of the place and match this with what was said in the interviews while remaining aware that observing is essentially a subjective activity (Denzin, 1994; Ely et al., 1991). As Adler & Adler (1994) noted: "Observers ... rely ... on their own perceptions. They are therefore more susceptible to bias from their subjective interpretations of situations" (p. 381). I was also aware that ethical issues were involved because I had gained permission to interview only. Therefore I used observations which arose naturally out of the interview situation and which added to that data and aided interpretation and ignored anything of a negative nature which reflected adversely on a principal. Observations constituted an important part of the log notes.

The field notes consisted of transcript data. Log notes consisted of the thoughts and reflections written into my log, sometimes before, but usually after each interview. I recorded my feelings and impressions to help me later in the grounded theory analysis. This was done as soon as possible after the interview as Ely et al. (1991) and Glesne and Peshkin (1992) recommended. I usually sat in my car and did this before driving home. I also noted student behaviour if I arrived at the beginning or end of the school day because I considered that anything related to the school could be relevant when I came to interpreting the data and creating a holistic picture. For example, an attractive, welcoming office which displayed children's work and communicated to visitors in different languages added to a principal's transcript statements related to marketing the school and getting to know the community. Interactions between a principal and a staff member or a student added depth to the principal's statements about his or her beliefs about managing staff and students.

Ely et al. (1991), Denzin and Lincoln (1994) and Richardson (1994) all commented on the importance of metaphors in description and interpretation. I kept a section of the log for possible concepts or metaphors which seemed particularly apt or telling at the time; for example, "patronage", "white water learning", "configuration of a dance" are all metaphors that came to me at reflective times. I kept another section for

quotes from literature that also seemed particularly thought-provoking; for example, "the mystery of life is not solved by success, which is an end in itself, but in failures, in perpetual struggle, in becoming" (White, 1957, p. 289), and "you are ever the child, and I'll never really be sure there is a place at the table for me" (Turow, 1993, p. 61).

The reflections consisted of ideas and thoughts about principals' or my own learning, which came to me either while reading, making the transcripts, writing papers, attending seminars and conferences or at any time of the day or night. I also considered the emergence of ideas and understanding from the point of view of constructivism, coming to a clearer understanding of meaning and "deep-level processing" (Bell & Gilbert, 1993, p. 60) in learning through these reflections. The log contained the ideas that emerged relating to the key questions of the research; how principals learnt to be principals and how what they learnt impacted on their practice. Selected ideas are described below in the section on grounding the theory. In discussing the findings in later chapters, occasionally I have quoted log notes as "Log note (with date)".

Other Documents

Education Review Office reports on each school were used to balance the principals' accounts of their schools. Eleven of the reports were assurance audits, assessing "the extent to which the Board of Trustees [was] meeting its legal obligations and undertakings to the Crown" (typical report). Seven were effectiveness review reports, evaluating "the extent to which the Board of Trustees, its management and staff [were] successful in making a difference to student achievement" (typical report). I read the reports after the interviews because I did not want them to influence my thinking. The reports confirmed the data from the interviews. They reiterated the problems which principals said they faced and showed clearly the expectations Government had for principals and Boards of Trustees. The Curriculum Vitae, again, confirmed the principals' extensive experience and varied professional development opportunities.

Newspaper clippings and other media data of schools in general provided a graphic picture of the principal's lot. While most media attention was focused on principal or Board of Trustee failure and poor Education Review Office reports, some accounts showed the success and pride of whole school communities. Media data served to reinforce principal statements and add up-to-dateness to the kinds of information which was coming through from research and academic literature generally.

The papers which I presented formally at conferences were important in helping to formulate the theory. However, I discovered that peers do not generally challenge the content of papers at conferences, hereby helping the paper writer to see the issue from a new light. Careful listening and analysis of audience questions can provide illumination and this did happen. For example, when I gave a presentation on my efforts to identify my own learning needs, a member of the audience suggested that ex-colleagues might be more likely to provide truthful comment than current colleagues, especially if the person seeking information was the principal who had the capacity to influence the informant's career. This consideration led to my changing the research design as I describe later.

The Self-study

Being the most easily accessible of the research participants, I began with the self-study. First I wrote my own answers to the questions in the schedule as a kind of autobiography. I looked in particular at where and what I thought I had failed to learn and looked for predominant threads; for continuous themes related to learning over a life-time. I sought to understand the relationships between my experiences, values and attitudes and to look for evidence of these in my management experiences in the last six years of work as a full-time educational manager.

To balance the natural subjectivity and bias in such an account, I took two steps. First I checked my own impressions of my learning needs with the impressions of significant others of those learning needs. It seemed to me that a comparison of *learning needs* as perceived by the self and significant others, would provide a useful indicator of learning achieved and learning required. To this end, I interviewed four senior management personnel at the College to find out what they considered my learning needs to have been. Each was interviewed once for 30-50 minutes. The interviews were taped and the tape transcripts returned for further comment or alteration. Two of the interviewees added written affirmation and confirmation of what they saw as the key areas of my strengths and areas of concern.

Before interviewing these ex-colleagues myself, I considered whether to enlist the aid of an independent interviewer. However I decided that any benefits of greater objectivity that such a strategy would entail, would not outweigh the disadvantages of the closed type of questionnaire which would be necessary. I thought that I would be able to reassure the interviewees, both by statement and body language (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Oakley, 1981; Reinhartz, 1992), that I was not going to challenge anything that they might say because I was interested only in noting the extent to which their

perceptions of my learning needs matched or did not match my own.

The second step was to ask one of the retired principals to interview me about my learning. The purpose of this was to check whether any different information would emerge which I had not already included in the autobiographical study based on the research questions. This interview lasted an hour and provided very useful information since it included the impressions of the principal of my management style. We had worked together on a number of educational management projects so that he was in a position to comment on the basis of experience. His comments completed a neat triangulation which drew together my own statements about my learning and the comments of my ex-colleagues related to their perceptions of my learning needs.

Documents available for use in the self-study consisted of supervision reports written by the Chief Executive Officer over a four year period from 1991-1994 and a 1994 review of the unit of which I was manager. I also used the reflective log from 1995 to 1998 to add illustrative incidents and thoughts as I remembered them.

Developing The Grounded Theory

Before describing the actual process of grounding the theory, I provide some background information related to data management. Since I began with a literature search, one of my first strategies was to develop a practical system for managing the reference data to aid the comparative process of the grounded theory methodology. The research involved a large amount of data because, in addition to methodological data, the topic contained two broad themes, learning itself and the principal's multi-faceted role. The literature search resulted in 20 large folders of notes and articles. The interviews provided more than 1500 pages of transcript. In addition there was the daily log and other related documentation which I have described above; namely, Education Review Office reports for each school, curriculum vitae for two principals and a box file of newspaper reports. As categories began to emerge from the analysis of transcripts, I created a reference file of categories which listed the location of literature relevant to each category, bibliographic details of which were recorded on a card index system. In this way I felt in control of the data since I could usually find any reference quickly as I compared categories and concepts as part of grounding the theory.

More important than the physical management of the data, was psychological management of the data. I was concerned that what I knew already about learning educational management as a result of teaching in the field and being a practitioner would be a hindrance to new insights because of "commonly held meanings and

associations" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 68). Ely et al. (1991) noted that it is important not to allow prior knowledge, experience, and the systems we create to manage data, to "impose blindfolds" (p. 31). I tried to keep this warning in mind throughout the research, although as Strauss and Corbin (1990) noted, grounded theory does make use of prior experience, existing theory and technical literature for establishing categories and even propositions. I was determined to challenge every assumption I had, and did this by making systematic comparisons, seeking density and insight following Strauss and Corbin's (1990) advice that "the analytic issue ... is never to take anything for granted" (p. 93). I asked myself questions constantly such as "What if that's the wrong interpretation? What other explanation could there be? What evidence refutes this interpretation?"

An example of the kind of reasoning is as follows. It was clear that some principals had extensive experience of leadership as students at school which they believed helped them to learn people management skills. It was also clear that an equal number appeared to have had very little of this kind of experience. Several commented that in those days students were not encouraged to be leaders or that leaders were chosen for their sporting ability only. Did this mean that leadership experience at school was not an important factor in becoming a leader later? What alternative explanation could there be? By going back to the transcripts, reflecting on my own experience and searching the literature, several were suggested, such as that leadership may be developed indirectly as part of establishing an identity in response to a lack of leadership opportunities (a *causal condition* in the grounded theory paradigm). Leadership might be developed vicariously by observing and experiencing peer role-models (*context* in the grounded theory paradigm), or in a different arena such as in the family, church or club, or through the fantasy of literature and film, or at a slightly different period of time, such as, as a tertiary student or a beginning teacher (*intervening conditions* in the grounded theory paradigm). As a result of this kind of comparative thinking, I developed the concepts of "preparationing", "compensating strategies" and "coping strategies" to account for success in the face of apparent limitations, and retained the theory that school experience of leadership was important preparation for adult leadership as principals. In labelling for grounded theory coding, I sought unusual terms such as "preparationing" because I found that familiar terms such as "preparation" blocked fresh ideas.

One of the reasons why grounded theory appeared to be so appropriate for this research was because the theory was able to evolve during the research through *theoretical sampling*. The research began with questions which formed the lynch pin of

the research. *How do you perceive that you learnt to be a principal? How do you perceive that what you learnt impacted on your practice?* With these questions on which to hang the data, I believed that I would be able to shed the skins of old ideas by means of analysing according to grounded theory processes, and in this way to discover new insights and reach a solid thesis.

Initially, I developed more than 100 concepts through open coding such as "self image, self-confidence, skilled practitioner, professionalisation" and so on. These were reduced as they were subsumed under the headings of more abstract concepts such as "foundational learning". Through axial coding and selective coding, the phenomenon of principals as "holistic" learners was developed. Patterns appeared from the data indicating *causal conditions* of "personal orientation, personal assets and learner in situ". The phenomenon of principals as learners of principalship was analysed in terms of the *contexts* of sub-categories such as learning to become a "provider of social services, an educator and a manager" in a given environment. Analysis of *intervening conditions* showed patterns related to the sub-categories of "socio-economic change, reform opportunities and challenges, national factors, political intervention, networks and barriers to learning". Analysis of the process of *action/interaction* clarified patterns of sub-categories such as "relating to others, directioning/positioning, reflectivity, developing and experiencing leadership". Patterns of *consequences* became clear through the sub-categories of "being here over time" and "doing things my way". *Theoretical sampling* of concepts as they became saturated through the coding process and became accepted as the key categories, developed the story line that learning to be a principal appeared to consist of three clearly demarcated parts.

Grounded theory deals with categories which are teased out by exploration of properties and dimensions in conjunction with the processes of comparing and relating according to the paradigm. This example of what Strauss and Corbin (1990) called "miniframeworks" (p. 113) shows how I used the grounded theory paradigm to develop a proposition.

As principals described how they learnt the job, the period of entry into the job emerged as a critical time. I called this particular sub-category of experiential learning, "initiation". The miniframework for initiation which follows as Figure 2 (page 100) helped me to identify the properties and dimensions of the sub-category and from them to develop a proposition incorporating initiation. Some of these appeared to be as follows:

Category	Properties	Dimensional Range
Initiation	time	3mths---- 3yrs
	difficulties	few -----many
	staff helpfulness	yes -----no
	obstruction	low -----high
	principalships	1st--2nd--any
	ex-staff	yes-----no
	primary	more-----few examples
	secondary	more-----few examples

Figure 2: Properties and dimensions of the sub-category "initiation"

The proposition relating to initiation was developed through applying the grounded theory paradigm as follows. The *causal conditions* of the category included the previous experience and location of the new principal, whether he or she was known and had a reputation or was unknown, and the interpersonal skills, beliefs and goals of the new principal. The *context* of initiation included the time of the year, environment into which he or she was coming, especially the nature and supportiveness of the senior staff, safety of the school in terms of its roll and physical environment, and the need for urgent change. *Intervening conditions* included nationally required change, mobility of senior staff, availability or lack of external assistance, crises of major proportions and opportunities for intensive training through designated courses. *Action/interaction* included the decisions the new principal had to make facing interpersonal relations with staff, students, Board of Trustees, community and Education Review Office, and the actions he or she had to make over the first months and years. Action/interaction also included properties of the methods of learning such as perseverance in the face of obstruction, observation, careful preparation and making use of allies and making concessions. *Consequences* of action/interaction were related to ability to establish a climate of co-operation, to move the school forward, learn from mistakes and develop contextual and relational leadership skills as day-to-day manager, team leader and builder, change agent, instructional leader and visionary. The proposition which evolved established that initiation was a time of major significance for principals in the context of situational learning.

One part of the grounded theory process which I found particularly useful was the creation of diagrams to identify and clarify relationships and "show the density and complexity of the theory" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 219). Three diagrams explicating the categories of intentional learning (Figure 3, p. 130), relational aspects of principals' learning (Figure 4, p. 147) and the unique configuration of principal and school/community (Figure 5, p. 174) are used in later chapters to convey meaning graphically.

The interview data were organised around 13 major concepts which emerged from the trial interviews; namely, chronological concepts such as background other than teaching, teaching background, becoming a principal/initiation and being a principal/principalship. The latter included specific concepts such as leadership, technical management, curriculum management, change, stress, school climate, school culture and power. The final over-arching concept concerned personal theories about learning as principal. Subsequently these concepts were analysed for critical categories and sub-categories following the grounded theory paradigm.

As theories developed in the form of tentative propositions related to the core categories, they were tested against the literature and further evidence from the transcripts and other documents until I thought they were saturated and could find no contradictory evidence. I developed the "the conditional matrix" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 163) from reference to a wide range of literature and discussion with informed others. It was not always easy to identify "informed others". For example, one of the ways I used to verify the data was to present parts of it as conference papers and seminars. I expected that feedback would help me to clarify my ideas and alert me to contrary arguments. Although paper presentation was helpful, it was not to the extent that I expected. A paper on appraisal as a way of identifying learning needs and learning in general was, I discovered, being presented to a group of academics, most of whom experienced no form of appraisal. However there was some positive feedback from the published paper on appraisal, and the fact that the paper was used by some providers in courses on appraisal showed that the ideas met the criteria of utility. A paper and two seminars on the topic of reflection and self-study again brought no specific debate but did alert me to other perspectives which I was able to build into the research.

Verification Through Member Checks

Once the findings had been analysed and the substantive theory identified, I developed a questionnaire from the propositions and sent this to 18 of the 19 principals. One principal had retired because of ill-health. The questionnaire formed the basis for verification by "member checks" (Robinson, 1993, p. 117) with the research participants, and for "back-talk" (Lanzara, 1991, p.291) with one principal. The questionnaire responses were analysed and the results fed into the report as I describe in Chapter Six. The questionnaire and statistical analysis of the results are presented in Appendix L.

Writing The Report

Writing the report was a central part of the actual process of the theory development itself, as Richardson (1994) and Scheirer (1996) predicted. Richardson (1994) commented that "writing is a process of discovery" (p. 523) and I found this to be the case. The substantive theory of the research emerged to a large extent, through the process of revising the chapter on the findings and the chapter on discussion rather than through the writing of memos, although I did write memos in my log. I found that writing helps "sort out complex and conflicting feelings" (Wolcott, 1994, p. 360) and moves the theory forward. The report was more than a conclusion to a process, a destination reached. It was a learning tool and in some ways a stand-alone product of discovery. This was because the internal consistency and coherence needed for the story, was created through the report.

In Chapter One I set out the research problem as a series of my wonderings and, at that stage, rhetorical questions. In Chapter Two I wrestled with a moving mass of information to establish the parameters of the study. I kept adding to and reworking this chapter as new data emerged through the selective and theoretical coding processes of grounded theory. Chapter Three forced me to clarify the most appropriate research rules and tools, and Chapter Four, to analyse the meta-cognitive processes contained in the actual description of the "what", "how" and "why" I did what I did. Setting out the research process clearly, threw into sharper relief, the need for changes to the research design. At the same time, Chapters Five to Seven were emerging out of, and along with, Chapters One to Four. In Chapter Five, I provided an account of the findings which is largely descriptive. I have done this deliberately to allow the voices of the principals to dominate. Chapter Five is also interpretive leading to the propositions, the grounded theories, the "systematic statements of plausible relationships" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 279). In Chapter Six and Seven, I aimed to link the chapters and explain the theory

showing how it emerged and could add to the knowledge of learning educational management.

Chapter Five presented me with a particular difficulty. I needed to generalise within the parameters of this study to articulate the developing theory, but at the same time, attempt to convey the strong sense I had as researcher, of the individuality of the research participants and their stories. The greatest challenge the report presented me as writer, was to generalise about individuality without falling into the trap described by Richardson (1994) of producing a text crushed by the weight of boring detail. As you will see, I have relied on the lively voices of the research participants to create the sense of their uniqueness and their refusal to be cloned as a norm.

Summary

In this chapter I have described the research chronology from 1995 to 1999, explained how I prepared the research instrument, selected the participants from primary, secondary, male and female principals who were known to me, and managed the research process. Managing the research process describes the nature of communication with the principals, the way the interviews were conducted, problems of having to reschedule, the nature and usefulness of the transcripts, and the use I made of observations, log notes, my own reflections and other documents. How I conducted the self-study is also detailed since this was as structured a process as the researching of the principals. A lengthy section sets out how I managed the grounding of the theory. Although this is shown here as a separate section, in effect, developing the theory began from the start of data gathering and continued right through writing the report. Grounded theory methodology includes verification as part of saturating the emerging theory. It is a precise method of theorising, at once rigorous but creative and flexible. It is now time to introduce you, the reader, what I found.

CHAPTER FIVE:

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

Before setting out the research findings, I remind the reader of the two questions which structured this research.

1. How did these principals perceive that they learnt to be principals?
2. How did they perceive that what they had learnt impacted on their practice?

The research also included a self-study because I wanted to understand my own learning of educational administration as part of my on-going learning, and as a way of adding depth to the study of the principals. Three main categories of learning emerged from the data as it was analysed according to grounded theory principles. These were foundational, experiential and intentional learning. The findings are set out in two parts. The first part describes findings from the self-study and the second, findings from the study of 19 principals.

PART 1: SELF STUDY

Autobiography

I report the self-study first and separately for three related reasons. First, it is appropriate because, as already noted, I have not had experience as a principal although I had been an educational manager, and this study was of principals' learning. Second, I was aware that the self-study influenced the way I interpreted the principals' experiences.

Therefore, I needed to be open about my personal position to let the reader identify the influence on the principal study of my values and predispositions. These would be highlighted and acknowledged in the self-study. Third, as a case study of self-knowledge and interpretation of reflection, the self-study was an important part of the research process. In this section, I describe the salient aspects of upbringing, background and experience of learning educational management, and then analyse what I perceive to have been the most important learning experiences for me.

As I reflected on my life, I saw clearly that the values and attitudes which influenced the way I carried out my full-time management role, developed from childhood. The three key influences in forming my values and attitudes were my family, Catholicism and societal pressures. From my family and upbringing, I learnt the values of hard work, responsibility, independence, justice, honesty and concern for the underprivileged. As second oldest in a large family, I learnt to be very competitive and overly responsible as a way of gaining recognition. From my upbringing, I also learnt that to be Catholic in a strongly Protestant community and relatively poor, as well as belonging to a family of Labour Party supporters in a National Party stronghold, was to be on the losing side, socially. Like my parents, I was uneasy with people whom I perceived to have social status. To some extent I remain so.

My formal education and career in teaching and middle management provided some experiential learning of leadership and administration as the following examples illustrate. I taught in two schools where the principals modelled different styles of leadership. The first modelled warmth and professional concern for the students and respect for them as individuals. The second appeared to identify with the school in personal ways, to prefer some staff to others, to mock peculiarities of students and staff and to hold grudges. Such a sharp contrast of leadership style had a marked effect on me. It developed my belief that those in positions of power have a responsibility to rise above pettiness and practise personal integrity. I also learnt that the senior staff in a school could create the climate either of warmth and collaboration or suspicion and coldness. When I was appointed to a tertiary institution, I had three important mentors in practical management who taught me planning and course design, innovation and team building. I learnt also that a team could be exclusive and threatening if it appeared to others to be a power block out to capture a greater share of limited resources. I was supported for promotion by my team colleagues and introduced to training in educational management by a close friend. Looking back, I perceived that friendship circles had much to do with my advancement in education. Finally, a significant learning experience, from the point of this research, was a two year association with the Department of Education as an

acting inspector and advisor. This enabled me to observe the working environments of a greater range of secondary principals.

As I indicated in Chapter One, when I was appointed as a senior manager in this tertiary institution, I experienced great difficulties initially. The difficulties lay mainly in the rapidly changing educational environment of major restructuring, both institutionally and nationally. No special training was provided although it would have been available had I felt that I had specific learning needs as a new educational manager. In retrospect, I see that I was unaware of the gap that existed between my experience and the skills and knowledge required for that job in those circumstances, and too independent to seek advice from a consultant when I did suspect that I needed help. My most powerful learning was on-the-job learning. This began first with experiencing difficulty, as I have noted, so that I knew that a problem existed, followed by success, with the appointment of an assistant who had management experience and qualifications in business management. Problem awareness and appropriate remedy came together. With this colleague, I learnt experientially to manage in an era of market-driven provision of principal and teacher education. I learnt in practice what I already knew in theory about strategic planning, budgeting, quality management and establishing a climate and culture of client-centred provision of professional education.

I also learnt from involvement in one-off events. For example, being part of New Zealand Qualifications Authority accreditation panels for the qualifications of other institutions was a great learning experience, because the involvement occurred at a time when I was designing similar qualifications myself. I gained administrative experience from helping to run courses and conferences. Although I did not use consultants to help me personally, I did learn from consultants brought occasionally to the institution for management team training in areas such as visioning and strategic planning. Professional reading was very important because I was involved in management teaching. But I also read to meet new management needs; for example preparing to introduce Recognition of Prior Learning for qualification applicants. Apart from the management knowledge and skill, the greatest benefit from this formal and informal learning, was that I gained enormously in confidence in my ability to be an effective manager.

I learnt about managing change most deeply by living through change and from two critical learning incidents. The first concerned a proposal for improving course design. The person proposing the change presented it in a way that denigrated all previous course design and course designers. Furthermore it appeared as if course design was specialisation which the presenter possessed but the audience did not. As a

consequence, the proposal was opposed and a needed learning opportunity lost to the institution. From this I learnt that a change agent may cause change to fail by the manner of presentation. The second incident, concerned a review of the unit I led. The review was proposed initially by the principal as a way of changing some aspects of the unit. However, this purpose was not made clear. The review failed to achieve any real benefit in terms of meeting the objectives of the participants, and left all concerned feeling dissatisfied. I learnt that to bring about change, the aims must be clear and agreed to through negotiation. I learnt that desired change will not come about as an indirect consequence of process. The real aim should not be a secret agenda. In this way what I knew already in theory about change, I now knew at a deeper level.

Attitudes and emotions are important to learning. From 1991-1994, I found educational management deeply satisfying and very stimulating. The job became my life. Success in the job was very much tied to my identity and self-esteem. I was motivated to learn by a sense of professional accountability and a will to succeed in a highly competitive field with several providers offering the same qualifications and professional development training. Competition added excitement and the thrill of the chase - for clients. Attitudes and emotions affected what and how I learnt. For example when my assistant demonstrated her superior knowledge and experience of such management areas as marketing, I deliberately developed areas in which she was not expert, such as programme development. While this was a way of developing complementary areas of expertise and team inter-dependence, it was also a way of maintaining self-esteem. Thus I discovered first-hand that feelings, self-image and self-esteem impact on aspects of management such as delegation.

When I identified management learning needs, I relied on my own efforts, mainly by reflecting on needs related to the work of the unit. I was required to do so as part of my supervision meetings. I had a budget for professional development and attended courses on educational management topics that interested me and were relevant to the work. I did not seek out courses to improve personnel management skills and had no clear evidence, while I was an educational manager, that improvements in personnel management were necessary. Nor did I use networking which the competitive climate tended to undermine.

Self-Study Analysis

Through the self-study, undertaken after I had retired from this management position, I gained a deep understanding of how I learnt educational management and how my whole-of-life learning impacted on my practice in major ways. But would this understanding have helped me while I was practising? I can see now that perception of whole-of-life learning is necessary for detection of some learning barriers and recognition of some critical learning needs. Two examples from the research findings illustrate this. First, from my upbringing I learnt to manage my world by being very conscientious. As one of the research principals who helped me analyse my autobiography remarked, "I always remember how incredibly conscientious you were I thought you were over-serious about it" (FN 20.1.5). However, discussions with colleagues as part of the research indicated that if one appeared to be over-conscientious, one also could appear to colleagues to be inflexible and lacking a balanced view. Second, from my upbringing I learnt to put up with adversity. As a coping strategy, I developed a very logical way of rationalising. If adversity happened I would analyse the situation, sort out what was deserved (my fault) and could be put right, and ignore the rest. But as a colleague said: "You were very logical but there were people who didn't ever see the logic" (FN 20.5.2). From this discussion, I learnt more about the role of emotion in management practice. Emotion and feelings cause some people to reject a logical position and make it hard for the logical person to want to negotiate a new position when the logical position appears to be so clear and so right.

Some learning barriers were structural. The most significant experience of this occurred in appraisal. For the last four years of my work, I had an average of six supervision meetings per year. Goals and performance targets were set. Performance, learning needs and professional development were discussed in light of progress. The meetings were well-prepared, and frank, friendly discussion took place. I found the supervision sessions affirming and useful. However when I later interviewed four of my ex-colleagues as part of the self-study to find out what they thought my learning needs were during those years, I gained two understandings of major importance. First, the system of supervision meetings had not enabled me to identify any concerns which the line supervisor had had about the direction of the unit. I learnt that the structures for appraisal and consultation, and the policies that underpinned them, carried the seeds of ineffectiveness within themselves. For example, the accountability system was run on the basis of "quite a lot of autonomy assuming that you can do the job can identify what it is that you need to know and then find out how to know it and do it" (FN 20.5.7). However, this hands-off policy tended "to subvert appraisal. Turn it into advice and

guidance" (FN 20.3.14) of a low key nature and prevented the vision of the whole institution from being pursued on a united front.

In Chapter One (pp. 3-4) I referred to a problem which I experienced related to conflicting policy directions. This problem was the source of the second understanding. What to me as a role holder appeared to be no more than general management problems, or indications of "the lack of learning of other people" (FN 20.4.1), were to others, my specific learning needs related to the specialist area of "managing professionals" (FN 20.3.3); managing not just by appropriate communication but by the process of influencing them to gain their willing co-operation. The interviews with my ex-colleagues led me to conclude that one's learning needs were generated partly by others in the institution. To find out what one's personal learning needs were, one would have to ask others what *they* perceived them to be. I concluded that, as a role holder, I had a responsibility to understand institutional interfaces; in other words, to understand how my interpretation of my role impacted on the management and professional roles of others in order for the vision and goals of the institution to be met. Knowledge of these role holder learning needs could be provided only by other members of the institution because each role holder impacted on other role holders and the institution as a whole. Although I believed myself to be a reflective person, this was not enough, because, as the research interviews showed, individual reflection could not tap the perceptions of others. The self-study showed the importance of others being involved in the reflective process; not just in relation to general management issues but with regard to one's personal management style.

What was the benefit of self-knowledge? This was well put by one of the colleagues whom I interviewed who said: "If one learns about oneself one can begin to grow, to identify what needs to be developed, changed or simply recognised as not being achieved and [use] other people to help achieve that (in a job sense)" (FN 20.5.3). If one gains self-knowledge, one is empowered to identify opportunities for learning and clarify areas for pro-action. Much self-knowledge is learning to know more deeply what one already knows as surface-level knowledge.

In summary, I began this research with the self-study because I wanted to know how I learnt educational management, how my practice was affected by my learning, and why self-knowledge was important. The self-study showed the importance of whole-of-life, cumulated learning. It showed that the foundations of my learning as an educational manager were laid before appointment, reached right back to my origins, influenced me as an educational manager and clearly impacted on practice. Learning after appointment

depended on situational features and my willingness to learn. But willingness alone was insufficient. Others needed to be involved. Barriers to learning existed in a blend of personal and structural factors.

After the self-study I began to look at principals' learning of educational management. I wondered to what extent the findings of the self-study would be replicated in the principals' study. The self-study has been reported here in some detail because, considering it in retrospect, I believe that it was very influential in the research. It was an experience of self-awareness which enabled me to identify the importance of self-knowledge in learning. The self-study sensitised me to the key issues of learning educational management which I later identified in the study of the principals. The self-study may also have been overly directive and orienting in the research of the principals. However, as befits a qualitative research study, it has enabled me to describe my predispositions with regard to learning. Readers may now judge the influence of the self-study on the study of the principals for themselves.

PART 2: PERCEPTIONS OF 19 PRINCIPALS OF THEIR LEARNING OF PRINCIPALSHIP

The perceptions of the principals of their learning of principalship have been conceptualised through the grounded theory process under the over-arching theme of cumulative learning. First, I describe the over-arching theme generally and then show how that theme is exemplified specifically by three main categories of learning which emerged from analysis of the data - foundational, experiential and intentional learning. These three categories provide an integrated theory of principals' cumulative learning. Each category is then explained. Explanation takes the form of a theme which describes the category generally and a number of propositions about the category which emerged from analysis of the data according to grounded theory methodology. This is followed by a selection of the data to show the reader how this data supported the emerging theory. I have used a representative selection of statements from the principals to show the richness of the data. In these statements, underlined words indicate particular emphasis given by the speaker. Upper case words indicate a raised voice. In reporting the research findings, the issues of learning educational management and the impact of learning on practice which were the subjects of the research questions, have been combined.

Cumulative Learning

The principals in this study perceived that their learning was cumulative; that is, holistic but also capable of learning losses through forgetfulness or the obsolescence of knowledge and skills, loss of motivation and modification of direction through new learning. I let the voices of three principals speak for the group since their sentiments were repeated by others in different ways.

The first voice.

Sometimes people say they had no training ... I consider that everything I've ever learnt and done as a classroom teacher was significant. Everything I ever did as an HOD was significant. I've been an SM with responsibility for guidance. And I've been a DP with responsibility for administration. So I think I had a lot of training ... I was in a school with a principal who shared ... knowledge and experience, and who gave senior staff significant areas of responsibility So I knew those things. (FN 12.1.9)

But learning did not simply encompass the school environment. The principal went on to say:

I am only now what I was as a five year old but differently. And it's my family as much ... everything comes together and what I am in five years will only be more of what I am now. (FN 12.1.11)

The second voice.

I suppose it's more the sum total of cumulative learning over the years It's probably a cumulative amount of study and reading and seminars and experience. And types of experience rather than one particular thing that I can say 'Well, this was the key'. (FN 6.3 30)

The third voice.

In terms of my own learning, I think it's an accumulation of things I keep thinking, am I better now than I was 10 years ago? I'm better in some ways. But I've lost a few things as well that kind of energy drive that you have. You're doing something for the first time and you want it to succeed and you're going hard at it And it's probably part of the ageing process I know a lot more ... I don't make the same number of mistakes, but I still make mistakes. (FN 15.2.20)

One of the reasons for cumulation of learning was that learning was on-going. Furthermore, as one principal commented: "I don't think you ever get there. That's ... why you're still learning. (FN 17.3.47). Continual changes required new learning. A recently retired principal provided a good illustrative case. In her last five years, she had to learn how to move from being a teaching principal in a special school for many years, to being a teaching principal in a mainstream school with a special attached unit as two schools merged. She had to relearn how to teach a mainstream class after 18 years in special education, and how to merge two schools and two staffs. The merger co-incided with the reforms of 1989 and "all the information that was coming out about Tomorrow's Schools ... teacher appraisal and of course the curriculum" (FN 19.1.5). She had to learn a new filing system to cope with the mass of documentation, new ways of reporting on students' progress and in her last year learnt to prepare for her first Education Review Office visit.

The theme of cumulative learning is grounded specifically in three main categories of learning. These were the categories which emerged from the axial and selective coding process of the grounded theory method of analysis. They were:

- (1) foundational learning.
- (2) experiential learning.
- (3) formal and informal intentional learning.

Each of the grounded theory categories is explained in detail.

Foundational Learning

The theme of this category, foundational learning, is the learning related to educational management which principals had acquired prior to their becoming principals. I called the prior learning of principals, their foundational learning, to distinguish pre-appointment learning from learning after appointment. I also wanted to establish the very influential nature of the prior learning which appeared to shape the principals before they became principals and continued to impact on practice after appointment. Two major propositions were developed through the analysis of the data in this category.

Propositions

The principals perceived that their learning of principalship originated in, and developed from, their background learning which evolved in the milieu of family and upbringing, formal education, career in teaching, middle and senior management, and relationships with significant others who were role models and mentors.

These principals perceived that their learning impacted on practice through influencing attitudes and values, confidence and social skills, management skills and knowledge, policies and procedures.

Most principals perceived that foundational learning began with the family, and that family influence was most evident in the learning and development of the values and attitudes, which later impacted directly on their practice. These included the values of honesty, hard work, loyalty and a sense of fairness. As one principal said "I'd hate anybody to say you weren't being honest And I think that ... [parental attitudes] had a lot to do with that" (FN 11.2.2). The impact of family learning and upbringing could be seen in principals' work ethic as the following statements show. One principal said: "I was following along what my Dad always said to me. He said '... whatever you do, son, do well ... to the best of your ability' " (FN 8.2.21). One set of values which emerged strongly in all the principals' statements was summed up by one as a "sense that you have a particular responsibility for other people" (FN 12.2.2). One principal from a home where "there was a lot of emphasis put on doing things for other people. A huge

amount", (FN 14.2.2) said of his attitudes to people: "People matter. Forgiveness matters. If they ... make a reasonable case to me, I find it very hard to be angry with a kid" (FN 14.3.31). Several principals related their personalities to family members. In answer to a question about the origins of her fortitude in the face of an incident of major trauma in the school, a principal said: "It's just part of me and I suppose it comes mostly from my family, my upbringing, my early years" (FN 12.2.7). Some traced their motivation back to their families. As one principal commented: "My parents wish that I would be able to go a bit further than the other three [siblings] was ... a responsibility I felt I had" (FN 13.3.1).

Self-confidence and social orientation appeared to be related to negative and positive foundational learning. For example, a principal who described his father as loving but dominant, spoke very respectfully of seniors in education and showed great humility. A principal of 18 years, in his fifth school, and apparently successful, he said:

I don't see myself as a leader ... it took a long time for me to wake up to the fact that I was as good as other people It was really only last year when I worked alongside some people that I admired, and realised, hang on, these people have got the same problems as I've got and they're asking me for advice. Asking ME. (FN 7.3.14)

Another principal who was nearing retirement, said that she still lacked confidence in herself. She attributed this to sibling rivalry and lack of her mother's support saying: "I won prizes ... but she never came along to assemblies or anything like that" (FN 2.3.19). In another case, overly high parental expectations combined with a critical attitude, led a principal to say: "I've always been self-critical and I think that's what I've picked up from my parents. It may be a handicap" (FN 17.2.4). In both these cases the principals stated that they behaved in ways that specifically avoided negative ways of treating others. As the last speaker remarked with regard to negative criticism, "I go to great lengths not to do it because I know how destructive it can be" (FN 17.3.24). Others learnt to move confidently in social and cultural circles. One principal, commenting on his confidence and social skills, noted that as a child he was always included by adults in family gatherings and "always greatly encouraged to take part" (FN 14.2.17). Affiliation with and sympathy for Maori culture and fortunes, which five principals displayed as principals, was linked to upbringing also. Although all acknowledged the importance of family and upbringing, most principals indicated that they had not thought about it before the research interviews.

Some principals believed that they learnt the rudiments of management and leadership as prefects, sports captains and coaches, officers in the school cadets,

organisers of drama, debating and other school activities. The experience gained was considerable in a few cases.

You were just given a play, if you were the House Captain ... and that was it. It was your responsibility And you were always expected to ... have a kind of community responsibility too ... to umpire ... and coach juniors and had a responsibility for junior forms. (FN 12.1.2)

Two of the principals enjoyed specific experience of leadership at Teachers' College, one as head of section and one as student representative on the Academic Board. However a similar number of principals stated that they could recall no particular leadership training from their school years.

The impact of the earliest foundational learning was illustrated in some practices and specific policies of principals. Two principals who had been compared with their siblings throughout their schooling, stated that they were always careful to treat children as individuals in their own right. In another case, a principal, speaking of principals' misusing power, recorded how she was summoned to the principal's office as a teacher trainee without knowing the reason for the summons and experienced great and needless anxiety. "I never ask anybody to come to my office without first telling them exactly what it is about" (FN 1.1.4). One principal had this to say about the impact of childhood bullying on his policy as principal.

Major impact. There's an innate sympathy for little boys that come to school who've been bullied at intermediate school and so I'm fairly hard on students who bully or victimise or intimidate other people. I'm sticking up for myself in retrospect. (FN 17.2.2)

In another case a principal adopted a policy of non-streaming, as a result of his own first-hand experience in the bottom stream.

It made me feel ... inadequate and ... annoyed that people didn't value me for what I thought I could do ... on the basis of the test that I was given just off the cuff ... and didn't realise the importance of I didn't see it as totally fair. (FN 13.3.21)

The principals were unanimous in believing that a successful career in teaching was one of the most important components of learning the instructional leadership role of the principal. Without first-hand experience of teaching, principals did not believe that a principal could fully understand the needs of the child and the educational purpose of a school. As a teacher, philosophies of education were developed. In addition, success in teaching established the credibility of the principal in the eyes of teachers and community. One principal summed it up by saying: "If I was known to be a poor teacher, I would have great difficulty going into people's classes suggesting they taught better" (FN 17.3.46). Primary principals believed that their basic management learning for the

principalship came first from managing their classrooms. The routines, planning, order and management of people, which they had learnt over many years in their classrooms, translated easily to the larger environment of the whole school. Management of the junior school provided valuable experience of managing a school within a school without the final, legal responsibility. In the secondary service, managing a large department, provided something like the same learning experience.

In middle and senior management, as deputy or associate principals, principals stated that they learnt essential skills of managing large numbers of adults and children on a whole school basis, and, to some extent, learnt all the technical areas of management they would need to develop further as principals. They learnt the daily operation of school systems. A common belief expressed was as follows:

Principals who become principals without being part of the management team have an enormous gap if they haven't done what I call the dirt things, and the day-to-day grind things, ... dealing with discipline and ... irate staff. (FN 11.2.7)

Eight of the eleven primary principals had had experience as acting principals and three of the eight secondary principals had been Deputy Principals. "Learning to manage multiple things at the same time ... setting priorities, balancing time, working with people" (FN 6.2.17) in senior management helped them settle in as principals. Some important management knowledge and skill was learnt in related educational management roles also; namely, as guidance co-ordinators and deans, teacher union counsellors and negotiators, subject advisors, visiting teachers, inspectors, Teachers' College lecturers and as members of Government-sponsored curriculum development projects.

Non-school experience in the years before becoming principals, aided management learning and impacted on practice also. Three of the principals had had experience in the Territorial Army which helped them as principals. "You do an awful lot of problem solving and lots of tables and plans and diagrams. That's when I first came into the idea of different kinds of organisational plans" (FN 9.1.24). Another principal learnt "discipline ... getting on and working with others, and leadership" (FN 8.2.17). He observed that the "big loud voice was very threatening and was very helpful from time to time" (FN 8.2.27) as a principal. One principal learnt advocacy and compromise through being a union counsellor. He said: "I've learnt how to lead people to a particular point" (FN 10.2.20). Interviewing experience gained by some principals through membership of interviewing panels for the Department of Education, College of Education or for other schools was also directly transferred into the principalship. As one principal said: "I use

an awful lot of the techniques that I've come across through the College with the interviewing process" (FN 10.2.21). These techniques included "the way they interact with me and with other people ... making judgements, analysing ... paper material, analysing in a group setting what my perceptions were, what other people's perceptions were" (FN 10.2.20). Several principals learnt public speaking through holding office in union or professional organisations. One principal, who had been a relieving lecturer at the College of Education, said:

I had the most marvellous group of students ... exciting, full of interest. ... It's impacted on my appointments in that ... the personality of the teacher is actually probably as, if not more, important than their academic qualifications. (FN 17.1.24)

One principal learnt consensus and curriculum development as a member of a curriculum development group. As she explained:

I had read about consensus decision-making But that's where I saw it working. And that was one of the things that I kept with me until I became a principal And I think having a practical understanding of how curriculum changes can be managed ... from the classroom out, rather than from the outside in, was really important. (FN 12.1.9)

One of the earliest propositions of the grounded theory of foundational learning to be saturated was that role models and mentors were perceived to be very important in moulding principals in their management attitudes, behaviours and leadership styles. Principals learnt by observing other principals and teachers and absorbing "dos" and "don'ts". From their role models, principals learnt how to interact with children, staff and parents in ways that got the best out of them and contributed to a harmonious and co-operative climate. Principal role models showed that different styles of interaction could be equally successful. Principals with whom they had worked were of particular importance in practice as the following examples show.

At the beginning of the year he'd have a little speech. I do much the same here. He told people how to get the classes settled down He made a big point of the style of teaching that he expected. (FN 17.1.21)

Another principal said:

An excellent role model ... how to manage people He actually took an interest in all his staff ... had lots of kids always in his office, coming to show work Yes, great, great role model. Probably the most influential role model in my career. (FN 5.1.11)

Role models demonstrated "excellently worked out systems" (FN 13.1.18) which were maintained and copied. They provided evidence of the wisdom of being seen about the school and at school functions. As one principal said: "She never missed a thing in

that school ... and I see that as my role too" (FN 11.1.9). Principals learnt from negative role models and attempted to behave differently, thinking: "What a terrible thing to do. I'll never do that when I'm further up the ladder" (FN 3 1.3). The analysis of the principals' data revealed that sadistic, sarcastic, rude, thoughtless, unfair and unappreciative teachers and principals, poorly organised heads of departments and indecisive principals taught, in some cases, just as powerfully as splendid role models.

Mentors helped the learning of many principals by demonstrating, advising, counselling and encouraging career development. These mentors came from many sources; relatives with expertise in related fields such as accountancy or personnel management, other principals, inspectors and advisors, tutors of qualification courses, union officials, leaders in subject associations, cultural leaders, university professors and teachers' college lecturers. Some found mentors at the social level who advanced their careers. One principal said: "The key elements of the story are the contacts good contacts on a social level" (FN 10.1.20). The most important development for several principals was the influence of mentors who inspired political, social, educational and aesthetic consciousness which later influenced their philosophies as teachers and principals. Speaking of his Teachers' College lecturer, one principal stated:

He talked a lot about teaching and learning ... what I admired most about him was that he was enthusiastic I just found it exciting. It was the first time I'd come across it It's ... what I was looking for. (FN 14.2.10)

Some principals established close relations with lecturers and academic leaders and were greatly supported and encouraged in their cognitive development. Others were encouraged to have confidence in themselves and believe that "everyone has a Field Marshall's baton in their knapsack" (FN 9.1.7). Others learnt to manage staff meetings. For example, one principal learnt from his mentor how to manage staff consultation by waiting until everyone had had an opportunity to express an opinion, then enter the discussion and lead the group to the conclusion he wanted.

Mentors were perceived to play a critical role in the socialisation of principals because of the hierarchical nature of schools. At the same time, the importance of mentors varied according to career cycle and the innate confidence of the principal. Two principals claimed that they had had no mentors, either as teachers or as principals. However, one of the most important ways that role modelling and mentoring impacted on practice was that most of the principals, acknowledging the importance of role models and mentors in their own learning, deliberately acted as role models and mentors for their staff. Some principals remarked that since 1989, principals themselves had had to become the main mentors for ambitious teachers and these principals considered this an

important part of the principal's role. As one principal said of her principal: "He was always very supportive of me as a person ... took time ... treated me as a colleague ... I appreciated all that and ... that's what I try to do for my folk" (FN 1.3.19).

In summary, the data showed that, in the perceptions of these principals, the learning principals needed for the job was firmly established by means of their prior learning in the contexts of family and upbringing, their own education and their careers. This learning impacted on practice through influencing attitudes and values, self-confidence, social skills, management knowledge and skills, leadership style, policies and procedures.

Experiential Learning

The theme of this category is the learning that occurred as a consequence of being the principal on a day-to-day basis over time. Five main propositions supported this category of findings.

Propositions

Principals perceived that they learnt in the situational contexts of initiation, crises, solving management problems, routine management, managing change and community involvement.

Principals perceived that they learnt by persevering, being observant, tapping into the knowledge of supporters, taking advantage of catalysts, working through procedures, reflection and experimentation (trial and error).

This learning impacted on the practice of the principals in their roles as day-to-day managers, team leaders and builders, change agents, instructional and moral leaders and visionaries.

The process of being a learning principal over time led to deep-level learning.

Deep-level learning appeared to be most influential in developing self-knowledge and managing interpersonal relationships.

On-the-job learning, resulting from being principals over time, is experiential learning. This type of learning enabled the principals to reach deep-level learning of

many aspects of the job; that is, through combining reflection, study, practice and evaluation. Consequently, experiential learning was perceived to be the most powerful and practical type of learning. Through grounded theory analysis, I identified two sub-groups of the experiential learning category; *situational learning* and *emergent learning*. I grouped specific learning situations as *situational learning*. For gradual learning through the process of being principal over time, I used the term, *emergent learning*. As situations occurred principals reflected, theorised and tried out solutions, as a consequence of which they learnt the job. I have not discussed reflection separately in this section because some levels of reflection were a component underpinning all principals' learning. The environment required reflection. In addition, specific reflection occurred in response to situations.

Situational Learning

Situational learning took place most powerfully in five different kinds of management situation related to initiation, crises and stressful management problems, routine management, occasional events and career changes. These learning situations were the "building blocks that went into shaping" (FN 9.1.6) the principals as school leaders; leaders whom they themselves described variously as day-to-day managers, professional leaders, team leaders and builders, educational leaders, visionaries, co-ordinators and moral leaders. I discuss each kind of learning situation and the learning involved and show how it impacted on practice.

The actual process of initiation in the first months after appointment appeared to be a critical learning period, especially in terms of establishing their leadership and identifying learning needs. The new principals fell into two groups depending on the support they received from staff. Eight were welcomed in the main and eleven had to learn to deal with difficult staff situations. I will describe the difficult learning situations first. No two situations were the same and difficulties varied in severity. Among the least difficult situation was working with a disappointed Deputy Principal who made the job "quite hard work, because he didn't resist necessarily But on the other hand you didn't get warm support ... either" (FN 13.3.1). At the other end of the scale, some Deputy Principals, who had applied unsuccessfully for the principal's position, were deliberately obstructive. One principal had to learn to manage a group of hostile staff about whom he said: "I could have walked on water It would not have made any difference to some

people. And you can't change those people" (FN 9.3.8). In another case, the disappointed candidate and supporters organised a staff/student protest outside the school and carried on a rear-guard battle for appointment through the media. "Front page of the [local paper], the heading was 'New Principal not Wanted' It was terrible." (15.3.17). Another said, after she had survived a challenge to her appointment: "The Board Chairperson contacted me and said 'Well, you've won the position. Congratulations. But you can't come on the school premises until the week before school opens' " (FN 4.1.21). In these cases, learning as principal began with learning how to become accepted, and how to deal with strained interpersonal relations.

Individual principals dealt with problems of initiation in ways that suited their personalities. As one principal said of himself: "I'm not cut out to be a revolutionary. My approach basically is to drip feed, sow the seeds, try to get non-threatening discussions going" (FN 9.3.2). Other principals met the opposition head-on. As one said:

I wasn't going to be shoved around, because I could see very, very clearly that that was the plan ... I was going to be like the caretaker principal. I hoped to make it clear, right from the start that I was taking over the reins. (FN 4.2.4)

These principals found ways to get round obstructive staff. Mostly they learnt to do this by trial and error, perseverance and being observant. Strategies included thorough preparation, careful negotiation, seeking out allies on the staff, using incidents as catalysts for reaching new levels of co-operation, and compromising on the speed of change. They also encouraged problem staff to move to other positions. Foundational learning had a major impact on early practice. As one principal remarked of her first months as principal: "I needed ... every single one of my skills" (FN 1.1.24).

Some principals were welcomed and supported by staff, Boards of Trustees and their communities. However, all new principals had to establish their leadership, "find out what's going on and get to know ... who pulls the strings" (FN 5.1.20). Even the six principals who had gained promotion to principalship from senior positions in the same school found that new learning was required. As one principal remarked: "In lots of people's views I had only changed seats, not roles It took me, I'd say, three years to make this ... 'my school' " (FN 11.1.6). She found particularly frustrating the staff's habit of continuing to discuss issues after she, as principal, had made a final decision. New principals from outside the school had to find ways of relating to senior staff as the spokespersons and in some cases, self-appointed guardians of the traditional culture. In the words of one principal: "You couldn't just override the others and sort of say 'Well, I'm here and this is what I'm doing'. You'd ... create bush fires all over the place" (FN 13.1.27). In most cases learning the culture of the school was a matter of patience,

sensitivity and using good observational skills. In five cases, where new principals did have to move quickly to change cultures of established tradition to meet the needs of changed clientele, or the changed economic situation, they learnt to do this by trial and error or "by the seat of the pants" (FN 7.3.6). The latter was an oft quoted expression. In particular, all five learnt to communicate strategically with staff leaders and make concessions to win final approval for their policies or proposed changes.

Each community was unique and new principals took a variety of steps to learn about their specific communities. This was done through contacting community leaders, visiting contributing schools, joining community organisations such as Rotary, accepting posts on committees, accepting speaking engagements and generally being seen at sporting and cultural functions. The most commonly stated method of getting to know the wider community was providing a welcoming school atmosphere and encouraging parents to visit the school.

Once through the period of initiation principals learnt through a great variety of crises and stressful situations, problem-solving activities and occasional events. I have used the term "crisis" because it was used frequently by principals. One principal, describing the differences between his previous and his current school, noted: "You have more crises if you do not have a crisis a day, you know that it's all ganging up and you're going to have six in one day" (FN 9.2.21). I defined crises as experiences which entailed considerable degrees of stress, threat and emotion. To differentiate between major and minor crises, I have used the term "stressful situation" for the "crisis a day", and retained the term "crisis" for serious situations. The frequent use of the term "crisis" indicated that the principals were very aware that in their jobs there was constant potential for a major issue that "explodes out of nowhere ... with no warning" (FN 14.1.20) or for the dreaded "midnight call" (FN 8.3.11) heralding a problem such as arson or disaster on a school camp. Stressful situations and crises were mainly to do with interpersonal relationships, such as dismissal interviews, disputes, physical violence, trespass and vandalism. By experiencing crises and stressful situations, principals, as one principal summed it up, "developed over time ... an understanding of procedures, rules, laws that you would not otherwise need to learn" (FN 10.3.4). They also learnt on the job to make moral decisions when values conflicted; for example, over the conflicting rights of teacher and student or parent, individual and majority.

The most dramatic specialised learning occurred by living through traumatic situations. Fifteen of the 19 principals had experienced one or more major crises such as deaths, injuries or illnesses of students or staff members, assaults, fire, arson and

repeated serious destruction of school property, court cases, media harassment, and sexual abuse cases. Some principals experienced the personal traumas of hostile initiations which I have addressed above, personalised opposition and criticism, marriage break-up and ill health. From experiencing major traumas and reflecting afterwards, principals learnt about themselves as people; the lengths of their endurance and their vulnerabilities. They learnt that they could cope and how they could cope. As one principal said: "You need a strength in yourself but for other people ... how can I cope myself so that other people can" (FN 12.2.6). With regard to a fire, another principal said: "I counted my blessings that it was my room ... because I don't know how I could have supported somebody else. I could now. Now I've been through it" (FN 2.2.18). By enduring and working their way through the procedures, most principals perceived that they learnt practical techniques and interpersonal skills. For example, in a case of sexual abuse of students, a principal noted that she learnt the steps and procedures to be followed, how to address the media, how to communicate what was happening appropriately to the rest of the school community, and how to handle the rumour machine. These were not aspects of management which she thought could be learnt effectively out of context. Learning associated with major crises usually resulted in policy making and demonstration of moral leadership. As one principal said:

If you make a mistake ... somewhere you should record the process, and work out what went wrong and make sure it doesn't happen again We've put in place a few policies and procedures now which we hope will mean that that [crisis] won't ever happen again. (FN 13.3.16)

Learning from crises also helped principals in their team building role by building up deeper understanding of the personalities on the staff and developing sensitivities that alerted them later to impending staff trouble. Principals said they used problem situations to publicise their values and moral leadership. As one principal stated:

People have to do what's right ... the staff believe that I should always support them But ... if the [student] ... or the parent is right, then I'll uphold them The staff now know that, so It's a learning curve for them as well as me. (FN 17.3.23)

Personal crises, especially illness arising from over-work, made principals more aware of their own limitations. Ten of the 17 principals indicated that they had experienced ill-health at some stage which they attributed to work-related stress and which impacted on their practice by making them less effective at the time but, they felt, more considerate of themselves and others in their future practice.

Principals described learning from the many routine incidents of day-to-day practice. At times these were perceived by the principals as mistakes. All agreed that they made mistakes and tried to learn from them. Change management was learnt by

living through it and often by trial and error. One principal described how, after a number of unsuccessful attempts at bringing about change, he learnt to "keep putting signposts out" (FN 18.2.4) signalling inevitable changes and when the time came for the change, "people had often taken it on board I guess I learnt it the hard way" (FN 18.2.5). One period when change management featured strongly was during the years of educational management reform. As learning of change management in the reform years is subsumed in the next section on motivation, learning modes and methods, the issue is not discussed further here.

Principals developed greater skill and knowledge from participating in one-off happenings or types of non-school involvement which provided learning. There were a great number and variety of occasional events, such as major building projects or restructuring, involvement in national professional functions, secondments to the Ministry of Education and so on. Several principals described how this kind of activity led to deeper learning of many of the principal's tasks; for example, advocacy, negotiation, curriculum development, problem solving, strategic planning, report writing and decision making. Some principals said that involvement in occasional events created spurts of learning for them, often with immediate transfer of learning to practice in their roles. Frequently the learning was personal as well as professional. For example, one principal said that she gained confidence in herself as a result of helping to run successful centenary celebrations.

In this section also, I make brief mention of career movement through multiple principalships. Nine of the 19 principals had experienced multiple principalships. Multiple principalships created a wide variety of new learning situations. This was most dramatic for three principals who began their learning as principals of sole charge or two teacher rural schools, one without formal teacher training of any kind. They acknowledged their initial lack of preparedness and a rapid, continuous learning curve. As one principal reflected: "I was so naive ... that I didn't even realise that you had to communicate with the Education Board. That there'd be forms to fill in" (FN 7.2.15). They learnt that being a principal meant being self-reliant and using initiative; for example, fixing petrol generators and enticing parents to meetings with Western movies. While help was available through the Education Board, "you tended to think that if you rang them too many times, they'd be thinking gosh who have we got here" (FN 8.1.19). Most importantly, through running the school with minimum support, these principals learnt basic administration and people management. As one noted:

I was doing the same sort of returns for a two teacher school as anybody of this size school [500] The buck stopped with you, and whether it's a two

teacher school or a 30 teacher school, if a parent's got their knickers in a knot, you're the person that's got to sort it out. (FN 9.1.19)

Most principals inherited extremely well-organised systems and consequently learnt from what was already in place. Asked about the impact on their practice of multiple principalships, and whether multiple principalships were beneficial, principals usually answered "Yes and no. Because each community was so very, very different" (FN 8.1.20). The major impact of learning from multiple principalships, was described as coming from the range of experiences which principals could draw upon to inform current practice and their confidence in their ability to do the job successfully. Speaking of his feelings about taking over a school in difficulties, a principal remarked: "I knew that I could deal with it - at some cost because of previous experiences I'd had" (FN 15.3.19).

As this analysis and description of the data shows, situational learning was a very important and powerful feature of experiential learning, often with immediate impact on the practice of principals in their varied roles. As they described their experiences, it was clear that learning was situated not just in different events and activities, but with different collections of personalities and in very different places. Environments appeared to influence learning also. Much situational learning over time created emergent learning which I discuss next.

Emergent Learning.

The second sub-category of experiential learning which I identified was emergent learning. Grounding the theory in the data showed that "being there" over time was an important dimension of the learning process. The term "emergent learning" was used to account for the living process of creating new learning by fusing learning from many experiences. This kind of learning was often achieved over time and by trial and error. Certainly reflection was an essential ingredient. The term encapsulated the thoughts of one principal when she said: "You can't take it out of a book ... you make the first tentative steps and come gutters from time to time but ... you build on those layers until it becomes part of the way you operate" (FN 1.3.8). Sometimes emergent learning was perceived to be tacit learning. As one principal said:

A lot of these things are not learnt. They're sort of gut feelings in many cases. And with experience, the gut feelings get a lot clearer. You say, I know that that works and I know that this will not work. (FN 8.2.28)

Emergent learning was demonstrated often in terms of the personal growth of the principal. For example, one principal said that from the experience of being a principal in

a South Auckland school, he learnt compassion and came to see the child as an individual, situated in societal problems. Another principal was very open about his learning of self-control through experience.

It took me a long, long time to learn to keep my cool and that was the thing I found hardest I think a person would come in abusive and he would stir me up so I would get aggressive in return I got better towards the end. (FN 18.2.18)

With regard to criticism, a further principal noted:

I think that's one area that I've developed quite a lot since I've been in this job that you just refuse to respond to personal attack. Because it's there all the time Yes, I think that's a pretty big lesson really. (FN 14.3.2)

Some became philosophical about people. In riding out a particularly hostile initiation, a principal commented:

I learnt that people with evil intent, will never be combated by the good guys who want the quiet life. They will see it as something that they hope will go away. But in the meantime, the bad guys and the person they have in their sights, are left alone basically to slug it out. (FN 9.3.9)

Part of learning that resulted from the process of "being" there over time was learning to live with a high level of tension, summed up by one principal as developing "steel in the soul ... that makes it possible to carry on a daily basis, an enormous weight of responsibility for the lives of young people" (FN 12.2.6). Principals also learnt to clarify their values. After a period on secondment, one of the principals, describing his battle to improve the cleanliness of the grounds and to re-establish contact with the student body, considered that the key to his success in these two matters came from having learnt to be "very clear about where you felt the school needed to head and very determined about it a bit ruthless" (FN 18.2.9).

Becoming comfortable in multi-cultural settings was one example of emergent learning. An interesting factor, which soon became apparent in the research, was the way multi-cultural communities captured the minds and spirits of teachers who later became principals in those communities. Ten of the 19 principals who were principals in schools characterised by ethnic diversity, predominantly Maori and Polynesian, had chosen to spend their careers in such schools. One principal recalled her first encounter with Polynesian students as a cultural shock of great magnitude, followed by months of feelings of utter failure as a teacher. Once over that hurdle, however, she continued to work in schools with large multi-cultural populations and made a deliberate choice to seek a multi-cultural school as principal. "I came to visit the school and I really liked it. It was the same sort of very multi-cultural area which I feel very comfortable with" (FN 5.1.18). Other principals made similar comments intimating that they choose multi-

cultural schools, which might be a challenge, but which they found were deeply satisfying places in which to work. One principal explained why he changed schools when the clientele of his school changed:

I didn't like the rich kids. I didn't like them when they turned up at school in their flash cars and all their trendy gear and ... were spoilt and arrogant and dismissive of teachers in a very sneering kind of way. I didn't like that. Hated it. (FN 15.3.14)

Learning to lead, learning to manage people was very powerful as a descriptor of emergent learning. There was general agreement that as regards learning management, "the human relationship side is the hardest" (FN 6.3.10) to learn. On occasions, emergent learning brought principals to the point where they could take a stand with individual staff when other approaches failed, and say as one principal did: "This is the bottom line. This is what as a staff we agreed we were going to do and you either come on board, or here's the *Gazette*" (FN 4.2.17). One of the most significant aspects of emergent learning, was learning the principal's role in relation to the staff and school as a whole. As described by one principal:

I learnt that it was beyond me to run an entire school on my own (FN 17.3.8) Any success that I've got comes from [the staff] and that's a very important realisation. You don't appreciate it until ... you've actually been in the job for a little while So once you learn that, your perception of the job changes. (FN 17.3.42)

The same principal also noted: "I've come to realise that ... I may be legally responsible if anything happens but I don't feel personally responsible. And it takes a while to get to that realisation" (FN 17.3.22). Over time, some principals perceived that they learnt patience, tolerance, humility and wisdom. They learnt to accept and to trust the staff. One principal commented: "Before, I think, I delegated but didn't delegate. I didn't put my faith in people I delegated to" (FN 3.2.12). The impact of emergent learning on practice was to be seen also in principals' discussions of learning refined decision-making. For example, experience had shown one principal how to recognise those occasions when no decision was the right decision. Others learnt when staff wanted their principals to make unilateral decisions and when they wanted to be consulted.

Learning to manage interpersonal relations took time in a particular job with a particular staff. As one principal noted:

In the end people have to do the things I ask them to do because they want to. Otherwise there's no real way of forcing them ... except to take disciplinary action ... and there are no more certain ways of creating divisiveness on the staff than that. So it's got to be by persuasion. (FN 17.2.39)

However, persuasion appeared in different guises and was described variously by some principals as "manipulating" (FN 5.3.14), and even "scheming [and] devious" (FN 14.1.17). This kind of emergent learning was demonstrated in the matter of consultation. It appeared that overall, principals consulted in more restricted ways as they became more experienced as principals. Three main reasons were given for tightening the process of consultation. First, "you can't just consult endlessly ... you consult ... after that you make a decision ... so that the school carries on. The momentum is there" (FN 13.2.11). Second, staff affirmed decisive leadership based on a clear, shared vision. "I've always been someone who moves the herd Westwards ... and it's come through my appraisal reports ... that they really like knowing where they're going, ... being well organised" (FN 10.2.17). Third, in dealing with large numbers of people, "you're not stroking the iron sands ... with a magnet" (FN 14.3.15) and, therefore, can expect opposition. By the process of emergent learning, the principals learnt how to balance the need to consult, with their contractual obligation to provide leadership. Several principals admitted that they had to become very good manipulators to achieve what they wanted for their schools. "Sometimes it's true consultation and sometimes it isn't" (FN 17.2.36).

Emergent learning was diffused. A clear statement of this came from an experienced principal who had recently taken over a school which was struggling to survive. He described his emergent, experiential learning as a kind of learning synergy which took place over many years:

Those ... experiences were really valuable for preparing me for [the new school]. Knowing my own kind of strengths and my weaknesses ... I'd learnt a lot about myself ... a lot about how schools work ... and I had a clear idea about what I thought I could do and couldn't do as a principal of a school but every situation is different. (FN 15.3.27)

Emergent learning was clearly also dynamic and on-going. When I asked this principal if an experienced principal would think that he had learnt enough from his earlier experiences, he replied with feeling:

No. No. No. Oh hell no. And I can't see that any principal would ever see their job in that way. Every day you're ... confronted with something that's slightly different. But you've got a solid basis of experiences, some theory to draw on and some skills. You can wend your way through. But you're constantly making mistakes. One of the important things about being a principal is learning to minimise the mistakes that you make, and learning to see the traps that you can walk into They're there all the time. And I've got better at doing that. (FN 15.3.28)

It appeared that one of the driving forces of emergent learning was constantly changing situational dynamics.

In summary, I have shown how, in the perceptions of these principals, experiential learning appeared to occur not just through the situational contexts of initiation, crises, problem-solving, routine management, managing change and involvement in occasional events, but through the complex process of "being there" over time. "Being a principal" over time appeared to be a learning process with its own dimensions and definitions which I have called emergent learning. Emergent learning was most evident in the deep-level personal development of the principals as school leaders, especially related to self-knowledge and interpersonal relations. Situational and emergent learning was contextualised within particular home, school and community environments also. The main impact of experiential learning on practice, appeared to lie in clarifying direction, in deepening understanding, and in the general honing of prior skills, learning new skills to deal with situations as they arose, and in the refinement of strategies. The principals learnt experientially by persevering, reflection, observation, negotiation, taking advantage of situations, and trial and error. They also learnt purposively as they identified learning needs. These are described next.

Formal And Informal Intentional Learning

The theme of this category is the purposive learning undertaken to meet learning needs identified through the contexts of being, or preparing to be principals. Motivation to learn, an important element of intentional learning, appeared to have personal, social and professional dimensions. Intentional learning included both formal intentional learning, involving gaining qualifications and certificates, and informal intentional learning obtained through courses, conferences and seminars, consultancies, networking and professional reading to suit particular learning needs and preferred styles of meeting learning needs. Learning methods involved reflection, tuition, coaching, critical thinking, self-directed learning and action research. Figure 3 (p. 130) illustrates the structure of the concept of intentional learning.

Propositions

The principals perceived that they identified their learning needs in the contexts of practice and were motivated to meet their learning needs through formal and informal intentional learning in ways that suited personal preferences and learning styles.

Principals' intentional learning had direct, major impact on their practice in a great variety of individualistic ways because of links to their learning needs.

Principals believed that limitations and barriers to their learning were personal, systemic, and job-related.

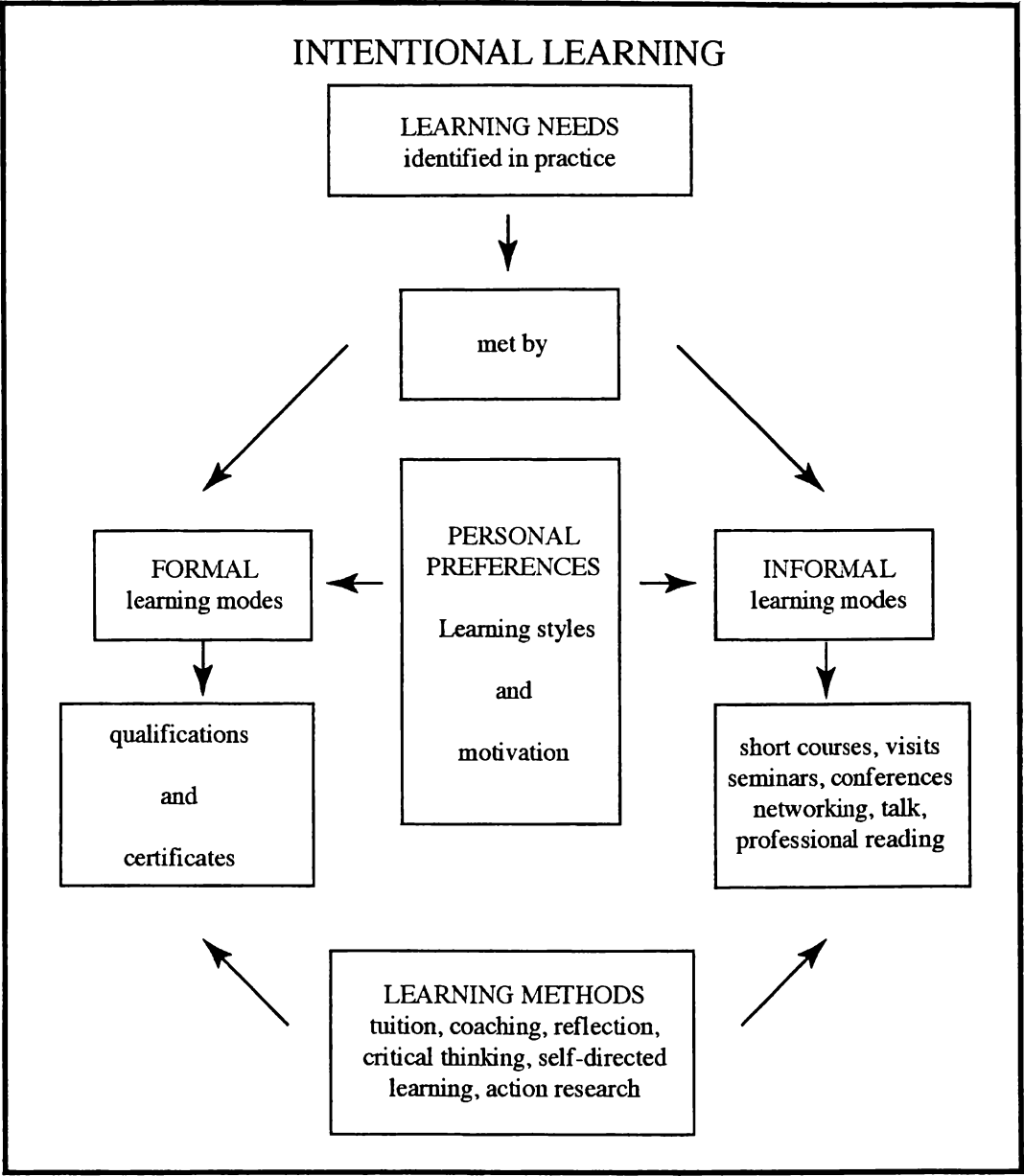


Figure 3: Intentional learning to meet learning needs

As part of the grounded theory method of data analysis and theory development, diagrams are useful devices for clarifying complexity. Figure 3 was developed to show

the complexity and relationships of the category of intentional learning. The figure shows the relationships between learning needs which have been identified, and ways of meeting these needs by means of formal and informal learning modes. All learning modes may use a variety of methods. Selection of learning modes and methods is influenced by personal likes and dislikes, preferred learning styles and motivation.

Intentional learning is now described in four contexts. These are (a) identification of learning needs, (b) personal preferences, learning styles and motivation, (c) learning modes and methods, (d) barriers and limitations. The impact of learning on practice is woven into the description of findings.

Identification Of Learning Needs

Principals identified their learning needs in a variety of ways. They perceived that identification of learning needs was a simple matter when learning was required by new legislation, regulations and official directives, such as the State Sector Act (1988), the Education Act (1989), the Public Finance Act (1989), the Performance Management Systems (1997) documents and so on. In 1989, primary principals were particularly aware of learning needs because of the scale and rapidity of the educational management reforms. As one principal commented:

I was anxious that the parents and the community ... would not be disadvantaged because of Tomorrow's Schools My focus was really as an executive officer ... reading the articles ... going to the meetings and the conferences and the seminars to keep myself up-to-date with the changes, and interpreting those changes, and reflecting those back in a way that was simplistic, but correctly understandable to ... my community as a whole". (FN 8.1.21)

Another principal explained the learning needs of primary principals as regards managing finance in this way: "The Education Board ... didn't know what it cost the school ... and like next week, we're supposed to know" (FN 1.3.29). This principal also commented angrily that managing schools in the reform era required principals to learn even more "political game playing" (FN 1.3.17) because in order to obtain funds for designated purposes they were required to spend so much time and energy on making a case to the Ministry - time which she said should have been going into assessing "children's progress" (FN 1.3.17).

All of the principals emphasised their need for learning as the instructional leaders. As one principal stated: "I think I know more about teaching and learning generally than anyone else on the staff. And I think I should frankly I take that

requirement very strongly" (FN 14.1.24). This led one principal to learn about "lead groups" (FN 13.3.14), another to learn about "bilingualism" (FN 4.1.15), and another to learn about "non-racist education" and "involving the community more in secondary schools" (FN 12.1.20). Non-teaching primary principals wanted to be able to support staff and encouraged new curriculum learning by attending curriculum courses with their staffs. Deep concern for the education and general welfare of their students helped to identify some learning needs. One principal noted: "I found that the level of poverty there was the worst I had ever experienced And it shaped me somewhat ... in terms of my social conscience Outrage can motivate" (FN 9.2.2). This experience identified the principal's need for marketing and lobbying skills to obtain resources.

Sometimes learning needs identified themselves quickly in an emergency, because of a mistake, or because of personal beliefs; for example, knowing the procedures to be followed when a parent attempted to remove a child from the school despite a court restraining order. One principal specifically encouraged openness in her professional study group and staff to help her identify her learning needs. As she said: "I really don't like little groups running around. I'd sooner things were up front" (FN 5.3.5). The difficulty of the task often indicated learning needs especially where the tasks concerned managing the staff. Endeavouring to get "the best out of people" (FN 5.2.30) threw up key learning needs because, as some principals noted, without this learning, the school would not operate effectively. Learning to delegate, which has already been mentioned, is a case in point.

Some of the principals had to learn specialist technical knowledge related to integrated schools and schools with special attachments, such as a middle school, disability units and community education. The principals of the integrated schools were keenly aware that their responsibilities for the special character of their schools created learning needs for themselves and staff. As one principal commented: "Schools integrated into the state system have an enormous responsibility to ... hold fast to the spirit of that Integration Agreement I feel very strongly that we must be absolutely rigorous about that" (FN 11.2.15).

Appraisal, the formal requirement for identifying learning needs, appeared to operate in a variety of ways in this regard and was described with varying degrees of satisfaction by these principals. The most warmly supported method was a school-wide system of development conferences (rejecting the term "appraisal"), whereby each person, including the principal, had a conference with two others who considered school-related needs and personal development needs related to quality performance. In three

cases a thorough principal appraisal was carried out by the Chairperson of the Board and the Deputy Principal. One school also included a random sample of students, staff and parents. Other appraisals were less rigorous and, it appeared, less valued. One principal commented that consultations with staff for his appraisal "were a bit superficial ... I didn't feel they were fully professional appraisals" (FN 13.2.15). Another principal said:

Effectively what I do is identify myself what I think the goals for the year are, in association with the staff ... and I'll always ask the Board ... but normally they don't have too many ideas Normally we just talk about what I've done in the year and I'll say, I've done this and this and this, and I haven't quite achieved this because of this ... and they'll say OK usually. (FN 6.2.23)

The emphasis on equating principals' learning needs and school's public goals was repeated by many of the principals.

Personal Preferences, Learning Styles And Motivation,

Personal preferences and learning styles usually dictated how principals used the learning opportunities provided. One principal remarked, "I'm not sure that you necessarily have to do lots of courses to be effective" (FN 6.2.16). She described herself as a "bit more of a paper person [who liked] to see things written down" (FN 6.1.21). Another principal commented that she "probably [learnt] best by listening to people and writing things down" (FN 3.3.13). One principal claimed to be "a bit of a course junkie" (FN 11.3.9). Another stated that he went to no courses and attended no conferences apart from "keeping in touch" (FN 16.1.3) with a small group of principals. Attitudes and intentions also played key roles in selection of learning modes and methods. The principals were very selective and critical of the learning opportunities provided. They wanted instructional value for money and time expended. They took account of factors such as the credibility of the provider, reputation of the presenter, the delivery method and timing of the learning provision. One of the principals stated that he learnt best by attending courses to "get a bit of a feel of where we were to head" (FN 18.2.2) although he "didn't accept a lot of what [he] went to courses about" (FN 18.2.2). He noted:

Two things ... were important. One was the atmosphere that the course created and the things that were being talked about. Often I would drift away and start to think about how we might do that the environment gave me the stimulus to think about those things. (FN 18.2.3)

Conferences and seminars helped to confirm some principal's opinions of their colleagues. One principal recalled a former principal saying that "if you were a Martian and you went there [to a principals' meeting], you could spend the whole day there and not know what the purpose of the gathering was" (FN 12.1.24). Another secondary

principal noted that "everyone tends to go to the middle ground" (FN 17.3.34) because it was so difficult to gain general agreement on collective action. I have described negative comments to illustrate the range and kinds of views expressed by these principals. However, I need to stress that all but one of the principals stated that they valued highly, many of the learning opportunities provided. Most stated that there was always something of value to be learnt; for example, knowledge of new regulations or systems "that you don't get any other way" (FN 14.3.10), the stimulation of new ideas, clarification of processes or confirmation of current practice. Comments made it clear that courses, conferences and seminars were dynamic, socialising occasions as well as learning occasions.

Motivation appeared to be important for identifying and meeting learning needs. A common belief of the principals was that "you have to be motivated. It's hard work" (FN 6.3.31). What motivated principals to persist in learning a difficult job? Using grounded theory analysis, I categorised principals' motivation for learning as personal, social and professional. The principals were ambitious. As one principal stated: "I wanted achievement. I wanted to do things. I wanted to make my mark. I liked the status that came with that sort of achievement. I liked the recognition that came" (FN 9.1.10). Self-esteem was another personal reason for learning. The principals were determined to excel in the job. They wanted to feel in control. They did not want to be less informed than their staff. As one principal said: "I've always got to be one step ahead" (FN 2.2.23) and another: "You can't afford to put yourself in a position where other people have information and you don't" (FN 12.3.27). Fear of failure encouraged some learning although this was less frequently mentioned than determination not to fail. As one principal stressed: "I never ever take on anything that ... would fail because I'd make it work I'm determined in that" (FN 3.2.20). These principals were willing learners, partly for the reasons described above and partly because of the rewards of success. Being a principal was deeply satisfying. As one commented:

I say to the kids quite often, that they don't understand the tremendous thrill that it is to be associated with them when they do well ... the sense of thrill and pride that goes with that is just immense. (FN 14.1.19)

Another principal defined a common feeling when she said "I really enjoy seeing development in people ... when you see young teachers who go on and do something better ... and you've had a part in their career and developing them " (FN 5.1.27). Many principals indicated that they enjoyed new learning for its own sake and became bored without new learning challenges.

Enjoyment of social activity and social contact, which learning often entailed, also motivated most of the principals since it meant sharing the load, dispelling the isolation of the principal within the school and providing stimulation. One principal enthused about the other members of a course: "It was incredibly stimulating being with such a group of people A tremendously vital group of people to be with. Yes, it was fantastic" (FN 9.2.13).

All of the principals were motivated to learn for professional reasons. Most had accepted the reforms of 1989 with genuine enthusiasm, although five said that later they felt disillusioned at the way the reforms impacted on their school finances. As one principal said:

We had a sort of sense of adventure. Going into the unknown. And that was fine until of course the Ministry started to claw back the real power. And then we found that we weren't really getting enough money You couldn't do what you were expected to do. So when we went into the Property Agreement we found that we couldn't keep our side of it You can feel guilty if you're that way inclined I did" (FN 9.2.9)

All of those appointed before 1989 also believed that the reforms had increased their work-load and that being a principal in the 1990s was harder than it was in 1989 because of the closer scrutiny of parents and additional pressures of work.

These principals indicated that they believed that the role was a professional one requiring high levels of instructional, moral and professional leadership in addition to competent routine administration. They took accountability seriously. The statement, "the buck stops here" was mentioned by most principals. One principal expressed this sense of professional responsibility clearly: "This is the job. These are the mandates. We've had a chance for input in most of them. This has been the decision. I've got to get on and do it well" (FN 11.3.29). Several examples indicating professional motivation have been provided throughout this chapter and, to avoid repetition, they are not repeated here.

The findings showed that principals were motivated to meet learning needs by personal, social and professional interests, but in ways that demonstrated their personal learning styles, feelings and emotions. The next section describes how they met their learning needs.

Fornal And Informal Learning Modes And Methods

Learning modes are the vehicles or means used to provide learning opportunities. Learning modes selected by principals to meet learning needs included courses,

conferences, seminars, consultancies, study tours, visits, networking and engaging in professional reading. Learning opportunities were provided in formal and informal contexts. Many public and private providers of professional development identified needs and offered training which covered the main dimensions of the self-managing school. I was one such provider. These kinds of learning opportunities are described next with brief comment showing the ways this learning impacted on practice.

Intentional learning of a formal kind was achieved through gaining qualifications and taking courses leading to certification. In this section I include only qualifications or certificates gained after appointment as principals. Just two of the secondary principals had completed University papers in educational management. None had an educational management degree. Three indicated that additional qualifications were not as important for learning management as "doing the things" (FN 12.3.7). All of the eleven primary principals had begun or completed postgraduate qualifications at the diploma level in advanced teaching and/or in educational management. Four had completed educational management diplomas specifically designed, in the post-1989 period, to help principals and teachers improve their learning of educational management. The latter were described as being particularly valuable learning experiences. The principals learnt mainly through tuition and coaching, although some parts of qualifications included critical thinking and action research.

These principals perceived that qualifications and certificate courses in educational management impacted on practice in four main ways. First, principals learnt new techniques, skills and knowledge which they were able to apply directly. For example, one principal used newly acquired research skills for market research and considered that "all principals should undergo research skills so that they can ... find out exactly how the community is thinking" (FN 7.3.21). Another said as a result of attending a course on managing groups: "I understood some of my staff better the insights into what makes people tick were very good" (FN 9.2.17). Second, they enabled principals to identify links between theory and practice and clarify their thinking. Third, they provided reassurance and guidance for improvement. Fourth, involvement in qualifications and certificate courses enabled principals to create their own network of friends and advisors from class mates whom they trusted sufficiently to contact for advice later. In these ways qualifications and certificate courses impacted on practice. I have described impact on practice in general terms although the individual needs and preferences of the principals ensured that impact on practice was idiosyncratic.

Intentional learning of the informal kind varied greatly as it related to meeting individual learning needs situated in time and circumstance. One of the periods when the principals had clear learning needs was when they first became or planned to become principals. These learning needs could be met inside or outside the school community. Some principals were coached by incumbent principals. In one case, where the principal wanted to become the principal in the school in which he was deputy, he deliberately took steps to learn the job from the incumbent principal. This task was made easier by the helpful stance of that principal, and by the fact that the deputy's office was situated so that he could see the principal at work, and discuss his *modus operandi* on a day-to-day basis. He believed that his physical proximity to the incumbent principal, and the fact that he was a non-teaching deputy principal, were critical elements in his learning for the job. In two cases, supportive principals sent the newly appointed principal out to observe other principals at work before they took up their positions. Another primary principal with the specific intention of becoming a principal, spent two years preparation as a Visiting Teacher in the Auckland area in which she wanted to secure appointment. As part of self-directed learning, she identified the schools and principals she considered successful and "picked their brains. Said 'How do you do it? Why do you do it? What do you do? Why does your school feel different?' " (FN 5.1.15). By the end of that time she had a clear idea of the kind of school she wanted to run, and the best ways to do that.

Five of the primary principals and three of the secondary principals were appointed after 1989 and had attended dedicated training provided by Government contract. One distinguishing feature of some of this training was that it extended over months and therefore, was able to focus on actual school problems. Action research was often part of such training. It aimed at immediate impact and helping the principals to identify the relevance of theory and fit the new knowledge into what they already knew. As the principal referred to above, commented:

We did a lot of work on culture. Things that after me being round for those two years, looking at those things, suddenly thought 'Yes, that's the word that means that' ... 'Yes, that is why that's successful because that's happening.' So it was all sort of gelling. All that I had been observing. It was all sort of linking it back to what should be happening. (FN 5.1.21)

Prior to 1989, principals had attended either week-long training courses for new principals, run usually by the inspectorate or a Refresher Course Committee in the school holidays. Attendance at most courses run by the inspectorate was by invitation only. Principals who attended these courses usually found them helpful especially where simulations were involved. They provided information and contacts for networks but were less school specific and intensive than the post-1989 courses. One principal described the week-long new principals' course as "a run past of things that principals

do" (FN 15.1.7) provided by an array of experienced principals. Post appointment training boosted confidence and the impact of training was often maintained through networks set up at the time.

Informal intentional learning was often a matter of circumstance. Several principals from more affluent schools, or schools with professionals on the Board of Trustees who believed in the value of overseas experience, or principals who had the political skills and knowledge to manage the resourcing system, attended courses and conferences overseas. This provided time out from the job, exposure to a greater range of international researchers, practitioners and ideas. One principal adapted a system he had seen overseas for use in the New Zealand system to solve a particular problem. As he said:

It was a bit like the Road to Damascus. All of a sudden it became clear to me how we could get round some of the blocks that we were facing here. Because there's a significant problem for teachers here, the maintenance of those records where students are moving from course to course and from area to area. They solve it in England by saying "Oh well, the students have to be responsible. There is no other way". And it never ever occurred to us to say that really. (FN 14.3.27)

Consultation featured also. For solving their own problems, principals tended to consult other principals or educational figures, whom they trusted and admired, on an informal basis. However, in serious cases, principals consulted the school's lawyers, the Auckland Employers Association, NZEI or PPTA Field Officers, who "may not agree with you. But at least you know that that's sound advice that you're getting" (FN 13.2.17), or the School Trustees Association "who've now built up a good store of that knowledge" (FN 13.2.17). Consultants had a considerable impact on specific parts of principals' practice. They were called in to solve particular problems such as the accounting system, team building, school development, appraisal or maintaining the special character of a school and so on. Often their impact was wider than just the official purpose of the visit. In one case a new principal who was having difficulty establishing herself with staff, brought in a consultant to help in a specific, school-wide area. As the consultant dealt with the specific topic, she was able to act as a catalyst for the relationship problem and provide staff and principal with a platform for discussing their concerns.

Networking in many forms featured very strongly in the principals' informal learning. One principal described the learning that came from non-school networks as follows:

You mix with people who have such skills that a lot of what they do rubs off on you The people you mix with in the business world like Minolta goes across and so you learn how they operate and you incorporate those. It doesn't take long before you are not sure where you learnt all those things from. They become so much a part of you that it's hard to give credit where credit is due. (FN 9.2.20)

Networks varied in importance for principals, being particularly important when principals were relatively inexperienced. This was especially so for the novice rural primary principals in sole charge schools. They quickly set up contacts with neighbouring principals and arranged regular meetings that provided management training as well as social contacts. Some urban networks were more formal. For example, one area had developed "telephone trees. ... clusters of schools with similar needs, similar ethnic make-up, similar size" (FN 3.3.4).

Networking impacted on different levels of practice also. Three principals were using networking with local businesses as a source of funds and sharing "expertise of appraisal and techniques of staff development" (FN 7.3.3), training sites and pooling of human resources. The impact of industry-school networking was not always straightforward. One principal suffered considerable anguish because he felt uncomfortable with industry involvement in education.

They're [the Company] giving us some encouragement and support. Yes, it's been a boost to us. But they're not addressing the problem of resourcing ... and do I want them to do that? ... I don't believe it's the job of a public company to fund our schools. It's the job of the State. (FN 15.2.18)

All the principals were involved in professional reading in ways that suited their individual learning styles and situations. All perceived that they acquired much valuable learning from professional reading. Principals' reading resulted in spurts of learning. For example, professional reading for the express purpose of making an immediate impact on practice was greatest during periods of administrative, management or curriculum change which occurred after 1989, and when new issues such as appraisal, attestation or new curriculum initiatives were Ministry of Education requirements. Opportunities for reading, and hence likelihood for impact on practice, increased during extended periods of leave, during formal study or when the principals were preparing to deliver conference papers or run courses for other principals as 13 principals had done. Finding time to read was not always easy. As one principal commented:

I used to read a great deal. I don't any more. I'm too tired I make myself try to keep up with the professional reading and stuff that comes in over my desk But I find it very difficult". (FN 4.3.17)

Individual habits and abilities also influenced professional reading. One principal commented: "I buy a lot of books ... but I might not actually read the whole thing from cover to cover. But I have them there as reference" (FN 5.3.24). This principal, who had her professional library conveniently placed on a low table in her office, belonged to a professional development group which discussed and shared books with a facilitator who often recommended books. One principal had developed speed reading to a marked degree and said that he read several books a week. While several principals said that they only read for pleasure in the holidays, one principal read fiction and poetry regularly from which she picked up ideas and inspiration.

Some principals intimated that they read mainly authors whose views matched their own, and mentioned authors such as Grace, Sergiovanni, Barth and Covey. Several principals indicated that they read business management material on effective leadership, team building, staff development, quality management and time management rather than educational management material. All indicated that some of what they read impacted on their practice. For example, I asked a principal about the origin of his school policy of providing teachers with study scholarships. He replied: "I learnt it out of a book called *Incentive payments* and I thought you can't have incentive payments within a school. There must be other ways of doing it and I found another way" (FN 7.3.12).

As noted earlier reflection was an integral part of all learning concerned with identified learning needs. Often principals learnt by reflecting formally with other staff as part of school development. Examples of reflection which involved the whole school and had a considerable impact on practice, included the introduction of ISO 9001 in one school, restructuring the management structure of another school, establishing specialist units within a third school and so on. Sometimes reflection was reactive as part of the aftermath of a crisis. In addition, preparing for ERO visits always forced principals to consider the quality of their performance vis-a-vis their job responsibilities. I remind readers also, that many of the quotations used in this report of the research findings, indicate the extensive nature and impact of principals' reflection on their practice.

Tuition, that is instruction through lecturing, was one of the teaching methods most frequently experienced at courses, seminars and conferences. Tuition was appreciated by the principals provided that it included well presented, topical information, supported by written material. Coaching, or supervised instruction, was usually associated with initial learning of principalship and with courses, seminars and so on which employed group work, simulations and role play. Support for such methods

varied according to personal learning styles, but most of these principals enjoyed learning methods which actively involved them. Critical thinking was part of some learning situations usually directed at goal achievement and strategic planning. Self-directed learning was described as learning what had to be learnt, but at times and in ways that suited the learner. Those principals who had been involved in educational management training over an extended period, had undertaken action research which they praised highly for its usefulness. Many noted that they also learnt indirectly by being involved in running conferences and taking sessions and observing how providers managed professionals. These principals perceived that they met their learning needs through these all these methods according to their learning styles and personal preferences.

Barriers And Limitations To Learning

I defined "barriers" as the learning blocks which constituted "limitations" to learning. Barriers and limitations were personal, systemic, job-related and very individual. Most principals believed that they could learn anything that they put their minds to. As one principal said "I think that probably the only real barriers to anyone's learning are things within themselves" (FN 12.3.26). Personal interest was a key element in the principals' learning. For example, while one principal made himself an expert on the computer, another expressed a determined lack of interest, saying:

When I listened to Dale Spender, I started to get the heeby-jeebies a bit because she's really advocating ... computer systems ... I just don't feel that's my role. And I don't like to have such a forceful person saying 'Get on board NOW.' Do this now because you're going to be left behind. (FN 3.2.5)

Attitudes, feelings and emotions limited the learning of some principals. One principal, commenting on barriers to learning, noted: "I'm quite discerning and I hate people who speak down to me, ... as if they really know" (FN 8.3.25). Three principals stated that they were not motivated to learn if they perceived that the wrong people were running courses; that is ex-principals, pre-1989 principals or principals who were not well regarded because of their stance on controversial issues such as school zoning, marketing or privatisation. Furthermore, with regard to criticism from staff, parents or students, a principal noted: "I think that it's really easy to feel defensive in the position of principal and to let that affect your ability to listen to criticism ... and respond to it" (FN 12.3.25).

Some principals' learning was limited by a combination of personal and systemic barriers. For example, one principal felt the need for a sabbatical after an extended period as a principal, but the school's financial situation did not permit an extended time

out. Although he believed that sabbatical leave for the principal would benefit the school, he said: "It's very hard to be promoting it yourself because you may seem self-interested" (FN 13.3.27). Other principals were assertive and confident in pleading their cases. As one explained: "As long as I've done the homework and can put a good case ... then they'll say 'Righto. How will the kids benefit? Yes' " (FN 5.3.15).

The most frequently quoted job-related barrier to learning was lack of time due to pressure of work. As one principal commented: "We were invited to a course on performance management ... and I pulled out of it because I was snowed under" (FN 15.2.24). This principal was particularly regretful to miss the learning opportunity because he faced having to implement the performance management system with a difficult staff, some of whom the principal and the Education Review Office had identified as having major weaknesses. Often the pressure was due to the combination of work pressures and family commitments. Constant pressure led to physical exhaustion which made learning even more difficult.

Another barrier which limited learning was the magnitude of the management tasks to be learnt. As one principal said: "When you're trying to drag a school back from the brink, that's a superhuman task" (FN 4.3.28). Another principal defined his learning task in a new school in this way:

I came here with the understanding that I was going to have 33 staff and we have; that I was going to have 22 staff who were brand new, and we have; ... that there were going to be a lot of overseas teachers and we have ... 14 of these; and there was going to be a whole lot of mixes and blends of experience and non-experience and we have to work through that as well. (FN 8.3.15)

He believed that a learning task of such magnitude and urgency carried limitations for learning within itself.

When they spoke of barriers which limited learning, the principals were often speaking of other principals rather than commenting on their own limitations. In particular, this judgement was based on the failure of some "other principals" to attend and/or support courses, rather than their perceived failure to manage their schools. Most of the secondary principals believed that academic ability for learning was particularly important in an academic school. As one principal said: "It's like a teacher who is not as bright as his pupils ... it does create problems in terms of credibility" (FN 17.3.32). In general, the principals in the research believed that limited ability was an issue for some principals. They perceived that less able principals were unable to identify what was priority knowledge and what was not, share power yet remain accountable, manage change, motivate staff and develop their self-esteem, evaluate their own performance

accurately, prioritise so that the paperwork was managed but not predominant, and make good decisions. One principal worried that the availability of alternative careers for able people and the increasing number of principal vacancies, could lead to less able people being appointed as principals.

As discussed in earlier sections of this chapter, intentional learning was dependent on identification of learning needs. Consequently, failure to identify learning needs had the potential to limit learning. When principals were asked how they identified their learning needs, three said that they did not know. Five said that they learnt of their shortcomings through self reflection and appraisal. However, as noted above, some principals did not believe that appraisal was always effective in this regard. One principal experienced such a wide coverage of his role that he felt that it was all superficial and that the real issue of his learning needs, which he wanted addressed, was side-stepped. Other principals had Board Chairpersons who were unwilling and unable to appraise the principal with any degree of rigour. Consequently, barriers to learning were contained in the way some appraisal systems operated.

Several principals noted that barriers to learning are part of the human condition. As one principal commented "I'm always learning new ways of doing things. And I'm still persisting with ways of doing things that I shouldn't be" (FN 8.3.15). The impact of learning barriers and limitations is implicit in the admission by all the principals that they made mistakes and continued to make mistakes. These principals all saw themselves as learners. However, all showed awareness that barriers to learning could exist in attitudes, feelings and emotions, systemic barriers largely beyond their control and many job-related practicalities of a lack of time, pressure of work, exhaustion, financial constraints for some, and not knowing the extent of their learning needs.

In summary, this section described the findings in terms of the intentional learning of principals as they responded to individual learning needs identified in practice. Learning needs were identified by external requirements relating to new legislation and regulations and new curriculum initiatives, and by internal contexts such as emergencies, the need for new policies to solve problems, appraisal, personal beliefs and meeting the needs of school specialisations. Intentional learning was strongly purposive and reflective of individual learning styles, attitudes and intentions. Personal, social and professional motivation was the key to much intentional learning. Learning methods included reflection, tuition and coaching in the main, critical thinking and self-directed learning to a lesser extent. Selection of modes of learning depended on preference, opportunity and circumstance. Some principals learnt formally through qualifications

and certificates and all perceived that they learnt informally through different learning modes such as courses, conferences, seminars, consultancies, study tours, visits, networking and professional reading. Much of what they learnt impacted on their practice in a variety of individualistic ways, providing knowledge, developing skills and deeper awareness of themselves and others. Most acknowledged that personal, systemic and job-related barriers to learning of varying degrees of severity existed at times and in certain circumstances.

Chapter Summary

The self-study showed that the attitudes and values which influenced my work as an educational manager, developed in different environments such as in my family, upbringing, formal education and in teaching and middle management. The same background provided much basic management knowledge and skill. Although this background learning had a major impact on practice as a full time educational manager, the deepest learning resulted from experiencing that role. Reflecting on that experience in hindsight as part of this research was also a productive learning time. Learning needs identified in practice were met by learning from selected courses and study. I discovered in hindsight the extent to which learning was influenced by motivation. I also learnt retrospectively, that there were limitations to my learning of which I was unaware as a practitioner. Influenced by the self-study findings, I investigated the learning of educational management of 19 principals. I asked how principals perceived that they learnt to be principals and how they perceived that what they learnt impacted on their practice.

The findings from the principals' study confirmed the general findings of the self-study. I found that the principals perceived that they learnt educational management in many different environments and by many different means. The foundations of their learning also were constructed from living and developing in the family milieu, being educated themselves, managing as teachers and middle managers, and being influenced by significant others. This learning of attitudes, values, knowledge and skills was of major importance. It influenced them as principals and impacted on their practice throughout their careers as principals, especially in founding their vision for their schools. However, I discovered as in the case of the self-study, that it was their experiential learning after appointment, which provided their deep-level learning of their roles as day-to-day managers, instructional, professional and moral leaders and visionaries. This experiential learning was often the result of the unique situations they

encountered as individual principals. These situations were identified in the contexts of initiation, dealing with stressful problems and crises, involvement in routine management tasks and specific occasional events, and in nine cases, through multiple principalships. Reflection was a very important feature of principals' learning, enabling their learning from many experiences to synergise to create new learning or move previous learning to new depths. I called this type of experiential learning, "emergent learning". Emergent learning was particularly important in developing self-knowledge and interpersonal relationship skills.

Experiential learning helped the principals to identify some of their learning needs, which they then met purposively by selecting from amongst the variety of formal and informal learning modes and methods available to them. It was also clear from the findings that personal, social and professional motivation played an important part in their learning. Motivation and preferred learning styles were key factors behind choice of learning mode. The principals believed that personal, systemic and job-related learning barriers could affect learning and performance adversely in some situations. Learning from all parts of their lives cumulated and impacted on practice in unique ways.

In summary, the findings showed that principals' learning was cumulative over their lifetimes. In the context of learning as principals, their learning was made up of three inter-related parts; foundational learning, incorporating all learning related to educational management acquired prior to appointment, experiential learning, the learning derived from the process of being the principal over time, and intentional learning, the purposive learning to meet learning needs.

CHAPTER SIX:

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, the salient aspects of the findings are discussed with reference to the research questions and issues raised in Chapter Two. There I described the learning theories which I expected to be relevant to principals' learning. These were the learning theories related to the nature of learning itself and specific learning theories that I might find exemplified in the research, such as action learning, experiential learning, adult learning, learning styles, transfer of learning, change and barriers to learning. All these theories appeared to provide background to the research and helped me to focus on the kinds of places where answers to the research questions might be found. Three key ideas have been used to draw the research findings together. They are used to structure this discussion. These ideas are; first, the cumulative, holistic and inter-related nature of learning as perceived by the principals in this study; second, the contextualised nature of their learning; and, third, the individualistic and unique nature of their learning. In Chapter Four (p. 102), I indicated the use I made of research literature to help ground the theory which was emerging from analysis of the findings. In this chapter, I use some of that reference to illustrate how the grounded theory became saturated. From the point of view of learning educational management, the findings of the self-study in a tertiary setting, were similar to the general pattern of the principals' learning experiences in primary and secondary settings. Consequently, the self-study findings are subsumed in the discussion of principals' perceptions of their learning and receive no further reference, except where the self-study provided a clearer perspective.

The Cumulative, Holistic And Inter-Related Nature Of Principals' Learning.

The principals perceived that their learning was cumulative; that is, layered, incremental, evolutionary and holistic. Their learning could also be deconstructed for analysis into three distinct but inter-related parts; foundational, experiential and intentional learning. The components were identified by the functions of the learning: namely, laying the foundations of the knowledge and skills related to educational management, experiencing principalship, and purposive learning related to identified learning needs. Each function was perceived to be an integral part of the whole and therefore inter-related. These parts are conceptualised as shown in Figure 4 below.

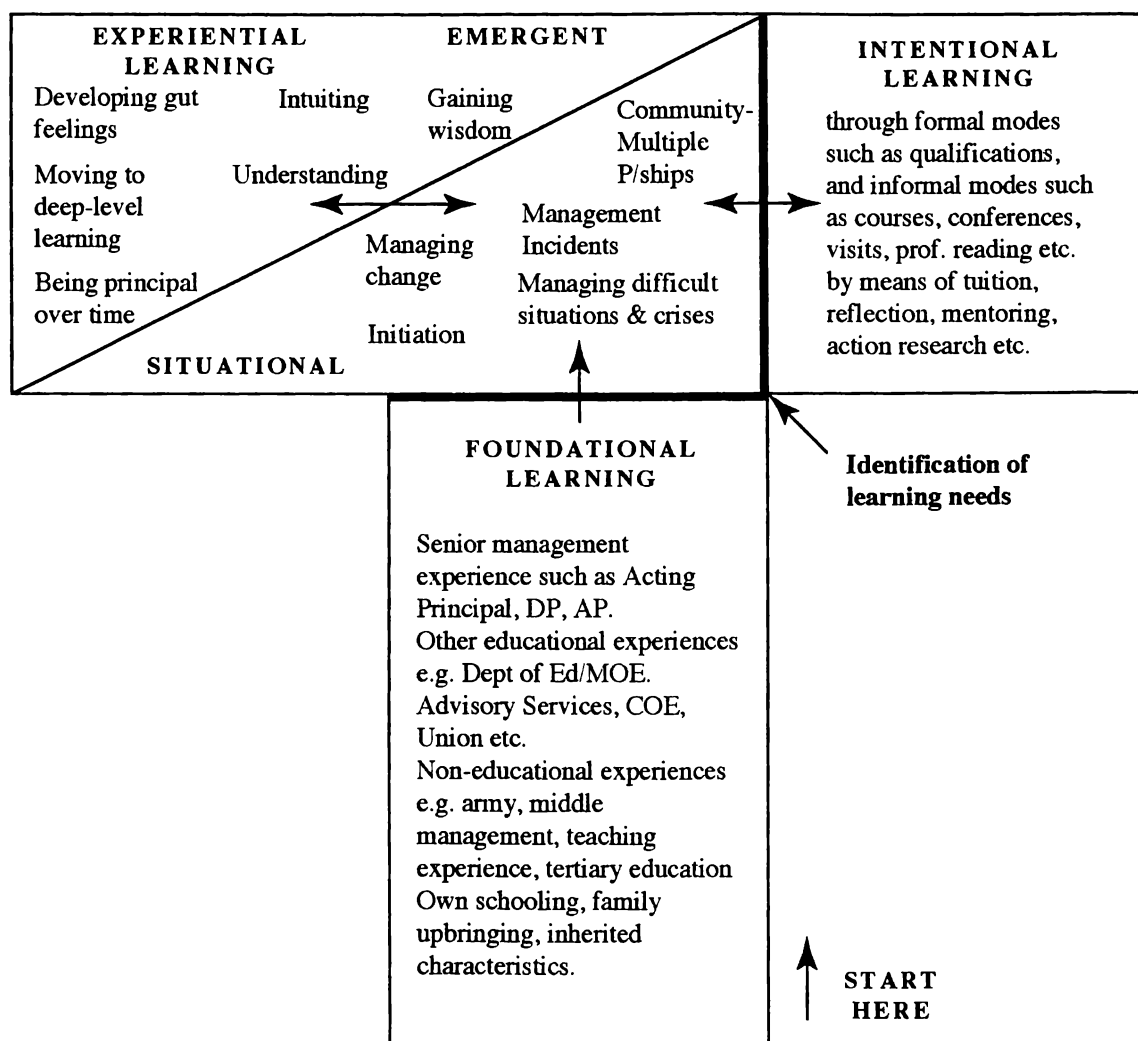


Figure 4. Conceptualisation of principals' learning as cumulative, holistic and inter-related.

The term "foundational" was apposite in the chronological context of being a principal and in the structural sense of constituting the foundation on which the career as principal was built. As Figure 4 shows, foundational learning was perceived to be whole-of-life learning up to the time of appointment. Most principals perceived that as part of foundational learning, they had learnt the basic attitudes and values, and had acquired a deep personal belief system about managing educational institutions, which guided them in the educational management role. Although the principals indicated that attitudes and values continued to evolve throughout their careers, they perceived that their basic attitudes and values did not change greatly. These findings fit with the general findings of other researchers such as Andresen (1993), Hamlyn (1983), Kuhn et al. (1995) and McBride (1994) who noted that, although attitudes and beliefs change in degree as circumstances of life change, the general direction or orientation of attitudes and values is learnt at an early age.

As the foundation for principalship, therefore, pre-appointment learning continued to influence these principals after appointment. Of particular interest were the research findings emphasising the social nature of learning, and in particular, showing that self-concept developed from childhood as Burns (1995) noted, and that childhood experiential learning, positive and negative, could affect the adult behaviour of these principals. The research findings showed that confident principals were very much encouraged in their earlier years, and that less well supported principals appeared to be lacking in confidence as principals. However, the picture was a complex one. The principals appeared to be able to compensate for one kind of adversity, such as lack of parental support, by developing talents or finding encouragement outside the family to build a generally positive self-concept. Foundational experience appeared to be of considerable importance also because it was from their foundational learning that principals appeared to find solutions to some problems. For example, one articulate, confident principal with highly developed political skills and contacts developed prior to becoming a principal, put this knowledge to good effect in learning how to establish a school-business relationship for his school. Another, with strong ties to Maori culture, which began in her own primary schooling, put her prior knowledge to work as she learnt to transform the school into a learning institution with a number of ethnic language units which could cater for an extended range of students. Credibility and reputation in various areas such as teaching excellence, was often based on pre-appointment learning also.

Most principals had learnt educational management knowledge and skills

extensively during their pre-appointment years. Those who had a less extensive educational management knowledge and skills had spent fewer years in middle management positions before becoming principals. In addition, it was as teachers, that principals first learnt to think of themselves as professionals. As they moved from novice to expert, they developed the personal independence they would need as leaders of schools. These findings, indicating the growth of professionalism during a career in teaching, replicated the findings of Crow and Glascock (1995), Hart and Weindling (1996) and Sullivan, 1997). In Chapter Two, I queried the importance of role models and mentors. The research showed that they too contributed to the growth of professionalism and that foundational learning from significant others was very important in ways both negative and positive. This finding replicated the findings of the self-study, and New Zealand and international research (Barnett, 1995; Begley, 1995; Hallinger & Murphy, 1991; Irvine & Lovett, 1996; Pocklington & Weindling, 1996).

In the process of grounding the theory, I discovered further justification for using the concept "foundational learning" in the literature. Learning was described there as holistic not just in terms of involving all the senses, but in terms of incorporating elements of whole-of-life learning (Long, 1990; Taylor, 1987). Several researchers argued that theory building began in the pre-school years (Keil & Silberstein, 1996) and that who we are as adults is the sum of our lived biographies (Bell & Gilbert, 1996; Boud & Walker, 1991). Consequently, foundational learning appeared to be a term of considerable explanatory power in the context of learning educational management. Arguing the existence and importance of foundational learning, and identifying ways this learning may impact on practice, appears to indicate that if personal strengths and weaknesses originate in the years of foundational learning, foundational learning may have established the patterns for success and difficulty as a principal or, in my case, as an educational manager. While the self-study and a number of instances from the stories of the principals appear to support this contention, further research is necessary on the impact of their foundational learning on principals' performance in relation to success and difficulty in the long term.

The second part of Figure 4, conceptualises learning as experiential learning. While acknowledging that experiential learning is a general term which is relevant to learning from birth, in presenting the research findings, I used the term "experiential learning" specifically to distinguish post-appointment learning from all prior learning

in order to emphasise the learning that took place as part of the process of being a principal. In this chapter, I retain the distinction.

The period designated experiential learning appeared important for two main reasons. First, it was a period of major consolidation and cumulation of learning educational management. Experiential learning as principal consolidated much cumulated foundational learning in response to new learning situations. This is clear from the way the principals spoke of their learning over the years, "layer upon layer" (FN 15.2.20). One principal, speaking of the people managing skills and knowledge that she brought into the principalship and developed further, commented, "but those are things that ... were embryonic in me from the time that I was quite small" (FM 12.1.19). Others spoke of new learning which simply "keens the edge" (FN 8.3.9) of skills already acquired. Learning cumulated very rapidly during the period I have called "experiential". While much cumulative experiential learning was straight forward technical learning with immediate impact, principals also added to their learning in the most important and difficult parts of the job related to leadership; that is, learning knowledge and skills to manage competing and often conflicting sets of goals, learning to manage the individuals who constituted the educational community and learning to manage unplanned situations. Birchfield (1998) stated: "The most valuable things we learn are from unplanned or unmanaged experiences, either at work or in private life" (p. 28). Although most principals qualified their agreement for this statement when it was put to them in the verification questionnaire (Appendix L: 2.4), I have included it here because it rang true for much interview data, especially that related to crises and to the self-study, and was affirmed by other researchers such as Brookfield (1993b).

Second, the functional period designated as experiential learning in Figure 4, appeared to be a period of maximum creation of new, defining, deeply personal knowledge of educational management, especially "knowing" in the area of leadership and managing change. Many learning experiences which constituted cumulated learning over time synergised or integrated to create new, emergent learning, as a consequence of reflection and analysis of a variety of learning experiences. This was a result of what Kolb (1984) called the "dialectic nature" (p. 159) of experiential learning. Emergent experiential learning was highly relevant, often definitive in impact and often learning that was deep-level learning in terms of the meanings gained. It appeared therefore that the situational and emergent experiential learning of principals was the critical learning for these principals in terms of quantity and quality

of learning, and because of a perceived, synonymous relationship of experiential learning and impact on practice.

Figure 4 also shows the inter-related nature of principals' learning. Learning needs were identified in the main, in experiential learning, and then met through intentional learning. Formal and informal intentional learning modes and methods were used to meet these learning needs, through the strategies of tuition, coaching, group involvement, reflection, study and, on occasions, action research according to individual learning preferences. Given the relationship of learning and performance, identification of learning needs, especially that relating to quality performance, becomes an issue of major importance. How well were learning needs identified? As in the case of foundational learning, cumulated learning in the experience of being a principal appeared to be taken-for-granted and rarely evaluated deeply by these principals. Evaluation from the perspective of identifying learning needs appeared to take place in specific areas of learning in response to a major crisis, major restructuring, a new developmental challenge or within the parameters and expectations of appraisal. However, from the self study in particular, but supported by the Verification Questionnaire findings [Appendix L], it appeared that evaluative processes such as appraisal, may not of themselves bring about examination of cumulated learning and associated belief systems. For that to occur there may need to be a catalyst which shakes taken-for-granted beliefs in ways that move the learner from surface to deep-level learning.

My theorising related to the holistic nature of the educational management learning of these research participants is supported by other research; both that which emphasised cognition (Greeno et al., 1996) and that which emphasised experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). Using literature as part of the conditional matrix of grounded theory indicated that learning is hybrid, incorporating personal, social and professional learning dimensions according to Bell and Gilbert (1996), and other interwoven and evolutionary dimensions, which Kolb (1984) called "integrative" (p. 208). Learning may also include "perspective transformation" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 64) given awareness and willingness on the part of the learner. Two points, therefore, stand out in this research. First, the learning of these research participants appears to be cumulated and holistic with three inter-related parts, foundational, experiential and intentional. Second, at the interface between intentional learning and experiential and foundational learning is identification of learning needs - the mortar which holds the blocks securely together. I return to the issue of identification of learning needs later

but in this section I have already indicated that identification of learning needs may be an area of weakness in learning.

Figure Four indicated the holistic, cumulated and inter-related nature of the learning of these principals. The same Figure also indicated the contextualised nature of the principals' learning. This is discussed next.

Principals' Learning Was Contextualised Learning

The Context Of Practice

The contextualised nature of principals' learning in practice was indicated by one principal when he described the job as "situational and circumstantial depending on the personalities and history and where to now" (FN 8.2.21). This statement was in line with Barth's (Sparks, 1993) comment, that the "most powerful" (p. 20) learning happens when there is a real problem and that is likely to be situational. As he said: "Schools provide a never-ending parade of issues and tough problems that can become growth-producing opportunities" (p. 20).

Before considering the implications of contextual learning, I discuss some of the contexts that appeared to pose particular learning problems for these principals. One context of situational learning was the process of initiation as a new principal. In Chapter Two I posed the question: What did principals believe they had to learn when they became principals? This research showed that becoming accepted was an unexpected problem for many new principals, and as such, initiation was a period when principals needed to learn effectively and quickly. However, I found very little about this specific problem as I sought to saturate the concept of initiation difficulty in data from the literature. A New Zealand study (Barnes, 1994), indicated that women principals frequently met with hostility from rural communities. In a British study on mentoring for new principals, Pocklington and Weindling (1996) noted that "the first 12 months ... of headship constitute a particularly demanding time for the novice headteacher" (p. 177). These researchers required their principals to rank a broad range of problem areas, but if encountering staff hostility was a major problem, it was disguised as "issues arising from the previous head's staffing structure" (p. 177). In an American study, Crow and Glascock (1995) discussed socialisation into the new role as an issue of adjustment for principals, but they were not specific about the nature,

causes or consequences of any related problems. Certainly several of the principals in this study indicated that they experienced some problems of adjustment as they settled into the role. However for the principals who "changed seats" (FN 11.1.6) by being promoted within the school, the problem of adjustment appeared to these principals to belong to other staff, rather than to themselves. Speaking to principals at large since this research began, alerted me to the fact that there is a great deal of anecdotal evidence about the opposition and hostility that many principals face at the beginning of their principalships. As one of these new principals commented: "In my old school [as DP], if I'd said jump off the building with me, they would have. Not this lot. Everything's a battle" (Log note 14.1.98). The contrast between success and popularity in the previous position and the difficulties of the new position, signal important learning needs. I return to this problem in Chapter Seven.

Another query raised in Chapter Two related to learning in the contexts of school crises and pressures. Without exception, the principals considered that the job they had to learn experientially was demanding, especially managing people and dealing with unrelenting pressure and responsibility over an extended period. In other words, principalship itself as a context, demanded on-going learning in different ways for different principals. The principals' description of crises and stressful situations, usually in the context of conflict resolution, problem solving, handling stress and the pressurised nature of the job, indicated that learning in these kinds of contexts was a dominant factor of school life. A number of these principals suffered poor health as a result of over-work in such a context of pressure. These situations provided opportunities for contextual learning of many practical, philosophical and psychological kinds. My findings, related to the pressurised nature of principals' learning, were widely confirmed by other researchers (Barnes, 1994; Bush, 1995; Crowther & Limerick, 1995; Dussault & Barnett, 1996; Fris, 1990; Glanz & Neville, 1997; Manthei & Gilmore, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1991b). However, not all contextual pressure was negative in impact. Braggett (1992), argued that the chaos of the unexpected should be used as the catalyst for professional growth. The research findings provided many examples of this. Most principals obviously thrived on the challenge of the job, as McCall, Lombardo and Morrison (1988) found in a study of business management. The latter noted that on occasions difficulties helped managers to recognise "their own fallibilities" (p. 117), learn sensitivity, recognise their personal limits and learn to "confront and act on people problems" (p. 117). Thus while many on-the-job learning contexts were indeed pressurised and demanding, my research indicated that they were also stimulating and part of the attractions of the job.

Much contextual learning occurred for the principals in the research study in the situations of personal and national change such as moving from school to school, restructuring management systems or changing the curriculum and reporting systems in response to Government initiatives. The principals stated that they enjoyed change themselves, and most of these principals clearly supported the reforms which changed educational management. However most also perceived that bringing about change through others was difficult, frustrating and often discouraging, depending on the scale and nature of the change. This latter finding confirms claims on managing change made by Fullan (1997) and Hargreaves (1997). During the process of analysing and saturating the emerging theory, I discovered a paper by Hallinger (1997) who noted that many changes are externally imposed and beyond principals' control. His advice to principals was to "surrender" (p. 27) and take an educative stance, based on their professionalism. This was a stance which was reported by some of these principals who were appointed before 1989. They had embraced the reforms enthusiastically and although some had said that they became disillusioned when the reforms failed to deliver the context for which they had hoped, they had opted to make the best of the situation. This occurred even where some felt that the reforms had created injustice because their schools were left to face society's problems of unemployment and social breakdown without sufficient help. They were not alone in thinking that. Many New Zealand researchers agreed (Grace, 1998; Middleton, 1998; Neville, 1998; O'Neill, 1998; Sullivan, 1997; Thrupp, 1996, 1997b).

Those who were principals before 1989, considered that being a principal in 1997 was harder than it was before 1989 and involved more learning situations and challenges related to workload and socio-economic problems. Consequently, contextualised learning of educational management was not simply a matter of learning new bodies of knowledge, developing new skills and embracing changes for the better. It was a matter of learning to manage strong emotions and feelings, learning to manage intervening conditions which appeared to some principals to be creating learning contexts of hardship, adversity and unfairness. The context of reform forced most of these principals to think more politically but no-one discussed this as a benefit of reform.

I conclude this section by discussing two of the implications of contextual learning; emergent learning and levels-of-learning. Contextual learning subjected to reflection often helped to develop emergent learning. Emergent learning is an important concept which came from the process of grounding the theory in the

interview data. Emergent learning conveys the generative nature of some experiential learning and the fluidity and dynamism of the process as lived by an individual in the varied contexts of managing a school. The principals were unanimous in believing that the context of being a principal over an extended period of time was a most important element in the learning process. This was put very clearly by one principal who, when asked if the job was what he had expected, replied: "It's nothing like what I thought it would be. It really isn't" (FN 17.3.39). This was in spite of his having spent four years in a professional capacity working closely in schools with a wide variety of principals. It appeared from the research findings that the contextualised learning of the principals based on the transactional and, on occasions, transformational aspects of being a principal, which created emergent learning, were learnt through doing with intent over time, supported by on-going reading, reflecting and communicating. One of the implications of emergent learning is that this kind of learning could be what defines a key difference between a novice and an experienced principal.

The concept of emergent learning appeared to be closely related to the concept of levels-of-learning. As a result of contextual learning, principals kept on expanding and, in some cases, deepening their skills and knowledge. The concepts of surface, deep and strategic levels-of-learning and different approaches to learning are well established in research (Bell & Gilbert, 1996; Entwistle, 1987; Marton, 1988; Marton & Booth, 1996, 1997; Marton & Ramsden, 1988). In this research I have used the term *deep-level learning* broadly to include learning grounded in experience over time and especially that associated with traumatic events which evoked strong feelings and involved learning. I also included the double-loop type learning which I described in Chapter Two and which some principals experienced as part of intentional learning and appraisal. Some emergent learning was deep-level learning but some appeared to be strategic learning based on pragmatic grounds. The issue of consultation appeared to provide a case in point in this research. As one principal quoted in the findings, said of learning to consult, that he had reached a point where he recognised that "sometimes it's true consultation and sometimes it isn't" (FN 17.2.36). Another principal said that he had learnt that "a lot of consultation is a b..... waste of time" (FN 14.3.16). A further example of pragmatic emergent learning was learning to motivate staff. As I explained earlier, emergent learning appeared to develop over time and in the context of learning to cope with management situations. Several examples were provided in Chapter Five of principals developing coping strategies in face of staff resistance to change. When attempts to motivate failed, on occasions, principals used political strategies of out-manoeuvring the resisters. They called these political

strategies manipulating and believed that in certain contexts, strategies of motivating staff were replaced by strategies of manipulation and deception. Contextualised emergent learning thus appeared to demonstrate some elements that were empowering and formative and others that were merely pragmatic.

In Chapter Two I outlined theoretical conceptions of leadership. In particular the theories of Sergiovanni and Murphy were set out to indicate the ways principals could show leadership within a system structured by legislation and regulation at Government level. The intention there was to show how leadership within such a system of tight central control could be effective, strong and empowering. Sergiovanni (1992a) and Murphy (1995) argued for moral leadership based on the idea of sharing power in ways that brought authority to life; for example, by good communication, the use of networks, strategic allocation of resources and promoting teacher development. Examples in Chapter Five showed that the principals generally believed in and practised these aspects of moral leadership, although some were more prepared to expand the use of wider community networks than others. All appeared committed to the concept of morality in leadership. However the example above does raise the moral question of means and ends. It was clear from the research that some principals appeared to compromise methods used to achieve school goals by the use of pragmatic strategies. These principals put the moral need to introduce needed reforms before the moral need to communicate in ways which might ensure willing and informed consent. Having to resort to such tactics may denote the wider issue of identification of learning needs. This issue is considered next.

Identification Of Learning Needs

One of the most important learning theories related to principals' learning is identification of learning needs since learning requires awareness of the need for learning, as Boud and Walker (1991) noted. It was clear that the principals' learning needs related to educational management developed in the context of their practice. The findings showed that most of these principals perceived that they identified their learning needs themselves and that learning needs varied in complexity from learning new educational administration procedures to learning, for example, to manage conflict. They believed that they were willing, highly motivated learners. However I perceived from the self-study that one could be such a learner without necessarily being involved in deep-level thinking about learning required for high quality performance. Often learning needs were identified in response to external influences,

such as the Ministry of Education, or by a situation requiring knowledge of correct procedures. It appeared that responsibility for identifying learning needs related to practice was often taken over by professional associations or other providers who used market research methods to identify what courses principals en masse needed in response to Government's initiatives or in response to general management problems such as truancy, and subsequently, provided the training or tuition. Principals then identified their learning needs from what was provided. This system was perceived by these principals to be efficient generally, even when much of the provision was not altogether relevant for their particular situations. As Hallinger and Murphy (1991) noted, general tuition often suffers from a loss of "contextual sensitivity" (p. 517). On the one hand, a smorgasbord of professional development was available, and on the other hand, most principals had limited time and finances to spend on professional development. Consequently they could meet their professional development requirements legitimately without having to analyse personal performance deeply. One reason for this situation was because of the way appraisal operated.

The research findings indicated that appraisal appeared to vary greatly in its capacity to identify key learning needs related to improving the quality of personal performance. To date research on appraisal in New Zealand indirectly supports this general finding, because the research appears to identify the extent of "implementation and institutionalisation" (Piggot-Irvine, 1996, p. 9) and issues of establishment (Edwards, 1992a, 1992b; McLellan & Ramsey, 1993) or focus almost exclusively on professional development (Timperley & Robinson, 1996), rather than issues of effectiveness as seen in improving the quality of interpersonal performance. Sewell (1998) noted a related factor; namely, that Boards of Trustees rarely sought evidence of value for money, in terms of improved performance from the professional development which they had approved for principals. Part of the nature of learning as a principal involved identification of contextual learning needs. It is possible that there are weaknesses inherent in the fact that learning needs are often identified by officialdom or providers and in the way some appraisal systems work. The need for further research in the area is noted in Chapter Seven.

In Chapter One I noted that although the information may be readily available, effective learning may not occur. This research has shown that it has taken this level of study to enable me to reach deep-level understanding of many concepts such as the concept of identification of learning needs. This commitment of time and effort would surely be too demanding for most busy principals, but the part of the research which

was critical for identifying my own learning needs was the self-study, which is within the reach of principals.

Principalship Training

Related to the issue of identification of learning needs was the issue of principals' training and education. Here attitudes and beliefs were an important feature. The Education Review Office found that the "typical secondary school principal has studied for and perhaps gained a postgraduate qualification in school administration" and that "other than short inservice courses, most primary principals have not undertaken training specific to their leadership position" (Sewell, 1998, p. 2). These findings were not replicated in my research. None of the eight secondary research participants had qualifications in educational management. On the other hand, four of the eleven primary principals had completed educational management qualifications, a further five had taken management papers as part of advanced teaching qualifications and the remainder had taken advanced papers in pedagogy. The difference in findings could be a consequence of my sample selection, since the sample of primary principals was taken from principals known to me through professional development courses. Most of the secondary principals believed that educational management qualifications would be of limited value, even though they had not experienced them. This view appeared to be supported in general terms by some researchers (Boud et al., 1993) and educationalists (Rentoul, 1996) who claimed that their qualifications in educational management had taught them less than their experience. However, comparing such judgements with the enthusiastic support for them from the research participants, who had such qualifications, I concluded that the value of qualifications depended on the extent to which they were perceived by principals to be of value to them practically or vocationally, were designed specifically to meet principals' learning needs and were of recent origin. The latter point is of special significance since post-1989 qualification structures tended to include action research which was particularly highly valued because it was school-based, was highly relevant and focused on real problems selected by the principal. In other words, the substance of such qualifications reflected the contexts of the job. Some primary principals noted also that qualifications had a high value in terms of self-confidence and self-esteem. These considerations, in addition to the supportive stance of the Educational Review Office (1996a, 1997) for qualifications in educational management, are likely to increase rather than decrease the place of qualifications in intentional learning in future.

One important context for learning was training as a new principal after appointment. The principals in this study believed that their foundational learning had prepared them adequately for the principalship, and they attended special courses after appointment to gain top-up tuition, confidence and collegial support. Most of the principals appointed after 1989, found their immediate post-appointment training very beneficial and supportive. The self-study showed that time was required to enable a new appointee to identify learning needs, even an appointee with educational management qualifications. In New Zealand there appears to be a lack of major studies into the socialisation and training of new principals but several studies have been carried out in Britain and the United States. Discussing the failure of preparatory training programmes generally in the United States, Hallinger and Murphy (1991) argued that "the starting point is administrative practice, not the social sciences" (p. 518). They remarked that many new administrators knew the theory but were unable to see the practical relevance of it. Several of the research principals demonstrated the importance of starting with administrative practice also. One principal, speaking of leadership style and how she learnt leadership skills and functions described how she found courses valuable after some practical experience:

Those were the things that I didn't have labels for then I go to a course and I think yes that is what I do. Or maybe if I changed such and such ... Yes I think that is the way I learn. (FN 4.3.14).

The only principal who argued strongly for formal management courses prior to appointment as principal, was an experienced principal whose main concern was not that the knowledge to be gained was so necessary for functioning in the position, but that principals lacked time to deal adequately with the job, family and study once appointed. Some of the newer principals appeared to believe that appointment, followed by a short period of practice, leading to an extended course spread over months, a course that included action research, that is individualised training, would provide the most effective support for new principals.

Apart from qualifications and training courses for new principals, these principals met their need for training by attending short courses, seminars, conferences and so on. Because of the individual nature of each principals' response, I will refer to this type of training later, and confine my comments now to the issue of professional reading. Professional reading was one of the most common ways by which principals claimed that they met their learning needs. In many cases, professional reading was contextualised in what needed to be read: that is what came through the post or what appeared in the journals of professional associations related

to current new requirements. Most principals stated that they believed that they should read more, a view shared by some New Zealand researchers (Lovett, 1997; Robertson, 1993; Wadsworth, 1990). However, I concluded on the basis of the evidence of this research, that while principals could introduce more planning and structure into their professional reading, and have a clearer idea of the nature of professional reading and perhaps better study skills, over a career they did in fact learn more from professional reading than they appeared to credit. I also concluded that the real problem of professional reading was that for most principals, professional reading provided learning opportunities for easily identified learning needs such as problems of technical management. Professional reading would not provide learning opportunities for learning needs which required the input of others for identification and acquisition. The self-study showed that for professional reading to be effective, the learner has to have a clear focus or sense of awareness of a problem in order to be able to access the substantive message of the reading, learn from it, and translate it into practice.

Impact And Transfer Of Learning

A key learning theory relating to contextualised practice concerned impact and transfer of learning. The principals perceived that their own intentional learning stance and the functional nature of much learning activity ensured impact. The research appeared to show that impact was clearest with regard to learning what Mezirow (1991) called "technical" and "practical" (p. 62) learning, that is, learning of basic management knowledge and skills or ways of communicating. Anderson et al. (1996) argued that in-depth learning and transfer of learning to practice required situated learning and the findings indicated that situated learning was what these principals experienced as principals. From another point of view, Sheckley, Allen and Keeton (1994) claimed that it was the recursive nature of the adult learning process, which caused learning to impact on practice. They argued that adult learning involves three systems, "a constructed knowledge system, a reflective system, and an adaptive system" (p. 66), all of which, singly and together, are recursive systems; in other words recursive systems involve impact on practice. Recursive systems are contextualised by their very nature. The following statement shows all three systems at work. One of the principals learnt the processes of creative management of change through tuition and group learning at a course. Then she said:

I was able to bring the papers back and explore ... some of the ideas with the management team What I've learnt more is that people will react to ... change in a different way and it's OK. It's alright for them to be like that They used to irritate me ... Now I want to use that natural skill. (FN 1.2.4)

All the research participants provided examples similar to the one above illustrating the recursive nature of adult learning and showing the impact of learning on practice.

Learning transfer, that is "the process of applying knowledge in new situations" (Greeno et al., 1996, p. 21), was less clear in the research findings than learning impact. Anderson et al. (1996), Grady et al. (1995) and Greeno et al. (1996) noted that learning transfer was difficult where learning was too closely associated with a particular situation so that it could not be generalised. My perception is that learning transfer did take place as emergent learning. Transfer also occurred where "a new situation" was defined as new in time, place and context rather than as new by being different. Transfer of learning, of the latter type, was seen, for example, in principals' descriptions of using negotiation skills learnt through professional union work, for negotiating organisational restructuring within the school and solving problems of interpersonal relationships. In many cases, learning transfer was assisted by painful, deeply personal learning. For example, one principal learnt the full extent and nature of school-based racism when her own children attended secondary school. This learning enabled her to identify covert, institutional racism. She then used this learning to solve the problem of under-achievement in her primary school by making major structural and educational changes within the school, based on her own learning.

I endeavoured to avoid "confirmation bias" (Klahr & Carver, 1995, p. 146) in analysing the principals' learning. Were there examples of perceived lack of impact and transfer of learning? or difficulties of transfer? or rejection of learning? Yes. One principal noted that she was unable to implement what she had learnt about collaborative leadership because of adverse staff relations. Others recalled failing to use problem solving strategies which they knew in theory, to solve problems of interpersonal relationships because feelings intruded. Others again, noted that they rejected some of the strategies they had learnt for consultation and delegation because they did not trust staff sufficiently. Clearly, impact and transfer of learning was tied to the wider context of organisational socialisation. In other words, principals' learning was contextualised. Input and transfer depended not just on the principals but on many factors within the organisation itself. In addition, Kuhn et al. (1995) noted that learners often retained old learning along with new learning. They concluded that "the more formidable challenge appears to be abandoning the old, rather than acquiring the new" (p. 9). The research appeared to confirm this conclusion.

The impact and transfer of learning was not constrained by time and examples were provided in the findings to show that the gap between learning and impact was often to be counted in years rather than days. Some childhood learning lay dormant for years like seeds waiting to emerge later in adult policies and practices. The individualistic and unique nature of the principals' learning, which impact and transfer of learning imply, is discussed next.

The Individualistic Nature Of Principals' Learning

In this section the individualistic nature of principals' learning is discussed in terms of four issues; characteristics of the individual learner, reflection, motivation and intention, barriers and limitations to learning.

The Individual Learner And Self-Knowledge

The research findings showed that principals valued highly their individuality as learners. They showed this in exercising personal preferences and valuing their independence in choosing which learning modes and methods would suit their learning needs. It followed, therefore, that if the principal was to identify learning needs effectively and reach deep-level learning, self-knowledge was essential. Self-knowledge was also of vital importance if the principal as learner was to model well the distinguishing characteristics of adult learners, which according to Brookfield (1993a, 1994), include self-directedness and critical thinking, and was to engage in the transformative learning which I described in Chapter Two.

Many of these principals indicated that their learning involved self-knowledge. However it was the self-study part of the research which was particularly illuminative with regard to self-knowledge. First, the self study enabled me to identify in depth what it was that constituted strengths in management and what it was that constituted weaknesses, and to gauge their impact on practice. I found that knowing which was which was not necessarily obvious in my case. Second, the self-study provided a learning experience which could be described as transformational. By the end of the research my perspective of myself had been transformed and some baggage, though not all, had been abandoned as no longer relevant. The self-study proved that, as Burns (1995) noted, while it is hard, it is not impossible for an adult to change her self-concept and that it is possible to change a way of thinking by critical reflection of basic assumptions, as Mezirow argued (1995a). Further, the self-study made me aware

of the extent to which the search for truth must be on-going, because, as Sprinkler (1980) noted "the self is constituted by a discourse that it never completely masters" (p. 342). By the end of the research I was still experiencing new learning of the self.

One of the changes I experienced through the self-study concerned my attitude to the role of others in learning. I was familiar with the literature stressing the importance of others in critical learning (Kolar, Fundar & Colvin, 1996; Robertson, 1994; Robinson, 1993; Stewart & Prebble, 1993) but I did not accept the premise of involving others. In this I seemed to replicate the attitudes of several of the principals. Hitherto I had believed that a well intentioned, thoughtful seeker after truth, would uncover learning needs without the help of others. The self-study showed that self-evaluation required not just input from others, but input of a specific kind from specific others as Robertson (1995) emphasised. The research findings and the self-study appeared to show that the characteristics and belief systems of an individual learner constitute yet another context which affects learning.

Reflection

At the centre of learning as an individual is the matter of reflection, alone and with others. Reflection was an integral part of the intentional learning of these principals; on-going and dynamic with two foci. One focus was external related to management issues. One was internal related to analysing the nature of personal performance. In the research findings, the external focus was more easily identified than the internal focus. However, the two foci merged on occasions such as in the matter of leadership. Reflection relating to leadership was a crucial part of the learning of these principals, because as leaders, they became the centre of followers' attention. This attention was frequently critical, thereby engendering defensive as well as formative reflection. Readers will recall the principal's comment that working in an atmosphere of continuing criticism could transform reflection into a protective, defensive mechanism. It was mainly as a result of the self-study that I became aware of the extent to which reflection could be subject to self-delusion, blind spots and superficiality. This conclusion is in line with Bolton's (1994) statement. "Knowledge of self is more beset by emotional barriers than any other kind, which implies that ... our reasoning powers ... can ... miss the mark because of irrational pressures" (p. ix). Interestingly, the principals mainly rejected the theory that reflection could be blind when it was put to them as part of the verifying the findings [Appendix L: 3.10]. However their negative response could be interpreted as positive support for the

theory. What appeared clear was that, however flawed, over an extended period, these principals were involved in a great deal of reflection in the context of their work.

The research findings implied that the defining element of effective reflection appeared to be the question of quality. Although these principals believed that they were reflective, most stated that they needed to be more so and most perceived that constant pressure made it hard to be reflective. Further, the research findings appeared to provide strong support for the conclusion that appraisal, one vital forum for reflection, was often superficial and ineffective as a means of developing deep-level kinds of reflection related to quality performance. Most principals reported incidents of reflective learning and practice, especially reflection related to study leave, study involving action research, or school development projects. Major crises were always times of reflection. Special situations such as this research helped all of the research participants to reflect. This was well summed up in one interview.

Principal

I would have to say that this talking about things would have to be one of the most valuable things I've done since I've been in the job.

Researcher

Why? In what way?

Principal

Because you challenged me and you've asked questions and you've made me think. I mean you forced me into reflection. But that's been great.

Researcher

Has it changed your behaviour in any way?

Principal

I think it probably has. I've become more reflective since you've been here. I mean one of the temptations in this job is always to be reactive. It really is So I've learnt something new. (FN 17.3.50)

The impact of reflection on practice could be seen in emergent learning as well as in specific management contexts. However, as the principal quoted above indicated, quality reflection leading to critical change in behaviour probably required special circumstances, or a trigger such as this research, to promote it. Reflection appeared to be closely linked to motivation and intention which is discussed next.

Motivation And Intention

Another characteristic of individual learning was motivation. Motivation

appeared to be a key factor in all learning and to be particularly important in intentional learning where principals exercised choice in selecting learning opportunities. As Burns (1995) noted; "human motivation and behaviour is ... complex" (p. 181) and "individual differences ... have a direct bearing on ... the motivation to be involved in further training and education" (p. 220). Individual motivation for learning had personal, social and professional dimensions. The personal dimension of motivation appeared to come from a deep emotional commitment to education and the desire to meet personal goals related to identity and self-concept. Some principals appeared to be able to compensate for areas of weakness, such as a perceived lack of self-confidence in inter-personal relations, by developing other strengths, such as preparing very thoroughly, excelling at administration and showing concern for the welfare of staff and Board of Trustee members. In Chapter Two I noted the comment of Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) that not everyone could lead a school towards improvement. This research appeared to show that a range of very different people could "lead a school towards improvement" when "improvement" was defined as either meeting Education Review Office standards, or being committed to meet those standards in one case. Social motivation was demonstrated not just in concern for social goals such as equity and justice. These principals were also motivated to learn in social contexts because their success largely came through the efforts of their teachers, whom they needed to encourage by example, and by the maintenance of good interpersonal contacts. Professional motivation, which was of critical importance, appeared to be integrated in complex ways with personal and social motivations. What is of interest is that personal, social and professional motivation impacted on practice in unique ways. As one principal noted: "I tend to look for ideas that fit my way of working, so that they are an authentic match with me, because to do something that's not natural to you is stressful and hard work" (FN 9.3.19).

The research showed that principals needed positive motivation to counteract the difficulty of the job, the unrelenting pressures due to "all the things that are going on all the time" (Log note 12.1.98). This was the difficulty which, according to Thody (1996) derives from the possible contradictions of the job; the need to be a "business manager" (p. 2) as well as an educational leader, a "strong leader" (p. 4) but an empowerer of others, a strategic planner and visionary, and provider of daily maintenance. All of the principals agreed that the job made contradictory demands but believed that they were motivated highly to learn how to handle the complexity and whatever had to be learnt. However, I found that describing motivation in terms

personal, social and professional contexts enabled me identify possible conflicts in the way motivation operated. This was because emotions played a large part in motivation. Some principals displayed a mix of emotions: for example, concern to know the latest learning requirements (professional motivation), but a wish to ignore most of what they were hearing or reading because of fear that new knowledge would result in even more work and pressure (personal motivation). The following example demonstrates complex motivations at work. Most of the principals in this research indicated that they had varied agendas and needs to be met when they attended educational gatherings, and different motivations. Informal learning opportunities provided a relatively unpressurised environment where they could combine personal, social and professional motivations. There they could socialise, meet colleagues, share concerns, consult informally, gain personal and professional refreshment, and make or renew contacts and continue networking. My research findings affirmed the findings of several researchers that much learning took place through informal talk (Bell, 1994; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Stewart, 1994; Watson, 1996). One of the aspects of conferences and meetings which several principals noted was enjoyable was that this environment was in stark contrast to their pressurised occupation.

It appeared from the interview data and my wider research study that the full range of individual principal's motivations is not always recognised and the impact of motivation on morale and learning is not always appreciated. For example, the Education Review Office (Sewell, 1998) reported that many New Zealand principals attended only professional conferences and meetings, implying that this was inadequate to meet their needs. Perhaps these principals have personal and social motivations which have to take precedence over professional motivation at certain times because of the pressurised nature of the job. Taking care of the self, remembering to "sharpen the saw" (p. 287), was one of the Covey's (1990) habits for success in management. As Southworth (1993) noted, studies of principals' motivation are few in number. Crow (1992) argued for longitudinal studies of the careers of principals to identify their motivations in order to be able to improve principalship training. The findings from this research appear to support such an initiative by indicating that principals' personal, social and professional motivations played an important part in their learning and therefore ought to be the focus of study. The recommendation is included in Chapter Seven.

Barriers And Limitations To Learning

As implied in the previous two sections of this chapter, contextualised learning involved a number of learning barriers and limitations but these affected principals in individualistic ways. Some barriers and limitations were caused by external factors. It was clear that the job itself was more complex and difficult for some principals than others, with major learning challenges concerned with managing people of varying degrees of difficulty. Some principals mentioned lack of time as the major limitation to their learning. By this they meant lack of time specifically in relation to the rapidity and pressurisation of change in their situation, lack of time in terms of the magnitude of the learning task, limited time to look for alternative solutions, and systemic barriers to taking time out for reflection from a distance. Two principals only mentioned dislike of using public money which could be used for children's education, lack of money or a small professional development fund as a barrier to learning. This was a barrier which Barth (1993) identified as a major cause of principals' failure to receive adequate training. Since 1989 Boards of Trustees have been obliged to set money aside for principals' professional development; that factor and the perceived constraints of time, could account for the lack of reference to finance as a barrier to learning for many of these principals.

Some barriers and limitations were related to the individual person. As I argued in the previous section, the principals believed that intention, attitudes and emotion were important factors in their learning and the learning of their staff. "If I'm interested I learn" (FN 4.3.8) was representative of the statements made; the corollary being, that lack of interest or motivation meant lack of learning. The research findings appeared to confirm the statement of Duignan and Macpherson (1991) who noted that where change caused major disruption, "emotions rather than rationality will prevail" (p. 32) for some more than others. Emotions could create a barrier to learning but did not necessarily do so. For example, these principals all supported the reforms and even the disillusionment described earlier which some experienced, failed to alter their emotional commitment to their communities and their will to learn. None of these principals appeared to perceive themselves as "powerless functionaries" as Mulford (1988, p. 34) speculated. On the other hand, some principals noted that their emotional responses led to rejection of a presenter's style or message.

The personal, intrinsic nature of learning barriers was noted by principals who made adverse comments about the learning limitations of other principals. They

believed that some principals showed a lack of ability, or unjustified over-confidence in their own ability and knowledge, or a general disdain of learning opportunities, "and it's not necessarily old people" (FN 7.3.15). What emerged was a judgmental attitude to the learning posture of some other principals. It was not within the scope of this study to determine whether such judgements were justified or not. My interest lay in the fact that these judgements were made across a range of the principals in the study. What the research findings showed was on the one hand, small networks of principals working co-operatively as effective learning communities: for example, a cluster of contributing schools centred on a secondary school, or a group of ex-course member colleagues, or regionally-based groups of learners. This was a positive learning situation because, according to Dussault and Barnett (1996), lack of networks to reduce isolation acts as a barrier to learning and holds up professional growth. On the other hand, there was a sense that large groups of principals, as represented by professional bodies, did not constitute learning communities to tackle educational problems as well as they could have, although this was less obvious on the part of primary principals than secondary principals. As one of the secondary principals said:

The tragedy when you sit in an Auckland Principals' meeting is that so few of them have chosen to use the position to bring about good change that's really sad, so I tend to be a bit disillusioned (FN 14.1.15).

Those 70 principals are now responsible for the education of 50% of the secondary school students Really and truly they ought to be the most powerful group in the country in terms of the reforms, ... change and ... making Governments accountable. Instead of that they're probably one of the weakest because they can't agree on anything and because you've got such a diverse range of people within it. (FN 14.3.9)

This kind of statement indicated the role of feelings and emotion in learning and suggested personal barriers to learning. The statement also indicated the individuality of principals and echoed some of the findings of Gray (1987) with respect to secondary principals' attitudes to professional development which I described fully in Chapter Two (p. 32-33). Another aspect of the findings which perhaps suggested that personal barriers to learning existed, was the frequency with which most of these principals commented that they made mistakes. However I was unable to pursue this line of thinking in the research and recommend it in the next chapter as an issue requiring future research. What this study showed was that barriers to learning existed in the environment in which principals worked but that capacity to overcome external barriers might depend on personal abilities and attitudes - that is, the existence or non-existence of personal barriers.

Chapter Summary And Conclusion

Discussion of the findings was structured around three key ideas. First, the learning of educational management of these principals was cumulated and holistic. When deconstructed this learning comprised three inter-related parts; namely, foundational, experiential and intentional learning. Their foundational learning continued to influence the principals throughout their careers and may even have established the success and difficulties of the principalship. Experiential learning was very important, the period of major consolidation and cumulation of educational management learning and of new emergent learning. Learning and impact of learning on practice were often synonymous through the process of action learning which being a principal represented. In experiential learning, these principals identified their learning needs which they met by intentional learning. Thus, identification of learning needs as the key to much successful learning, was highlighted in the research.

Second, principals' learning was contextualised. Initiation, crises and pressures, situations of personal and national change were discussed as important contexts of learning. Within these contexts, the principals learnt knowledge and skills. One implication of the research findings is that emergent learning, being related to being a principal over time, may be what defines the experienced principal and the novice. Emergent learning, while often deep-level learning, could also appear pragmatic with further implications for learning needs of both principals and staff. Intentional learning was discussed in the contexts of the principals' training and education; in particular, in post-appointment training, gaining qualifications and professional reading. The impact and transfer of learning was most straightforward when learning was technical. It was argued, with Sheckley et al. (1994), that the principalship itself represented a recursive learning system in which impact on practice was an integral part of learning. However, examples were provided also of occasions when learning did not impact on practice.

The third key idea was the individual nature of principals' learning. It was argued that self-knowledge was an important constituent of learning as an educational manager if strengths and weaknesses were to be identified accurately. Within this, reflection, especially reflection with the help of specific others, was essential. Self-knowledge and reflection were particularly important in developing leadership. Other important features of individuality were motivation and intention. It appeared that motivation could provide conflicting pressures for some principals. Finally, barriers

and limitations were discussed as being among the most individualistic dimensions of learning.

In Chapters Two and Three, I stressed the point made by Boud and Walker (1991), Johnson (1994), Richardson (1994) and Schön (1987) that research findings should be communicated to the audience for whom they are intended in ways they find useful. Metaphors are often used as powerful messengers of meaning (Ely et al., 1991; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Richardson, 1994). On three occasions, I have described the nature of a principal's learning to groups of principals and providers of professional development through the following metaphor. They appeared to find it useful. I provide it here as part of the summary and conclusion to this chapter. A metaphor currently in vogue to describe an experiential learning environment in business or education is managing "permanent white water conditions" (Vaill, 1996, p. 10). However, on the basis of the research findings as I have discussed them in this chapter, I consider that the permanent white water metaphor is appropriate only for a school passing through a period of sustained difficulty. The learning of these principals often took place in periods of relative calm.

The metaphor of a river appeared to sum up the perceptions of the learning experiences of these principals. The findings showed that their learning, like a river, began with origins and was on-going in time and place. Their learning was rapid and often tumultuous in the beginning (especially as a new principal), and increased with the input of many sources (their learning from experiences and intentional learning). Their learning was sometimes shallow (learning basic strategies or what they considered was not really relevant to their situation), sometimes deep (related to vision or policy direction), unpressured where the river slowed (for example, learning at a holiday course) and riding the rapids of learning in times of serious crisis (such as a fire or physical violence in the school). In the case of riding the rapids, specific prior preparation might be of limited help compared with life-time skills and knowledge. Control could be restricted by external forces (such as the media or parents taking the initiative). A wrong move could lead to disaster (as in failing to follow correct procedures leading to a challenge in court and pillory in the press). Experience of riding the rapids would help on a repeated occasion, although each ride would have different pitfalls and hazards (for example when dealing with serious staff conflict). Traumatic school situations from which principals learnt had many of the characteristics of riding the rapids - a sense of danger, the production of adrenaline, rapid decision making, a sense of achievement at a successful conclusion, perhaps

injury or bruising, exhaustion and, of course, debriefing to assess strengths and weaknesses from the experience to affect future performance. Rivers slow as they reach their destination (principals relying on their accumulated knowledge and embedded skills or perhaps experiencing loss of energy as retirement nears), unless the flood-gates (of change) burst and force the pace (of learning) upwards again. No two rivers are the same. The metaphor of the river appears to capture that cumulative, varied and unique experiential learning environment of these principals.

In Chapter Two as I discussed general issues of learning, I raised a number of queries which I expected to follow up in the research. These concerned the extent to which the individual experiences of principals would influence their practice, their attitudes to change, the nature of their reflection and critical thinking, and the ways they identified their learning needs and so on. These issues have been extensively discussed in this chapter and in Chapter Seven and further explanation is not required here. However, my conclusions with regard to six issues are summarised briefly here since they may be of particular interest to readers.

I wondered at the extent to which the principals perceived that they were influenced by their own school principals and principals from their teaching days. None of the principals appeared aware of their school principals as management role models. They were, on the other hand, very aware of principals in schools where they taught, as role models, both good and bad. Good role models treated students and staff with respect and were supportive and well organised. Bad role models were described as abusive or poorly organised. Another question related to social learning. I wondered whether principals would be aware of their social learning and whether I would be able to identify this learning. I concluded that principals were aware of the social dimensions of their learning although they did not use the term "social learning". I discovered their ideas about their social learning in their narrative of experiences and others who influenced their beliefs and practice, especially in their discussion of role models, mentors, professional development courses and professional reading. A third question related to whether anyone could lead a school to make it better than it was. I concluded on the basis of this research and without generalising beyond these principals, that anyone could lead a school in the direction of making it better than it was, in terms of gaining Education Review Office approval. This conclusion was based on the perception that no one set of skills ensured effective practice as a principal defined in these terms of improving a school. The principals in the research exhibited very different strengths and appeared to compensate for

apparent weakness in some skills by very highly developed skills in other areas, such as political knowledge and skill, caring and supportiveness, ability and determination. Self esteem and self concept appeared to be very important to these principals. This was most specifically described by one principal as I described on page 134 above. This principal appreciated the recognition that came from success. Self esteem and self concept were often subsumed in motivation generally, whether the principals were motivated for educational, professional or personal reasons (See Appendix L, pages 212-213). Self concept appeared also to be a factor in the way principals reacted to opposition. Even those who made concessions at the time, appeared determined to remain in control as the rightful place for the principal. Finally I wondered if life's experiences would orient a principal to one or other style of operating. It appeared that this was the case. Principals who had experienced responsibility and support early in life appeared to be more confident and assertive than others. However this was an area which the research was unable to investigate thoroughly and it is recommended in Chapter Seven as an area for future study. The formal conclusions and recommendations are outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

How did these principals perceive that they learnt to be principals? How did they perceive that what they had learnt impacted on their practice? This chapter sets out the conclusions to these questions provided by the findings, professional implications which can be drawn from the conclusions, the limitations of the research, recommendations for further research and a final word.

Conclusions

The main conclusion to evolve from the research findings is as follows:

Each principal's learning was perceived to be holistic and cumulative, consisting of his or her foundational, experiential and intentional inter-related learning, contextualised within his or her particular school/community environments. Therefore each principal's learning constituted a unique learning configuration.

This conclusion is now explained more fully.

One of the grounded theory categories which became saturated thoroughly as the research proceeded was the uniqueness of each principal's total learning experience on the one hand, and the uniqueness of each school milieu as the environment in which the principal operated on the other. As a way of explaining this sense of individuality and uniqueness, I developed a diagrammatic representation of the constituents of a principal's learning to show the category of uniqueness as a configuration. [See Figure 5 below].

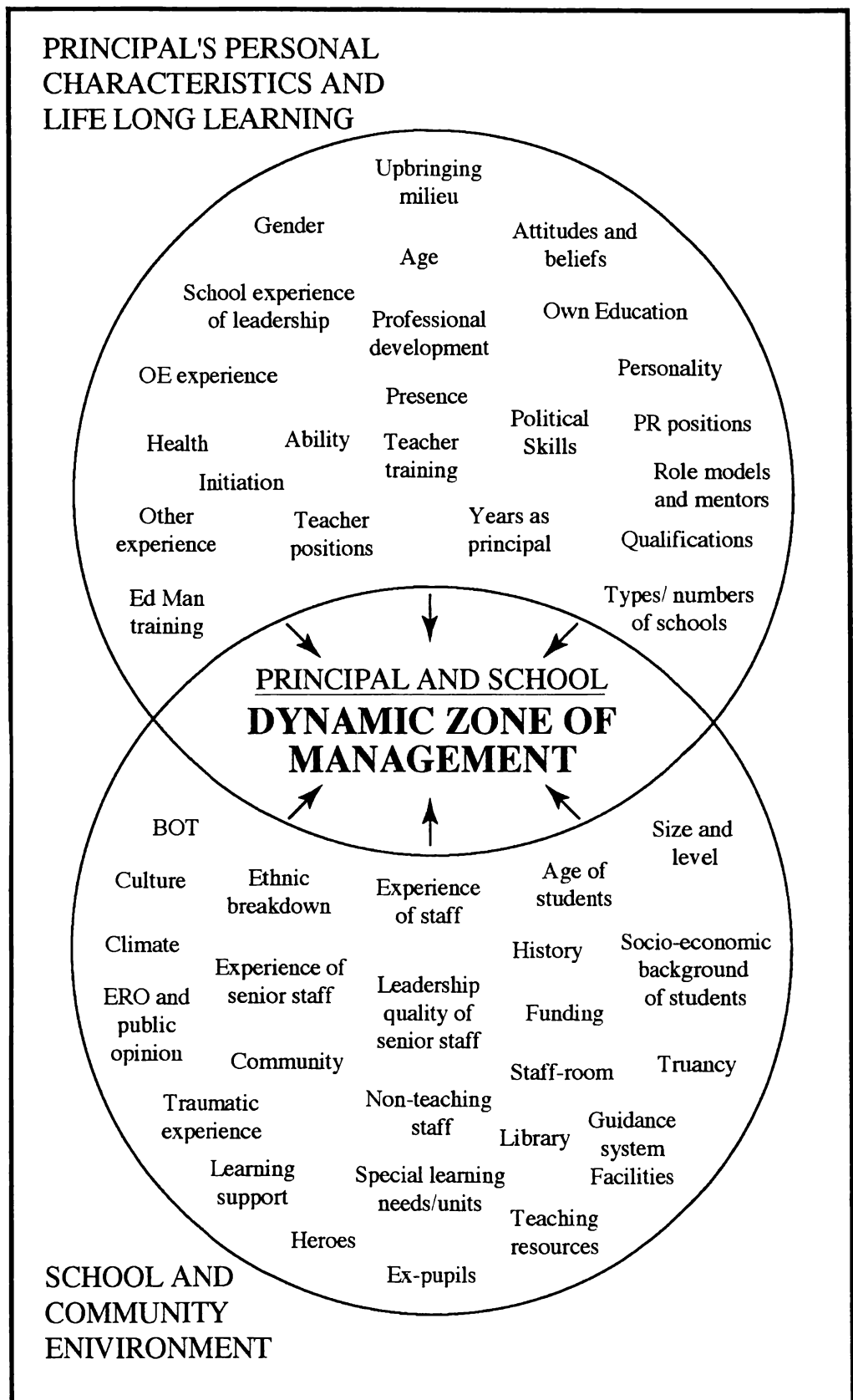


Figure 5: Unique configuration of principal and school/community

A configuration resembles a dance rather than a template or diagram, allowing for the dynamics of the concept. The configuration is the result of combining two sets of multiple factors; one set representing the principal and the other set representing the school. The sets, which are representative rather than exhaustive, include principal factors of upbringing, gender, personality, abilities, age, qualifications, training and on-going education, teaching, management and principalship experiences, learning barriers and limitations. The list of school factors includes size, age range, gender, ethnic mix, culture, climate, socio-economic factors, community and staff personalities and so on. Each principal and each school represents different combinations of these factors. The way in which these combinations are joined together into a whole, creates different configurations for each principal/school combination. The utility of the concept of a unique configuration is that it allows for many similarities as well as differences because it is the overall combination of factors and features which is unique.

These conclusions developed from two sources. First, there was my experience of listening to 19 different stories relating to the principalship. Second, the principals in the research study themselves remarked on the different personalities and styles of principals, the individual ways they had of carrying out the role of the principal, and on the fact that "many, many different kinds of people are successful principals" (FN 14.3.28). One principal who had been contracted to work with Multi Serve Education Trust visiting a number of schools, commented on the "lots of different personalities and styles and different ways of going about things" (FN 5.3.31). These principals appeared to be similar to the principal in Southworth's (1995) study who "regarded headship as individualistic and personal" (p. 214). Principals themselves indicated the differences among schools when they had been principal at more than one school. The element of different personal styles and ways of managing was also identified by Harold (1995) in her research into the relationship between principals and Boards of Trustees in three schools, and by Grace (1995) generally in his English study of 88 principals. I was struck by the dimensions and significance of the factor of difference because it was not something I had taken much heed of as a provider of professional development. I was aware of the theory of individual difference, but the research brought home the deep-level meaning of individual difference in the context of being a principal. This conclusion is consistent with the suggestions of Greenfield and Ribbins (1993), Ribbins and Marland (1994) and Wadsworth (1990) when they urged consideration of the contextual experiences of individual practitioners.

To reiterate, the core concept of uniqueness which emerged from the research study, lay not the uniqueness of the experiences themselves because to be human is to experience from the same diverse, complex range of human experience, which Egan (1984) called "the community of human nature" (p. 202). What was unique in the principals' stories was the combination of those experiences. While all research participants drew from common categories of human experience, no two configurations were similar or even close to being similar.

A secondary conclusion to derive from the self-study is as follows:

Self-knowledge is critical for learning educational management. Effective self-study requires two components; open-mindedness on the part of the individual learner and the input of specific others dealing with specific issues of quality performance.

This conclusion is linked to the main conclusion in the sense that the individual learner, as a unique learner, may need to understand the uniqueness of the self-in-the-learning-context for critical professional growth to occur as a school leader.

These conclusions appear to have implications for principals as adult learners who need to be aware of their own learning and for providers of learning opportunities seeking to find solutions to the seemingly intractable problems of practice. These implications are developed next.

Implications Of The Findings For Professional Development

I identified three main implications for professional development from the findings and their related conclusions; the importance of self knowledge, the importance of the holistic and inter-related nature of learning, and the importance of levels of learning. Each is described below.

The Importance Of Self-Knowledge

In discussing school principals and educational leadership recently at a conference, Sewell (1998), an ex-secondary principal of long experience, remarked in

general discussion: "The whole you is the principal. Therefore understand yourself". This research in general, and the self study in particular, showed just how important this statement is. Consequently, professional development needs to assist principals to understand themselves in the context of their jobs. This means first identifying the nature and origin of their attitudes, values, and motivations, and second, analysing how these attitudes, values and motivations impact on practice. Principals and other educational managers need the skills to undertake a kind of personal audit. This should go beyond the familiar analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and attempt to uncover basic questions of identity. "Who am I? What do I believe in? How did I get this way?" and in the context of the learning needs of particular management jobs: "How do I fit this job? Where do I need to concentrate my professional learning? How can others help me? Which others?"

The importance of self-knowledge is emphasised because, as a consequence of this research, I consider this to be one of the most important implications for professional development in educational management. In discussing authentic leadership, Duignan (1998) explored the need for general self-awareness, including acknowledgement of "the flawed self, the dark self, the mask we sometimes wear to protect our fragile self" (p. 62). He warned that we can become unthinking creatures of our institutions, simply going along with what is. To avoid such capture, Duignan stressed (1998), we need to be clear about our values and motivations. The research participants all indicated that involvement in the research made them more aware of themselves as educational managers, more thoughtful and questioning. It was clear that self-study is a powerful learning tool. It was also clear from the self-study that the involvement of specific others can help the individual to reach a better understanding of learning needs and the self. English (1995) noted that "biography and other forms of life writing have been neglected sources in teaching educational administration" (p. 203) because of the emphasis on empirical forms of theorising. Encouraging principals to consider their own unique learning and practical experiences through studying biographical writing could help them grasp better the impact that they as people have on their work environments.

One period when self-knowledge is likely to be emphasised is when principals are being prepared for management positions. However, as I noted earlier, the literature on preparation appeared to indicate that such courses generally focus on tasks (Begley, 1995; Hallinger & Murphy, 1991) and best management strategies for achieving and maintaining success as leader (Brady, 1996; Dussault & Barnett, 1996).

Self-knowledge of the self as person does not appear as a priority. Nor do the relational and contextual dimensions of self-knowledge appear to be emphasised. Where new principals are urged to understand themselves as in Day (1992) and "develop an appreciation of their fundamental values and attitudes" (Barnett et al., 1992), the reasons why this should be done and how it might be done are often not acknowledged and developed clearly in the literature. It appears to be taken for granted that newly appointed educational managers will understand the relevance of self-knowledge. However they may not be in a position to understand the significance of self-knowledge as Heitmuller et al. (1993) found. In their American study, new principals ranked recognising personal development needs as tenth in a list of twelve items. The importance of self-knowledge is an important implication of this research for educational managers and for providers.

The Importance of the Holistic and Inter-related Nature Of Learning

The second major implication for professional development is that principals need to understand the integrated structure of their learning. Learning needs to be understood as holistic but structured, with clearly identified linked parts; namely foundational (pre-appointment learning), experiential (learning on-the-job) and intentional learning (to meet learning needs identified on-the-job). Principals need to understand how pre-appointment learning impacts on practice and in particular to identify where prior learning is inappropriate for new situations which develop over the years.

Within this integrated structure, experiential learning as a principal included a number of specific contextual learning situations, such as the learning associated with initiation into a new job. One of the implications of the research is that newly appointed principals may require training in ways of analysing the new job environment, and ways of managing established staff and institutional change from the different perspective of being a "new leader". Some may need assistance and support to handle the shock of moving from a climate of personal popularity to one of possible hostility. As the role and the self constitute one's identity, it may be difficult for educational managers in this situation to seek help and publicise the fact that they are not welcomed by some staff and are experiencing problems. Those promoted from the ranks to the senior management position may need professional development to help them analyse the effect their promotion has had on some other staff and find

ways to turn problem situations into growth promoting situations for staff as well as themselves.

The research participants indicated the difficulty, unstructuredness and unpredictability of much in educational management through their discussion of managing crises and unexpected developments, affecting change and managing people. All of these areas have implications for professional development. As the key concerns of practitioners, they are the key issues for professional development; the foci of intentional learning.

The main implication of intentional learning with regard to professional development from this study is the need for intentional learning to be examined in relation to the holistic and integrative nature of learning. In other words, meeting learning needs should be considered not just in relation to specific issues, which arise from time to time, but in relation to one's over-all development as an adult learner. If learning is holistic as has been argued in this study, do some long-accepted assumptions need to be challenged to meet current circumstances? This research study appeared to suggest that intentional learning, while very important and greatly valued by most educational managers for a variety of reasons, was geared in most cases to immediate problems of a technical nature, such as new Government-required procedures and the wider ramifications of their implementation. To achieve the goal of understanding one's holistic learning, reflection needs to be sourced in deep self-knowledge and awareness of oneself as a learner. It is important for principals to be aware of critical learning needs of a personal nature which affect performance at the quality level.

The concepts of learning barriers and limitations have implications for professional development. On the one hand the principals claimed that they could learn whatever they wanted to learn, and on the other hand, they described the job as hard especially dealing with people, and said that they learnt by trial and error and made mistakes of varying degrees of severity. The research did not show that most mistakes were related to the risk-taking of innovation, but rather to making the wrong judgements or taking spur-of-the-moment action. On the basis of this evidence, I concluded that defining learning barriers and limitations was a professional development topic requiring attention. Appraisal should be included also because the research showed that the system operated ineffectively on occasions.

The consequences of unique configurations of each principal and school for providers and recipients of professional development appear to be enormous, requiring perhaps a re-orientation of professional education and a rethinking about ways of solving complex educational problems. In many cases both particular problems and their solutions appeared to be localised. The principal, as a unique practitioner and power within the school, may have contributed to specific problems and, therefore, would need to contribute to the solution. By suggesting that solutions to problems could be found in the interaction of a particular principal and particular school, the findings could indicate some solutions to what several writers have identified as the intractable problems of educational practice (Boud & Walker, 1991; Johnson, 1994; Schön, 1987).

The Importance of Levels-Of-Learning

One of the most important aspects of the self-study was discovering the unplumbed depth of knowledge and insight hidden behind common, taken-for-granted knowledge. The self-study was a critical learning experience. I discovered as Steier (1991) noted, that "research becomes a way of unconcealing our own tacit world, including the constraints we have self-imposed" (p. 7), a way of discovering the "authentic self" (Duignan, 1998, (p. 62). I discovered different levels of "meaning" through attacking common knowledge with a series of analytical questions, and was forced to wonder whether the greatest barrier to learning might be, not just who we are, but what we know already when that knowledge is taken for granted and not examined critically. The implication for professional development is that providers need to be able to help principals and other students of educational management challenge their taken-for-granted knowledge. The work of Argyris and Schön (1974), Mezirow (1994a) and Robinson (1993) showed just how difficult this process is. However, moving from surface to deep-level learning, and understanding adult learning strategically, is sufficiently important for professional developers to find ways of helping principals and other educational managers to become skilled in using learning levels. This is particularly important in the context of a unique learning configuration.

The concept of unique learning configurations is an example of the concept of levels-of-learning, since it is common knowledge that people and schools are different. The concept of unique configuration interprets the nature and meaning of difference in school contexts. One implication for principals and providers is that professional

development courses should be oriented more directly towards this uniqueness and away from norms and generalities in the ways courses are presented and implemented. School-based development has developed greatly since 1989. However it is possible that the focus has been on norm-derived problem solving strategies applied to only one half of the configuration - the school as environment for the problem, largely excluding the other half of the configuration - the principal as power-broker and climate-controller to a considerable degree. The implication for professional development is that the configuration of principal and school community needs to be considered as a symbiotic relationship, with both parts affecting the other in ways that create unique problems.

In summary, the most important implications of the research for professional development are that learning opportunities need to be provided for these principals to develop self-knowledge, understand the holistic and integrated nature of learning, and develop awareness and skills to become strategic and flexible managers of learning levels; that is, to be able to evaluate and assess their knowledge and skills and their learning needs.

Limitations Of The Research

The main factor which limited the research, was the nature of the sample. The sample of 19 principals was chosen for convenience of access and spread by gender and educational level. Most of the principals had attended courses through the education unit which I managed. Furthermore, I chose several principals who were well known to me. These factors may have influenced them. The sample was not as balanced as I would have liked. The small pool of secondary women principals made equal selection difficult. In addition, withdrawal of one woman secondary principal increased the lack of balance in the group in terms of gender and educational level. Time constraints and the need to restrict the research study to one of manageable proportions have been indicated in Chapter Four and these concerns are not repeated here except to remind readers of their existence.

Notwithstanding these limitations, I have the confidence in the conclusions described earlier in this chapter. This is what Glaser and Strauss (1967) noted that a researcher should have. I believe that the research findings add to the store of knowledge about educational management and principalship and perhaps direct attention to important aspects of principalship which may not have been regarded with

a sufficient sense of urgency by researchers and providers of professional development, and by principals themselves.

Recommendations For Further Research

I have argued that each principal and school community constitutes a unique configuration. There is a need for further biographical studies of principals, focusing on whole-of-life learning and the interaction of individuals and their school communities. This would provide useful resource material for professional development of principals helping them to analyse and appreciate their own situations and identify their learning needs. It would be particularly useful also for deputy principals who aspired to be principals.

As I interviewed the principals and analysed the research data, it was clear that the personality of the principal was an important factor in educational leadership. These principals, as did the principals in the research carried out by Harold (1995), provided examples of very different personalities. I was unable to investigate the impact of the personality of the principal on the school within the scope of this study, but I believe that this is an area worth investigation. A study of the impact of a principal's personality on the school in terms of school climate, culture and success, could be helpful for School Boards when making appointments, and for principals themselves as they reflect on their performance.

Trial and error learning was mentioned regularly by the principals. Research into this common learning phenomenon to identify its causes, nature and scope could lead to better ways of identifying learning needs and values. Such a study could clarify better whether most "trial and error" learning was a necessary element of experiential learning because it was related to the risk-taking of innovation, or simply a judgement made in hindsight about careless, unthinking behaviour. If research showed that "trial and error" learning was the latter, identification of the problem could lead on to finding ways to address it.

There is an urgent need for research into ways of identifying learning needs, especially of the non-technical kind such as learning for self-development and effective leadership, and to contrast such learning needs with the professional

development that is "consumed" by educational managers. How well does identification and provision match? Providers need to know the extent to which current professional development trends are meeting principals' needs. One of the key findings of the self-study in this research was that taken-for-granted assumptions need to be examined carefully. I believe that one taken-for-granted assumption is that learning providers are providing adequately for principals' learning needs. If that is the case, why, a decade after reform, are some schools still failing?

Principal's motivation is an issue of major importance. How does a principal's motivation impact on the culture and climate of the school? How is a principal's motivation affected by the external pressures of the current political, social and economic climate? How does personal, social and professional motivation develop over a career? Principals' motivation is closely related to their professional development and retention in the profession. Considering the alternative careers currently open to able people who have human resources skills, and given the demanding nature of the principal's job, research into careers and motivation is urgent from the point of view of the future welfare of education.

Initiation into the principalship was clearly a major problem for many principals in this study. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the problem could be more widespread. The fact that problems of initiation may be of short duration in terms of a principalship, and the natural reluctance of principals to publicise their difficulties, may account for the lack of in-depth studies on this phenomenon. However, appropriate training needs to be based on a more thorough analysis of the issue of initiation than can be found in this research. Consequently further research is essential. A related area for research is a long term study of principals who strike major difficulties as new principals, to investigate whether they do, in fact, go on to become successful leaders of those schools, and what learning or situational change was involved in their route to success.

Finally, many issues have been raised in this research which could not be explored adequately in the context of a single research study; for example, the development of attitudes and values over a life-time, the relation of foundational learning and long term success or difficulty as a principal or educational manager, comparisons of the findings by gender and educational level, and principals' learning related to school climate and culture. The concept of emergent learning and my own experience of learning how to research learning appeared to fit the theories of

constructivism and adult learning which I raised in Chapter Two, but here too I have had to leave these interesting and relevant issues to future research.

A Last Word

I believe that the purposes of the research have been met. These purposes were to understand better how some principals learnt their roles and put what they learnt into practice, to contribute to the body of qualitative knowledge on the subject of learning the job of principal, and to identify implications for providers of professional development. As a practitioner and an educator in the field of educational management, I had a double interest in the question of learning educational management. Consequently, the research also included a self-study of learning educational management. As has been stressed in several places in this study, "postmodernism claims that ... our Self is always present" (Richardson, 1994, p. 520) however we write and should be recognised and acknowledged. Steier (1991) even suggested that the reflexive nature of research made research itself a type of social constructivism. As Clandinin and Connelly (1994), Ely et al. (1991) and Glesne and Peshkin (1992) argued, research can be an instructional, educative, even a transformational learning experience for the researcher. On the grounds that this research was a very powerful learning experience for this researcher, I believe that this aspect of research should be encouraged. The educational potential of research for the researcher, when combined with the importance given to self-knowledge in management and teaching, provides a strong advocacy for self-study. As Brookfield (1995) claimed "our autobiographies as learners ... represent one of the most important sources of insight ... to which we have access" (p. 31).

As regards the impact of learning on practice, Argyris and Schön (1974) and Robinson (1993) argued cogently that it is often difficult to put espoused theory into practice and even to identify which beliefs and values guide practice. On the basis of this research into the perceptions, beliefs and experiences of learning of a group of New Zealand principals, I concluded that their learning and the impact of their learning on practice were idiosyncratic and contextual. These findings add to the complexity of learning and practice. Therefore to understand learning in the context of being a principal or educational manager, the principal or educational manager should develop and maintain a thorough understanding of the self and the inter-relationship of

the individual-as-self and a particular context; that is, in the case of a principal, a principal at work in a particular school. A principal's learning of management is cumulative, holistic and contextualised. It is made up of foundational, experiential and intentional learning, and is, by that very nature, unique. How such learning is unique and with what consequences for practice and professional development is what principals and providers of learning opportunities need to understand.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A:

Model Of Research Interview Questions

Ribbins and Marland (1994, p. 216) interview schedule.

1. To help us get this conversation in context, it would be helpful if you would say something about your background?
2. How and why did you become a teacher?
3. What made you interested in headship? How did you prepare for it?
4. What are your memories of taking over your first school? How did that experience affect your subsequent management of the school? What did you or will you do differently next time?
5. What do you expect of your senior and other managers and what can they expect of you? How are their roles divided and how did this pattern of responsibility come to be devised?
6. How do you lead the work of the staff as a whole?
7. In what ways do you relate to pupils, parents and the local community?
8. How do you manage your relationship and working practices with your governing body?
9. What are (or were) your relationships with the LEA?
10. How do you keep up with developments in understanding of what makes for effective teaching and learning and with the seemingly ever increasing pace of demand for change?
11. What do you enjoy most about headship and what interests you least? Has headship changed significantly in your time as a teacher and a headteacher?
12. Who or what has most helped you in coming to terms with headship?
13. More personally, how do you cope with what is expected of you? How well do you manage your time? What gives you most stress and creates most tension? How do you cope with these stresses and tensions?
14. How far is your school still able to determine the nature and shape of the curriculum and its assessment: How is curriculum planning and development organised and managed within your school? What part do you yourself play in all this?
15. How do you cope when things go wrong?
16. In what sense is the school, your school?

APPENDIX B:

Chronology

- 1990-1994
 - Problem identification process commenced
 - Literature search commenced
- 1995
 - Literature search continued. System established for managing documentation
 - Research proposal designed
 - Research proposal accepted
 - Trial studies with three ex-principals to identify the key issues to be canvassed in the research on learning as a principal
 - Interview schedule developed on the basis of the trials
 - Interviewing of significant others to identify learning needs as part of the self-study
 - Self study autobiography written
 - Conference paper on appraisal presented
- 1996
 - Literature search continued
 - Participants selected and communication commenced by means of telephone and correspondence
 - Consent obtained
 - Interview time-table established
 - Interviewing of principals and transcribing tape recordings
 - Self study interviews completed
 - Case study interviews of retired principal (1)
 - Data analysis commenced with open, axial and theoretical coding as part of grounding the theory
 - Conference paper on self study presented
 - Draft Report writing of Chapters One to Four commenced
- 1997
 - Interviews of practising principals completed
 - Case study interviews of retired principal (2)
 - Data analysis continued
 - Chapter Five on research findings began to take shape

- Emerging theory continued to be grounded in literature as part of development through the conditional matrix
 - Report writing continued
- 1998
- Report writing continued as the analysis of data was completed resulting in the findings, discussion, conclusions and implications
 - Conclusions discussed with selected research participants
 - Paper presented on findings to obtain peer response
 - Report revision continued as part of the writing process and on-going verification
- 1999
- Research completed and report submitted for examination

APPENDIX C:

Interview Questions - Researcher Guidelines

THE PRINCIPAL AS LEARNER

Introduction

- a. Learning to be a principal. What are the first thoughts that come to mind about learning to be a principal?

1. Background (Other than teaching)

Key question: What key background factors influenced your learning of management and leadership in educational settings?

- a. Tell me about your background and early life especially anything that might have had an influence on your management and leadership skills.
- b. Were any family members or teachers particularly influential for you? Which ones? How? Why?
- c. How influential were your own school principals? In what way?
- d. To what extent were you successful academically? Was this an influence?
- e. When you went to University and/or College did anything you learnt there influence your management and leadership knowledge or skills? Why? In what way?

2. Teaching background

Key question: What was your teaching experience before you became a principal?

- a. How did you get into teaching? Why did you become a teacher?
- b. Where did you start teaching? Why did you go there?

-
- c. What did you learn as a beginning teacher about leadership and management?
 - d. How did your career as a teacher develop? How did you acquire these positions?
 - e. What did you learn as an experienced teacher about leadership and management? How did you learn this?

3. Becoming a principal (i.e. in your first principal's job)

Key question: What did you have to learn as a beginning principal? How did you accomplish this?

- a. Why did you apply for a principalship? How did this application come about?
- b. How far did you feel prepared for principalship? What had prepared you?
- c. What did you understand the role of the principal to be at that time ?
- d. When you were appointed, what did you believe you had to learn?
- e. What did you learn as a beginning principal? How did you learn these things? How did you apply these skills and this knowledge? With what success?
- f. Which people helped you and how did they do this?
- g. In retrospect, with the wisdom of hindsight, what skills did you have to learn?
- h. What did you find hardest to learn?
- i. If you were to set up a training course for beginning principals, what topics, knowledge or skills would your course include?

4. As a Principal

Key question: After the beginning years, how have you learnt the principal's role?

- a. What professional development have you had since you have been a principal (excluding the beginning years)?
- b. What have been the flash points of learning for you (i.e. points of great learning or illumination)?
- c. Which people have helped you to learn the job? In what context? What did you learn? How successfully? How do you know this?

- d. Which experiences or events helped you to learn (not necessarily as principal)? In what context? What did you learn? How has being in the job helped you to learn? What do you see as being the main roles of the principal now?
- e. In what ways did you work differently when you took up your second/third principalship? What did you learn from your first/second principalship?
- f. What learning demands did the Picot Reforms place on you? How did you meet those demands?
- g. What do you like most about being a principal? Why?
- h. What do you like least about being a principal? Why?
- i. How far do you see the school as “your” school? What do you think are the consequences of this?
- j. Does being a principal give you a buzz? Why? In what ways?

5. Learning specific aspects - about leadership

Key question: How have you learnt leadership?

- a. Principals are leaders of teams of teachers. How do you see yourself as the leader of the work of the staff as a whole? How did you learn to be the leader of a team of professional staff and other staff?
- b. What do you expect from your senior staff? What should they expect of you? What learning is involved here?
- c. How do you go about making decisions? How did you learn these skills?
- d. How do you solve problems? How did you learn these skills?
- e. How do you handle conflict and disagreement? How did you learn this?
- f. How did you learn to manage your relations with the BOT?
- g. How would you describe your relations with students and parents? How did you learn this?
- h. What are your relationships with outside educational groups e.g. MOE, ERO, NZQA, NZEI/PPTA? How did you learn to manage these relationships?
- i. What would you say are the two main characteristics of your leadership style? How did you learn this style?
- j. What is your vision for the school? How did you develop it?

6. Learning specific aspects - about technical management.

Key question: What technical management skills and knowledge have you learnt and how have you learnt this?

- a. How did you learn the skills of strategic planning and goal setting?
- b. How did you learn financial management?
- c. How did you learn office management?
- d. How did you learn to communicate with staff?
- e. How did you learn to communicate with the community?
- f. How did you learn the skills of appointing?
- g. How did you learn the skills of evaluating and assessing student progress?
- h. How did you learn the skills of reporting?
- i. How did you learn the skills of appraising staff and giving feedback?
- j. How did you learn the skills of managing the site e.g. buildings etc.?

7. Learning specific aspects - about change

Key question: How did you learn to recognise the need for change? How did you learn the skills required for implementing and maintaining change?

- a. How did you know what changes to implement?
- b. What did you have to learn to implement change successfully?
- c. Which changes did you initiate personally, which were staff initiated that you supported as principal and which were imposed by others such as the BOT, MOE or ERO?
- d. How do you keep up with the pace of change?
- e. How do you change your own behaviour? Habits of mind?

8. Learning specific aspects - dealing with stress.

Key question: How did you learn to recognise and deal with stress?

- a. What causes the greatest stress for you and others in your work place? How do you know this? What do you do about it?
- b. How do you personally cope with stress? How did you learn this?
- c. What do you do when things go wrong? What learning is involved here?

9. Learning specific aspects - about curriculum management

**Key question: What did you have to learn in order to manage the curriculum?
How did you learn this?**

- a. What do you see as your role in the school as far as implementing the National Curriculum is concerned (e.g. Technology)? How do you carry out his role?
- b. What learning is involved in managing the learning of students?
- c. How did you learn curriculum management knowledge and skills?
- d. How do you apply your curriculum management knowledge and skills?

10. Learning specific aspects - about school climate.

Key question: What did you have to learn about school climate? How did you learn this?

- a. How do you define “school climate”?
- b. How would you describe the climate in your school?
- c. What kinds of things have you had to learn in order to develop the school climate you want for your school?
- d. How did you apply your learning to develop and maintain the school climate?

11. Learning specific aspects - about school culture

Key question: What did you have to learn about school culture? How did you learn this?

- a. How do you define “school culture”?
- b. What are some features that best identify the school’s culture?
- c. What have you had to learn to fit into the school’s culture? How did you learn this?
- d. How do you develop and maintain school culture?

12. Learning specific aspects - about power

Key question: What did you learn about power? How did you learn this?

- a. How would you describe your power as principal?

- b. What have you learnt about power as a principal?
- c. How have you learnt to handle power as the principal?

13. Theories about learning

Key question: Have you developed any theories about learning with regard to learning to be a principal?

- a. Professional development and learning. Are these synonymous? Explain with reference to your own professional development experience.
- b. Do you think of yourself as a learner of principalship? In what way? What professional reading do you do regularly? What professional reading has made an impact on you in the last year or two? In what way?
- c. How do you identify your learning needs? Who helps you do this? How do you know what others think of you?
- d. What kinds of things do you enjoy learning most?
- e. How do you learn best?
- f. In what ways have you applied your new learning? What was the last new learning that you applied?
- g. What role has personal failure played in your learning?
- h. What things do you not learn? Why? What are the barriers to your learning?
- i. If you had been able to go into any career in or out of education, which career would you have chosen? Why? Did you ever apply for any job outside of teaching? When? Why?
- j. Are there ideal learning environments for a successful woman principal? a successful male principal? a successful Maori principal? or a successful Pacific Islands principal? If so, do they differ? In what ways?

14. General

Key question: What general comments would you make about learning to be a principal?

- a. What are your thoughts generally about learning with regard to being a principal?
- b. How does learning principalship fit into the notion of lifelong learning?
- c. What, if anything, have you not been able to learn well or at all?
Why?

APPENDIX D:

Guiding Questions Sent To Principals

THE PRINCIPAL AS LEARNER: QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOUR THINKING

Note: The emphasis is on **your** learning. Not all questions will be of equal significance for you. Not all need to be addressed.

1. Background (other than teaching)

What key background factors influenced your learning of management and leadership in educational settings?

Consider your background and early life, family, teachers and school principals, your tertiary education and teacher training etc.

2. Teaching background

What was your teaching experience before you became a principal?

Consider your reasons for becoming a teacher, your career in teaching, your learning about leadership and management as a beginning and experienced teacher etc.

3. Becoming a principal (in your first job)

What did you have to learn as a beginning principal? How did you accomplish this?

Consider your reasons for becoming a principal, your preparation for the principalship, your understanding of the principal's role at that time and what you had to learn as a beginning principal, courses etc., people who helped, the hardest things you had to learn, whether the job was what you expected etc.

4. As a Principal

After the beginning years, how have you continued learning the principal's role?

Consider your professional development including reading, courses etc., reasons for going, preparation, flash points of learning, people, experiences including relevant non-education experiences, the second or third principalship (if appropriate), the Picot reforms, likes and dislikes about being a principal, attitudes to the job, learning transfer, being in the job, P's role now, presence and image etc.

5. Learning specific aspects - about educational leadership

How have you learnt educational leadership?

Consider the learning you required for leading teams of staff, philosophy, your expectations of your staff and theirs of you, learning decision making, problem solving, handling conflict, managing relations with the BOT, relations with students, parents, and outside groups such as ERO etc. and your leadership style or two or three main characteristics etc. Vision.

6. Learning specific aspects - about technical management

What technical management skills and knowledge have you learnt and how have you learnt this?

Consider strategic planning and goal setting, financial management, office management, communication, making appointments, assessment and evaluation, reporting, appraisal and management of buildings and site etc.

7 Learning specific aspects - about change.

How did you learn to recognise the need for change? How did you learn the skills required for implementing and maintaining change?

In addition to these questions consider changes you initiated and changes others initiated, learning to deal with the pace of change and coping with imposed change etc. Attitude to, habits of mind, values.

8. Learning specific aspects - dealing with stress.

How did you learn to recognise and deal with stress?

Consider what causes you and others you work with the greatest stress and what you do about this, what you do when things go wrong etc.

9. Learning specific aspects - about curriculum management.

What did you have to learn in order to manage the curriculum? How did you learn this?

Consider your role with regard to the National Curriculum, how you learnt curriculum management knowledge and skills and how you learnt to apply that to managing students' learning etc.

10. Learning specific aspects - about school climate.

What did you have to learn about school climate. How did you learn this?

Consider what you understand by the concept of school climate, the climate in your school and what you have had to learn to develop and maintain the climate in your school that you want etc.

11. Learning specific aspects - about school culture.

What did you have to learn about school culture? How did you learn this?

What you mean by school culture, features that best identify your school culture and what new learning, develop and maintain the school culture etc.

12. Learning specific aspects - about power.

What did you learn about power? How did you learn this?

Consider your power as principal, what you have learnt about the principal's power and how you have learnt to handle this power etc. Your role on the school, ethical questions.

13. Theories about learning.

Have you developed any theories about learning with regard to your learning to be a principal?

Consider professional development vis-a-vis learning (are they synonymous?), whether you as a principal think of yourself as a learner, the impact of professionalism on you, critical reflection, what others think of you, personal audit, how you learn best, examples of how you apply new learning, the role of personal failure in your learning, self esteem, barriers to your learning, other careers you might have preferred, ideal learning environments for different principals (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age) etc.

14. General

What general comments would you make about learning to be a principal?

Consider principalship generally as a learning occupation and the notion of lifelong learning, yourself as learner, effect of the principal as learner on the school. What, if anything, have you not been able to learn well or learn at all? Greatest learning success, greatest learning difficulties.

F Townsend

APPENDIX E:

Explanatory Letter

Frances Townsend
Waitangi Falls Rd
Waiuku RD 1
Auckland

(date)

(name)

(address)

Dear (name)

Thanks for talking to me today and agreeing to further contact with the possibility (and hope) that you will agree to participate in the research that I'm doing once you know more about it.

The research field is learning educational management. In particular:

How does a principal learn (his/her) job?

What does a principal have to learn?

How is what is learnt reflected in the job?

I am currently undertaking this research for a D. Phil. at Waikato University to try to find some answers to these questions and hope that you would be interested in being involved in the research.

Being a principal is a very demanding and arduous job and the more we can learn about it the better. A great deal is written about the nature of principalship, the training principals might need, ways of supplying that training and development, and

the role of the principal with regard to effective and successful schools. However, not a lot is written about the learning experiences of individual principals with regard to their particular schools, what they have had to learn, how they identified their learning needs, how and why they learnt and what problems they face or faced in their learning.

The scope of the research will cover not just the courses which you as a principal will have attended and your own reading and thinking, but your life-long experience which has a bearing on your learning to be a principal.

The research will involve a small number of principals - probably about twenty. Most will be part of a general survey but a very small number will provide in-depth case studies. If you agree to taking part in the study, you could be part of the general survey only or considered for an in-depth case study. Unfortunately, time factors prevent the sample being greater at this time.

The question has to be asked - why should you, as a very busy person, opt to be involved? I believe that the research on learning educational management will be very beneficial for the principals who are involved, as a learning experience. It will provide them with an opportunity to reflect on their learning in strictest confidence, with a sympathetic but impartial person who is not involved in the school. In addition, they will be able to consider their educational management learning needs, past and present, and clarify for themselves the stage they are at currently as principals. I also believe that, ultimately, the research will help other principals and providers of principal development in future.

Before you make a decision, you will want to know what is involved. If you are part of the survey, you will be involved in two or three interviews, each of about an hour, arranged at a time to suit you. Notes or transcripts of these interviews will be sent to you for correction. The whole research experience could take about six hours of your time spaced out over three months.

If you opt for the in-depth study, beside the interviews outlined above, I will need to interview some other people whom you propose, look at relevant school documentation and other relevant records and observe some operations where this is relevant*.

* The case studies were dropped from the design as the research proceeded.

The research will be undertaken following the strict guidelines laid down by Waikato University's Research Ethics Committee. That means that you will have to give your consent to all procedures and methods of collecting information and only the information which you agree to, will be used in the research. Your identity, the school's identity and all information and materials will be treated in confidence. Any procedures which you consider harmful to yourself or any other person will be avoided and you will be able to withdraw from the research or any part of the research at any time.

You will be kept informed of progress and the nature of the progress. The data collected for the research will only be able to be used for academic writing other than the doctoral thesis, if you approve both the principle and the substance of the writing.

I hope that this information will be enough at this point for you to decide whether or not you are interested in being part of the research. I know how hectic the lives of principals are, but I think that the benefits for you, if you become a participant, will be worth the effort. The principals whom I interviewed on a trial basis in 1995 found this to be the case and certainly, I will be committed to ensuring that the process is worthwhile and pleasant for the participants.

If you require more information please contact me collect on (09) 235 3792. After you have had time to consider all the pros and cons, I would be grateful to you for the return of the consent or decline form which is enclosed.

Many thanks for your time. I look forward eagerly to hearing from you and will contact you in the week commencing (date).

Yours sincerely

Encl. 2

Consent Form

Return envelope

APPENDIX F:
CONSENT FORM

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO**

Research Project On Principals' Learning

Researcher: Frances Townsend

Consent/Decline Form (please select one of the following)

EITHER

I agree to take part in the research proposal as outlined by the researcher. I have read the proposal outline in the accompanying letter and understand the commitment involved.

Please tick (a) or (b) or (c)

- (a) I am interested in being a research participant as part of the survey
- (b) I am interested in being considered for either the survey or the in-depth case study*
- (c) I am interested in the in-depth case study but would like more information before making a decision

OR

I have considered the proposal and do not wish to be involved. [You may comment if you wish].

Signature _____

Full Name: _____

Preferred address: _____

Telephone:(H)_____ (B)_____

Fax _____

* The in-depth case study was dropped from the design as the research proceeded.

APPENDIX G:

Data Analysis Of Research Participants

Research participant	Primary Men	Primary Women	Secondary Men	Secondary Women
Numbers of principals	4	7	6	2
Av. age of practising principals	48	49.5	52.2	49
Av. years as principal	18.5	6.9	10.8	9.25
Numbers of principal-ships	5	1	2	1
Qualifications e.g. degrees	1	1	5	2
Dip Ed Man	3	1	0	0
Ed Admin papers	1	6	2	0

APPENDIX H:

Sample Letter Confirming Interviews

Frances Townsend
Waitangi Falls Rd
Waiuku RD 1
Auckland

09 235 3792

(date)

Principal
School
(address)

Dear (name)

re Research Interview Schedule

Many thanks for agreeing to take part in my research and to the following interviews:-

- (1) Wednesday 1 May at 1.30 pm
- (2) Wednesday 15 May at 1.30 pm
- (3) Wednesday 29 May at 1.30 pm

The questions on the Principal as Learner, some of which I would like to address over the sequence of interviews, will be sent to you at the beginning of April as requested. The thrust of the research is how principals learn to be principals and how what they learn is reflected in their practice. I look forward to exploring these issues with you and hope that the experience is interesting and helpful to you. Many thanks also for your gracious response to my request for your participation and for your prompt return of the consent form.

Regards

APPENDIX I:

Sample Covering Letter With Guiding Questions

Frances Townsend
Waitangi Falls Rd
Waiuku RD 1
Auckland

09 235 3792

(Date)

(Name)

(Address)

Dear (name)

Herewith the questions to guide your thinking about learning to be a principal. Remember that not all need to be addressed as some will be more important for you than others.

The format for the sequence of interviews that seems to be emerging, is that in the first interview you talk more generally about your background, career in education and people and events that contributed to your learning to be a principal. It's not a prepared speech as I'll guide you through with questions. You then receive a transcript of the first interview on which I have highlighted points that I would like to look at in some greater depth. The third interview will pick up points arising from the transcript of the second interview but will focus particularly on question 13 on the Questions to Guide Your Thinking sheet. No preparation is required of you other than thinking about how you learnt to be a principal - though a copy of your CV, if you were willing to let me photocopy it, would help me.

Have a good break. I look forward to meeting up with you on (date).

Regards

APPENDIX J:

Sample Letter With Transcript

Frances Townsend
Waitangi Falls Rd
Waiuku RD 1
Auckland

09 235 3792

(Date)

Principal
School
(Address)

Dear (Name)

Many thanks again for your time last Wednesday. A copy of the tape transcript is enclosed. As you read through the transcript please make any alterations or additions on the script.

At our final meeting I would like to discuss the sections in the transcript which I have highlighted and the questions in the margin and the last page.

Remember that you are always free to pass on any questions.

I hope that you will have time to read the transcript and do some more thinking about how principals learn before we meet again on **(date)**. You may keep the transcript. If you make any additions or alterations I will add that to my copy when I see you.

Sincerely

APPENDIX K:

Sample Withdrawal Letter

Frances Townsend
Waitangi Falls Rd
Waiuku RD 1
Auckland.

09 235 3792

(date)

Principal
School
(Address)

Dear (Name),

Many thanks for your time last Thursday as well as for the time you made available for the other interviews. As I transcribe the tapes I am very aware of the richness of your experience of learning and truly humble in the face of your willingness to share your life's experiences with me. I hope that eventually, the research could have some benefit for the development of future principals, although I can assure you that the identity of the principals who were part of the study will be protected.

A copy of the tape transcript is enclosed. If you wish to make any changes or add anything that you have thought of since, please write it on the transcript and send it to me. It will be returned to you when I have noted your comments.

I hope that you have enjoyed reflecting on your experiences. I have certainly enjoyed hearing about them. I would like to refer back to you next year at some stage, if you agree, to try out my key findings. That is some distance away at this stage however.

Regards

APPENDIX L:

Verification Of Findings: Questionnaire And Analysis

RESEARCH FINDINGS INTO PRINCIPALS' LEARNING OF PRINCIPALSHIP

Frances Townsend
School of Education, Waikato University

CONFIDENTIAL

NAME: (Optional)_____

These are the tentative findings of my research into the learning of principalship. This research sought answers to two questions. (a) How did the principals in the research perceive that they learnt to be principals? (b) how did they perceive that their learning impacted on their practice? As a research participant, your reaction and responses to the tentative findings are an important part of the verification process.

Please study the two diagrams and the statements and indicate your agreement or disagreement, or any modifications you think would make the diagrams or statements more accurate **IN YOUR CASE**. Add comments if you wish.

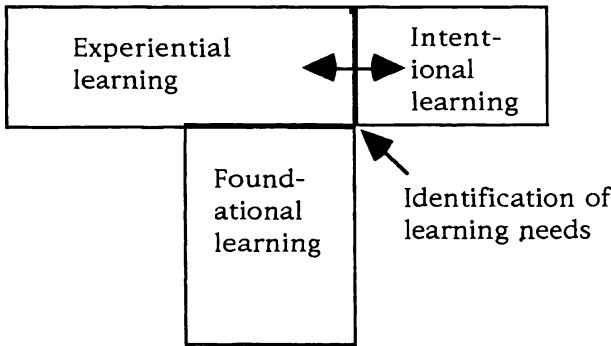


Figure 1: Diagram showing the relationships of foundational, experiential and intentional learning as principal, and identification of learning needs.

STATEMENTS: Please circle 1-5 to show which response best fits what **you** think *

* Statistical analysis of each result is shown directly below the item.

1.0 Foundational learning (Figure 2)*

1.1 Basic educational management knowledge and skill required by a principal is learnt extensively during the pre-appointment years as foundational learning.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
13% 7% 60% 7% 13%

1.2 The main attitudes, beliefs and values which guide me as a principal were learnt during the pre-appointment years.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
7% 0% 47% 33% 13%

1.3 Foundational learning which influences me as a principal reaches back into my childhood.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% 20% 33% 47% 0%

1.4 Throughout my years as a principal, I have continued to be influenced by my foundational learning.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% 7% 40% 46% 7%

1.5 Personal strengths and weaknesses appear to originate in the years of foundational learning.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
7% 20% 20% 46% 7%

1.6 As a principal I tend to take foundational learning for granted, and I am not consciously aware of the ways in which foundational learning influences me.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% 33% 53% 7% 0%

* Figure 2 was revised later. See Figure 4 page 147

2.0 Experiential Learning i.e. Situational, On-The-Job Learning As Principal (Figure 2)

2.1 Experiential learning grows out of and builds on foundational learning.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% 0% 33.3% 33.3% 33.3%

2.2 Experiential learning is highly relevant, often immediate in impact, and often learning that is "deep level learning" in terms of the meanings gained.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% 7% 20% 46% 27%

2.3 Much experiential learning is acquired through trial and error learning.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% 13% 33.5% 20% 33.5%

2.4 "The most valuable things we learn are from unplanned or unmanaged experiences, either at work or in private life".

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
7% 40% 26.5% 26.5% 0%

2.5 Many learning experiences synergise over time to create new, deep-level learning (may be called gut feelings, getting wiser, knowing what will work).

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% 0% 27% 40% 33%

2.6 Situational and synergic experiential learning as a principal is the really critical learning in terms of impact on practice, quantity and quality of learning.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% 13% 27% 47% 13%

3.0 Intentional learning i.e. learning to meet identified learning needs (Figure 2)

Please rank the next three statements

3.1 I identify my learning needs mainly through appraisal. (2) **53%** (3) **47%**

Most of my learning needs are identified for me by others, such as the MOE, ERO or providers. (2) **47%** (3) **53%**

I identify my learning needs mainly as a result of experiences and reflection on experiences. (1) **100%**

3.2 There is very little difference for me between any of the 3 statements in (1) above, as regards identifying my learning needs.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
60% **33%** **7%** **0%** **0%**

3.3 One thing I value greatly is my independence to choose which learning modes and methods will meet best my personal, social and professional learning needs.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% **0%** **20%** **27%** **53%**

Answer and then rank statements 4-7 on motivation. You may use equal signs.
 [SEE BELOW FOR RANKING RESULTS]

3.4 I am motivated to learn out of a deep sense of commitment to education and children. (1) **52%** (1=) **13%** (2) **7%** (2=) **13%** (3) **13%**

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% **0%** **0%** **13%** **87%**

3.5 I learn because of the desire to meet personal goals of being successful.

(1) **13%** (1=) **20%** (2) **13%** (2=) **7%** (3) **20%** (3=) **13%** (4) **13%**

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% **0%** **20%** **27%** **27%** (N/A **26%**)

3.6 I am motivated for social reasons because my success largely comes through the efforts of others. (1) **0%**, (1=) **7%**, (2) **26%**, (2=) **7%**, (3) **20%**, (3=) **7%**, (4) **33%**

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
13% **13%** **20%** **27%** **7%** (N/A **20%**)

3.7 I am highly motivated to learn technical management, communication, and leadership out of a sense of professionalism. (1) **7%** (1=) **26.5%** (2) **26.5%** (2=) **13%** (3) **13%** (3=) **7%** (4) **7%**

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% **0%** **20%** **27%** **33%** (N/A **20%**)

MOTIVATION RANKED BY POINTS (4 points for 1 or 1=, 3 points for 2 or 2=, 2 points for 3 or 3=, 1 point for 4).

(1) Commitment to education and children [87]

(2) Professional [78]

(3) Personal goals [63]

(4) Social [46]

3.8 Leaders have to be reflective because they are the central focus of followers' attention.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% **7%** **20%** **33%** **40%**

3.9 Followers are frequently critical, thereby engendering defensive as well as formative reflection.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% **27%** **13%** **40%** **13%** (N/A **7%**)

3.10 Reflection can be subject to self-delusion, blind spots and superficiality.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
7% **47%** **20%** **26%** **0%**

3.11 It is often difficult to translate learning into practice.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely
0% **47%** **20%** **26%** **7%**

3.12 Many things I learn have a minimal impact on practice.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

7%	66%	20%	0%	7%
-----------	------------	------------	-----------	-----------

3.13 A principal makes mistakes all the time.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

7%	33%	20%	13%	27%
-----------	------------	------------	------------	------------

3.14 Barriers and limitations to learning are usually related to the magnitude of the learning required, within the time span available.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

7%	20%	27%	20%	27%
-----------	------------	------------	------------	------------

3.15 Learning limitations are often linked to foundational learning, either through limitations in experience or flaws in personality development.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

0%	20%	53%	27%	0%
-----------	------------	------------	------------	-----------

3.16 Failing to identify learning needs, is probably the major barrier to my learning.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

0%	46%	27%	13%	7%	(N/A 7%)
-----------	------------	------------	------------	-----------	-----------------

3.17 Lack of access to appropriate learning for identified learning needs, is a major barrier to my learning.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

27%	33%	20%	20%	0%
------------	------------	------------	------------	-----------

3.18 The hardest learning needs to identify are those related to interpersonal relations.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

7%	7%	46%	20%	20%
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GENERAL CONCLUSIONS - [YOUR EXPRESSIONS OF OPINION]

4.0 Cumulative Learning

4.1 A principal represents his or her life-time learning - the good and the bad.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

0%	0%	20%	40%	40%
-----------	-----------	------------	------------	------------

4.2 Cumulated, life-time learning is taken-for-granted and rarely evaluated deeply.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

0%	7%	40%	33%	20%
-----------	-----------	------------	------------	------------

4.3 Cumulated, life-time learning needs to be examined to test the appropriateness of basic assumptions.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

0%	0%	40%	40%	20%
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4.4 Appraisal does NOT bring about examination of cumulated learning and assumptions.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

7%	0%	33%	47%	13%
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5.0 Unique Configurations Of Learning

5.1 Each principal has unique experiences of foundational, experiential and intentional learning and different cumulations of learning. Each school community is different in contexts and composition. These differences constitute a unique learning configuration for each principal/school combination.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

0%	0%	27%	27%	46%
-----------	-----------	------------	------------	------------

5.2 Individual difference is very important in relation to principals, their particular work environments and their specific learning needs.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

0%	0%	20%	27%	53%
-----------	-----------	------------	------------	------------

5.3 The concept of individual difference has major consequences for providers of learning opportunities.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

0%	0%	13%	54%	33%
----	----	-----	-----	-----

5.4 Most learning providers do not appear to take into account the individual differences of principal/school configurations.

(1) Disagree (2) disagree mostly (3) agree mostly (4) agree (5) agree completely

0%	13%	27%	40%	20%
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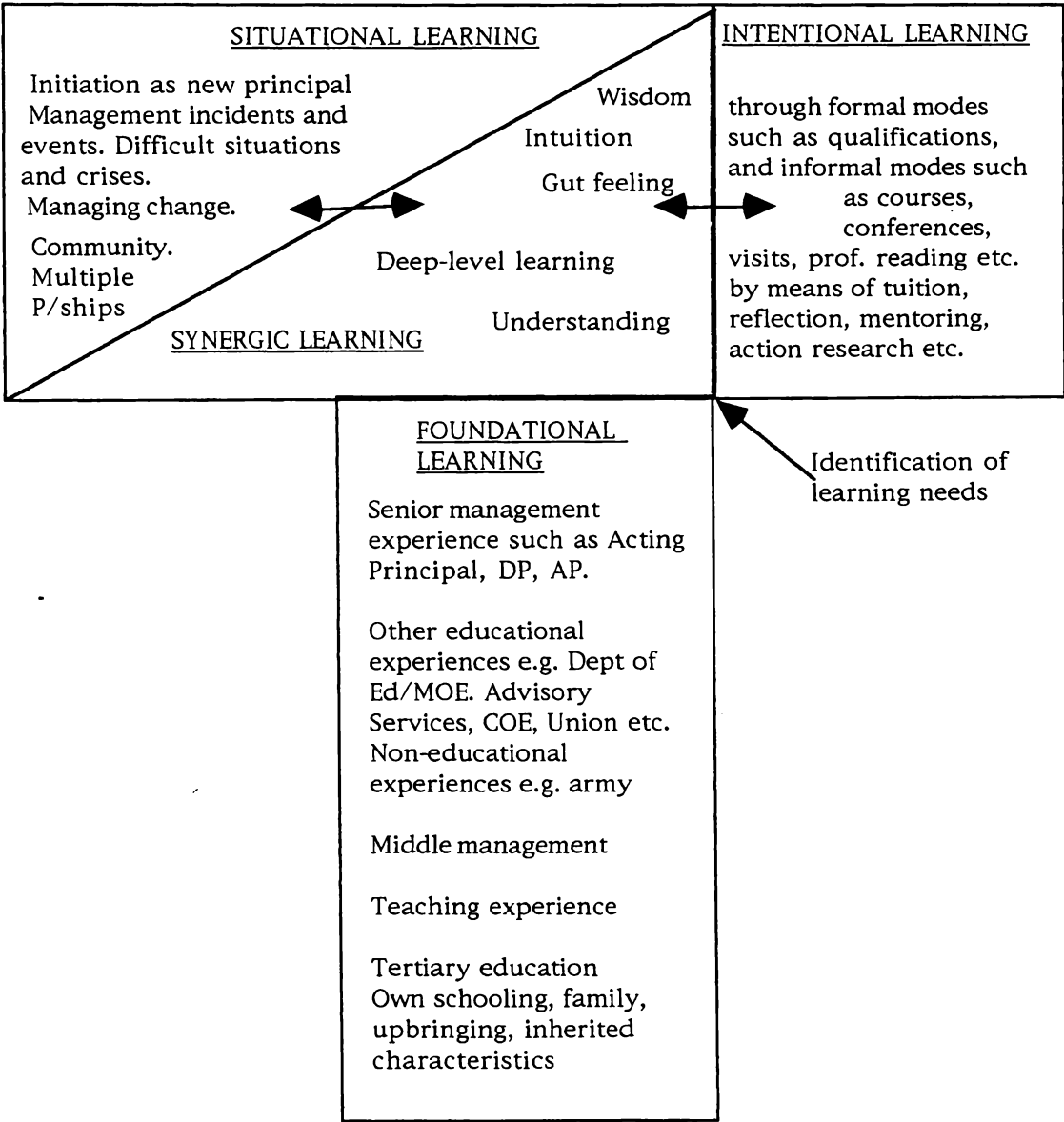


Figure 2: Showing how principals perceived that they learnt to be principals

Please return the completed questionnaire in the attached envelope by
WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 1998 or earlier if possible.

MANY THANKS.

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